



Volunteer Amanda Bolton and manager Leslie Cavendish. Photo Diana Cormack

Volunteers keep All Aboard afloat

By Diana Cormack

During National Volunteer Week in June Leslie Cavendish, who runs the All Aboard charity shop in the High Road, contacted THE ARCHER to tell us about some of their volunteers. "Most of them are women," he said. "For some reason, that seems to be the case in charity shops."

At the time of writing there are two teenage schoolgirls, one from the Jewish Free School on work experience and the other from Fortismere for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. A Brazilian teacher of Spanish works there to improve her English, as well as a headmaster's wife and a professional seamstress who has a hearing problem. But one volunteer rates particularly highly with Leslie. "She's my shining light," he said.

Amanda's story

Amanda Bolton, who lives nearby, was introduced to All Aboard by her care worker in the hope that she would benefit from working there. How right she was! It has given Amanda something to get up for in the morning, increased her confidence, helped her to make friends and even inspired her to write about it for THE ARCHER.

Here is a little of what she wrote:

"I like it so much that I am able to have my picture in the charity shop newspaper to let Mencap see how I am getting on with all the steaming and the different things I do. I have a laugh with Leslie. He can be very funny. Sometimes I pick up the donation bags from the counter to put them in the back to be sorted for rags or to go to other countries like Africa or to be put out for people to buy.

"Since I have been in the shop I have not been shy or nervous. I am very happy to work here. I cannot believe that I have worked so well and hope it will always be my hobby to work in the charity shop with Leslie."

Volunteers are always needed. If you're interested, call in at 124 High Road or telephone 020 8883 6773.

Reading challenge is a real page-turner

By Daniel Weir

The British summer is known for many things: rain and long school holidays being two that immediately spring to mind. For young families in East Finchley it's also synonymous with the Summer Reading Challenge.

The scheme is aimed at four to 11-year-olds, and aims to ensure that they continue to develop their minds when school is out. This year the library has also been encouraging 14 to 18-year-olds to volunteer at their local library to help the young readers.

The scheme itself entails the youngsters reading six books over the holiday and this year it is themed around 'creepy house'. Last year 780,000 children nationwide took part.

Although the Challenge is already under way it's not too late to get involved as it runs until 9 September. Parents and carers can pick up a leaflet and have a look at the reading challenge's Facebook page for more information. Children interested in the scheme can chat, get recommendations and even enter competitions on the Challenge's website.

Teenagers interested in helping with the scheme should e-mail justina.gore@barnet.gov.uk and those who want more information can visit <http://readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge/>



Puzzle-ing appearance

Tilly Schwartz and her pony Puzzle were the perfect partners on a 12-mile cross-country ride round Buckinghamshire to raise cash for medical detection dogs.

The pair were out in the hot weather for three and a half hours on Sunday 7 July and came home very tired but very happy. Earlier Tilly, of Park Road, took Puzzle into Highgate Primary School, above, to tell the children about her good cause Canter for Cure.

Medical detection dogs are trained to sniff out breast cancer and many other diseases. They are also used to help epileptics and diabetics live independently as they can detect when fits and low-sugar moments are coming. You can help Tilly with a donation at www.justgiving.com/TillySchwartz

Fancy a summer evening run?

Are you a runner in East Finchley who would like to run with a group socially? The East Finchley running group, which has been going for six months now, goes out every Tuesday night and sometimes on Sunday mornings.

They typically run around 10K, incorporating runs up to Alexandra Palace, Highgate Village, Hampstead Heath and Golders Hill Park, sometimes followed by a drink or two in the Bald Faced Stag.

The group is ideal to join if you want to discover new running routes and get to know the local area. The routes tend to be generally 'off road' and incorporate the woods and parks in and around East Finchley and Hampstead Heath.

Some of the group join the Mornington Chasers Running Club on Hampstead Heath or Primrose Hill for track and hill training on Thursday evenings as well.

For more information call Nick on 07593 367134 or meet at 7pm on Tuesdays at East Finchley Tube.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Crystal balls

In the weird and wonderful world of an English summer it would great to be able to stare into a crystal ball and see the future. Not far into the future, not even as far as Christmas, but just far enough to know the winning numbers for the next Euro Millions megabucks draw. And there are a few other things I'd like to have known about in advance.

Back in May the Daily Excess announced that this was going to be a cold, wet summer with snow drifts outside Budgens, flooding in Cherry Tree Wood and six feet of mud at Glastonbury. And guess what, I believed them, bought wellies and hired a boat so I could sail down to watch the Stones. Oh for foresight, if only I'd known I'd not have got stranded on the M4 outside Basingstoke.

I bet blond Boris the Mayor wishes he hadn't believed the stuff about endless cold wet summers when he ordered his buses. If he'd known he'd invented the first double decker sauna he might have realised that being able to open the windows is a good idea when the temperature gets above 80. Or maybe not; he cycles and bikes have natural air-conditioning.

Had I known in advance that Andy Murray was going to win Wimbledon I could have left the country before I drowned in a flood of strawberries and sun cream. OK, it was a good bet that he would do it this year, but the point is I'd like to have known. Just as I'd like to know if the weather will be good for a barbie or if I should crank up the central heating.

Which brings me to the main event. By the time you read this you'll know what they're going to call the new royal baby. You'll know if you were right to bet your house on Victoria for a girl and Charles for a boy. You'll know the name of the doctor who delivered the child, have seen the look of shock and bewilderment on its parents' faces as they face the cameras and so will I. It's just that I don't know yet and I really want to know if they are going to go all modern or stay with the traditional approach.

So, will it be named Balmoral after where it was conceived, or something funky: Summer or Spring or Betty (Blue)? Will they go Norman with Eleanor or Tudor with Mary or Elizabeth? I reckon if it's a boy they should call it Ricky. But then I would, wouldn't I?

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