



New home for family charity

By Linda Sansom

A family support charity has moved out of the East Finchley base where it has been since its formation 14 years ago, but is still working to help families in the local area.

Home-Start Barnet, which supports vulnerable families throughout the borough, has moved from its offices at the Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road to new centrally-based accommodation at Avenue House, East End Road.

Eight of the staff are now based at the Victorian Grade II listed building that was the home of Henry Charles (Inky) Stephens, son of the inventor of the famous blue-black ink. He bequeathed the property to the people of Finchley, and ever since it has housed various organisations, as well as being a venue for events.

Low-key support works

The charity may have moved headquarters, but its work has not changed. It is the only non-statutory organisation in Barnet that works to support families throughout the borough who have at least one child under five and are experiencing difficulties.

Home-Start recruits and trains volunteers who visit families at home once a week and help in practical or emotional ways. They may take the family out shopping or

to appointments, play with the children while the parent gets on with something else at home, or simply provide a listening ear, if that is what is needed. It's a low-key approach, but it works, and Home-Start is known to help prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Families are referred to Home-Start from various sources including health visitors, children's centres, social workers and by self-referrals.

The organisation is at Avenue House, 17 East End Road, N2 3QE. You can contact them on 020 8371 0674 or email at admin@homestartbarnet.org.

When transport was green

Today pollution-free transport is high on the political agenda, yet it is sometimes forgotten that electric vehicles ran on the streets of London for over 57 years, from the coming of the trams in the early 1900s until the demise of the trolleybuses in 1962.

Local author David Berguer, Chairman of the Friern Barnet & District Local History Society, has written a book entitled *Under the Wires at Tally Ho* which paints a picture of what life was like in north west London during this period and includes interviews with people who worked and travelled on the vehicles, extracts from local newspapers and Council and official minutes of the time.

The 126 page-book includes over 80 photographs and illustrations, many of them never published before. Anyone who remembers travelling on the 517, 617 and 609 trolleybuses from East Finchley may welcome this trip down memory lane. *Under the Wires at Tally Ho* (ISBN 978-0-7524-5875-5) is published by The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG at £12.99 (www.thehistorypress.co.uk) or post



free from Friern Barnet & District Local History Society, 46 Raleigh Drive, Whetstone, N20 0UU.

A rare picture of a trolleybus in the turning circle in front of East Finchley Station. This was seldom used as most trolleybuses continued north to North Finchley or south to Holborn Circus or Moorgate. Photo courtesy David Berguer.

Rugby with the Scarlet and Whites

A rugby club is on the look-out for new players and supporters. Finchley Rugby Football club has been based at Summers Lane, N12, since 1929 and has some of the best facilities in north London.

The club currently runs three senior sides and a Vets XV, plus a thriving Mini and Youth rugby section with over 400 players from the ages of seven to 18.

Deputy president Geoff Ottley says the club is run by volunteers and always has a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere for players and non-playing members.

Geoff says: "We are an ambitious club that is very keen to progress at both senior and junior levels, so if you are thinking of playing rugby in north London then look no further, come along and play for the Scarlet and Whites."

The club has a fully enclosed ground, qualified coaches at all playing levels, a fully floodlit pitch, a stand with seating capacity for 400, top-class changing facilities and a separate clubhouse with very competitive bar prices.

Visit the club's website at www.finchleyrfc.co.uk for more information or contact Geoff Ottley on 020 8441 1623.



Youngsters can get their hands on the best toys at the toy library.

Toy library celebrates 25 years

By Liz Luxmore

Muswell Hill Toy library is about to celebrate its 25th anniversary in September. We are the largest toy library in north London, with over 800 toys for children from birth to six years old, and we have a special music section with easy-to-play instruments, and CDs of singing and simple rhythmic classics.

We run two singing sessions each week, with drums, bells, rattles and other fun "percussion things", plus stories. There are special events in school holidays, too.

Toys include jigsaws, from lift-and-look play trays for the very young to large-piece floor puzzles. Fans of Thomas The Tank Engine can borrow trains

and tracks; those who enjoy making things can borrow Duplo, or a baking set; we even have a wooden fire engine, with firemen, and hordes of plastic vehicles.

The library is based upstairs in Muswell Hill Library in Queens Avenue, N10, opening Monday afternoons and Thursday and Friday mornings. Do come and see us.

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