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Fashion amongst the foliage

Coldfall Wood has always been a nature-lover's paradise but now it could be a fashion hotspot too. Professional photographer Caron Westbrook decided to use the woods for a fashion shoot and came up with amazing results.

Caron used Barnet model Alice Grist, hair artist Kasia Fortuna, make-up artist Jasmine Mathieson and gowns by Adebayo Jones, a veteran of the fashion industry for 25 years, who has dressed celebrities and Miss World 2001.

"The beauty of Coldfall Woods attracted me whilst

walking my dog Phoebe," said Caron. "I had a mental image some time ago of doing a shoot in a woodland area. Having moved to Creighton Avenue and the woods being at the end of my garden, I decided to try and put my mental image together by creating a shoot."

Mary is a caring winner

Mary Hayes, of Home Instead Senior Care in Barnet, was named Home Care Worker 2011 in the Great London Care Awards. Mary works in East Finchley and other parts of Barnet.

Before joining the Home Instead team, she cared for her mother when she had cancer, as well as her son who was living with heart problems, and a disabled nephew.



Caregiver of the Year Mary Hayes being congratulated by TV presenter Debra Stephenson and local businessman Jason Clayburn.

Mitzvah Day in Coldfall Wood

By John Roots
The Friends of Coldfall Wood had some welcome guests on Sunday 20 November: a group of journalists from the *North London Times*, who came to do voluntary conservation alongside volunteers from BTCV.

The newspaper team wanted to contribute to Mitzvah Day (the annual day of voluntary social action, led by the Jewish community) so they contacted 20 organisations for ideas. We were delighted that they finally chose to come to Coldfall.

We met at around 10 o'clock on a misty morning. After a brief pause for a photoshoot, we trooped off towards the stream. One of the Friends gave a snapshot of the local history from the end of the ice age; to an enclosure act in 1543 for the Bishop of London; and the use of the woods as a natural resource right up to the 1930s - all in five minutes!

The group's task was to clear a stretch of willow saplings which threatened to choke off growth along the bank of the stream. When they finished shortly after midday the entire stretch of saplings had been cleared, apart from a few larger ones which will provide nesting sites for birds.

As the volunteers set off home through the woods, the sun came out and lit up the mist along the stream bed, clearly showing what beautiful patches of woodland can still be found, even so close to the centre of a densely populated city.

Jack Whitehead's forest childhood

By Ann Bronkhorst
Historian, writer and retired teacher Jack Whitehead, now in his nineties, makes local history come alive. Interviewed in September 2011 by the Friends of Coldfall Wood, who are gathering reminiscences about the wood and its setting, Jack recalled his childhood in the 1920s growing up in one of the first council houses on Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill.

He described the remaining traces of rural life, the making of the Coldfall Estate and an inspirational teacher who gave him "a sense of time". Around Jack's home were forest trees, unpolluted streams, hayfields and flower-rich meadows: "a magic place". Children made dams in streams, pressed leaves, collected moths and bred butterflies. "Nature was very much part of life," he says.

Through the back garden gate of friends in Durham Road, East Finchley, Jack could enter the private Coldfall Wood, then owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and extending south to Fortis Green, and walk home through unbroken woodland. As he wrote in *The Making of Muswell Hill*, he seemed to live at "the edge of a thousand year old forest, immense and exotic."

When the trees were felled

Asked which moment he'd revisit, if he could time-travel, Jack chose the woodland clearance that heralded the

Coppett's Wood and Coldfall Estates. His father, who usually avoided mentioning the Great War, said it was "just like Flanders," but young Jack felt "shock and excitement" as the ancient oaks were felled (one dating back to 1717) releasing their sharp, unforgettable smell. He watched the army of skilled workmen hand-building the new homes (no health-and-safety regulations to inhibit a curious boy) and his life-long interest in architecture began.

The Coldfall Estate gardens became virtual allotments during World War Two, to the benefit of Coldfall School pupils. One effect of open space and fresh food was 'The Coldfall Type' of healthy, strong child who often scooped the prizes at post-war inter-school sports days. Obesity certainly wasn't an issue then!

Jack Whitehead is still developing teaching materials and championing the relevance of local history. Check the website www.coldfallwoods.co.uk where his memories will be made available next year.

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