



Friends will protect Alexandra Park

By Gerry Saunders

The granting of a 125-year lease of Alexandra Palace for commercial purposes to development group Firoka has led to a widely supported and rapidly growing movement to form Friends of Alexandra Park.

The new body would aim to protect the parkland surrounding the Palace when development of the building itself gets under way. It says the park should be preserved as a natural green space that can be enjoyed to the full by the community.

There are concerns over the possible encroachment within the park of commercial activities associated with the palace, particularly as Firoka may also be granted a contract for the maintenance of the park. The Friends would involve individuals, community and

resident groups and make representations to the Council, the Palace and Park trustees and the palace developer.

After much canvassing around the area, the Friends already have a core of keen would-be members and a constitution in draft form. If any person or organisation would like to register support, they can contact Peter Thompson of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association on 020 8883 0371 or Jane Hutchinson of the Alexandra Residents Association on 020 8444 3308.

Sixty summers: from khaki to pyjamas

East Finchley writer Peter Cox explains why he went in to bat for English cricket

Even if you're not a cricket enthusiast, you cannot have failed to spot that 2005 was a special year for English cricket. The Test cricket was thrilling, played at a hectic pace that would have seemed strange to a spectator of 50 or 60 years ago.

Long summer evenings now bring 20/20, finished in little over two hours, with colour-coded cricketers thrashing a white ball to all parts in front of sell-out crowds at Lord's and the Oval: county match sell-outs not seen since Denis Compton's glorious heyday.

As a boy I followed cricket avidly - playing, watching, and devouring the annual Wisden, the cricketer's almanack. While I was working full-time, my ability to watch it diminished, but not my enthusiasm.

When I retired in 2003 I began to mull over the dramatic changes to the game that had occurred since I was born in the summer of 1945, particularly in the last 15 years. Oddly, there was no book on the shelves that told me the answers, and that was how *Sixty Summers - English Cricket since World War 2* was born.

The book follows England's Test team after the war as it leaves its khaki behind and starts again. The

team begins badly, recovers in the glorious Fifties, reaching heights it has only recently begun to regain after younger countries began to compete more strongly, something we have seen this winter.

At intervals I break off to explain some of the trends: why throwing became an issue in 1959 (and resurfaced a few years ago), how county cricket nearly went bankrupt and was saved by one-day cricket, why English spinners have virtually disappeared despite their resurgence elsewhere, and many others.

The book took a year to write at my home in Hertford Road, finishing in October 2005 after that 60th summer. It's an illustrated 400 page hardback, retailing at £20 in bookshops in Muswell Hill, Highgate and Finchley Central, and in the major chains soon, but I'm happy to sell signed copies to *ARCHER* readers for £15, delivered to your door. Phone 020 8883 6952 to solve your Father's Day present at a stroke!

Mass for new arrival

By Len Willcocks

St Mary's RC Church in the High Road was packed in mid-February for a Mass celebrating the induction of a new parish priest, Father Anthony Pellegrina. This was attended by many former priests of St Mary's, including Canon Robert Plourde, Canon Pat Davies, Father Gerard Quinn and the Dean of Barnet, Michael Kennedy. The choir and organist performed music by Mozart, Colin Mowby and Sir Edward Elgar.

Clocking up a third decade in East Finchley

By John Dearing

Victory Auto Services first came to their High Road workshop more than 20 years ago. Mark Bharadia and Wayne Adams, who had worked there for some years, took over the company in 1996. A year later Wayne set up a new location on Fortis Green and they decided to concentrate their business there five years ago, when the High Road workshop was closed.

Wayne told *THE ARCHER* that the motor services trade has changed a lot over the past two decades. Cars are much more reliable mechanically, require servicing less often, and there is less need for roadside repairs (apart from the inevitable flat batteries).

Most cars now have an Electronic Control Unit (ECU) that manages all aspects of engine performance, via electronic sensors. The first step in repairing or servicing a car is to connect a diagnostic computer to the ECU to extract information about the health of the engine, in order to decide what is required.

Wayne has been in the motor trade for 25 years and, when not working, is a full-time family man. Mark Bharadia came to the UK in 1971 and went to school in Finchley, before joining the trade in 1974. He has been a member of Finchley Cricket Club for 25 years and still plays, primarily as a bowler.

Mark said that Victory Auto Services were pleased to have a very diverse team that includes a Czech, a Tanzanian, an Englishman and a British Indian. They are located at 109 Fortis Green and are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. Contact 020 8883 9707.



Mark Bharadia and Wayne Adams of Victory Auto Services. Photo by John Dearing

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