



Year 2 children from Martin Infant School singing the Penguin Song at the launch of the Barnet Learning Charter. Picture by Helen Drake

Learning without limits

By Helen Drake

Children from Martin Infant School and Brooklands Junior School performed for members of the local education community and guest speakers at a special conference held at the North London Business Park on 21 June. The Barnet Learning Charter: Learning without Limits, a new initiative from the Local Education Authority (LEA) was launched at the conference.

John Paxton, a strategy manager with the LEA and the driving force behind the charter, said that the purpose had been to consult Barnet's education community and to "discover our core beliefs and what kind of schools we want."

Kevin Anscomb, head teacher from Martin Infant School, and Heather Blackmore, head teacher from Brooklands Junior School, were both part of the Development Group that spent 18 months analysing the results of the consultation process and putting together the final

document.

Guest speaker Bill Laar praised the Learning Charter for its dynamism and predicted that it could become a "model of good practice outside the boundaries of Barnet."

The charter has at its heart a set of core beliefs and provides a blueprint for school-based activities. In her introduction, Gillian Palmer, Chief Education Officer, says it will "help all schools to translate these principles into the action which will best serve the needs and aspirations of their communities."

Based upon *Every Child*

Matters, the key government document that provides a framework for all agencies involving children, the charter aims to ensure that every child is able to: "Enjoy and Achieve, Stay Safe, Be Healthy, Make a Positive Contribution, and Achieve Economic Well-being".

Aims for each child

Children from Year 2 at Martin Infant School performed the action-filled Penguin Song as part of a medley of favourite school tunes to demonstrate the kind of activities that enable children to Enjoy and Achieve.

Kevin Anscomb said: "The children are all talented singers and performers and it was a nice thing for them to do before they move up to the juniors." Pupils from Brooklands Junior School also gave an imaginative presentation.

The Barnet Learning Charter will be launched at both Martin Infant School and Brooklands Junior School in September. Copies will soon be available to download on Barnet's website www.barnet.gov.uk

Sponsors needed for Muswell Hill Festival

Although a number of local businesses have already signed up as main events sponsors for the Muswell Hill Festival in September, there are still sponsorships waiting to be taken up, most importantly for the performing arts stage, which is a central feature.

This is a prestigious sponsorship, costing £2,000, but it could be split among several donors. Among the activities to be covered are hire of the PA system, a generator, a large covered stage, paying a crew for the day and barriers. Live music is very much a part of the Festival and several local bands have already booked to give performances. Alternatively, £500 will secure sponsorship of the dog agility competition and dog show, paying for barriers for the arena, prizes and certificates for the winners, plus a roving microphone. The same sum is also what the parachuting teddies are looking for as they jump from

the tower of St. James's Church in Muswell Hill Broadway on Saturday 16 September, 10-4, as a curtain raiser to the festival on the next day.

Full details of what the sponsors get for their money are available from Alison Wynn of the Hornsey Trust for children with cerebral palsy, organisers and beneficiaries of the festival, which will be held once again in Cherry Tree Wood, East Finchley, on Sunday, 17 September. Contact her on 020 8444 7242, fax 020 8444 7241, mobile 07808 364 033, or e-mail her at info@hornseytrust.org.uk (copy your e-mail to alison@onlib.com).

The season of singing: a bulletin from life at the choir face

By Marian Bunzl

We at North London Chorus have become patrons of the arts. Under the guidance of our Musical Director, who in spite of everything, still seems to have faith in us, we commissioned a choral work from Royal Philharmonic Society Award winner, Matthew King (with generous support from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust and the Britten-Pears Foundation).

The choir suggested the theme and texts: a celebration of all aspects of singing. As patrons, we hoped to encourage our composer to keep each voice in its own comfort zone, to avoid difficult harmonies and fast complicated rhythms and, while we're at it, could the altos have the tune for once? And above all, as a long ago composer was commanded: not too many notes!

To be honest, no one dared voice any of the above. And, without the benefit of our advice, Matthew has produced The Season of Sing-

ing, a joyous, life-affirming work.

At first it seemed mind-bending: clashing rhythms, and multi-layered texts, alternating with gentle, lyrical passages. We thought: here we go again. However, under the patient teaching of our Musical Director, we found it a very approachable work, composed with love and care for the performers. Throughout (most of) the rehearsal period we were enthusiastic and positive, confident that we could do it justice and that our audience would enjoy it as much as we did.

Judging by the applause at the performance, they did indeed. The world premiere of The Season of Singing was given on 24 June at St.Judes-on-the-Hill in Hampstead Garden Suburb as part of its Prom Festival.

We managed to bring out the different strands of music and text, while the soloists floated high above us. Our composer, who attended the concert, told us afterwards that we had transformed his score into a living thing that communicated with intensity and passion.

At the same concert we performed the Requiem by Mozart, that other composer whose patron also complained of too many notes.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Summer of sport

Welcome to the less than wonderful world of British sporting achievement. Sorry, let's get this right and try again. Welcome to another summer of British sporting failure and I mean British, because not even the Scots can claim that the Murray Mint isn't one of theirs.

This year, just like most years, the Brits have managed to cover themselves in a heady mixture of lager and flags, load up on pointless euphoria and dream the dream. What we got is the usual nightmare. The 'mighty' cricket team who fluked it against the Aussies couldn't beat Sri Lanka and both the Mint and the Tinman failed spectacularly to win Wimbledon. And it rained and the strawberries were tastelessly overpriced and no Brit survived into week two, so no change there then.

Let's now turn to the weird, perverse and embarrassing world of football and give the Scots, Welsh and Irish a laugh. After spending hours watching a bunch of overpaid idiots make the beautiful game look ugly I began to despair, and despair led to consumption of mind-expanding substances on an industrial scale. And you know what happens when you do that? You get inspired, that's what.

With my head full of chemicals I saw the answer to all our problems and got paranoid enough to spot a conspiracy coming. Conspiracy? Yes, the maniacs at FIFA conspire against us Brits by insisting that the World Cup is played in the summer and somewhere hot enough for heatstroke. No way can any British team ever win.

The answer is obvious. The World cup should be played in November, in England. No need for Wembley, play all the matches in places like Leeds, Huddersfield, Wigan, Bolton and Blackburn. Play them on Wednesdays, kick off at 7.30 and make sure it rains. And not just normal rain, but that wonderful horizontal drizzle that has Englishmen dancing topless on the terraces. While the Italians and Brazilians shelter under umbrellas, Wayne Rooney will feel happy and at home as he dodges hailstones on his way to a hat trick.

It's the only way to win

Starlings flock to East Finchley

By Daphne Chamberlain

On a sunny day recently, a friend and I were sitting by the Serpentine in Hyde Park. Suddenly, about a dozen very young, perky starlings appeared around our feet. Next moment, one of them flew straight at my friend, who was just about to pop a chip in his mouth. The bird snatched it from his fingers, and carried it off to the water's edge for his tea. Nearer home, I've noticed more starlings about than in the past few years.

Also, the Finchley Society has reported a parakeet in Avenue House Grounds, waxwings in Oak Lane and the once rare red kite over the northern part of Barnet.

Recent spottings in the St Pancras and Islington Cemetery along the High Road include a pheasant, a deer, and a sparrow hawk, possibly the infamous visitor to back gardens in the county roads previously pictured in THE ARCHER.