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By Adam Justice-Mills

Once again there's been another very dry winter (rainfall has been below average for 19 out of the past 24 months), with hosepipe bans already here. Last year I wrote about water use from a gardener's perspective: micro-watering and collecting in butts. I checked the drought provision: micro-watering is OK (but re-filling our fish pond by hosepipe isn't).

What about saving water in the house? In the Thames Water area, a household with four people uses over 600 litres a day. The company's online water usage calculator will tell you what you use. Our family's main aim is to reduce the amount we use in showering from 400 litres to the average 100 litres (teenagers, take note).

Thames Water offer free water-saving devices: bags for the loo cistern (flush with less water), tap inserts and so on. My favourite is a shower timer (like for eggs, but this one sticks on the shower wall and tells you when to get out).

Secondary schools use on

average 1,000 litres of water per pupil per year. The government's "wise up to water" web site helps schools to reduce their costs by educating students, staff and parents about saving water. On average, a school could save £1,500 per year with simple water-saving actions.

I'll bet as you're reading this it's raining cats and dogs ... if not, perhaps we should all think ahead. From now on we'll be collecting rainwater in dustbins whenever we can and eventually we'll get a butt installed. Thames Water says it's not possible to predict when the hosepipe ban will be lifted, so it could be a long, dry summer for our pond fish.

Maggie Ferguson

By Daphne Chamberlain

Maggie Ferguson, vice-chairman of The Finchley Society and manager of its archives, died from pancreatic cancer on 29 March. Her fellow members have paid warm tributes to her, with chairman David Smith saying they would need about four people to replace her.

We at *THE ARCHER* are most indebted to Maggie for her work in the archives. The mass of material there is a really valuable record of life in Finchley. As well as official source-material, much is donated, often handed in by people clearing friends' and relatives' houses.

I remember talking to Maggie about their collection of photos. She was keen for *ARCHER* readers to help with identification, as looking at them made her feel "like a newcomer to Finchley." She said, "I've only lived here since the 1970s, and I've only really felt part of the area since I retired."

Her colleagues agree that Maggie loved making discoveries and sharing her knowledge. Margaret Cullen said, "She

always knew where to look to find an answer to a query, and she made our meetings fun. We hope we can keep the archives as happy and useful a place as it was under her management."

Her special interests were the theatre, literature, nature and France, and she also played the cello. Apparently she was quick with Shakespeare quotations, which, together with her organisational skill, probably stemmed from many years as a stage manager.

Confirming that Maggie was a genuinely warm and nice person, artist Mari I'Anson added poignantly, "When people go, I wish that I had known them better, and so it is with Maggie."

Martin Primary School pupils run miles for charity

By Frances Buckingham



Run for it: Martin School children run round their playing field for Sport Relief.

On a lovely sunny day in March pupils from Martin Primary School ran over 400 miles on the school field to raise money for charity. The pupils were taking part in the Sport Relief Mile and each year group, including the nursery, ran up to a mile along a winding course marked out on the field.

A team of year six helpers was on hand to keep them going and gave encouragement to those with the littlest legs. Parents also took part, supporting from the sidelines and running with the children.

The pupils also dressed up as their favourite sportsperson for the day. Inspired by their recent work on the Olympics and Paralympics many came as runners, gymnasts, boxers, swimmers, footballers and tennis players. The day was a great success and raised over £1,200 in sponsorship for Sport Relief.

Help Shelter to help the homeless


By Diana Cormack
Shelter, the housing and homeless charity which believes everyone should have a home, now has a shop in Muswell Hill. "Most people just walk by because they don't realise we're a charity shop," manager Jane Mungai told *THE ARCHER*.

Situated at 44 Muswell Hill Broadway, by the well known Toff's fish and chip restaurant and close to many expensive clothing outlets, they have a lot to live up to. Their impressive window display certainly shows they are making the effort, as do the rails inside, where the stock is of a high quality, much of it new.

An East Finchley resident who volunteers there said more volunteers are needed not only to work in the shop but also to collect much needed donations.

Jane hopes they can be a bit different from other charity shops and there are various plans towards this end. One is to have a rolling programme of "star" donations featuring goods given by well known personalities.

So if you fit that description or you would just like to give to this charity call in at the shop or phone 020 8815 9138. For more information about Shelter telephone 0808 800 4444 between 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday or visit www.shelter.org.uk



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