



Police and leaves: The dog walkers in Coldfall Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Eyes, ears, paws and tails

By Ann Bronkhorst

On any day there'll be a scattering of dog walkers in and around Coldfall Wood but on Sunday 25 February an organised group of them, with dogs on leads, plus two PCSOs in uniform, did a tour of the wood. No, they hadn't been arrested. This was a Haringey Dog Watch walk.

The idea came from Haringey's Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Pauline Sydell, I was told by PCSO Stefanie Gibbs who is an enthusiastic advocate for the scheme. As police stations become fewer and neighbourhood policing faces new challenges, this simple idea recognises that dog walkers can be a source of local knowledge. It also helps to build good community relations.

PCSO Stef says: "There are fairweather dog walkers and everyday dog walkers" and it is the second group who are

potentially most useful: the ones who go out, rain or shine, often on familiar routes where something 'wrong' is easily spotted and where an alert, nosy dog can lead to information that helps solve a crime or save a life.

Welcome to Dog Watch

For a Dog Watch walk there are few formalities and some nice incentives. The dogs must be on leads and they get (whisper it) treats; their owners are asked to fill in a form and are given useful items like dog-poo bags or panic alarms. After a brief introduction to the park or open

space the group sets off for a walk lasting no more than an hour. There's a lot of chat as walkers get to know each other and the two friendly PCSOs, Stef and Avra, while the dogs are busy networking too.

The next Dog Watch walk is scheduled for Saturday 21 April at Alexandra Palace, meeting at 10.30 a.m. at the Farmers' Market entrance, Alexandra Palace Way. Look out for Haringey Dog Watch walks in our What's On section in future issues of *The Archer*.

School spring fair

Holy Trinity Primary School in Eagans Close, N2, is inviting everyone along to its Spring Fair on Saturday 12 May from 12noon to 3pm. There will be plenty of traditional attractions, including face painting and hook-a-duck, as well as pocket money goodies and home-cooked food to buy. Entrance will be £1 for adults, free for children.

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A house of rare distinction

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Finchley Society's February meeting featured an illustrated talk by Frank Kelsall about Hawthorn Dene and its role in local and national history. Hawthorn Dene is the Georgian house at the entrance to Strawberry Vale, down the slope from the Green Man Centre.

Some people still call it 'the Captain's house', after its occupant when it faced demolition, Captain Harcourt Kitchin. It is Grade 2* listed, meaning it is particularly important, being of more than special interest. Only 5.5% of all the 500,000-plus listed buildings in England have this grading; 2.5% are Grade 1 and 92% are plain Grade 2.

Unusual construction

Why is it so special? At the time of its listing in 1969, it was said: "No other known examples have so far been found of this type of construction in so

resistant. The square rooms form a circular plan on each floor, with each room leading into the next.

Betjeman on board

However, in the 1960s and 70s it was threatened with demolition when the North Circular could have become a motorway, and it was in danger of being swallowed up by the new slip road.

Jean Scott, then the GLC member for Finchley, and founder of The Finchley Society in 1971, fought a long battle to save it and to get it listed.



Hawthorn Dene at Strawberry Vale. Photo Mike Coles

small a house."

It was built in the 1820s by James Frost, one of the first builders to make bricks from local clay. He had just invented a new type of cement, and was also eager to show how new materials like concrete and cast iron could be used in construction. The ceilings in Hawthorn Dene are supported by fluted cast iron ribs, and the stone stairs have fretworked iron railings. They are all fire-

She was supported by local residents, including architect Bill Tyler and comic Spike Milligan, and a petition to save the house was signed by poet John Betjeman.

This campaign was one of the precipitating factors in the formation of The Finchley Society.

Editor's note: Helen Fletcher's Childhood in Hawthorn Dene is in The Archer archives for May 2004. Find it online at www.the-archer.co.uk.

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