



Hawk hunts in Hertford Road

By John Lawrence

How's this for wildlife on your doorstep? Hertford Road resident Peter Cox looked out of his back window to see a sparrow hawk feasting on his lawn.



Close encounter - the sparrow hawk. Photo by Peter Cox

The bird of prey had swooped down on a wood pigeon that had been attracted by the seeds Mr Cox scattered on his grass.

The gardens of Hertford Road are mostly back-to-back with those of adjacent roads but there certainly seemed to be enough open space for this hawk to home in on his quarry.

Mr Cox spotted the flying visitor at around 3pm on a Thursday in early January and suspected the concentration of feathers in one spot meant the pigeon had been killed as it fed.

He said, "I've been here

since 1977 and have only ever seen a sparrow hawk once, last year, flying between two houses in Durham Road.

"It was a huge piece of luck that I got the sighting. I work in the front of the house and hardly ever look out of the back in daylight at this time of the year."

Linda Mitchell, who writes *THE ARCHER's Wildlife Diary*, has twice reported seeing a sparrow hawk in the area, most recently in November 2004 when it tried but failed to take a pigeon. Linda, who lives in Fordington Road, also spotted a kestrel late last year.

New sports centre for Bishop Douglass

By Toni Morgan

Bishop Douglass School officially opened its new sports hall, fitness centre and dance studio on 19 January. An invited audience included representatives from the Board of Governors, Barnet Council, the contractors and neighbouring residents, who were later given a tour of the facilities by the students.

Barnet Council was praised for supporting the building project as were the builders for their excellent standard of work and the neighbours of the school for their forbearance while the project was being carried out. Head Teacher Angela Murphy was particularly praised for her vision and energy in taking forward the project, which she described as a real partnership.

Seen and heard

Ever wanted to get around more quickly in London? Try the RAC website's route finder service. Motorists using it to find the best route from East Finchley to Islington may be taken aback to see the estimated time for the five-mile journey is NINE minutes. Get the helicopter out, darling, I'm going in to town.

East Finchley Baptist Church

Just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2

Sundays at 11.00 am and 6.30 pm

For more information
please contact the Church Office
Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)

Visitors always welcome

Me and my Shadow

By Anna Davies

An article in *THE ARCHER* article last summer inspired 12-year-old Anna, of Summerlee Gardens, to try a new sport. Here she tells us how she is getting on:

I saw your article about Fishers Green Sailing Club in June ("A life on the reservoir wave") and went along to the open day on 9 July because I liked the idea of sailing. I'd never sailed before. I am now helming my own boat, *Shadow*.

Every Saturday we head out for the 30-minute drive to the Lea Valley. It certainly doesn't feel like a Saturday driving off before nine o'clock, but once you're there, it feels like you're on holiday. When the day ends (around 4:00pm) you are happily exhausted and ready to go home.

Don't capsize

One of the first things you need to learn is how to capsize. It's important to know what to do and how to get your boat back up. Naturally the lake is quite cold (it's not heated like a swimming pool!) so if you capsize you get rather *cold*. In the summer the sailors capsize to cool off, but in the colder seasons (spring, autumn and winter) the water is a lot *colder*, so the aim is "Don't capsize".

So, to be allowed to go sailing in winter, you need to be equipped with the right things. In summer all you need is a wetsuit and a life jacket. In the



Anna sailing in her 'Shadow'.

winter, however, you either need a full-length wetsuit or a dry suit (designed to keep you *dry* rather than *wet*) worn over thermal clothing, and a life jacket. Though sometimes even all that doesn't keep you warm!

I started off by crewing for more experienced sailors. Cadets are boats for two

children aged seven-17 and are 3m 20cm long, with three sails. I moved on to helming in September and did a six-week training course. I bought my own boat to race in the open day, along with 50 or so other cadets. I came 41st!

To view Fishers Green Sailing Club website visit www.fishersgreen.org.uk

YOUNG ARCHER

Long lost lovers

By Diana Cormack

February 14, St Valentine's Day, has long been accepted as a special day for lovers and St Valentine can be traced back to the third century AD. But in recent years another name has emerged on the romantic scene, and one that does not trip so easily off the tongue.

Dwynwen was the daughter of a Welsh fifth century king. There are many different versions of her name, just as there are of her story. But, as with most ancient tales, they all agree that Dwynwen was a beautiful, pious and virtuous girl who had set her heart on becoming a nun. A young man called Maelon fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. Although she loved him in return, Dwynwen rejected him because of her determination to become a nun.

She dreamed she was given a sweet drink that turned Maelon to ice and saved her from his attentions. However, Dwynwen realised that Maelon could not help his feelings for her and so prayed that he would be restored to life. She also prayed that all lovers should find happiness but that she herself would never have the desire for marriage.

Dwynwen did become a nun. She lived on an island off the coast of Anglesey, north Wales, in an area only reached at low tide. Her well

was a fresh-water spring that became a wishing well and a place of pilgrimage, especially for lovers when they heard her story. The tradition grew that a fish or eel in the well could advise lovers. By scattering crumbs on the water, then laying a handkerchief on the surface, women believed that if the fish disturbed it their lover would

be faithful. This tradition also led to a belief that Dwynwen could intercede to help heal sick animals.

There are churches dedicated to St Dwynwen in Wales and Cornwall. Her special day is 25 January and some shops in Wales have begun selling cards to send on her day, just as on St Valentine's Day.

**All Saints' Church,
Durham Road, East Finchley
Church of England**

**Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.
Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.
Prayer requests are gladly accepted.**

**The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.**

**All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.
Experienced singers are always welcome.
Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.**

<http://www.all saints-eastfinchley.org.uk>