



Which way to the Bouncy Castle? Photo by Marie Schwandt

Parents and children get the sporty spirit

By Natan Tiefenbrun

The newly formed events committee of Friends of Cherry Tree Wood hosted a family sports day on 19 September, attracting 50 children and their parents. A crowd of spectators gathered to watch the fun. Divided into teams, kids of all ages took part in the activities, including egg & spoon, sack and space hopper races. No sports day would be complete without a tug of war, which duly took place. In the obligatory but somewhat chaotic parents' relay race, all four teams of adults claimed victory.

There were medals and treats as prizes, and kiosk owner Sally-Anne Wigfield rewarded each participant with a free snack. One participant Ava, age 4, said her favourite part was the "hoop race that I won" while her proud father said the best bit was the Curly

Wurly he received as a prize. Barnet Council helpfully waived the fee and reduced the amount of paperwork normally required of the larger festivals. Given the enthusiastic response, the event will probably be repeated next summer. FoCTW is looking to expand its membership and the number of active volunteers so as to organise more community events and undertake further conservation work. It welcomes enquiries via its website www.cherrytree-wood.co.uk.

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Obituary: Helen O'Toole

September 1977 - October 2010

On the morning of 15 October Holy Trinity Church was packed for the funeral of Helen O'Toole. Father Laurence Hill, who had known Helen since she was a toddler, came out of retirement to conduct the service in the church and later at Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road. Helen's primary school head teacher Sonia Singham played the accompanying music.

Helen lived for most of her life in Trinity Road. She was born with a very rare condition known as Morquio Disease and tribute must be paid to her parents Mary and Charles for the strength of love and support they gave which enabled Helen to develop into such an amazing young person.

Despite her condition, Helen attended mainstream school at Holy Trinity Primary before going on to a support unit at Whitefields Secondary School. At 18, Helen went to Treloars College in Hampshire. Here she was introduced to wheelchair dancing, which was to play such a large part in her life.

Helen also got a taste for independence and was delighted when she was eventually able to move into her own flat in N3 a couple of years ago. She was able to decorate it according to her own considerable artistic talents.

Though Helen needed 24 hour support, she was independent, feisty and knew what she wanted. Many of her mourners felt that what Helen achieved against all the odds in her short life is truly an inspiration to others.

Helen was an active member of the community, being involved for instance with organizing the East Finchley Festival, getting disabled access to the library and helping as a volunteer at Holy Trinity School. She was also a great fan of *THE ARCHER* and used to write for us.

There will be a longer tribute to Helen in our December issue.



Over 60s' Christmas party

The famous Bishop Douglass Christmas Party this year will be on Thursday 9 December. All East Finchley residents who are over 60 are welcome and you should book your place no later than the end of November.

As usual, you will be welcomed with a glass of sherry by Year 10 students and enjoy a three-course Christmas meal followed by carol singing and entertainment by pupils and staff. Games of bingo and presents from Santa Claus will round off the evening. Transport will be provided for those who need it. So book your place now by phoning Pam Kent on 020 8444 6690.

Desperate to be Doris

By Diana Cormack

When I saw that the artsdepot was seeking singers for a Doris Day musical, I just had to have a go. Doris's performance as the spirited cowgirl Calamity Jane in the mid 1950s assured her of a special place in the memory of many moviegoers, including me.

Four of us attended the first audition and we all got through. Then choir producer Rachel Sharman asked us to encourage friends and family to join. "You don't have to be able to sing," she said. "All you need is enthusiasm and a sense of fun."

Dean's dream

Her theatre company Lipservice is touring the country with the successful *Desperate to be Doris* and uses local volunteers as a backing choir in the show. The story tells of Dean, a buyer for a mail-order nightwear firm by day, but by night a Doris Day singing legend in his own living room. When his local operatic society decides to stage the hit musical, Dean is suddenly thrown into the limelight.

There were over 30 people

at the first rehearsal in mid-September, ready to be whipped into singing shape by Tom Fowkes, director of the Tottenham Community Choir. Unfortunately, circumstances prevented me from attending rehearsals for the following six weeks so I won't be taking to the stage when the show opens at the end of this month.

Starring Darren Southworth from the West End hit *Spamalot* and featuring some of Doris Day's best known songs, *Desperate to be Doris* runs from Thursday 25 to Saturday 27 November at artsdepot, North Finchley at 7.30pm daily plus a 2pm Saturday matinee. Tickets at £15 or £13 concessions are available from the box office on 8369 5454 or online at www.artsdepot.co.uk

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