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Susan Bennett and Earl Hyde share a cuppa with Charlie Dimmock in their Muswell Hill garden.

Gates open on great gardens

This year, the National Gardens Scheme celebrates its 80th birthday with 3,500 gardens opening for charity but unfortunately not one in East Finchley.

Last year, Paul Harrington and Patsy Joseph opened their prizewinning garden in Elm Gardens and raised over £650. This year they are raising a family but hope to return to the scheme in 2008.

Meanwhile we can look to our neighbours in Muswell Hill for inspiration.

On Sunday 8 July, historical Railway Cottages at Alexandra Park Station open their gardens as a group. A step back in time,

one has topiary created by the original railway worker occupant. Another has transformed a back yard into a plant-lovers' paradise, and charming front gardens will be on show too.

On Sunday 22 July, Muswell Hill's most famous garden, created by artist owners Earl Hyde and Susan Bennett, will open. Chosen by the NGS to launch its 80th birthday celebrations, headed by TV gardener Charlie Dimmock, their garden appeared on ITV News.

Unique architectural features include a baroque temple, pagodas, and a new Gothic wall with stained glass window saved from the porch of the long-demolished Methodist Church in Colney Hatch Lane.

Earl and Susan are also the assistant county organisers for the scheme and are always on the

look out for new gardens. Contact them on 020 8883 8540. Visit the website at www.ngs.org.uk.

Summer openings

Sunday 8 July, 2-6pm, Railway Cottages, Dorset Road and Bridge Road, N22; admission £3.50, children free; home-made teas and plant sale.

Sunday 22 July, 2-7pm; 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, N10; admission £2.50, children free; home-made teas, plant sale, open studio.

Sunday 2 September, 11-4pm, Golf Course Allotments, Winton Avenue, N11; admission £2.50, children free; autumn show, refreshments, produce sale, grand tour.

Sunday 16 September, 2-6.30pm, 6 Methuen Park, N10 (Chelsea medallist Yulia Badian); admission £2.20, children free; teas, plant sale.

Remember: testimonies of the survivors

By Ann Bronkhorst

Remembering isn't the same as not forgetting. It is more conscious and sometimes more painful. On 4 June, at the New North London Synagogue, East End Road, a remarkable production had its final performance. *Remember*, a dramatisation of survivors' testimonies, faced us with the necessity of remembering the Holocaust.

The play was devised by Mark Sell, head of Performing Arts at Finchley Catholic High School, and performed by a cast of (in his words) "phenomenally-talented children" from years 7 to 10, including six girls from St Michael's Catholic Grammar School.

This experience did not feel like a school play, however. On arrival, each member of the audience was given a white rose with the word "Remember" spoken plainly and intensely; that intensity set the tone for the whole production. The young figures holding candles around the darkened hall conveyed stillness and inwardness but, later, showed performance skills ranging from the fierce partisan song *We Are Here* to the energy and expressiveness of their ensemble speeches.

Against a backdrop suggesting the gates of Auschwitz and a huge image of Jews, young and old, seemingly being herded towards us, the individual stories were told. A young flower seller tried to comfort an old man who had failed to save his grandchild. An SS officer, appalled at atrocities he had witnessed; cynical, sneering Nazi soldiers; the agony of a Jewish policeman who "wheeled and dealt" to save lives: the range

of testimonies was surprising, and created a many-layered emotional experience.

Bearing witness

Perhaps most compelling was the testimony of Elisabeth De Jong who had survived the 'medical' experiments in the infamous Block 10. Scarlett Neville spoke the role with quiet composure while managing to convey the weight of what was unspeakable.

Later, answering questions from the audience, the young actors were aware of having travelled on what Mark Sell described as "emotional journeys". Daniele Boeri, 12, who played the flower seller and spoke much of the linking narrative, admitted that learning Hebrew phonetically for songs like the *Ani Ma'amin* had been at first "like learning gibberish"; the power of the music "did it in the end", said musical director Des Yarde Martin.

For Conor O'Sullivan, year 7, "*Remember* meant more to us than just words and stories", especially after the performance at Auschwitz on 25 May. For Jack Cronin, 15, "Going to Auschwitz was a real wake-up call." In the final words of the play: "Cambodia, Bosnia, Ruanda, Darfur...REMEMBER."

Missing moth

By Diana Cormack

It is not unusual to see notices put up by the owners of missing pets. However, a notice on display in Summerlee Avenue at the end of May could have made passersby wonder if it was actually 1 April, because it was appealing for help to find a missing moth.

Below a large picture of the creature - a special Japanese variety - was the information that it was three weeks old and answered to the name of Ginger. The public were asked to search their sheds and other likely places for a moth to hide and to treat the moth with care and not swat it.

Slits had been cut at the bottom of the notice to create tear off pieces bearing the names Cindy, Ginger and a mobile phone number. *THE ARCHER* rang this number to pursue the story, only to hear the message, "The number you have called is not recognised".

Although we know of other people who saw the notice, which was not on display for long, we do not know what effect it had. Was Ginger found? Was he ever really missing? If you have any more information on this subject or indeed if you are Cindy herself, please get in touch. Our contact details are on page 2.

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