



Finchley's double cantilever grandstand. Photo Mike Coles

Take your seat in a Grade 2 listed grandstand

By Daphne Chamberlain

Here's a quiz question for you. Where is the oldest reinforced concrete cantilevered grandstand in Britain?

Very well done if you answered Summers Lane, North Finchley. I'm guessing you support Wingate and

Finchley Football Club or Finchley Rugby Club, who have one side each of the double-sided back-to-back stand.

Built for Finchley Urban District Council in 1930 for £30,000, it now has Grade 2 listed status.

When the Council's Chief Engineer and Surveyor, Percival

T. Harrison, was directing the construction, the Rugby Club had been going for five years. The then Finchley Football Club was much older, being founded in 1874, but its glory days were in the 1950s. Perhaps some of you roared on its stars, like the late George Robb of Finchley, Tottenham and England.

Were you in the grandstand, or do you remember it being built? We would love to know.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

An uncommon man

I heard it on the radio, crammed in between the latest on the missing plane and the weather forecast, and I didn't want to believe it. But it stood out in the blandness of early morning broadcasting, something to stop the clocks, silence the barking dogs and quieten the bustle of the day: Tony Benn is dead. And to me, it wasn't just another politician, it was personal.

Entire forests have been sacrificed recounting the transformation of Anthony Wedgewood Benn, centre right Labour MP and flag bearer for the white heat of technology into Tony Benn, radical, socialist and idealist. He was the perfect class traitor, born into a privilege that he would not defend and it was because he knew the establishment's rules that he would not play their game. Instead he became one of the last of the old-style radicals.

Tony Benn could have had it all. In the 1960s he was thought of as the Tony Blair of his time. He'd been to public school and Oxford, become the youngest MP in 1950 and had the family background for it: grandfather a liberal MP, father a Labour minister in the 1930s. If New Labour had existed back then, young Wedgewood Benn would have been perfect for the moral vacuum. Something changed in the 1970s and at an age when most people move to the right he moved to the left, driven by a conviction that there was something better than the collapsing post-war consensus.

In that vacuum there was a decision to be made. Would we turn left towards a bright socialist dawn or right to a gleaming free market sunset? We all know the choice we made, just as we all know where the road led and that Big Society means a food bank on every corner.

And the personal? Back in the mid 1980s he went down to Exmouth to the local Labour Party fete. He was chatty, friendly and made one old lady's day by pushing her round the fete in her wheelchair. Twenty years later, when the Tony Benn Road Show hit Christ's College here in East Finchley I asked him if he remembered that day. He paused, smiled, said yes, he did. In fact, he even remembered her name and that made me, the lady's grandson, immensely proud and is why I will raise a mug of tea to his memory.

The symbols of Easter

By Diana Cormack

Although Easter is now a Christian festival, you may be surprised to learn that the two symbols which represent it come from pagan times. In those days people used to pray to the goddess of spring for their crops to grow well and their animals to have babies. The goddess was called Eostre.

Eggs played an important part in their spring festivals because they produce new life and people used to give them as presents. The hare, which is like an oversized rabbit, became a symbol of new life because it produced lots of babies. It was also the animal sacred to Eostre.

When Christianity came it

took over a lot of pagan festivals. So Eostre became Easter, with eggs and hares still being special. However, chocolate ones weren't made until hundreds of years later. You could think about this when you are chomping into your chocolate bunny or enjoying your Easter egg.

The Best Education

A short story by Alex Miles

While Sir was reading the surgery's newspapers, Lady weighed up all the other parents and pulled her mink comfortingly round herself. Looking down at Lysander's chess game, she noticed the chess moves were three every second and the majority of pauses were taken up by Lysander.

"Check, check, stalemate."

Lady raised her eyebrows at the result. Both boys shook hands with speed and synchronicity. At that moment, the door of the consultancy opened and Nurse, with her longest digit, beckoned to Lady. "Honeycomb, you're next."

Lady got up and pulled Lysander away from the chess board, towards the consultancy. Sir followed, able to navigate without looking up from the newspaper.

Lysander entered the office and lay face down on the bed without instruction. On the back of his head were many laces interwoven through the skin, holding it together. Nurse brought her chair up to the side of him, stretching and exercising her fingers. These fingers constantly fidgeted, as did her massive eyes, which swirled behind magnifying glasses. Sir had taken a seat in the far corner, still reading.

Nurse bent her head down to Lysander, "Poppet, how are you feeling?"

"Not happy," replied Lady.

"Hedgehog, if you're not happy I'm nothing. What's wrong?"

"He came third in the oboe regional championships."

Nurse began undoing the bows and knots on the back of Lysander's head. "Sugarcake, that new version of Oboe-Playing-Make-VI has been out for months. Everyone's up to date. But there is a brand, brand new viola make. I could give the angel that?" Nurse pulled out the remnants of lace from the back of Lysander's head and opened him up like a parcel.

"Viola? Yes, I suppose Lysander would like the viola."

"Of course he would. Okeydo," said Nurse, pulling ribbons out of a drawer and holding them up to the light. She stopped at a light blue thread of silk. "Ah! Here it is." With insect dexterity she took out a needle and scissors, and began cutting and sewing the contents of Lysander's head with the ribbon.

"While you're there, he has been interested in Marlowe recently, but can't he get involved in Jonson and Webster, please? Everyone seems to be on Marlowe at the moment."

"Oh, they but are fun aren't they? The little monster will love them."

"Have him like reading the plays rather than watching, please. We don't have the time. And while you're there, he keeps using the word awesome."

"Easy to snip out. What do you want me to replace it with, Chocynot?"

"Just something more suitable. What do you think, darling?"

"Whatever is best for Lysander," said Sir through the paper.

You can read more about the world of Alex Miles in his book, Glory and Splendour, Tales of the Weird. Published by Karoshi in 2012, it's available on Amazon.

Alex is a member of the East Finchley Writers Group, who meet on Wednesdays at The Old White Lion. Call Carola on 020 8883 5808 for details.

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Easter Services

- 17th April 7.30p.m. Maundy Thursday United Service (at Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane N2) - Holy Communion
- 18th April 10.30a.m. Good Friday "Reflections on the Cross"
- 20th April 10.30a.m. Easter Day Celebration Service - Holy Communion