



Fallen hero: The memorial to John Henry Parr in Lodge Lane, N12.
Photo John Lawrence.

Silhouette honours first soldier killed

A life-sized silhouette in tribute to the first soldier to die in the First World War is now standing on permanent duty in Lodge Lane, North Finchley. The memorial to John Henry Parr has been placed in the road where he once lived and was donated to the Barnet War Memorials Association by John Seigal.

Private Parr was just 17 in August 1914 when his 4th Middlesex Regiment was mobilised as part of the British Expeditionary Force, the first to cross the Channel to France. He is thought to have been shot while out on patrol two or three weeks later, the first recorded British death of the war.

Bedtime reading

When Phyllis McGovern went on holiday to Turkey in September she made sure she took a copy of the paper she helps to deliver back home in East Finchley. Her daughter Jacqueline took this photo of Phyllis reading *The Archer* by moonlight on the terrace of their apartment in Calis, on the country's south-western coast. Email us your photos of *The Archer* on holiday to: the-archer@lineone.net



Could this be highwayman Dick Turpin's other oak?

By Linda Dolata

Oak Lane in East Finchley, on the left side of the High Road as you head towards the North Circular, is named after a huge ancient oak tree that stood there until 1952.

It was known as 'Turpin's Oak' as in its time it would have been one of the trees on Finchley Common, where highwaymen lurked, ready to waylay and rob travellers on the Great North Road, now the High Road.

Whether Dick Turpin himself actually hid by it or not, it was certainly alive in his day. It is said that when it was cut down, lead bullets were found in the trunk.

Hidden in a hedge

This summer I noticed an interesting hedge alongside the North Circular not far away, just as it crosses Long Lane. The hedge has a good range of species: blackthorn, hawthorn, bramble, dog rose, hazel, elder, field maple and a lot of elm, suggesting it is of a good age.

The hedge can be accessed from Font Hills and was obviously left to act as a noise filter between the dwellings and the North Circular. When I took a closer look I discovered a fantastic pollarded veteran oak tree.

Detective-work

It is almost five metres in girth, suggesting that as a pollard (a tree trimmed from the top, which extends its life) it is probably well over 300 or even 400 years old. It is not really visible unless you look for it, but I think it is the largest tree girthwise in East Finchley and a contender for the oldest too!

It is also very close to the historic site of Turpin's oak and must have been contemporary with it... a worthy replacement. Possibly it was a boundary tree from the edge of the original Finchley Common, or even a timber tree, pollarded high (to deter grazing animals) in the original pre-enclosure hedge which has grown away from it, and towards the sun over the years.



Roots in history: This veteran oak could date back to the days of highwayman Dick Turpin.
Photo Linda Dolata.

Veteran survivors

I'd love to know more and would like to embark upon a local register of significant native trees which have survived from our historic woods. For example, the coppiced hornbeams in Cherry Tree Wood and Coldfall Wood qualify. If readers know of any others, maybe they could let me know by emailing lindadolata@talktalk.net



Ready to ride: The Big Yellow trio get in some training, with colleague Lanzi Simwizye on the bike.

Storage staff cycle for 11 hours

Staff from the Big Yellow storage depot in East Finchley jumped into the saddle to raise hundreds of pounds for charity. Tina Miles, Genevieve Ferrer, Zoltan Papp cycled 150 miles in 11 hours in aid of The Big Yellow Foundation, which supports six organisations helping vulnerable people, including ex-offenders, people with disabilities, ex-service personnel and refugees across the UK.

The team smashed their original £500 target and ended up raising just short of £1,300. Donations are still welcome at uk.virginmoneygiving.com (search 'Tina Miles').

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