



Tony Roberts with printouts from The Finchley Society website. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

The electronic notice board

By Daphne Chamberlain

For a useful, accessible website revealing the history of Finchley and modern day planning and environmental issues, try www.finchleysociety.org.uk.

The Finchley Society site was commended at the London Forum's Walter Bor Media Awards Ceremony in November. These awards cover newsletters, one-off publications, websites and media campaigns. The judges look for presentation, content, readability, layout and design.

The Finchley Society website's chief designer and maintainer is East Finchley's Tony Roberts, society trustee and Membership Secretary and former copy editor of *THE ARCHER*.

Tony believes passionately that the society has to use 21st century technology to communicate effectively. Barnet Mayor Councillor Maureen Braun and MP Rudi Vis were among the audience at a meeting in December, when he set out the advantages of what he called an electronic newsletter and notice board.

Electronic advantages

Compared to a traditional newsletter, Tony said, a website is cheaper to produce, can be in "glorious technicolour" with better quality photos and even moving images, is accessible anywhere in the world at the same time, is quicker and easier to update, and can be used by the blind and partially sighted.

Tony offers a change of font on the Finchley Society site for

partially sighted visitors, and is careful with colour combinations to benefit the colour-blind. He told *THE ARCHER* that even the totally blind can use an appropriately designed site with the help of an audio reader, which converts text to the human voice.

Accessibility

As an experienced website and database designer, he told us that his philosophy is to keep it simple, attractive, easy to navigate, and accessible to everyone.

The Finchley Society site includes information about news and events, membership details and application form, pages on its current projects in planning, environment and transport, local history and archives, and links to other websites, enquiry contact numbers, and local photos.

Tony updates the site about every two weeks, but can make amendments in half an hour.

He paid tribute to Peter Pickering, a member of the watchdog committee which "kept him on his toes" throughout the design, and to former Society President Bill Tyler, who entered the website for the Walter Bor award.

On the presentation night itself, Tony couldn't be there, but the award was received by Stephen Yeo, who set up the original site.

Find time to fit in fitness

By Diana Cormack

Former East Finchley resident Bridgit Napleton is a qualified personal trainer specialising in outdoor fitness.

She is also a mother of three, so runs her classes during term time and appreciates the problems mothers might have in keeping fit.

To this end she has designed unique outdoor fitness sessions specifically for mum and baby, with the energising workouts held in Highgate Wood, giving mothers and babies the chance to meet. She also holds group fitness power walking sessions there. These combine a fun cardiovascular walking workout with resistance training exercises for toning, while her group running sessions combine running skills with strength and endurance development.

Should you prefer to exercise away from the public gaze, Bridgit can provide tailored exercise programmes in her one-to-one fitness studio in Highgate. She belongs to the Register of Exercise Professionals, which aims to ensure that their members are qualified to safeguard the health and promote the interests of the people who use their services. For more information phone 07779 591 101 or visit napleton@yahoo.com

Organiser needed

Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association are looking for a new meetings organiser. If you have events organising skills, please contact John Hajdu on 020 8883 8114 or hajdu.clarion@talk21.com.

Planning permission: better safe than sorry

By John Dearing

In the UK, building development is controlled and managed by the local authority through the planning application process. Development companies and individuals who want to erect new structures or enhance existing ones are obliged, usually, to apply for planning permission.

Most people are aware of this process, often as a result of being notified by the planning department of a planning application that might affect them, and are grateful for the opportunity to be consulted.

When, however, the boot is on the other foot, a surprisingly large number of people behave as though it doesn't involve them or they were ignorant of the consequences. They build extensions or new outbuildings such as garages, fell or pollard trees, or carry out external work on buildings, without first applying for permission.

Late application could be too late

Sometimes neighbours alert councillors and the planning department to perceived infringements, and a Planning Enforcement Officer calls. Other times, homeowners decide to seek approval after work has been completed.

In 2006/7 there were 131

retrospective planning applications in the borough of Barnet, and by no means all of them received retrospective permission. Occasionally the work has to be reversed.

"The costs can be considerable," commented Councillor Kate Salinger. "It is such a shame when people make costly alterations to their homes without seeking planning permission first. Having made a retrospective application, the case will be examined and the outcome may not always be as wished. It cannot be assumed that permission will be given merely because building works have been done."

"The message is clear. If you wish to alter or extend your property, speak to Barnet's Planning Office first. They will tell you what is necessary for you to do. Not all improvements or alterations need planning permission but it is much better to find out first than be sorry later."

A short break for Lazy Sally

By Diana Cormack

Since the kiosk in Cherry Tree Wood re-opened last summer under the name of the Lazy Sally, it has built up a reputation for good, wholesome food and drink.

Regulars will know that the emphasis at the café, run by Sally-Anne Wigfield of Beresford Road, is on natural and organic produce. Wet weather put paid to Sally's plans for a Christmas Day opening, but plenty of people turned up on New Year's Day, when mulled berry wine and healthy smoothies were on offer along with the usual fare. The Lazy Sally is now closed, but should be open again in March.

A new approach to autism

Children under five who are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) are benefiting from a new home-based service, which provides a specialist personalised programme responding to the particular needs of the individual child.

The Barnet Early Autism Model launched by Barnet Council works in partnership with families at home and offers a tailored package giving up to 20 hours educational input every week.

It has been proved that early intensive intervention for children with ASCs will improve their chances of communicating in a social setting and going on to have a happy childhood and school life.

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.
Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.
Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

Experienced singers are always welcome.
Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

A friendly welcome awaits you

EAST FINCHLEY METHODIST CHURCH

197 High Road, London N2 (opp. Creighton Ave.)

www.eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk

Family service and Junior Church
Every Sunday at 10.30 a.m.

Worship Music Social events Youth Club Wheelchair friendly
Tel: 0208 346 1700 e-mail: info@eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk