



OBITUARIES

**Dietrich Kessler: 1929-2006**

By Geoffrey Hanson

**East Finchley resident Dietrich Kessler, who died on 12 December, came to England in 1950 aged 20.**

Swiss by birth, he had studied the art of violin making and repair in Brienz at the Swiss Violin Making School (Schweizerische Geigenbauschule) and had early gained a reputation as a skilled craftsman.

He worked with Arnold Dolmetsch at Haslemere making

viols and it was this instrument which was to become the overriding interest of his creative life. He made more than 250 and collected and restored a great number of historic viols made by English luthiers, forming a very valuable collection. It is hoped that these will find a home in the historic instrument collection of the Royal Academy of Music.

From 1969 he was in charge

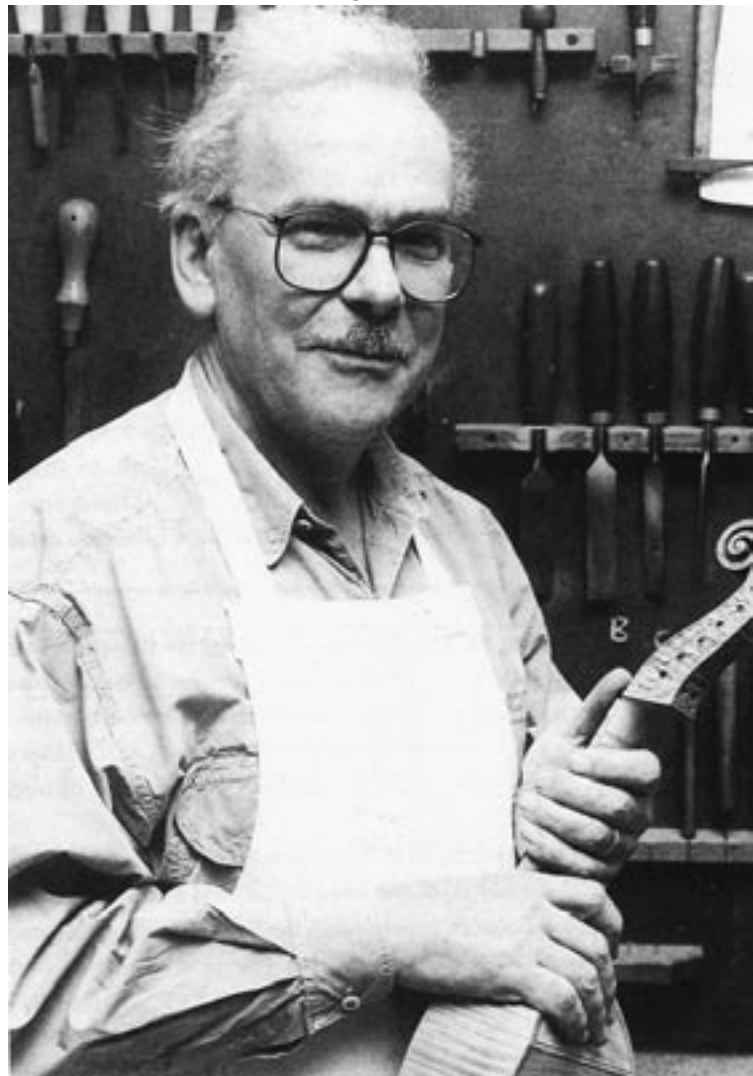
of Withers, the 200-year-old violin firm in Soho. After selling the business in 1987 he worked from his studio at the top of his house in East Finchley, to which he had moved in 1976.

His reputation in the profession and amongst string players was enormous. Those who came to him, as so many did, knew that they would receive the very best of care for their instruments and the highest standard of craftsmanship. To the end of his life his skills were much in demand.

He was married to Jane Ryan, the distinguished viol player and teacher of the instrument. For both of them it was a second marriage and between them they shared eight children and numerous grandchildren.

