



Raising laughs raises funds

By Diana Cormack

An audience of over 300 enjoyed *An Evening of Song and Laughter with Maureen Lipman and Friends* at The Middlesex University Campus in Hendon on Sunday 18 April. The event was in aid of the Spike Milligan Statue Fund, part of The Finchley Society, and was compered by Spike's daughter Jane.

There were a few familiar faces in the Angels of Kaos choir, who sang with their usual verve, accompanying some numbers with sign language. Jessie Buckley (runner-up in I'd Do Anything, BBC One's talent competition to find a new Nancy for the stage show *Oliver*) sang some stunning jazz numbers and Jane Milligan impressed with her vocals too. Varied performances on a range of musical instruments were very entertaining, providing a suitable run-up to the two stars of the evening, Victoria Wood and Maureen Lipman.

Their performances were second to none and Ms Lipman's natural talent continued to amuse as she ran the auction of paintings and books signed by stars and patrons of the charity. She was ably assisted by Councillor Brian Coleman

(the then mayor, accompanied by his mother) whose many witty off-the-cuff comments entertained the audience.

Undaunted by shortfall

By the end of the evening over £3,600 had been raised towards the goal of a statue of comedian and writer Spike, which it is hoped will be erected in the grounds of Avenue House, East End Road. Visit www.spikemilliganstatuefund.org.uk for more information.

The Spike Milligan Statue Fund Committee announced in April that, as they were still approximately £23,000 short of their target, payment to sculptor John Somerville has been temporarily suspended. However, their fund-raising campaign is continuing. If the Arts Council approve the committee's application for a grant, the statue could be in place next year.

Then and now in Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

Where the last ice sheet stopped its southward slide a vast forest eventually grew, and a tiny fragment of that ancient forest, Coldfall Wood, still remains. Guided by botanist and lecturer David Bevan, former Conservation Officer for Haringey, more than 25 people (plus children and dogs) joined a walk organised by the Friends of Coldfall Wood on Sunday 21 March, to discover its past, present and future.

We zigzagged across the wood, roughly east to west, past stands of trees, coppiced glades, dead-hedges and streams. David's sharp eyes found plants thriving after years of dormancy, largely because of better light. Each told a tale: the rare 'soft-shield' fern; the St John's Wort flourishing thanks to birds eating its seeds in local gardens; the seven kinds of sedge emerging since the coppicing.

BIG pruning

Coppicing was the key word, on this walk. It explained the wood's name: a 'fall' was part of a coppiced wood, while 'Cold' referred to the charcoal made, traditionally, from the hornbeam trees. To visualise coppicing, think BIG pruning, with trees cut down to stumps from which 'poles' re-grew and were harvested. Wheel-

axles and butchers' chopping boards were also made from this dense hornbeam wood.

Friends or foes

The walk also showed that ivy and brambles shouldn't be seen as enemies to be removed. "Ivy simply uses trees for a leg-up to the light, and doesn't tap into them," David said. And, like ivy, brambles provide excellent cover for small creatures, as well as a food supply. He was pleased to see how brambles are binding piles of felled logs, transforming them into safe habitats.

Returning to my own bricks-and-mortar habitat, I felt I had been given insights into the distant past of Coldfall Wood, its lovely springtime present and a future that seems more hopeful than for many years. For more information visit www.coldfallwoods.co.uk

Open week at The Institute

The Institute is holding its first new-look Open Week from Monday 21 to Saturday 26 June. In the past, the college has always held an Open Day in June but this year, in line with most other colleges across London, they have decided to throw their doors open all week.

Organisers say this gives prospective students the chance to come along, talk over their needs, and their apprehensions, with sympathetic teachers and even visit some taster classes to experience what studying at The Institute is all about.

The college next to the station will be open from Monday to Thursday from 12 noon to 2pm and from 5.30pm to 8.30pm, on Friday from 12noon to 2pm and on Saturday 26 June from 12 noon to 5pm. Alongside advice and guidance sessions and the opportunity to visit some classes, there will also be a wide-ranging programme of activities.

The Institute has more than 600 courses on offer ranging from Art, Design and Creative through Computing and Cookery, Languages, Media & Performing Arts to English, Maths, ESOL and Teacher Training. It has been providing adult education to the local community for the past 100 years.

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Pat and Avis do a Titanic at the quiz evening. Photo by Ashley Jones.

Quiz and chips and a titanic performance

By Jo Girling

The beginning of a new term at Martin Primary School saw not just the pupils asked to exercise their brain-power, but the parents too. Quizmasters Pat and Avis, a fantastic husband and wife duo, put the teams through their paces.

There were the usual general knowledge rounds, but also some questions with a twist.

Would you recognise 'screams' from well-known songs or be able to place our friendly High Road shop keepers if they were photographed in the 'wrong' local shop?

The most entertaining round by far saw the teams acting out iconic scenes from well-known films. It proved the highlight of the evening, the quizmasters earning themselves a raucous round of applause for their performances as Jack and Rose aboard the Titanic.

The proceedings stopped

briefly for parents to enjoy a delicious fish and chip supper provided by the Tally Ho Fish Bar.

Not only was the evening highly entertaining, but it also raised over £900 for the school. This amount was boosted by very generous sponsorship from local business GLH and continued support from Budgens.

The next date to put in your diaries is the Summer Fun Day to be held on Saturday 12 June, when you will be able to enjoy the usual range of entertainment, food and craft stalls, a bouncy castle and a visit from the Fire Brigade.

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