



Sippy Azizollah with (from left) Barbara Bus Fund Co-ordinator Julia Pryor, volunteer driver John Jones and Bob Blackman (MP for Harrow East). Photo courtesy of Julia Pryor

Transport charity needs drivers

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Barbara Bus Fund is appealing for reliable and friendly volunteer drivers. Who was Barbara, why does she have buses named after her, and why are they so important? Firstly, they are not actual buses, but vehicles adapted for wheelchair users. Barbara Werndly was disabled by polio and a long term patient at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore. Supported by friends, family and hospital staff, she raised enough money to get the first 'bus' on the road. That was in 1969. Now there are nine vehicles at Stanmore, with others in Wales, Stoke Mandeville and Yorkshire, all run by the Barbara Bus Fund.

New lease of life

East Finchley's Sippy Azizollah has used the service for about 10 years. She told The Archer: "They have been a new lease of life for me, as I love to go to meetings, meals, quizzes and, best of all, days at the seaside. I have two close friends who are also wheelchair users, and we do many trips together in one of the large buses. The co-ordinators do a fantastic job organising all the trips. The drivers are great, and all of us enjoy the chats we have on the way to and from our destinations."

As Sippy says, those destinations are often local, but journeys can be longer. The

point is to enable disabled people to get out whenever they want to.

Vehicles are available to people who have a friend or relative to drive them, with no charge except the cost of the fuel and a donation to the Fund, but there is also a small group of volunteer drivers to call upon. Passengers using a volunteer driver just pay a small mileage charge.

So if you enjoy driving and meeting new people, why not give the Fund a call on 020 8416 0733 or visit the website www.barbarabus.com, and if you are a wheelchair user needing help with transport, do give the Fund a try.

End of an era at Christ's College

By Ann Bronkhorst

Gary Tucker, head of Christ's College Finchley, retires this summer after nearly ten years in post. His teaching career began there in 1980, making him one of a diminishing breed: teachers who stay at one school, developing a deep understanding of its formal and informal structures and shaping its ethos.

As a young geography teacher he was impressed by the original, eccentric Christ's College buildings in Hendon Lane, but for most of his career he has worked in the current premises off East End Road. And as the buildings changed, so did the school, now an academy specialising in maths and computing, linked with local primary and secondary schools, schools abroad (Finland and South Africa), the London School of Economics, and businesses such as the Pentland Group.

One change that would



surprise the school's founders is the arrival, about a decade ago, of girls in the Sixth Form. Mr Tucker is positive about their impact, as he is too about the increasing diversity of the school's intake.

Students' school councils with real teeth, taking real decisions, have his approval, as do the strong pastoral and learning support systems. Christ's College has long since shed what he calls its 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' image, yet he enjoys the irony of being Commanding Officer (as headteacher) of the second oldest Cadet Corps in the country and

smiles at the surprise of C.O.s from public schools on finding that a London academy can, in a sense, outrank them.

Future plans

As chair of Barnet Secondary Headteachers' Group, Mr Tucker says of his role: "It's a family of schools and you nurture it." Ahead are more committees: the London Leadership Strategy and Pixl (Partners in Excellence, a national team), to which he will bring his energy, directness and sense of 'family'.

"I'm sure Mr Tucker will be sorely missed," said former pupil Daniel Hampson. "He was always helpful and treated us fairly: a man who lived and breathed the school."

Gary Tucker won't miss the roar of the North Circular but says he will remember, and miss, the long playing field with its changing views over north London. Perhaps there'll be a moment to capture it with his camera or his watercolours before saying goodbye to Christ's College and setting off for some glorious sailing.

Arson in Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

The seat near the signpost in Coldfall Wood was set on fire in daylight in the early evening of Monday 3 June. The fire brigade extinguished the fire but the seat, made largely of metal and dense rubber, was completely destroyed.

Parents and children walking through the wood to and from Coldfall Primary School, as well as dog-walkers and courting couples, will be sorry to lose that convenient seat. Such a perverse act of destruction is hard to understand.

A noticeboard at the south-eastern corner of Muswell Hill Playing Field, carrying information about the field, the wood and the Friends' activities, was damaged earlier that evening and its glass shattered. Mending the noticeboard and replacing the seat will be costly.

A scooter was set on fire in the wood on Wednesday 19 June, again in the early evening.

Police patrols in the area will be increased. Please call 101 about non-urgent suspicious behaviour in the wood or on the field and 999 about on-going crime.

Parking ticket problem solved

By Diana Cormack

Last September we carried the story of how, earlier in the year, local resident Debbie Hoare was given a penalty notice despite displaying a valid parking permit on her windscreen. Debbie appealed but her appeal was rejected because, according to the Civil Enforcement Officer's report, "no permit was found on the vehicle" (*THE ARCHER*, September 2012).

To back up her case Debbie provided a photograph of the permit, which she had downloaded following the guidelines on the parking service website and placed over her expired permit. The guidelines state that Civil Enforcement Officers should be aware of the variation between home-printed versions and those mailed out. However, it seemed that it was Debbie's word against the Officer's report.

But Debbie, of Cherry Tree Road, refused to give in. In November the Parking

and Traffic Appeals Service informed her that the London Borough of Barnet was not going to contest her appeal against the penalty charge notice. A letter from Barnet said the reason for this was "because you have a valid permit". Surely "had a valid permit" would have been more applicable? This is what Debbie had been telling them all along and, if a little common sense had been used, the borough could have saved a lot of time and some taxpayers' money.

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(Refreshments are served after mass on Sunday and Thursday)

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

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Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>