



Many hands: Dozens turned out to plant trees alongside Mutton Brook

Planting mob magics up a miniature forest

By Paul Salman

Dozens of volunteers created an instant miniature woodland when they converged on a field in Hampstead Garden Suburb to plant 600 trees in a matter of hours.

This was a Tiny Forest, a densely packed native forest that fits into a plot the size of a tennis court. Tiny Forests are based on a planting method developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki and have been gaining in popularity as one way to combat climate change in urban areas, where space is at a premium.

This one was a collaboration between Barnet Council and environmental charity Earthwatch, who have been promoting the concept in the UK and have now helped to plant dozens around the country.

As we reported in February, Barnet Council made some land available near Mutton Brook, just off the A1 and North Circular at Henlys Corner. Earthwatch prepared the ground, fenced it and supplied the 600 trees, all native species, that were to be planted. Trees are chosen to best match the soil conditions at the site and

to provide different levels of height cover.

Getting involved

On planting day in late February, dozens of volunteers arrived at the site to dig holes in the muddy ground and plant the trees. Children from nearby schools Garden Suburb Infants and Henrietta Barnett also took part.

"It was a fantastic day," said local resident Daniel Mermelstein, who helped coordinate the volunteer effort. "It was very moving to see so many people turning up and getting stuck in."

Earthwatch will be organising science and community days, when local residents will be encouraged to measure the forest's progress by, for example, measuring tree size and counting butterflies and other wildlife. Volunteers will also be needed to pick litter and do some light weeding over the coming months. If you want to get involved, email tinyforest-barnet@gmail.com.

Tales of trees that have taken root

By Diana Cormack

The Archer 19 years ago in April 2003 carried three articles about trees. The front page reported on 15 downy birches newly planted in the Glebelands, near the Coppetts Wood nature reserve, just over the North Circular in North Finchley, with the aim of making it more attractive for local people to use. Sadly, within three weeks, vandals had destroyed every one of them.

However, back in East Finchley there was a different story. There the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood had planted



Still growing: The oak is planted in memory of Robin Chapman in 2003

an English oak in memory of Robin Chapman, one of the

founders of the Friends who had died suddenly the previous year.

Robin loved the Wood and it was the responses he received from local people to notices that he pinned up in the park that led to him organising a meeting and starting a committee that formed the Friends in 1995.

From then onwards he never allowed Barnet Council to forget the existence of the Wood and was always there to inspire and encourage the Friends in their many beneficial activities. Robin visited the park almost daily with his wife Kirsten and their dog Trina.

Fittingly, the oak tree was planted in line with the spot where Robin loved to sit and gaze upon the place he loved so dearly. You can see it in the triangular flower bed in front of the Cherry Tree Wood café.

Nearby at the Summerlee

Avenue entrance is a cherry tree which was planted in 2003 to mark the tenth anniversary of the newspaper you are reading now. *Prunus avium plena*, a double-flowering bird cherry, was chosen to commemorate a decade of continuous effort by *The Archer* team and everyone in the community who supports it every month. Who can envisage how we will mark our 30th birthday next year?

Vandalised: The broken saplings in the Glebelands



Anniversary: The cherry tree that marks The Archer's 10th birthday



Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Spare that garden tree

By Isobel Grant

I love trees. The unnecessary cutting down of any of them upsets me. I got wind of such a thing recently in one of the county roads when a universal wail went up on a WhatsApp group.

Fretful voices decried the careless demolition of a mature tree in the corner of a back garden, coupled with the sight of bewildered birds sitting around on fences wondering where, in a matter of minutes, their safe haven had gone.

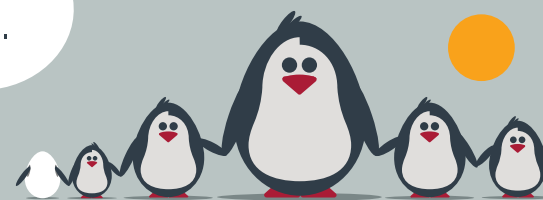
Since I arrived in East Finchley over 40 years ago I have watched a number of trees being unnecessarily culled from front and back gardens, often to make a bigger terrace or parking area. You would think in these days of climate change concern that residents would try to preserve their natural surroundings rather than destroy them.

A despairing walk down Creighton Avenue demonstrates the proliferation of concrete-stiffed front gardens where up to four cars are parked per house. I've even heard of one East Finchley household covering their entire back garden with 50 square metres of plastic grass.

So increasingly our wildlife is deprived of shelter, the earth cannot breathe and water has no drainage. We can hardly point the finger at Brazil's president Mr Bolsonaro and his deforestation programme, when in our small way we are equally guilty of damaging the natural world.

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