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Wash day blues... and blessings

By Sheila Armstrong

Are launderettes a dying breed? Well certainly not in East Finchley, as testified by A Heck of a Wash on the High Road, where there is more going on than just socks and soap powder.

Since January, Fortismere School sixth form student Lydia Francis has been working on an in-depth video project at the launderette as part of her A-level in photography.

A real community

Lydia decided to study the launderette in detail because she remembers it so well from her

childhood. "It's always been there and the video shop used to be next door," she told *THE ARCHER*. "What makes a project like this so interesting is talking to people and hearing their stories. You have no idea what will come up."

"When I first went in there I met a film producer, a script



writer and our local road sweepers. Patience and listening skills are needed when you go to photograph in any new place."

She describes the launderette as a community within a community: a social centre used by a great variety of local people. Even tea and biscuits are sometimes on offer there.

As many people will know, Margaret Cartwright does the service washes and extends a warm welcome to one and all. Margaret grew up in East Finchley and still lives here. She remembers the first bananas going on sale after the war and playing in the streets in those relatively traffic-free days.

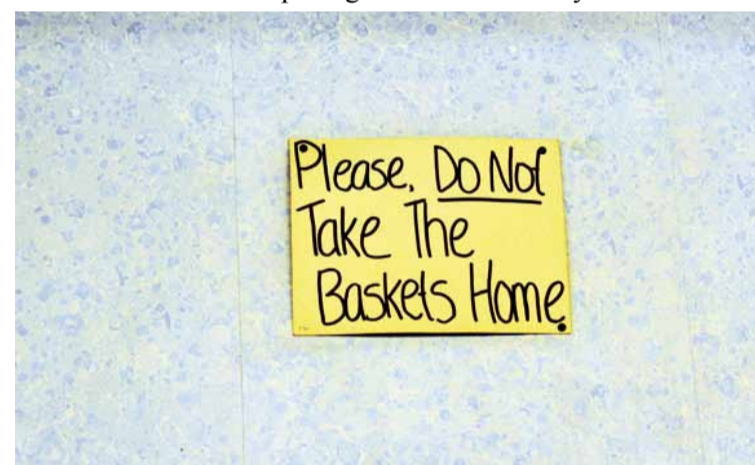
Inspiration

Lydia uses a Nikon D90, SLR digital camera. The great photographers Henri Cartier

Bresson and Diane Arbus, to name but two, have inspired her, and she admires Louis Theroux for his interviewing skills and genuine interest in those he meets on his TV programme.

She has done another photog-

raphy / video project at Springfield Retirement Home and also one at Mulberry Court retirement flats on the High Road. You can see some of Lydia's diverse work on her website <http://lydiafrancis.weebly.com>



A selection of photos from Lydia Francis's study of A Heck of a Wash launderette.



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New library opening hours

From this month, East Finchley library will be closed on Tuesdays instead of Mondays.

Seen and heard

Sharp eyed people looking for clues in the gripping ITV detective series Broadchurch may well have spotted a familiar face in the town's newspaper office. The editor of the Broadchurch Echo, which is reporting on the mysterious death of a local boy, is played by Carolyn Pickles.

A long term resident of Bedford Road, Carolyn has acted in numerous film, radio, theatre and television productions, being perhaps particularly remembered for her roles in Bluebell and The Bill.