



# Hand-drawn memories of a newspaper cartoon master

By Diana Cormack

Older readers may remember that Christmas was never complete without a copy of the Giles cartoon annual. With his regular output of three cartoons a week on topical themes in the *Daily Express*, there were plenty to fill the pages of these favourite stocking fillers.

Being deaf in one ear and blind in one eye following a motorbike accident, Ronald Giles was rejected for war service but did become the paper's correspondent cartoonist with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army in the Second World War. Later he was assigned to the Coldstream Guards unit that liberated the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Following the war he introduced his imaginary Giles family, featuring the formidable Grandma Giles with her offspring and grandchildren. These highly detailed drawings, which first appeared in 1945, gave him the chance to comment

widely on current affairs for over 50 years. He also designed Christmas cards to donate to friends and favourite charities, one being the Royal National Lifeboat Institution of which he was Life President.

A regular recipient of these was my mother-in-law Gladys. From 1937 to 1938, at the age of 22, she became the Giles family lodger in Edgware to help cover the bills, following the death of his older brother.

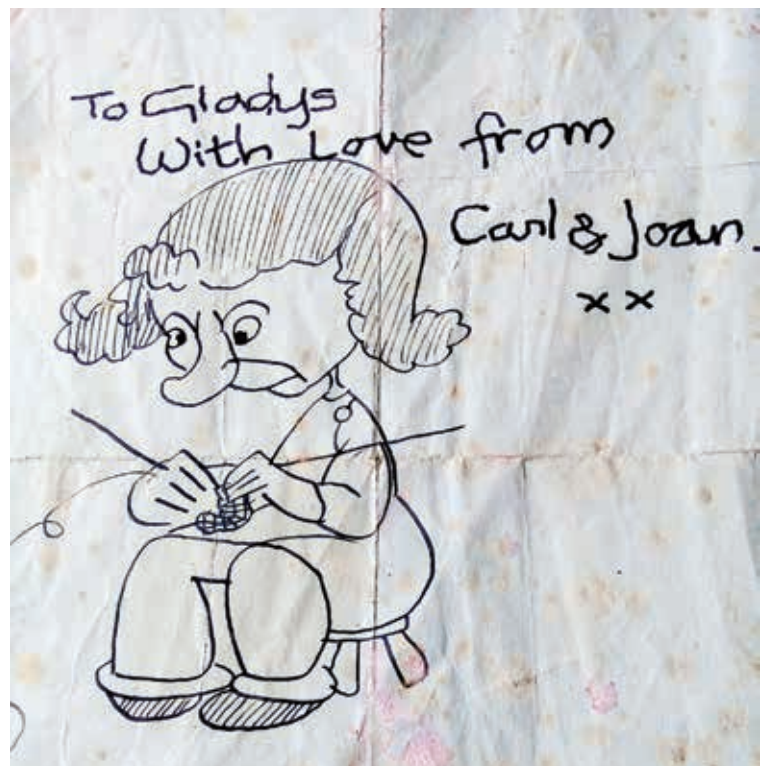
At that time Giles drew cartoons for the Sunday paper *Reynold's News*. Later he changed his name to Carl after friends commented that he looked like film star Boris Karloff. Hence all

the cards she received from him over the years were signed Carl and Joan (his first cousin whom he married in East Finchley).

## Memorabilia

My mother-in-law kept all those cards, along with newspaper cuttings and articles about her old friend, who passed away in 1995, eight months after his wife's death.

My husband and I recently sorted through this memorabilia and took it to the museum in Ipswich, where the couple made their home. They had no children, but it seems some of Giles' characters were the inspiration for the *Beano* comic's fabulous Bash Street Kids. We



Personal touch: The cartoon drawn by Giles for Diana's mother-in-law Gladys

were delighted to know that what Gladys had carefully and lovingly kept was to be put on display and credited to her.

