



## Garden glory of giant

### foxglove

By Diana Cormack  
This foxglove seeded itself at the edge of our lawn and obviously liked that location, for it just kept on growing.

With six normal-sized stems sharing the same base, the central one just headed on upward. They all thrived and bore plenty of flowers, perhaps helped by weeks of warm and wet weather conditions. The final flower at the very top dropped off during the deluge that accompanied Wimbledon, beaten into submission by the rain.

The plant reached two metres, or six foot seven inches, in height. Is this a record? If you have had any similar horticultural surprises, please let *THE ARCHER* know (contact details are on page two).



"High there!" Photo by Diana Cormack

## New Faced Stag

By Dawn Powell

The Bald Faced Stag, one of East Finchley's most well known pubs, has had a dramatic transformation. The pool tables and fruit machines have gone, the carpet has been replaced by modern wood flooring, and the Stag is now a 70-seater open plan gastro pub.

According to general manager Tom Foley, the makeover is long overdue. He said: "East Finchley has been crying out for a quality pub serving quality food, a great wine list and fantastic service." He adds that the pub will no longer show the big football matches or have theme nights at times like St Patrick's Day. "The aim is to have a nice atmosphere where people can come for a drink or dinner and not be intimidated."

However, although the pub would now not look out of place in Covent Garden, Foley claims it has kept to its roots. He says: "There is a bit of the old, as it still has quite a local feel." He explains that pictures of East Finchley in bygone days have been used to decorate the walls, and most of the staff are from the area.

Will some regulars miss the five well-used pool tables and the Sunday evening pool competition? Well, the Bald Faced Stag has been a fixture in East Finchley since the 18th century. Throughout that time it has undergone many changes, including being a hangout for highwaymen to gather information on their prospective victims. This latest incarnation is just another page in its history book.

## News from Barnet's Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme

More volunteers are needed to work with the Barnet Association for the Blind. Volunteers can work on home visits (generally about two hours per week or fortnight) with a client matched to them, assisting the client with talking computers, IT advice, and assorted equipment and gadgets.

Help is also needed in the Sensory Garden at Church End, Finchley, and at Sight Help and Information Points at Barnet General and Edgware Hospitals. Further information from Jo Adams on 020 8275 8482 or Tina Hind on 08458 380 480.

• RSVP are still searching for new accommodation for their weekend Feed the Homeless project. Please contact Bill Ibbotson on 020 8440 1291 with suggestions.

### Rabbits and sheep

At the end of the lane were allotments and three cottages. Living there were the Ginn family and Mr Tommy, who had a long garden and kept rabbits. The land belonged to the Finchley Charities and all disappeared when they built sheltered housing.

One of the residents was Buster, a retired coalman who kept an eye on things, clearing away any carpet bits and pieces, sweeping the lane and seeing off anybody who sought to relieve themselves or to dump rubbish.

On the corner lived the Kemps. They remembered that when they came to the area at the end of the Second World War, there were fields where the

**We moved near to the Five Bells pub on East End Road in February 1962 when the snow had lain on the ground since December and would not melt away for another month.**

On our first morning, we woke to the 'ting ting' of a bell. We were enchanted and ran to the window to see the ringing of the five brass bells hanging on the pub sign. The next sound was a clip clopping and we saw two horse riders coming back from the end of the lane. Yes, there really was a blacksmith doing his Saturday morning shoeing. We also discovered that he made the wrought iron of our banisters.

The blacksmith went later in the 1960s to be replaced by a carpet place, owned by Ron Bowers and later his son Peter. Not much later, the pub's five brass bells came down and were replaced by a sign showing five bells.

allotments were and sheep used to be driven where Cromwell Close is now. They had a beautiful 19th century wisteria in their front garden.

### The Merry Miller

Round the corner in Stanley Road, now also a residential home, was a large garage and the home is named after it: Holmfield. Every afternoon, my mother used to walk down Stanley Road, over the railway bridge, alongside the playing fields to the Merry Miller, a bakery sending off breathtaking smells and selling off cheaply at the end of the day any cakes that may have had a crumb missing or risked getting stale. She would triumphantly bear some home for tea when the children came back from school - much preferred to the carrot sticks and raisins that I laid out.

I remember a little Sainsbury shop adjoining the old Barclays building at the corner of Fortis

Green and High Road. It was from another age, with picture tiles on the walls and butter done with pats and neatly wrapped.

Mr Ball was a greengrocer roughly where the Poseidon restaurant is today. He would not allow anyone into his shop until he was ready to serve them so we all queued outside, rain or shine. A couple of doors away was one of the first Tesco groceries.

Across the road where the Abbey bank is now was Conrad Lewis, the foam rubber shop. He was a lovely man, always ingenious with helpful solutions. He and his wife were looking forward to a wonderful planned holiday as soon as he retired. I saw him one day sitting in the sun on a bench in Kenwood. "How was the holiday?" I asked. "We never went," he replied. His wife had died a week before they were booked to go.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Weather or not

Welcome to summer, welcome to rain, welcome to drowned rats floating down the street, welcome washed out cricket and welcome to English weather as we know it. It will still be raining when you read this because I'm writing it on the rain gods' favourite day, St Swithin's Day, and that means it's going to keep on raining until 24 August. Disregard the weather boys and girls with their flash graphics and their talk about depression over the Azores, real weather is about weather gods and the rain gods are winning.

Take St Swithin's Day. It's about a Saxon bishop who asked to be buried outside his cathedral so the rain could fall on him; he got upset from beyond the grave when the monks decided to move his body to an ornate indoor shrine. In fact, he got so upset that the rain gods intervened, it rained for 40 days and the monks changed their minds. After that, the rain gods decided this was a good deal and turned July 15 into their big day.

Ok, so this year they decided to get in a bit of practice and drown Hull, most of Yorkshire and Wimbledon before getting on with the main 40-day party. Which is why it should still be raining by the time you read this, even if the weather folk predict bright sun and wall-to-wall heatstroke.

It might be unfair to blame St Swithin for the rain. It may be that rain gods hate cricket, tennis and golf. It may be their idea of a bit of a laugh to turn a test match into water polo. It may be global warming. If it is, then you can blame all those sunseekers who jet off to the Costa del Livin' to escape the rain, for the rain they're trying to escape. Then again, why not blame Chelsea tractors? They only come into their own in rain, mud and snow and belch out enough CO2 to create the perfect world for themselves to enjoy.

### LOOKING FOR HOMES

Many cats and kittens needing good homes; some single, some in pairs.



If you think you can help get in touch with the local cat charity

ANIMAL AID AND ADVICE  
48 HIGH ROAD EAST FINCHLEY  
OR PHONE 7607 1723

LOOKING FOR A CAT

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