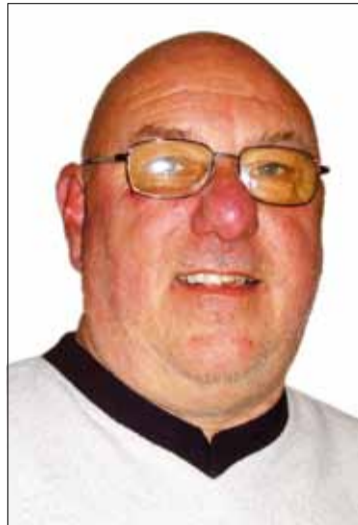




45 years in the same workplace

By Ann Bronkhorst

"I was aged 15 when I walked in through those gates," said Barry Law, newly retired from 45 years' work in St Pancras (now Islington) cemetery. Few people have a work record as long, or as happy, as his.



Barry Law.
Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

Barry enjoyed the outdoor life from earliest childhood when he loved visiting Waterlow Park and its aviary. He became a skilled gardener, with an assistant, working for 20 years in the then Camden-owned section of the huge St Pancras Cemetery. His father had worked there and now Barry's son-in-law works in the office too.

When the cemetery gardening budget was cut Barry chose to continue to work outside, but as a gravedigger. And being outside, in what he calls "East Finchley's own nature reserve", has given him immense pleasure.

What, no wallabies?

Over the years he's watched innumerable birds, from gangs of long-tailed tits to pheasants, red-legged partridges and a regular duck family in the stream. Barry's face lights up as he describes the fox cubs at play; the cemetery cat, Duski; the pair of muntjac deer (long gone, sadly). He knows every road, path, monument and statue as well as the wildlife havens in between.

For Barry, a place often associated only with sadness has given him, he says, "45 years of watching, studying and loving" wildlife. That won't stop, because he and his family enjoy walking in the countryside and visiting nature reserves. He's a RSPB member, with state-of-the-art bird feeders in his Hertford Road garden, and a young grandson who shares his passion for nature.

Family man

On 1 November Barry was given two awards for long service and some bite alarms (he's a fisherman, too). Then colleagues past and present joined the family and friends for a party at The Five Bells. Colleague Sophia Alana said later: "Barry will be much missed and his length of experience can't be replaced. He's always positive: a great character and a family man through and through."

In fact, family life is so full, busy and happy that Barry isn't likely to miss his work, as some do after retirement. And he lives near enough to the cemetery to pop in now and then, in the early morning, to check on his favourite foxes.



Kevin Daly, Robin McDonald, Chris Antonio rehearse for the New Horizons production.

Theatre to break down barriers

By Linda Sansom

Young adults with disabilities are getting to grips with Shakespeare in a new inclusive theatre group that meets at the Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road.

New Horizons is the brainchild of Cheryl Ferney-Reeves, a performing arts teacher at Barnet College whose students have already had successes with *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*.

Parents of the students wanted them to further develop their skills, but there is little chance for those aged 18-35 to do that, and Cheryl wanted young adults with learning disabilities to be able to belong to a theatre group. So she started New Horizons with colleagues Jose Forni and Emily Kinane.

"It's inclusive, which is very

important," explains Cheryl. "We didn't want to differentiate between mainstream young adults and those with disabilities. We wanted to break down barriers and we feel we do that with the workshops and performances. Once you are on stage there is no difference between the group and this is what's special to us."

Adapted for today

The group aims to tackle the classics including Shakespeare, because a lot of people are shy of performing them, and to make them accessible and enjoyable. So they rework the story, adapt the text into modern-day language, and add

visuals such as movement and theatrical technique.

Currently rehearsing *The Merchant of Venice* for a performance next summer, the group runs entirely on member subscription, with costumes, lighting and props all produced in house.

Cheryl is hoping for new members, who don't need previous acting experience "People can come along and try before they buy. Lots of young people have never had the chance to act at school."

For information contact Cheryl (07748 155298) or just turn up on a Friday (5.30 - 7.30pm).

New kid on the recycling block

By Diana Cormack

A relatively new arrival to the block of recycling banks outside East Finchley station is one for the disposal of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). Anything that uses a plug, battery or charger can be recycled, so if your unwanted electrical item fits, pop it in. The WEEE bank opening measures 52cm/20ins by 51cm/20.5ins.

Otherwise call 0800 085 1050 for free collection of any electrical items from your home or take them yourself to a Reuse and Recycling Centre. Barnet's is just up the road from East Finchley at Summers Lane, North Finchley, N12 0RF. Old light bulbs and all batteries can also be recycled there.

By recycling one iron, enough steel is recovered to make 13 cans. Last year north Londoners recycled over 3,000 tonnes of electricals, estimated

at having offset over 26,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. This is equivalent to taking 7,200 cars off the road for a year.

Visit www.wiseuptowaste.org.uk/weee for an interactive

map of Barnet's recycling facilities. This address can also be used for free entry to a prize draw competition in support of The Children's Air Ambulance lift off. For more information visit: www.dhl.co.uk/envirosolutions

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11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Celebrant and Preacher: The Rt Revd Peter Wheatley, Bishop of Edmonton
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