



The gift of sight

By Nevile Robinson

Over the last 12 years the Rotary Club of Golders Green has been collecting old spectacles and delivering them to Vision Aid Overseas, a charity based in Crawley, Surrey.

The old spectacles are taken to four of HM Prisons, where long-term prisoners have been trained to use special instruments to measure the prescriptions of the lenses.

Teams of ophthalmic, surgeons, optometrists and opticians, all volunteers, pay several visits each year to Ethiopia, Ghana, and Sierra Leone where they set up camps to examine the eyes of local people in small remote villages. The results are

matched with the prescriptions of thousands of old, re-cycled spectacles collected here in Britain, so that people who do not need the doctors' expertise can be supplied at once with spectacles that they had no access to previously.

This summer, through the generosity of Mr Kantaria, a retired optical wholesaler who donated over 10,000 brand-new spectacle frames, Vision Aid Overseas has helped many happy recipients.



Golders Green Rotary Club Secretary David Grannell (left) with Howard, Vision Aid Overseas Stock Manager (second left) and Mr Kantaria (second right).

Finchley Society comes East

By Daphne Chamberlain

Every month we advertise The Finchley Society's meetings, and every so often somebody says to me, "That looked really interesting, but it's awkward to get over to Avenue House," or "It's a pity it was on in the afternoon. I couldn't manage to get there." Well, changes are afoot.

This year, the Society has started varying the venues. In April, the monthly meeting was at North Finchley, and this month it will be on our doorstep, at Martin School on Thursday 29 September (see What's On on page 10).

Derek Warren will show slides of East Finchley in the past, balanced by a discussion of planning issues relevant to our area today. The meeting will be at 8pm, reflecting the trend of reducing the number of afternoon meetings.

The Society is also keen to hold more discussions and to put a greater focus on their topical work. In his annual Chairman's report, David Smith highlighted The Finchley Society's care for the environment,

asking for more input from the community on issues like air pollution, green spaces and transport.

East Finchley-based Mike Hughes, of Hughes Design, has listed the Society's achievements in the "brag sheet", reproduced in this year's Festival programme.

If you care about East Finchley, call Committee Secretary Mike Gee on 020 8346 5503 or pop along to the public meeting at Martin School.

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Aftermath of the riots

Although East Finchley itself was not directly affected by the riots and unrest in the first days of August, it is clear that businesses have lost money due to locals becoming more cautious, and people are questioning why it all happened. Rebecca Brown went out to gather opinion.

Hadley O'Garro, 15, works on the High Road, and told me shops had been asked to close early by the police on Tuesday 9 August as there were rumours that trouble might arrive. Nothing materialised. "It's so disrespectful," he said of the looting and violence. "It's nothing to do with Mark Dugan's death anymore." Despite concern for his friends, he did mention that East Finchley felt relatively safe.

Mehmet Akpınar, manager of Seven Hill Hair and Beauty on the High Road, feels the recent government cuts play their part: "They push the public too much...they must have known something may happen." Seven Hill is one of the many businesses which have been affected economically. "We have had far fewer customers. We lost about 20 and had lots of cancellations."

I spoke to one business owner who was worried that future violence could see customers scared off for months. He told me: "There is a good police presence on the High Road, but not enough to prevent a substantial attack."

Our materialistic world

A couple of 15-year-olds from Fortismere School did confess that they were worried

Walk in memory

The Alzheimer's Society are holding Memory Walks all across the country this September. They can be as short as one mile, or as long as 26. All you have to do is to aim to raise £50, and you could be doing it in memory of a friend or loved one. Why not get a team together?

Find your local walk and register by visiting www.memorywalk.org.uk or calling 020 7423 3646. Registration is free.

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about going out alone now. "I feel unsafe in the evening, if I lived above a shop I would be more scared," one boy told me. "I think it's the parents' fault," said one girl. "Some of the kids I saw on TV were only 11." The first boy told me he thought today's culture was to blame: "You can see from the texts they send each other, shown on the news, it's all completely about getting free stuff now, it shows the materialistic world we live in."

One local shopper I spoke

to believed the blame for the riots rested on everybody's shoulders. "People are always wanting more, leaving some with nothing," he said. "What about the CEOs of big corporations stealing from us every day? They are the thieves. The government needs to be realistic, everywhere people are angry."

For more views on the riots, see our Letters on page 11. We'd like to hear your opinions. Write to the-archer@lineone.net or The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

Cyclist injured in collision

By Janet Maitland

A cyclist was in collision with a car on East End Road at about 5pm on 26 July. The cyclist, a 26-year-old man, was treated by two ambulance crews at the scene of the accident and then taken to the Royal Free Hospital with facial injuries. Police also attended the accident, which smashed the car windscreen. The cyclist's injuries were not life threatening.

The number of cyclists killed or injured on roads in the UK has risen to a six-year high. Figures from the Department for Transport show that in the first quarter of this year, 3,370 cyclists were killed or injured compared with 2,961 in

the same quarter last year. The number of cyclists who were killed or badly injured rose by 36%. Safety campaigners are calling for more Government action to protect them as cycling becomes increasingly popular.

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