



Letters to the Editor

Old friends from N2

Dear Editor,

Greetings via THE ARCHER to all the community of East Finchley that I know so well. I grew up there during my secondary school years and, after the millennium, completed three marathons in London and New York City.

I also delivered papers on The Grange and if I see people from the area anywhere in London I realise I am still remembered so running was a good thing. The children seem so well behaved and grown up and I know that that is not so easy these days.

Please send my regards to all the readers of the publication who sent their cheques to my flat on The Grange for my charity Get Kids Going. I've never experienced such a mega amount of support as I got from the N2 community. Life goes on: I'm now an advertising sales manager in Borough, SE1. Have a nice year!

Yours faithfully,
Martin Sutherland,
Formerly Sycamore House,
The Grange, N2.

Weather-wise

Dear Editor

A dignitary from one of the third world countries visiting Britain remarked to his British host, "In my country it very rarely rains. So we never have enough food or water, and my people suffer. Here in Britain it never stops raining. You are so lucky".

The Briton responded, "It's not a matter of luck. It's due to a sacred ritual that we practise. First we take a field, and at its edge we drive wooden posts into the ground. At the other end of the field we drive more posts into the ground. We then encourage one of our young men to hurl a ball at one of the cluster of posts that we call a wicket. And it then pours with rain".

Yours faithfully
Harold Karton,
Creswick Walk, NW11.

Editorial footnote:
So that's why cricket isn't in the Olympics!

Abbots Gardens

Dear Editor,

My brother (74) and I (69) were reminiscing over Sunday lunch this afternoon when he mentioned he had been surfing the web for information about V-bombs falling on East Finchley. I got the laptop out and we surfed some more and came across your January 2009 edition containing a report on the V2 which hit Abbots Gardens in November 1944.

Our parents lived at 65 Abbots Gardens during the war, moving to Surrey in about 1946. My brother recalled the Abbots Gardens V2; I was too young to remember it myself. Our mother told the story that she was going into the living room when the fire flew out of the grate towards her, then rushed back whence it had come. Only then did she hear the explosion which shattered all the windows in the house. Things having settled, she started to clear up the house. Later that afternoon a nun came round, looked at the house, and remarked on what a mess it looked. Our mother was not amused! Our father worked at a bank in Picca-

dilly. I don't dare to think what he was thinking as he came home on the Tube knowing that East Finchley had been hit.

My brother also recalled the Widecombe Road V1, and our father recalled pushing me down a road while trying to keep a tree between us and a passing doodlebug. Our father played cricket for North Middlesex where play was occasionally interrupted by doodlebugs, players rapidly hitting the deck if the pulse-jet engine cut out. (I have a photograph of a barrage balloon on the outfield.) I am also told that my brother and I slept in the Anderson Shelter (where he once tried to incinerate us). The accommodation being generally unpleasant, our parents tended to sleep in their bed. I was most fascinated by your article, as it will be a proof to my grandchildren that their grandfather had a respectable war record, even if he was only two at the time!

Yours faithfully
Robin I Morgan
Broadwater Close, Woking.

Trot back in time

Dear Editor,

I wonder if you are able to help me?

I am trying to find any news items about a Musical Ride on horses, performed in the early 1960s at Parliament Hill Fields by Tessa Evans, who was proprietor of Strawberry Vale Riding Stables, and a group of riders. The stables were located just off the North Circular junction with High Road East Finchley, by The Green Man pub.

I realise that this information is not much to go on, but I would dearly like to know if you, or anyone you know, has any information, articles or photographs about this? Perhaps you could print my email address for any possible response, and mention my maiden name, which was Finch, in case anyone remembers me from those far off days

Thank you.
Jill Gilbert.
Email: jilliegilbert@msn.com

Frozen in time

By Diana Cormack

My outstanding memory from sixty years ago is not the Queen's coronation but of something which happened three months later. In 1952 we were living at RAF Topcliffe in Yorkshire and were used to our dad disappearing on flights to different parts of the world.

On 16 September we learned that his plane had crashed 8000 feet up on the Greenland ice-cap, seven hundred miles from the North Pole. Two RAF Hastings had been dropping supplies to scientists on the British North Greenland Expedition which entailed flying at very low levels. The crash came during a "white-out" with the pilot unable to differentiate between swirling snowflakes and the glaring icy surface below. After careering over one and a half miles across treacherous ice at 120 knots, the Hastings my father was in screeched to a halt and, fearing a fire, twelve men leapt out into one of the coldest places on earth. Fortunately only three were injured, none seriously.

The crash-landing hit the headlines all over the world and we were besieged by the press. Pictures and stories of the plane, its crew and their families appeared every day, along with the belief that no rescue could be attempted until the spring. The men lived in the plane's fuselage lined with parachutes and my father took on the role of cook, using supplies dropped from their sister plane.

Secret base

Gradually people began to realise that the Hastings lacked the capacity for such a long flight. This was in the middle of the Cold War and the Americans were not best pleased when it was revealed that the RAF had used the secret American base built at Thule, five hundred miles from the crash site. However, the American ingenuity of fitting two planes with skis and using Jet Assisted Take Off provided a speedier-than-expected rescue for the Brits. After ten days they were on



A colleague waves to the marooned airmen from their sister plane. Air Ministry photograph.

their way home.

Their story was told in the cinema, on the radio, in a book called *Rescue Below Zero* by

Ian Mackersey and by my dad, whose frost-bitten fingers were a lifelong reminder of the chilling event.

Two men arrested for park assaults

By Janet Maitland

Two men have been arrested and bailed, following a series of random attacks in Queens Wood, Alexandra Palace Park and Highgate Wood during May and June.

All of the attacks were carried out by a lone man who approached his victims and then assaulted them with no apparent motive. Police think the incidents, each of which happened during the afternoon, may be linked. The victims described the man as white, aged 20 to 35 years old, 5ft 7in to 5ft 11in tall, with short dark hair, wearing casual clothing.

A 33 year old man was arrested in July and bailed to return to the police on 30 August, pending further enquiries. A few days later, a 27 year old man was also arrested. He has been bailed to return to the police on 17

October. Police are carrying out additional patrols in Haringey parks and woods.

'Our enquiries are still ongoing, and we appeal to the public to get in touch if they have any information,' said the investigating officer, DC Kay Sekyere, who can be contacted on 07899 967 616. 'If you want to remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.'

Earlier this year, a man was sentenced to life imprisonment for another series of assaults in Haringey parks, which took place in January 2011. Two of his victims died of their injuries after being attacked in Queens Wood and Alexandra Palace.

**FREE
PRESCRIPTION
SUNGLASSES**

STEWART DUNCAN
The East Finchley Opticians
126 High Road East Finchley
020-8883-2020

Buy any pair of glasses and get a pair of prescription sunglasses absolutely free or upgrade to a designer pair like the model shown for just £49. Bifocals and varifocals, high prescription and special lenses available for additional charge, ask us for details. While the stock lasts.