



# RICKY SAVAGE ...

## Round the clock

In the wonderful world of modern health and safety if you turned up in North West France and said you wanted to close ten miles of local roads for a 24-hour race they would probably have you arrested. But it wasn't like that 100 years ago because back then they said yes and the Le Mans 24 Hours was born.

The idea was simple: ordinary sporting cars with at least two seats raced from 4pm on Saturday to 4pm on Sunday in mid-June when there was maximum daylight. In the first year, there were 20 starters with two drivers per car and the winner managed 128 laps at an average speed of about 65mph.

The following year Bentley turned up and won, then did it again in 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930. By now the race was fully established and British sports car fans added it to their to-see list. It came back after the war in 1949, running on the same circuit with the same unique traditions that had been set down in the 1920s.

Drivers didn't sit in the car to wait for the flag to drop, they stood on the other side of the track and ran across the road, before leaping into their car, starting the engine and heading off. Fine in the 1950s, but by the mid-1960s someone had invented seat belts and who wasted time doing them up? No one. Instead they tried to get them on as they hurtled down the 4 miles of the Mulsanne straight. That didn't stop until 1970.

And who said you had to have two drivers? In 1952 Pierre LeVagh managed over 23 hours of solo driving before the car gave up. Seeing as he was leading at the time it had everything you wanted from a French tragedy.

And yes, motor racing was dangerous. There's a long list of drivers who didn't make it, but the real tragedy happened in 1955 when LeVagh's Mercedes hit another car and was launched over the barriers, killing him and over 80 spectators. After that they tried to make the circuit safer. Nowadays it has chicanes on the Mulsanne Straight so no one can match the 253mph achieved in 1988. There are barriers everywhere and you have to have three drivers with no heroes trying to do it non-stop.

But it's still the only sports car race you've heard of, which is why when Enzo Ferrari refused to sell his company to Ford, Ford got their own back and built a car to win Le Mans. This year marks 100 years since that first race and after 50 years Ferrari are back. But Porsche or Toyota will probably win.

## Looking ahead to events in Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

**This year's programme of walks and woodland events is coming together, with details and updates available at coldfallwoods.co.uk**

You may have missed the photography walk (for adults) and Fun in the Forest (for children) in May but more events are planned. On Sunday 11 June, 10am to 12pm, local artist Laura Fox will lead an individual and collaborative drawing session in the wood, using various tools and media. All ages are welcome and all materials will be provided, with the emphasis on enjoyment and being mindful.

On Sunday 16 September Diana Clements of the Natural History Museum will lead a Geology walk, which may appeal to older children as well as adults. She is an expert who can recreate the far-distant past in our small ancient wood. For wild plant enthusiasts an autumn plant walk is planned for Sunday, 1 October, led by local botanist Linda Dolata. And there will probably be one or two bat walks, always popular with families, with dates still to be fixed.

Coldfall walks and events are organised by the Friends

group and are free, with voluntary donations welcomed. Meet usually at the east gate into the wood on Creighton Avenue, by the noticeboard, and remember to book a place as some events are for limited numbers.

## Tennis coaching

**As part of their centenary celebrations, The Avenue Tennis Club in East End Road, N2, is holding an open day on Sunday 11 June from 2pm.**

Visitors will have the chance to enjoy some free coaching and to play tennis with the coaches and members, and there will be discounts on memberships and summer camps for children. For more information visit [www.avenuetennisclub.co.uk](http://www.avenuetennisclub.co.uk) or email Head Coach Sally Bentley at [sally@avenuetennisclub.co.uk](mailto:sally@avenuetennisclub.co.uk) or call her on 07958 758580.



Councillor Alison Moore had a busy year as Barnet Mayor, including visiting shops during the Town Team's Eat Finchley event in March and the Wilmot Close Coronation party last month. Photos Mike Coles

## Alison comes back down to earth after her year as Mayor

By Ruth Anders

**After almost a year as 57<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Alison Moore has handed over her mayoral duties to Nagus Narenthira, who served as her deputy. Before the end of her tenure, Alison talked to *The Archer* about her year as Mayor.**

"It's been a wonderful time", she said. "I've undertaken more than 300 engagements in a year when we had the Platinum Jubilee, many organisations having their first face-to-face event after Covid, the death of the Queen with the obligatory mourning period and formalities, and the Coronation of the King. "We've also had a breadth of occasions like the annual Urban Gamz in Colindale's Graham Park, the Pearly Kings and Queens Harvest Festival in Bow, and the five-mile Whittington Walk for the London Mayors' Association from Highgate to the Mansion House for lunch."

### Robe pros and cons

Alison has revelled in every moment. Last July she told *The Archer* how she wanted to modernise the role. She chose not to wear the robe of office for Barnet Council meetings, although she enjoyed wearing it more than she'd anticipated.

"It's a great point of contact for people, a real talking point" she explained, "and there's so much tradition attached." She has used the robe for fun history lessons or 'robe shows' aimed at children and young people, this year including a group of young adult asylum seekers.

Alison has also enjoyed inviting young people from a range of backgrounds to speak at the start of Council meetings, a significant departure from the previous format of a chaplain and prayers.

### Meeting people

The element of the role Alison has enjoyed most is

meeting people of all ages and backgrounds. She admitted that she found officiating at the citizenship ceremonies unexpectedly moving and the connection with children has been a delight, especially the many who "ask for a hug".

She added, "The most challenging aspect of the role has probably been maintaining political neutrality. Oh, and avoiding ladders in my tights!"

### Spot the Festival steward

Having been told she looks like a pirate and a highwayman in her full regalia, will she miss the Mayoralty? "I'll still have a role as Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing, and meeting people across the borough has helped reinforce the need to tackle our health inequalities."



Laughter: On stage at last year's East Finchley Festival. photo: Tetiana Shedko

"I've had an amazing time as Mayor and learned a lot from the role, but I'm really looking forward to being back in East Finchley, at the Festival in a T-shirt and jeans and acting as 'toilet roll monitor' and general steward at large!"

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