



Bowls club facing closure

By Daphne Chamberlain
Muswell Hill Bowls Club, established in 1901 and one of the most attractive sporting venues in north London, is facing closure.

Tucked away between houses, with an entrance off King's Avenue, the club has produced many champions and given a lot of pleasure. However, membership has fallen so much that club directors have sent a circular to immediate neighbours, warning them that the future is very uncertain. The decision to close will be made during this playing season, which runs until the end of September.

To survive, the club needs both playing and social members. The green needs to be maintained, and fixtures, matches and social events arranged. There must also be a good-sized pool of players.

All ages and both sexes play bowls, which is certainly not just a game for pensioners.

If you think you can help in any capacity, please phone Paul Chapman on 020 8442 1875.

Police visit for every crime victim

By Janet Maitland

Police have undertaken to offer every victim of crime the opportunity to report the crime in person to a police officer.

Calls to the police are graded as emergency or non-emergency. Emergency calls are those that need an immediate response from police, such as a crime that is actually being committed at the time of the call, or serious road traffic accidents. Police officers always attend these calls and will continue to do so.

Non-emergency calls, such as those reporting crimes that have already happened, are currently routed to the Metropolitan police telephone reporting centre. Under a new scheme called Operation Promote, these victims of crime

will now be offered a personal visit by a police officer who will take a report of the crime from the victim. The visit will be arranged through an appointment process for police to visit within 48 hours, unless the victim prefers to report the matter over the phone.

"Operation Promote is a key part of our commitment to delivering a better and more responsive service to the victims of all types of crime," said Chief Superintendent Jim Read. "The service we provide to victims of crime must be at the heart of all we do."

Gardeners' delight

By Ann Bronkhorst

Nearly 50 gardeners were lured to Martin School on Sunday 22 April for a seed and plant swap organised by Charles O'Toole of the East Finchley Community Trust and other Trust members, with crucial support from Martin schoolkeeper Tristan Hunt.

Despite the cold, wet spring, a steady stream of optimists turned up throughout the afternoon, giving and receiving a wide variety of healthy house and garden plants and colourful packets of seeds.

On close inspection some seed packets were rather elderly but many were brand new. Everything was free

so it was worth taking a chance, and there were plenty of knowledgeable and approachable people around if advice was needed.

One swapper said what a pleasure it was to chat to fellow gardeners and hoped the event would be repeated. Another seed swap next spring is very likely, Charles says, with one this autumn also a possibility.

Hero or villain?

By Nick Young

If you've heard a harsh screech on the streets of East Finchley recently, you may have been listening to a jay.

Smaller than a woodpigeon, the jay has a pinkish-fawn body, a distinctive black 'moustache', a black tail and white and blue patches on its wings. Despite being the most colourful members of the crow family, jays are more often heard than seen as they are secretive birds. However, there have been sightings on streets and in gardens recently as nesting pairs have been busy gathering materials.

Although they are woodland birds (Coldfall Wood is an excellent place to see them), numbers in the suburbs have risen in recent years, and as that photo on the back page of the February edition of *The Archer* showed, East Finchley is nothing if not tree-lined.

Jays are best known for eating acorns, which they store in the autumn so they can eat them all year round. However, they also eat insects, beetles and even the eggs and nestlings of smaller birds, something for which they are considerably less notorious than their cousins the magpies. Jays may well have a negative impact on smaller birds as they will be looking for more food with which to feed their young at this time of year.



Muswell Hill 'country' lodge for sale

By Andrew Popov

The historic and enchanting Little Lodge, nestled off Muswell Hill on the slopes of Alexandra Palace, has recently gone up for sale after much deliberation from its owner Keith McKay. He has taken this decision rather reluctantly after renovating the initially uninhabitable lodge into the quaint country dwelling it is today.

It is quite rare to find such an old rural dwelling in the bustling urban climate that is modern day Muswell Hill. Away from the town's centre, huddled on its grassy slopes, it is now one of the last few surviving 18th-century country estate remnants to be found in the Haringey borough.

During the war, the Red Cross used the lodge as a base to treat wounded soldiers and it consequently has real historic value.

In recent years, it was also the inspirational backdrop for the children's story *The Mosella Tree*, written by Hannah Lea, Keith's own daughter, who

lived there for a short time as a child.

She says it is in a unique spot due to its contrast with the "architecture, atmosphere and vitality that makes Muswell Hill such a popular place to live" and the majestic woodland garden and its teeming undergrowth that seem to envelop the lodge itself.

Keith has fought many hard legal battles with the local authority to keep possession of the building, which he has owned since 1993. He says he found the Land Registry to be remarkably helpful in giving him absolute possession of the property to prevent any further intervention from the local authority in trying to redevelop his land or compel him to move out.

The future of the lodge seems uncertain, Keith frequently receives calls from speculators wishing to purchase his property for new construction projects, such as apartment buildings, but few, if any, people seem to appreciate the true character and charm of the place and it would be a great shame to see the lodge taken down after all his hard work.

Poetry in the wind

By Betti Blatman

East Finchley poet Dennis Evans read from his latest collection of poetry *Paper in the Wind* to an audience at Golders Green Unitarian Church on Saturday 12 May. Dennis gave some interesting background relevant to each poem prior to reading his selection. Amongst the wide range of poems, some were sprinkled with humour whereas others were more meaningful. All received an enthusiastic response from those in attendance, who were each given a copy of the collection. Dennis generously gave 50% of all proceeds directly to the church's heating fund.

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