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Councillor Old (back left) helps other volunteers to clean up Stanley Field on the December litter pick. Photo courtesy of Friends of Stanley Field.

Stanley Field and the canal boat

By Ruth Brown

Volunteers who were litterpicking on Stanley Field found two large bunches of keys that looked suspiciously as though they'd been deliberately thrown over the fence from the path. One set was clearly the keys to a boat.

They took the keys to the front desk of Fortis Green police station, which is staffed five days a week by a rota of volunteers. They were very friendly and helpful, and turned into amateur detectives, making phone calls around the country.

They finally managed to track down the canalboat owner, who was happy to be reunited with the keys that had been stolen when his property had been broken into. He was very grateful to all the volunteers involved.

Campaign continues

The Friends of Stanley Field hope they won't find any more stolen property at their monthly litterpicks! Seven or eight helpers have been coming to help, keeping the field a green and pleasant open space for the many local people who enjoy it for sport and recreation every day. Joggers and dog walkers mark a well-worn path round the field, and the grass pitch is kept short by kids playing football.

December marks a year since Barnet rejected the Big Society SportsEF bid to keep Stanley Field for sport, funded by the London Marathon Trust. Barnet began negotiations with developers, but a year on, the final fate of the field is still uncertain.

The campaign for Stanley Field has always enjoyed the support of the East Finchley Labour councillors and, in December, Conservative councillor Graham Old, representing Church End, helped out at the litterpick. If you want to help too, the next litterpicks are at 2pm on Sundays 13 January and 10 February.

Crazy for You

Review by John Lawrence

As the dark days of January close in around us, who wouldn't want to be whisked off to the bright lights of Broadway? Fortunately, anyone on a budget can achieve the effect by taking a short bus ride to Highgate.

There, the ever-inventive Ovation company is presenting George and Ira Gershwin's *Crazy for You* in the Upstairs at the Gatehouse theatre, running until the end of January.

Making miraculous use of the limited space available, a fizzing cast of 14 conjures up New York's chic theatreland one minute and then a drowsy Wild West frontier town the next as the story follows would-be impresario Bobby Child and his quest to win the heart of the beautiful Polly by putting on a show at her father's crumbling old playhouse.

There are two stories behind this production. First, *Crazy for You* is a modern-day Gershwin musical, dating back only as far as 1992. Creator Ken Ludwig

justice to such a massive show in a tiny theatre with no stage machinery, limited wing space and precious little room for scenery. Whatever they said worked, and they've delivered in style.

The intimacy of the theatre is perfectly suited to the tenderness of *Someone to Watch Over Me*, sung to perfection by Ceili O'Connor as Polly, but it also comes alive in a riot of tap dancing and hand waving for the big dance routines. You can't help but be swept away by the spirit of it all when 14 people are hoofing their hearts out to a live band just a few feet in front of you.

Cleverly, John and Katie have arranged the auditorium so that the action takes place in a long stage area between



Bela (James Doughty), left, and Bobby (Jay Rincon). Photo by Minyahil Giorgis.

based the production on Gershwin's 1930 hit *Girl Crazy* and was given permission to use other songs from the Gershwin back catalogue, effectively creating a greatest hits show.

There are some great numbers in there: *Embraceable You*, *Things Are Looking Up, But Not For Me* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, plus a storming Act 1 dance finale for *I Got Rhythm*.

Secondly, Ovation's John and Katie Plews had to fly to New York to convince the Gershwin estate that they could do

an audience split in two and banked on either side. Every time I looked across at the faces opposite me, they were wreathed in smiles. For a winter escape, you couldn't go anywhere better.

Crazy for You runs Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village, until Sunday 27 January; Tuesday to Saturday at 7.30pm and Sunday at 4pm. Tickets priced £14-16, with concessions available. Box office: 020 8340 3488, or www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com

Cyclists: a laser or a coconut?

By Daphne Chamberlain

Are you a cyclist? If so, did you know you can now defend yourself with a laser, or even transform your bike into a horse?

In case manoeuvring vehicle drivers don't see you, a handlebar-mounted laser can project a bright green image of a bike onto the road. See www.kickstarter.com for details and pictures of this new design, which is not without controversy.

And, showing that cyclists pay homage to the past as well as the present and future, you could fix a Trotify on your front wheel. This is a wooden device fitted to the front brake mount which clacks together two halves of a coconut as the wheel turns. See www.trotify.com to prove I am not making this up.

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