



## Why they're chopping our trees

By Ann Bronkhorst

**Chainsaws are coming to Coldfall Wood, not for a massacre but to let in more light. Helped by a grant from the Forestry Commission, the coppicing programme will start this autumn,**

Nick Michael informed a meeting on 5 September hosted by Friends of Coldfall Wood. Nick, Haringey's Conservation Officer, and David Bevan, his predecessor, were questioned by the Friends and members of the public about this first stage in the planned re-generation of the wood.

Coppicing entails cutting trees, in this case hornbeams, down to stumps from which new growth emerges. It sounds drastic but does not kill the trees and was traditional in Coldfall Wood for centuries. Representatives from the Friends of Queen's Wood, Highgate, showed 'before' and 'after' photos to demonstrate how gloomy it had been before coppicing, and how letting in light encouraged plant growth, including orchids. David Bevan

pointed out that soil disturbance, too, allows long-dormant seeds to germinate. After the last coppicing in Coldfall Wood in the 1990s, a *Hypericum* recorded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century reappeared, one of 120 different plant species newly found in the coppiced areas.

### Nightingales and brambles

Simon Levy, a forester who works in a wood in Croydon included in the same Capital Woodlands Project backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, shared his experience. After coppicing brambles would grow, he agreed, but they would support insects and other wildlife. Then, as the hornbeams grow back, the brambles will diminish again. In his wood, birds such as nightingales and nightjars have reappeared. He felt that hornbeam coppicing

also benefits other trees which struggle for light, become too tall and are at risk in high winds. The coppicing programme will cover only 14% of Coldfall Wood, mostly in a north-south swathe along the course of the stream. The vehicles and machinery used will be small and will enter by the east gate on Creighton Avenue. Wood debris ('brash') may be chipped, or used for 'dead-hedging' or possibly for reedbed dams planned later for the stream.

Concern was expressed about vandalism during this long-term project and it was agreed that, ideally, local school children should be fully informed and involved. Further meetings for the public are planned and information will be available at the gates to the wood, and at [www.coldfall.info](http://www.coldfall.info)



Sylvia and her pocket park. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

## Finchley Common exposed

By Tony Roberts

**At a meeting at Avenue House on 14 September organised by the Finchley Society's Local History Group, Hugh Petrie, the Borough's Heritage Officer, gave a fascinating and informative talk about Finchley Common.**

With the help of contemporary maps, he traced its passage from Finchley Wood, the ancient, thickly wooded buffer between Finchley, Friern Barnet and Hornsey, to the more sparsely wooded and smaller 900-acre Finchley Common at the time of enclosure in 1816.

The area formed the main part of the wastes of the Bishop's Manor (other parts included the wide verges alongside thoroughfares). Initially the woods were managed, providing fuel for London in the form of wood faggots, and 'pannage', the feeding of animals on acorns and beech mast from the wood floor. When coal was introduced in Stuart times, the price of wood fuel fell so the felling and selling of timber and

consequent 'herbage' - the grazing of animals - took over.

With the reduction in trees, Finchley Wood gradually became Finchley Common. The change is evidenced in Herbals of the time: John Gerrard refers to Wortberries from Finchley Wood whereas 40 years later Culpeper mentions juniper berries from Finchley Common.

Hugh went on to talk about encroachments, started long before the Common was enclosed, military encampments, and highwaymen, whose activities ceased some time before enclosure.

Hugh will be giving a second talk to The Finchley Society about the Common in the spring; also open to non-members.

## The big key giveaway

**A recent survey by insurer More Than shows that many of us allow relative strangers to have keys to our properties, but then come to regret it. Apparently, 40% of people said they had given someone else a key to their home.**

Around 27% of us had allowed relative strangers such as window cleaners, builders and tradesman to have unsupervised access to our homes. It seems that window cleaners are the most likely non-residents to have keys, followed by plumbers and utility tradesmen, cleaners and childminders.

Thirteen per cent admitted they did not even know the person at all before they gave them a key! Nearly 25% said they had a non-resident come to their house at least once a month, with 11% having one come every week.

Giving a set of keys to a non-resident, however, led to an abuse of trust in 14% of cases.

Fourteen per cent said their homes had been damaged or they had had items stolen

Six per cent said people with keys had helped themselves to food and drink without permission

Five per cent said they had used the telephone, invited people over or skived off when they should have been working.

Three per cent claimed they had cash or personal belongings taken

One per cent said their keyholder had even borrowed clothes without asking!

It makes you wonder how we can be so trusting.

## Colour them pink

By Ann Bronkhorst

**Of all the local 'pocket-parks' this must be the tiniest. Its mound of pink flowers has brightened Durham Road all summer, for the third year running.**

When paving stones were re-laid in 2004, on impulse Sylvia Etheridge asked the workmen if they'd leave unpaved a small area round a tree near her home. To her surprise they agreed. Sylvia put in compost, planted Busy Lizzies and nurtured them.

Last year, when this photo was taken, the display was even better, in spite of attentions from dogs. This year, however, dogs weren't the only threat. A human being with a trowel but

without a conscience dug up some of the display. Hastily Sylvia put in more plants to hide the damage.

Durham Road residents have had enormous pleasure yet again from Sylvia's pink 'pocket-park' and will be sorry when the autumn cold wilts the flowers. So if you want a colour photo in *THE ARCHER*, reach for some pink crayons, and if you want colour in your street next year, start planting in the spring.

## Eat your fruit and vegetables in season

By nutritional therapist Judy Watson

**Judy Watson has recently started practising at Utopia Health & Beauty, off the High Road, and is also the alternative health columnist for Real People magazine.**

Why is it important to eat fruit and vegetables in season? It is difficult nowadays when shopping to know what is in season, as produce from abroad is available all year round.

However, vegetables not in season have usually been transported thousands of miles, which puts more stress on our delicate environment, while the time taken results in lost nutrients and taste.

To buy in season and avoid 'food miles' check the label first to make sure it has a UK name, for instance 'Produce of Kent' or Lincolnshire.

Secondly, support farmers' markets. You will be surprised how many there are in London: Alexandra Palace, Palmers Green and Borough Market are just some of them. Support independent grocers or order a box of local organic produce.

As we move into autumn and Halloween, try making pumpkin pie. It is sweet tasting so is great for those with fussy taste buds, as well being rich in antioxidants: beta carotene and vitamin C to boost the immune system and keep the skin glowing when the colder weather comes. If you buy a pumpkin for the kids at Halloween, make good use of the pumpkin flesh by adding it to a stew or soup for the cooler nights.

Apples and pears are now at their best and can be eaten in packed lunches, as snacks or baked and served with yoghurt and a drizzle of honey.

Other seasonal vegetables for October include carrots, broccoli, leeks, spinach and turnips and mushrooms. Happy eating!

Judy Watson can be contacted for appointments on 07904 335763.

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