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Local News is our Aim

# THE ARCHER



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 CARS & COURIERS

August 2010 No. 202 **20p**  
 ISSN 1361-3952 where sold

*A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.*

## Sisters reunited after 67 years

By Daphne Chamberlain  
 In June this year, Betty Powles opened a letter which began, "I expect this will come as quite a surprise to hear from me, your baby sister". Betty's carer, Kathy Dalton, says: "It was the first time in 10 years I had seen her cry."

They were tears of joy, because Betty, who lives in Paul Byrne House, Helen Close, had not seen her sister for 67 years. She told *THE ARCHER*: "I used to look at strangers in the street, wondering if they were Sheila. I remember holding her as a baby, with our mother nearby."

### Loss and lies

Sheila was born in 1942, shortly before Betty was evacuated to Somerset for three unhappy months. While she was there, their mother died, and when Betty returned Sheila had gone too. "I kept asking where she was, but was told she had been taken away, and it was not to be spoken of again."

In fact, while splitting up his family, their father had advertised Sheila for adoption on a card in the local butcher's shop. Renamed June, she grew up with loving new parents, who



Betty Powles (left) meets her sister, June Raymond, after 67 years apart. Photo courtesy of Gill Davis

she thought were her real mum and dad. Only a few years ago she found out that she had been adopted, and that was when her natural father made an upsetting one-off appearance.

### The search begins

Then, in an amazing coincidence, her husband learned that he was in the same situation. June's adoptive parents having passed away, they began to search for their families.

Their search last year led them to the General Register Office, which keeps an adoption contact register. In 1991, Betty's son, Gary, had discovered that Sheila/June had been adopted, and had registered

Betty's contact details there.

June was thrilled to find she had a sister, but joy turned to frustration when her letters to the address she had been given were returned "not known". Betty had remarried and moved. Were they never to meet?

Then Betty's daughter, Gill, resumed the search this year. The details she gave the General Register Office updated the original list, so this time June's letter reached the right address.

Betty and June are now making up for lost time. "It's incredible," says Gill. "The stuff that fairy tales are made of."

See [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk) for details of the Adoption Contact Register.

Footnote: Betty and June would love to trace another sister, born Margaret Gadd, 3 March 1931, daughter of Alfred and Caroline, and last seen around 1956.

## Stanley Field locked up

Many readers will have noticed that the Stanley Road playing field was recently locked and barricaded with planks of wood to prevent anyone using the space.

Carol Haybarger, who lives in Homefield Gardens, wrote to alert us, saying neighbours had not been notified even though many of them use the field for recreation. She said there was a larger contingent of dog owners who were previously able to exercise their dogs there in safety and freedom.

Carol also pointed out a problem with flooding along the path beside the fields, as a result of water draining off the building contractors' site alongside Holy Trinity School. See *Letters*, page 11. East Finchley councillor Colin Rogers asked Barnet Council why Stanley Road Playing Fields had been fenced off.

The reply from Councillor Daniel Thomas was: "Stanley Road playing fields was subject to a lease which recently expired. Property Services repossessed the site at that expiry and took action to secure the site to avoid squatters and further rubbish dumping."

"Although the site was leased out, the previous occupier failed to properly secure the gates, wrongly giving the impression that public access was permitted. It was not."

"The site will remain secured while consideration is given to the future of the site. Property Services will undertake intermittent checks of the site until its future is agreed."



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