



Out of the woods?

By Ann Bronkhorst

With work on the improvements to Coldfall Wood due to start this month, questions are still being raised both about the immediate plans and about the long-term strategy. At a recent meeting of the Friends of Coldfall Woods, Nick Michael, Conservation Officer for Haringey, and Tony Healey, of their Parks Department, responded to some of the queries.

A major concern is, of course, money. The Heritage Lottery Fund grant (*THE ARCHER*, January 2006) will meet the costs of the main proposals but paths, bridges, railings and benches, as well as the natural features of the wood, require regular maintenance. How will those future costs be met?

From the sale of the Lynx depot, north of the playing field, the woodland project is guaranteed £36,000 under the section 106 agreement, with the possibility of several thousands more. The Friends are approaching Lynne Featherstone MP and local councillors for support in retaining and ring-fencing that money for specific local needs now and in the future.

Other long-term issues are maintenance and security in the woods. One hopeful national trend, endorsed by the government, is the return of park keepers to public parks. Tony Healey assured the Friends that Haringey is aware of the concerns about Coldfall Wood's long-term maintenance but said that appointing park keep-

ers might take some time. He will consider the feasibility of some woodland maintenance being carried out by people completing community service sentences, under supervision. Haringey parks police have a newly-appointed head who will meet the Friends and who may have constructive suggestions.

Partly to forestall vandalism, the Friends wanted schools to be actively involved with the whole project at an early stage and Nick Michael agreed. Children who are engaged in what is happening are more likely to feel protective towards "their" wood. Talks will be given to two schools each year and organised walks will take place twice a year; a signposted nature trail for walkers will also be available.

When work begins this spring, temporary signs should provide information about what is being done but the Friends still want people who use the wood to make their views known. Contact info@coldfallwood.info or Nick Michael on 020 8348 6005.

Setting out the stalls for friendship

By Ann Bronkhorst

Children danced in a circle, clapping hands; children sang 'Light One Candle' and 'Absolutely Everybody'. They seemed to symbolise the hope of all those present, hope for a future of friendships made across the barriers of nationality.

It was a wet afternoon on 8 March, at the Town Hall, and the Mayor of Barnet, Andreas Tambourides, was hosting the Open Day of the borough's Twinning Associations, all eight of them.

This occasion was very much his idea, as municipal twinning is a concept he strongly supports. He wasn't unique, however; mayors seemed to be everywhere, from homely places like Bromley and Enfield to more exotic ones such as France, Cyprus and America. Some had come to share and pick up ideas, while others represented the foreign towns linked with Barnet. The Associations provided volunteers who manned the stalls and gave out information with tireless enthusiasm. And the

children were the delightful icing on the cake.

Why get involved? One man said (and he wasn't joking) it was to prevent future wars. Another wondered (and he was joking) whether the Associations needed to start a war to attract more members. For there is concern about scant resources for twinning groups and about the apparent reluctance of young people to commit time and effort to voluntary activities. It was heartening to hear that some French schoolchildren from Chaville were expected later in the month, hosted by pupils at Friern Barnet School. It is rumoured that the government wants each secondary school in the nation to acquire a foreign 'twin' during the next decade.

Crop, snip and a jump for Gus

By John Lawrence

After 21 years in his current premises on the High Road, Gus and his team of barbers are on the move - but they're not going far.

On 2 May Gus and the guys are moving four doors up to a smart new shop at 127c High Road, once occupied by the Mahavir sweet mart.

It will be business as usual for the whole team, except one. Gus's pet iguana, Arnold 2, needs a new home because there's no room for him in the new premises.

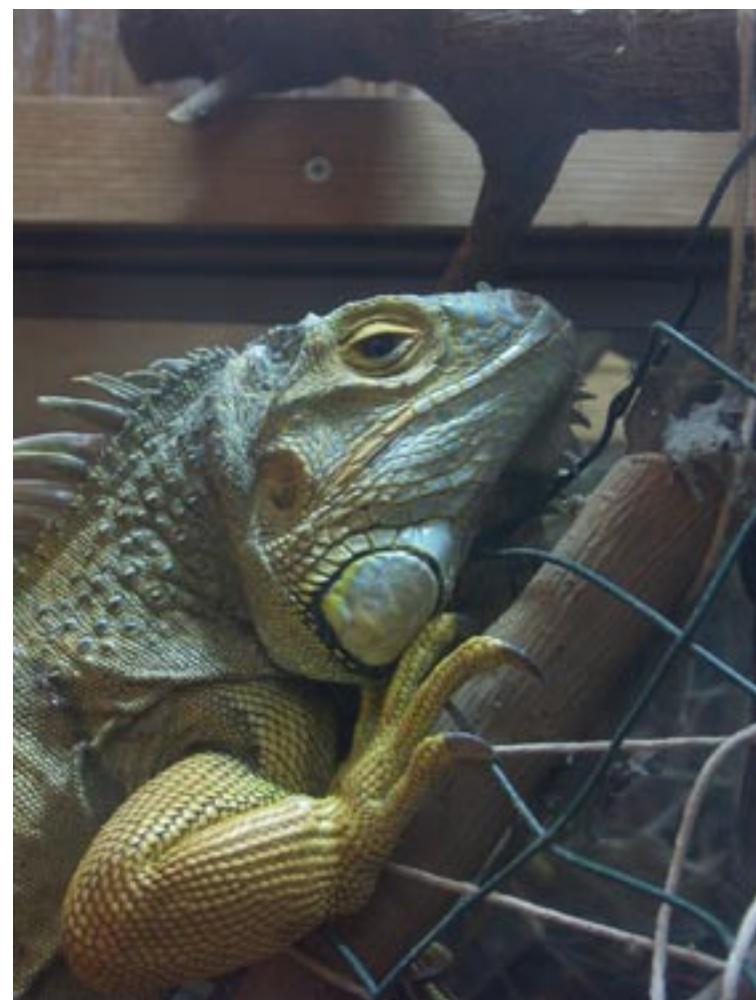
Gus said: "Arnold 2 has lived at the back of the shop for two years after taking over from the original Arnold. He's easy to look after and no bother. He'll sit next to you and watch TV and only eats vegetables. If I can't find a good home for him, I'll have to contact the RSPCA or the zoo."

So why the move for such a long-established business? The new shop is slightly longer and narrower than the existing one but will be the same set-up, with brand new granite floors and surfaces.

Gus said: "We wanted to make a modern barbershop and to do that here would have meant closing for two months or more, which was not possible. So I'm very lucky that a shop became available so close to where we are now."

The future of the existing Gus shop has not been decided although it has been rumoured that there is interest in turning it into a bakery-style café.

If you would like to offer a home to Arnold 2, please visit Gus at his shop.



Arnold 2 the iguana, awaits a new home. Photo by Erini Rodis

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