



Alan Fulford unveils the memorial plaque in Abbots Gardens. Photo by John Dearing

## Bomb victims memorial

By John Dearing and Debby Hiller

On 15 November 1944, a V2 rocket landed in the back gardens of numbers 109 and 111 Abbots Gardens. Five people were killed, many were injured, five houses were destroyed and many more badly damaged (see *THE ARCHER*, November 2010). This rocket was one of several hundred launched from various sites in Northern Europe by Hitler's forces between September 1944 and March 1945.

On Saturday 16 April 2011, a commemorative memorial plaque was unveiled by Alan Fulford in Abbots Gardens to record this terrible event. The plaque is located on the verge outside numbers 111 and 113 and reads: "Near this spot on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1944 at 5.18pm a V2 rocket destroyed five houses killing five people."

David Smith made a short welcoming speech. Amongst those attending the ceremony were Tina Manolis, niece of Maysel Houghton, who was blinded in the attack, her son Georgios Manolis, Sheila Cook (nee Fulford), Gill Rousell (nee Marvell), and Cllr Andrew McNeil. A booklet recording some eyewitness accounts and the background to the attack was on sale at the event.

## Old Barn council call

By Janet Maitland

The Old Barn Action Group has intensified its campaign to restore the Old Barn community centre to local people. Last month we reported that almost 100 local people had submitted applications to become members of the Old Barn in order to put pressure on the management committee to recommence community services in the building. Those applications were not accepted.

"We will be formally notifying the Charity Commission that all requests to join the association have been denied by the management committee," said Will Hudson, leader of the action group. "We've also asked the council for a high level meeting."

The action group has planned a series of events to raise the campaign's profile and will have a stall at the East Finchley festival.

The centre has been at the heart of community events and activities for 25 years, but, after a change in management last year, many community groups moved out and an after-school club was shut.

"The centre has been hijacked following a shady takeover by a

single-interest group," said Will. "It's providing none of the services or facilities that the community wants to see or needs to use. The council, which owns the building, is aware of the situation. They've refused to recognise the new regime as the legitimate owners and have not accepted any rent payments."

"The only way to save the Old Barn is if local people come together and let the new 'owners' know that they won't have their community centre taken from right under their noses."

If you want to help, contact Will on 07870 647 284 or endofstrife@hotmail.co.uk or come to the action group's next meeting at 7pm on 7 June at the Green Man Centre, Strawberry Vale.

# Nothing to be embarrassed about

By Nick Young

Embarrassing Bodies is one of the most popular shows on Channel 4, and the man behind it is from East Finchley. Adam Gee is the channel's Multi-Platform Commissioning Editor and has been responsible for several programmes that have changed the way television works in recent years.

He has won three BAFTAs (two of them for Embarrassing Bodies) and was recently nominated for an Emmy award for the first time. The programme is seen as groundbreaking in the TV industry for encouraging viewers to interact with the show through its website, a first for a factual programme.

The website is integral to the show and has had over 10,000,000 users. When Embarrassing Bodies ran a feature on autism, an online test for people to see where they are on the autism spectrum had 32,000 hits in the first 25 seconds of going online.

### Life-saving

"It has an amazing impact and engages a lot of people in health issues who aren't remotely interested generally, so it's bringing in people that the NHS doesn't usually reach," Adam explains. Embarrassing Bodies has been widely praised for increasing awareness of preventative healthcare among members of the public. Adam himself has received several emails from members of the public thanking him for saving their lives after they were encouraged by the show to visit their GP.

### At the interface

At Channel 4, Adam has also



Adam Gee with his BAFTA awards. Photo by Nick Young

worked with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall on the award-winning Landshare project and the Big Fish Fight campaign which made heavy use of Facebook and Twitter, and led to changes in the fishing industry within two months.

Adam sees this as testimony to the power of multi-platform programmes: "I work in the interface between television and interactive media and when you get it right and hit the 'sweet

spot', it's very powerful."

On a more local level, Adam has been involved with the campaign to save East Finchley Library. "Finally, it comes down to one or two really dedicated individuals who live and breathe it for a while. It's a really difficult thing to do... I have been working on it consistently over the years but it's those people who are there when the chips are down who have really made a difference."

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