



Our oldest reader born in East Finchley?

By Daphne Chamberlain

Mrs Irene Bell, 99 last July, would like to know whether she is our oldest reader born in East Finchley. Born in Ingram Road, she has also lived in East End Road and, for almost 60 years, in Twyford Avenue. Her late husband was a native East Finchleyan too, born in Hertford Road and a pupil of the Great North Road School (known now as Martin). Mrs Bell went to Holy Trinity School, then on the site of the Bobath Centre, and they both attended Finchley County.



Mrs Irene Bell, 99 year-old ARCHER reader. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain.

Since last year, she has been living in The Meadows, off Colney Hatch Lane. Almost next door are tennis courts where she used to play as a member of East Finchley Methodist Church tennis club. As a child, though, one of her favourite playgrounds was the park at Alexandra Palace, where a big attraction was a large communal boat on the lake, giving rides for one old penny.

She also played in Highgate Wood, Queen's Wood and, of course, Cherry Tree Wood. In those days, Brompton Grove was called "the lane", and included a cottage with a pony and trap outside. Just up the road was a cinema nicknamed "the fleapit", which had a lady pianist. Officially it was the

Picturedrome, now reborn as the Phoenix.

If you wanted a go on a bike, Janes and Adams hired them out for about four old pence an hour. Mrs Bell used to practise riding one in Huntingdon Road.

She has many more memories, which we plan to bring you in the next few months. Meanwhile, who else remembers the East Finchley village pump and pond, Waitrose in the High Road, or East Finchley Grammar School? Please tell us if you do. *THE ARCHER* and Mrs Bell would love to know, too, if she is indeed our oldest native East Finchleyan. Email the-archer@lineone.net or write to us at The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

Gina's century of memories

By Daphne Chamberlain

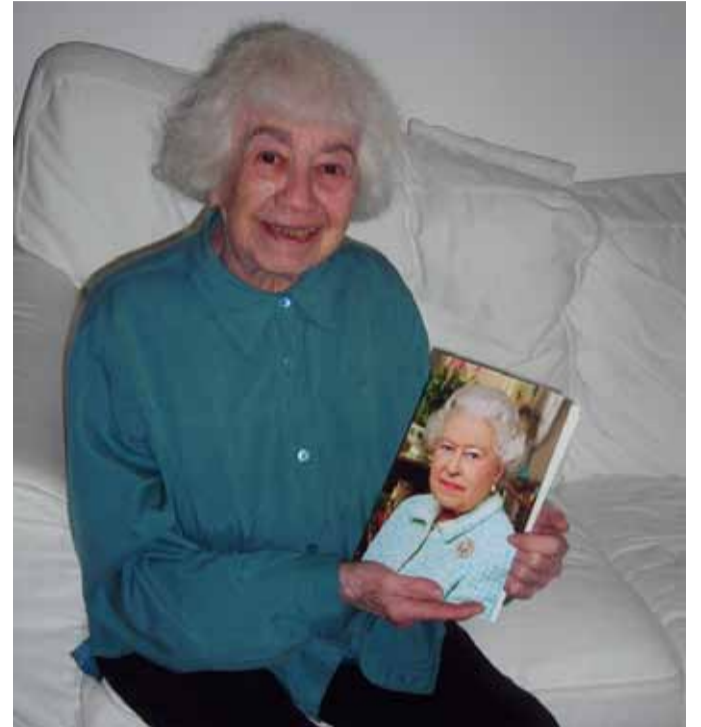
Regina ("Gina") Allen, who has lived in Neale Close for 45 years, reached her 100th birthday in August. She was delighted with her card from the Queen, particularly as what Her Majesty probably didn't know was that Gina had once seen her "scampering along with her sister behind their mother".

That was at a reception hosted by the Queen Mother at Holyrood House. Gina was then a district nurse in Greenock and Renfrewshire, but spent her own childhood in her native Germany, arriving here in 1939 as one of the last refugees from Nazism. Apart from one sister who survived in Belgium, all her relatives died under Hitler's regime.

Gina remembers Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, seen by many as the onset of the Holocaust. Jewish shops and businesses were vandalised throughout Germany, with "windows being broken all round".

The following year, she managed to catch the last boat from Ostend to Dover. "I don't know how I got on that boat. Maybe it was because I was small and nondescript. Some men gave me tickets. During the crossing I just felt numb. My books were really important to me, but I could take only four or five of them."

Sent to Scotland to train as a nurse, she met a couple on the journey who became like second parents to her. She is still in touch with their family. After moving back to England, Gina



Mrs Gina Allen with 100th birthday card from Queen. Photo by Stroma Leith.

specialised in caring for people with infectious diseases, particularly

TB, working as a ward sister in Leeds and then in Devon. She also had spells as medical assistant to a London doctor, and as a bilingual secretary, translating medical documents from Germany.

It was in Devon she met her husband. Though divorced, they are still good friends. Another friend is Eleanor Bron, who keeps in close touch with her. Gina remembers with particular fondness being a member of Hampstead Theatregoers' Club. She says, "I am so grateful to this country", but this country should be just as grateful to her.

Comedy line-up for children's hospice

An eclectic mix of the UK's most accomplished comedians will be taking to the stage when Festival of Theatre presents *The Comedy Night 2012 in aid of Noah's Ark Children's Hospice on Saturday 20 October*.

This unique stand-up show at artsdepot, North Finchley, will be hosted by actor and Noah's Ark Ambassador Shane Richie. The star-studded line-up includes Charlie Baker, Miles Jupp, Peter Serafinowicz and Rob Deering.

Priya Singh, Noah's Ark Community Fundraiser, says: "Being able to enjoy fun times and share a laugh is really important for all families but particularly families struggling to support a child who is undergoing stressful treatment or suffering from a life-limiting condition.

"At Noah's Ark we aim to

offer families support where it is most needed through initiatives like our Play Scheme, Siblings Support Programme, Family Support Volunteer Service, Family Days and Specialist Carers. The money raised from this event will go towards these services."

Suitable for age 16+, The Comedy Night 2012 starts at 8pm, with tickets priced £25 available via www.artsdepot.co.uk, by phoning 020 8369 5454 or in person at the artsdepot box office.

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(Refreshments are served after mass on Sunday and Thursday)

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.

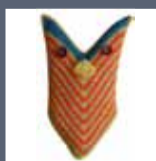
All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

Experienced singers are always welcome.
Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

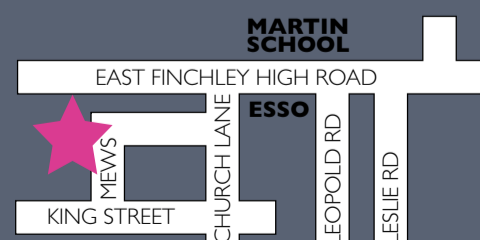
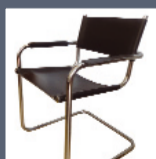


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