



Eve Bagley with Ted's Arctic Convoy medal. She is wearing the Russian friendship medal given to the wives on their various visits. Photo Toni Morgan

Arctic Convoy medal at last

By Daphne Chamberlain

Sixty nine years after the end of WW2, the men who served on the Arctic convoys have been honoured by the UK. The medal came too late for East Finchley's Ted Bagley, who heard of the award just before he passed away in April last year, at the age of 90, but it is now with his widow, Eve. "It was about time!" she said.

Crucial role of convoys

In contrast, the Russians have always honoured the men who brought them over four million tons of food and arms when they were besieged by German troops. People were starving; eating any animal they could find, and boiling their boots for soup. The convoys kept Russian resistance alive.

Sailing from Scotland, Liverpool and Iceland, they had to combat "the harshest seas known to man". Sea spray froze as it fell, waves were mountainous, and they were under attack from the air and from submarines. Those who arrived in northern Russia found temperatures of minus 40 degrees, and ice on rivers over four metres thick.

Ted was there for 13 months, inspecting and maintaining guns brought by the convoys.

Whenever Ted and Eve returned to Russia with convoy veterans, they were over-



Ted, pictured in 2013

whelmed by their welcome. Everyone recognised the famous white berets, and on Remembrance Days a red balloon is released for each of the men on the convoys. Ted was awarded several Russian medals, including the Arctic Star.

Four years ago, three Rus-

sian companies pledged money to maintain HMS Belfast. New masts were made in St Petersburg, and 11 Russian workmen came here to fit them. They said it was an honour to help preserve the ship which had been one of the convoy escorts. The Imperial War Museum said, "Without them, we would have been waiting years".

Ted lived in Church Lane from the age of five. He was a founder member of EFVRA, and former President of Glebeland and Finchley Victoria Bowling Clubs.

Loch Ewe in North West Scotland, from which 19 convoys sailed, is planning a museum dedicated to them, and would welcome stories and memories. For information, see www.russianarcticconvoymuseum.co.uk.

The tennis club that never closed!

By Jacky Wood

Fortis Green Tennis Club has made history this winter. The exceptional lack of heavy frosts allowed the club's shale courts to remain open right through the season, for the first time since club records began.



A hard core of members braved cold wind and rain to rejoice in the continued decent playing surface, and are now slowly shedding their thermals to herald the spring.

So we're already open for 2014 and new members are welcome to come and sample

the delights of this very local club. Adult beginners and rusty couch potatoes will be able to hone their skills at the popular Monday evening group coaching sessions from 12 May, open to members and non-members.

The 2014 junior coaching programme will be expanding to include squad training in the hope of entering a team in the 2015 Middlesex League. Check out the website www.fortisgreentennis.co.uk to see the full programme of activities and membership details for 2014.

Calling all writers

Try your hand in writing workshops, get tips about how to be published, and learn how to develop your online author profile by blogging and Twitter.

This year's Finchley Literary festival runs from Saturday 24 May to Saturday 31 May. It's supported by Greenacre Writers, Avenue House Trust, The Finchley Society, Waitrose and Squires Estates.

The two events in East Finchley are both in the library. On Saturday 24, Sarah Holding runs a creative writing workshop, CliFi (sic) for Kids, from 3-5pm. On Thursday 29, at 2pm, Maggie Butt has advice on 'How To Get Your Poetry Published'.

There are events all over Finchley. For the full timetable, visit greenacrewriters.blogspot.co.uk. For more information, contact greenacrewriters@gmail.com.

Old Barn trustees

'not valid'

By Janet Maitland

In a statement to THE ARCHER, the Charity Commission has marked a sea change in the long battle over the management of the Old Barn Community Centre by announcing that its trustees were not elected properly. "It is our view that the current Executive Committee was not validly appointed," said a spokesperson. "We are working towards the establishment of a proper membership and arrangements for elections as soon as possible."

When the current trustees took over the Old Barn in Tarring Road in 2010, vital services for children and young people were discontinued. Campaigners, alongside Barnet Council, Community Barnet and, since last year, MP Mike Freer, have been trying ever since to restore the centre to local people. The trustees have taken no notice. The Charity Commission has also repeatedly attempted to get the trustees to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities but to no avail.

"I'm delighted that at last the Charity Commission has accepted the evidence that the trustees were not properly elected in the first place," said local resident Helen Drake. "I'm optimistic that we can soon hold an AGM to elect trustees with the drive to make the Old Barn the much-loved community asset it once was."

"The present management

has shown such disdain for the local community," said local resident Will Hudson. "The Charity Commission must take responsibility away from them. We need an open membership and a transparent election of trustees and we call upon the commission to appoint independent trustees to oversee this process."

A spokesman for Barnet Council, who own the building, said: "We are continuing to liaise with the Charity Commission and Community Barnet as part of our support for the local community."

"I continue to lobby the Charity Commission to take action and for the Council to rescind the lease," said MP Mike Freer.

Local people who want information on how to become members of the Old Barn or about any forthcoming AGM should contact Victor Momodu at Community Barnet on 020 8346 8400.

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