



Crowds fill Cherry Tree Wood at last year's festival. Photo by Mike Coles

East Finchley Festival: a special anniversary

This year's East Finchley Community Festival takes place in Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 22 June from 12noon to 6pm. Here Roger Chapman explains how the history of the event goes back further than anyone imagined.

There is a long-standing debate about when the first East Finchley Festival took place. Many people say it was in the mid-1970s. However, evidence now shows that it is a little bit older than that.

The first festival took place in September 1774, two years before America's Declaration of Independence, in the reign of George III. It was held on the site of the Hog Market, which is where Kitchener and Beresford Roads now stand.

The event was mired in controversy and had to be broken up because, according to one newspaper, illegal activities were taking place including "bear baiting, raffling and other unlawful diversions".

A different spin was placed on events by another newspa-

per called the *Public Advertiser*. Its report said that hand bills had been "stuck up" and distributed at Highgate, Finchley and adjacent villages giving notice that on Monday and Tuesday a "fair would be held at Finchley, when men would run in sacks and women for Holland Smocks, etc. and where all sorts of toys and good gingerbread would be sold."

Smock Races were common in the 17th to early 19th centuries. The idea was simple enough: "Sturdy country lasses competed in a footrace along a set course, the prize being a smock of fine linen."

Glorious gingerbread
According to the *Public Advertiser* the "promised diversions took place" but a gentleman of Finchley noti-

fied a Justice of the Peace at Muswell Hill who issued orders that the High Constable of Finsbury Division, a Mr Hurford, should suppress the affair. Thirty constables were dispatched and put an end to the event "by knocking down the gingerbread stalls and taking some old women into custody". The women were later discharged by the magistrates pleading "what was very true, their extreme poverty."

So this year we are not claiming this is the 40th anniversary of East Finchley festival. It is the 240th anniversary and on Sunday 22 June this year in Cherry Tree Wood we will be selling gingerbread on the Festival food stall in memory of the women who were arrested in 1774.

New choir members wanted

Do you enjoy singing and like the idea of joining a choir? Well, here's your chance.

A-Chord is a recently formed choir which meets every Thursday evening from 8pm to 10pm at the New North London Synagogue at 80 East End Road and is looking for new members. All abilities are welcome and no previous singing experience or audition is required.

A-chord sings a light, popular repertoire, including songs from musical shows and pop, within a relaxed and friendly environment which is open to all. If you want to give it a go, the new term has only just started and the first

session is free. The choir is just beginning to perform locally and has its second concert scheduled for June.

Cost for the term is £60 per term including refreshments. For more details, call Laura on 07732 120464 or email a-chord@gerlis.com

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Patients asked about hospital bus links

By Daphne Chamberlain

"Someone's trying to get a bus to the hospital? Thank God for that. About time too!"

These are typical of the comments I heard from Finchley Memorial outpatients last month. As we reported in *THE ARCHER* in April, visitors to the hospital were invited to fill in a questionnaire about access.

The survey, carried out over two days under the auspices of The Finchley Society and Friends of Finchley Memorial Hospital, asked visitors how they had travelled there, how easy the journey had been if they had walked, and whether they would use a bus which would bring them to the doors.

At the time of writing a full analysis had not been made, but statistician Gill Green told

us that there were 932 returns. This of course did not reflect the total number of visitors, as a number of people brought several children, and often only one of a couple filled in the survey.

Please continue sending us your opinions. Do you support the campaign for a bus to the hospital doors? And, if so, would you be in favour of a hopper bus circling the catchment area, and possibly also linking with different routes around the Tally Ho? Do let us know at *THE ARCHER* and we will pass on your comments. Our contact details are always on page 2.

A pedestrian crossing near the hospital?

By Daphne Chamberlain

THE ARCHER has asked Barnet Council whether they have considered installing a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Granville Road and the High Road.

At present, anyone crossing Granville Road at this point has to negotiate continual streams of filtered traffic at a four-way junction, with no pedestrian lights.

This is the crossing used by Finchley Memorial Hospital visitors who have got off the bus, as well as by all pedestrians along the High Road.

Many people say they avoid using it, and instead move a little way along Granville Road (which is also quite busy) to take their chance crossing when

a gap presents itself. Not desirable for hospital patients, or indeed anyone! It was a point brought up in last month's survey of hospital visitors.

A Barnet Council spokesman told us: "Residents have raised concerns about this crossing, and our officers have agreed to undertake a study to see if it is possible to install a pedestrian crossing. We have already begun a discussion with Transport for London to see what improvements can be made."

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