## From The Archer archives ...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:  
November 2013

Future prospects continued to improve for Avenue House, now called Stephens House, in East End Road, N3, as Barnet Council awarded a £25,000 grant to the Avenue House Estate Trust. This was to be paid in three instalments during 2013-2016 and would unlock £1.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for improving outbuildings and grounds. The house and grounds were bequeathed to the people of Finchley by Henry Stephens, founder of Stephens Ink, when he died in 1918.

15 years ago:  
November 2008

Many of our older readers will remember the Mandarin Chinese restaurant, which closed in November 2008 after over 20 years in business. It was one of the High Road's longest established restaurants but William, whose parents first opened the Mandarin, and his family's farewell notice in the window confirmed the closure and wished all former customers well. The site is currently occupied by Going Greek.

23 years ago:  
November 2000

The Phoenix, one of the oldest working cinemas in Britain, was granted Grade II listed building status by English Heritage. General Manager at the time, Ruth Mulandi, said "We feel good about it. It's great to know we're not the only ones who think the auditorium is well worth preserving." Twenty-three years later, the Phoenix is still entertaining East Finchley residents with a wide-ranging programme of films.



Gifts galore: The campaign aims to make sure young people in need aren't forgotten

## Make a young person's Christmas

An organisation has put out a call for people to donate Christmas gifts for children and young people in need in Barnet. The presents will go to young carers, young people in care and those families most in need.

The Young Barnet Foundation runs its gift campaign every year in partnership with 200 trusted grassroots charities. Last year more than 2,500 donations flooded in, including toys and games, toiletries and some items that specifically matched children's interests.

Organiser Maria Copelin said Barnet's green and leafy appearance can mask significant areas of deprivation. One in nine young people in the borough are thought to be living in poverty.

"Many of our local charities are stretched to capacity and so we support them through running a centralised Christmas campaign. We aim to reduce isolation for young people and create a positive touch point with local charity services that can help them," said Maria.

There are several ways in which supporters can donate. New toys and gifts can be dropped off at the foundation's offices at Old East Barnet Library, 85 Brook Hill Road, East Barnet, EN4 8SG, or items can be purchased from the foundation's wish list on Amazon. Alternatively, people can donate money to purchase age-appropriate gifts. Find out more at [www.youngbarnet-foundation.org.uk/christmas-campaign](http://www.youngbarnet-foundation.org.uk/christmas-campaign) or via the QR code here.



## Choir is back with a Baroque spectacular

North London Chorus is back this month with a programme of Baroque music celebrating the genius of Bach and Handel. The centrepiece of the concert will be Bach's *Magnificat in D*, accompanied on period instruments by the Meridian Sinfonia.

Bass soloist Trevor Eliot Bowers will sing Bach's aria *Grosser Herr* and soprano soloist Ellie Neate will perform Handel's *Laudate pueri (Psalm 112)*, accompanied by the choir. Handel composed this work in 1707 when he was only 22.

Mezzo-soprano Bethan Langford and tenor Graham Neal complete the starry line-

up of soloists. The strings and continuo will showcase their talents in Handel's *Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 7 in Bb*.

The concert takes place on Saturday 25 November at St James Church, Muswell Hill, at 7.30pm. Tickets from £13 are available from [northlondon-chorus.org/tickets](http://northlondon-chorus.org/tickets) or St James Church bookshop.



Stirring sound: The North London Chorus in concert

## Frost fair

The Finchley WI and Stephens House and Gardens in East End Road, N3, are hosting their 12<sup>th</sup> annual Frost Fair on Sunday 26 November from 10.30 to 5pm.

A wide range of beautiful gifts and treats will be on sale, all made by local artisans, and at affordable prices. Choose from edibles, jewellery, candles, room scents, artwork, knitted and textile gifts and more. The event supports local charities.

## Calendar of a year on Long Lane Pasture

Looking for a 2024 calendar that supports a local good cause?

The Long Lane Pasture calendar is available from this month, priced £5 and showing 12 natural scenes photographed on the nature reserve. Visit the pasture, opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3, on any Saturday morning from 10am to noon, to pick up your copy.