



Garden opens in time for spring



Outdoor clothing: Barnet Mayor Councillor Alison Moore at the opening of the neighbourhood garden in Leopold Road. Photo Mike Coles

Barnet Mayor Alison Moore has formally opened the Leopold Road Neighbourhood Garden, which has been the result of a year of hard work and planning.

More than 50 people joined in the celebrations, with tea and cakes, and a group of children accompanied by Tim Brierley on guitar sang John Denver's *Garden Song*.

It was two neighbours, Edwina and Kathy, who decided something could be done to improve Leopold Road's dilapidated corner of The Walks and the community enlisted the help of Councillor Arjun Mitra to get support from Barnet Council.

They used a grant to buy plants and commissioned local artist Judith Devons to

paint a colourful mural on the brick wall. They designed an information board with words by local historian Roger Chapman, and East Finchley Community Trust have sponsored the benches.

The garden forms part of the East Finchley pollinator trail and links up with a community garden further along The Walks. Provision for wildlife will be further enhanced by the forthcoming 'natural' refurbishment of the Market Play playground.

Resident Kathy Batten said: "We're looking forward to the spring colour when the bulbs come up. So many people walking by express their thanks and are constantly cheered up by the space. It has been transformational for the area."

Netball openings

By Diana Cormack
With netball being one of the country's fastest growing sports it is not surprising that East Finchley is following the trend. A second netball club has started at the Archer Academy on Wednesday evenings, with the previous group still meeting on Tuesdays (see *The Archer*, November 2021, page 4).

GRDNS Netball Women's League began in January and comprises six teams who play in a competitive but friendly way. They are made up of local women, as is reflected in the team names: Archer Arrows, Martin Blue Birds, Shooting Stars, Tetherdown Tigers, Tigers Too and Team Wren. Organiser and East Finchley mum Sonia Bownes told us she is hoping to add to the teams next season, which begins on 19 April.

She says: "If you've ever played netball before and liked it then you should join the league. It's recreational level, so all about fun. You can join as an individual and be matched to a team."

Sonia was full of praise for trainer Maya Somayeh, who works at Martin School and is deeply involved in a number of sports and devoted to passing on the skills involved. Indeed the two teenagers refereeing when I visited the club gained their qualifications under her guidance. One player said: "We come together on a Wednesday night for fun and not a gruelling battle. Just brilliant."

Starting at 7pm on Wednesdays and priced at £6 a session, you can join in the fun by emailing netball@lymoregardensfc.com

RICKY SAVAGE ...

Shop till you drop

It's Saturday and time for the weekly shop. You grab your list, bags for life and what's left of your sanity and head for the supermarket. First up is the car park challenge, driving round in ever increasing circles trying to find a bay that isn't occupied by one and a half Range Rovers.

Out of the car, you grab the last trolley and naturally it has a mind of its own and will only go sideways. This makes dodging the skateboarding kids, the 4x4 baby buggies and the kid throwing a tantrum in Aisle 7 even harder. Finally you queue for eons before some disinterested teenager reluctantly scans your stuff and you wrestle the trolley back to the car for the traffic jam back home.

That's when nostalgia creeps in like a stray cat and you think about how much better it must have been in the olden days. I mean, you've been to the farmer's market and bought wonderful hand pummelled sourdough and artisan pate. Wouldn't it be nice if shopping was like that, when the shopkeepers knew everyone and the sun always shined?

Back in the olden days it was. No supermarkets, no one-stop shopping, no bags for life, just something hand crocheted by great aunt Esmeralda from old socks. There was the butchers with its array of dead rabbits hanging outside like an advert for the ex-cast members of *Watership Down*, the bakers with its two types of bread, white or brown where 'French bread' was a long way from a baguette.

There might be a Sainsbury's, but not as you know it. Back then, there were marble counters, and you queued to get bacon, queued for cheese, queued for flour, queued for canned peas and queued again to pay. And that meant you got to hear all the local gossip about how her at number 36 had a fancy man or that Mrs Grumpy at number 27 was furious that her pedigree Siamese had been devalued by the local marauding tom.

And that was before you got to the greengrocers where your 5lbs of potatoes came with 10% soil. Then you had to conjure up something appetising for dinner. This was a world before avocados, when aubergines were foreign, Clingfilm hadn't been invented and frozen pizza was in the future. A time when there were no buggies but prams the size of wheelbarrows parked outside shops so that babies could chuck teddy bears out into the street.

So, next time your trolley weaves off in the wrong direction or the queue at the checkout is too long, remember that the olden days were different, even if they weren't always golden.

Charity offers free advice on getting into business

Spring is one of the best times to look for a new job or build a business. Research by recruiters in the UK has found that the start of the new financial year in April leads to new jobs being created, promotions being offered and opportunities for start-ups.

N2United connection

Business guru Sara Gatoff hopes to help. She will be known to those who attended an N2United networking meeting, where she delivered a very popular lecture on ten top tips for running small businesses effectively.

Sara, who has worked for Harrods, Tesco and advised many businesses over a career spanning three decades, has now joined Finchley-based Work Avenue, a charity set up to give free guidance to those who own companies, want to start one, or need advice in finding employment.



Business advice: Sara Gatoff

Work Avenue was created originally by and for the Jewish community but has since spread its wings to give free help and advice to all.

Sara would like to offer *Archer* readers a free one-hour initial session to understand their needs and then see if she can be of further help. All info can be found at theworkavenue.org.uk or by phoning the charity on 020 8371 3280.

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