All Saints' Church, of which he and Jane were long standing members, was filled to capacity for his Requiem in the week before Christmas. He was both treasurer and a generous patron of the East Finchley Arts Festival, and became a familiar figure at festival events.

This skilled, warm hearted and gentle man will be greatly missed both in the community of East Finchley and amongst string players.



**Clive Smith: 1938 - 2007**

By Hugh Petrie

**In 1974 my father came home from work one day with a book called *Finchley As It Was*. It was a collection of photographs, mostly dating from the 1900s, accompanied by interesting snippets of history. I found the book fascinating and would spend hours examining the pictures, an experience that has led me to my present vocation as Barnet's Heritage Officer.**

Clive Smith, the writer and compiler of *Finchley As It Was*, died on 24 January this year, aged 69. He was brought up in Hendon, and for many years was a collector and vendor of local view postcards and photographs, becoming the most important collector and dealer in London.

In 1981 he opened Memories Picture Library in Bell Lane, Hendon, which moved to its present location in Brent Street in 1991. In later years he ran the monthly Bloomsbury Postcard Fair where collectors and sellers of postcards and ephemera meet. It is thought his son David will keep both businesses going.

In all Clive published 15 local histories, including another on Finchley where contemporary photographs were directly placed next to their present views, called *Finchley Past*

and *Present*. Clive's particular passion was Hendon Aerodrome, and in recent years he furnished most of the material for the exhibition at Church Farmhouse Museum celebrating 100 years of flight.

Clive Smith's work is popular and timeless. His importance to local history was not just as a collector. He avoided using the publications to show off his local knowledge, and opted to allow the pictures to speak for themselves using minimal captions. It is now a common approach, but 30 years ago it was innovative, and for me personally inspiring.

His local knowledge, especially about Hendon, was exceptional. His death is a loss to the local history community both in Barnet and London. He leaves two sons, Phil and David, and wife Valerie.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.



Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.

**The Pest of Pigeon Corner**

By John Dearing

**Over the years, we've all noticed the mess from the pigeons all around Pigeon Corner, outside Budgens. The birds were attracted there by the mounds of bread left for them by misguided souls.**

There was an attempt at a clean-up in recent years. However, the sign saying 'Do not feed the pigeons' is not well-positioned. It's about 10ft above eye level and written in tiny print.

Recently, large mounds of carefully cut cubes of bread have started appearing next to the salt bin by Budgens's wall several times a week. There is so much bread there that even the pigeons don't seem to be able to eat it all. Consequently, it becomes an attraction for our local rat population and, after a period of rain, turns into a foul slurry.

So who's putting it there? The other day, I was walking along East End Road towards the corner when I noticed (from a distance) a car draw up just short of the traffic lights. A woman (middle-aged, with grey or blue-rinse hair, I think) got out of the passenger side with a large bag and proceeded to deposit the latest offering on the preferred spot, then get back into the car, which drove off. It was too far to get the number plate, but it was a Ford Escort of 10 or 15 years vintage.

What this woman is doing is really anti-social. She is creating an unpleasant and unnecessary nuisance for residents nearby and for the thousands of shoppers and commuters who pass by. The same problem exists at the other end of the High Road in East Finchley. Piles of cubed bread have been appearing on the green close to St Pancras Court, opposite Oak Lane.

Our urban rat population is a growing problem. The last thing we need is piles of food being left out to keep them fed.

**Letters to the editor**

**Lost in time**

Dear Editor,

In December 2006, I was getting into my car at the end of Brackenbury Road, near Manor Park Road, when I noticed something in the road. I looked closer and saw it was a broken watch which was in a few pieces.

It must have been run over but the face was still in working order. With this watch in my hand I had no idea what to do with it. I couldn't throw it away or place it on the nearest wall. It may have some sentimental value to someone so I took it home and it's been living in my kitchen ever since.

I'm hoping one of your many readers may know who this watch belongs to.

**Name and address supplied**

If you know who owns the watch, please contact THE ARCHER and we will put you in touch with the finder. Contact us on 08717 334465 or by email: the-archer@lineone.net

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