



How Coby the dog is helping children to read

By Jackie Briggs

I just want to share with readers of *The Archer* my amazing experience as a volunteer for Pets as Therapy. Some of you might already know of this organisation which arranges for dogs to visit schools, hospitals, senior citizens' homes, hospices and many other establishments that feel that a visit by a dog and its owner brings a feeling of well-being. This has happened to me and my dog Coby.

I have been with Pets as Therapy for well over five years and had already visited a number of places with Coby but I wanted to establish a permanent visit rather than going here and there, and we have now finished our fifth year at Underhill School in High Barnet. Let me tell you a little about our visits.

Cosy with Coby

I have a small group of children aged between six and nine who for various reasons need a little extra help with their reading. I take over one period of 45 minutes and we



Happy to listen: Jackie Briggs with Coby. Photo Mike Coles

cosy up in a special place with Coby sitting on his mat and each child taking turns to sit with him.

I always start the session with who had what for lunch. I always seem to have the same thing and they know me as Cheese and Biscuits. "So," I say, "Lovely full tummies which means lots of lovely reading."

Well, the reading is secondary really. The session just gives the children the

opportunity to build up their confidence and over the last five years I have seen some spectacular results.

Calm canines wanted

So if you have a dog that is obedient, calm, happy to be quiet and sit still for 45 minutes with the occasional stretch and, needless to say, happy to take a treat at the end of the session from the kids, maybe this is something you could consider. Find out more at petsastherapy.org.



You're sacked: The McDonald's litter picking team clean up in Cherry Tree Wood.

Clean-up in Cherry Tree Wood

Volunteers from the McDonald's UK headquarters next to East Finchley station took time out in Cherry Tree Wood in July for a litter pick. The 14 staff members collected 10 big bags of rubbish, 50% of which was recyclable.

Deborah Linton, of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said: "We'd like to thank those McDonald's employees

who gave their time to help with the clean-up and we are looking forward to working on litter clean-up events again in the future."

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Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

We have received reports from two East Finchley families regarding scams upon elderly members.

Water board scam

Two males convinced a lady to take the safety chain off her front door and let them in, telling her a neighbour's house was flooded. While one man distracted her in the kitchen the other went through the house and stole jewellery worth £4,000. Do not open your door to anyone you do not know. If you do not know them it is highly unlikely they will have anything you are interested in. If you are unsure, ask them to make an appointment for when you can have family or a neighbour present. Not all callers are con men, but sales people can be pushy too.

Roofing scam

Another lady was pursued over several days by a 'roofing company' trying to persuade her to pay for scaffolding with a view to working on her roof and chimneys. Fortunately she realised something was not right and refused to deal with them further. This lady was approached again by different men trying a different angle within a week.

It is best not to engage with callers either at the door or on the phone. If you do, it encourages them to try again another time. Such addresses and phone numbers end up on 'mugs lists' and are valuable to con people.

In both cases the con men were well presented, charming, fluent and had a good answer for everything. If you are concerned about damage to your home it's best to discuss this with family and work towards finding a reputable workman. Please don't buy at the door.

Stock up the foodbank

Finchley Foodbank continues to welcome donations that it can pass on to families and individuals in need. Any non-perishable grocery items and toiletries are always required. Recently the foodbank has been particularly short of biscuits, small packets of rice, tins of tomatoes and size 5 and 6 nappies. Spare strong plastic bags also come in handy to package up the items.

Drop off points

Collection points are in the big orange box at Sainsbury's on the High Road, N2 or at the foodbank itself in the church hall behind St Mary's, 279 High Road, N2, on Saturdays from 12:30pm to 2pm.

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