



Share your memories in time for 50th festival

By David Melsome

Preparations have started for next year's East Finchley Festival with an invitation for all to get involved and an appeal for people to send in their memories and photos from festivals down the years.

The community event in Cherry Tree Wood next June will be the festival's 50th year. Although the very first one happened in 1972, two years have been missed, one for legal reasons and one due to flooding.

Open meeting

The East Finchley Festival volunteer organisers are holding an open meeting from 7.45pm on Thursday 9 November at the Old White Lion pub, Great North Road, N2, where every-

one is welcome to come along to share ideas and get involved.

The festival always used to be opened by a parade of carnival floats from local schools and community groups making its way down the High Road and into Cherry Tree Wood. Do you have photos of those parades? Or maybe you took snaps on the festival field or captured some of the performers who have taken to the festival's two stages, including the late great Amy



Street parade: The Wilmot Centre youth club push a car down the High Road in the mid-80's, following pupils from Martin school.

Winehouse, who performed in 2003, just before the release of her first album, Frank.

Send your photos and memories to the festival organisers, who will include as many as they can on their website and in the official programme for next year's event. You can email eastfinchleyfestival@gmail.com or upload them directly to the festival's Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/eastfinchleyfestival

Friends of Cherry Tree Wood make history

At the same time, the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood have started work on a history of the festival in time for next year. They are asking people to share their memories of the event through the 1970s and 1980s

right up to the present day.

Roger Chapman, of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said: "Initial archive research shows that the first festival was organised by the East Finchley Neighbourhood Association in June 1972. We are particularly keen to hear from people involved in the period 1972 – 1982 as this is the time of which we have least knowledge."

Tell your story

Share your memories and your photos with the Friends at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2, on Saturday 18 November between 2pm and 4pm. The Friends will scan any photos and record your stories. You can also send words and photos by email to friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com.



Half century: Festival compere Charles O'Toole in 1999. Charles is the only member of the festival committee to have been involved from the very beginning.

A life well lived and with so much to tell

By Daphne Chamberlain

John Hajdu arrived in England in 1957 as a penniless refugee, knowing nobody and speaking only a little English. He is now the recently retired Chair of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, a former magistrate and police adviser, and a Haringey Hero for his contribution to the borough.

John also has an MBE for services to Holocaust education and commemoration. He often tells schoolchildren his early life story, and why a tiny teddy bear is one of his most treasured possessions.

He was born in 1937 in Budapest, when life for his middle-class Jewish family was comfortable and peaceful. In his first seven years that life was shattered. The Hungarian government supported Nazi Germany in the Second World War, imposed savagely anti-semitic laws, and eventually collaborated with German occupation. In 1944, the notorious Adolf Eichmann set up his HQ in Budapest.

John's father had been sent to a forced labour camp. In a later round-up, his mother was sent to a concentration camp, but a non-Jewish family sheltered his aunt and himself in a cupboard, at great personal risk.

Ghetto

Eventually they were

also found and forced into a ghetto containing 50,000 Jews. Around 20 people were crammed into each flat. They fetched water in a bucket, and had no electricity, medical care or cleaning materials. They existed mostly on horse meat, bread and dripping. Refuse was not collected. Many died and bodies lay in the street.

Once, their building was bombed. John remembers his fear as masonry fell around them, and then bewilderment when they emerged into an almost obliterated city. That was when the Soviet army liberated the ghetto, just before the retreating Germans could blow it up.

Survival

John's parents both survived but were divided by personal circumstances. The new Soviet regime was harsh and restrictive to all, culminating in the students' uprising in 1956. Over 300 demonstrators were gunned down in Buda-



Long service: John Hajdu and his wife Maureen at his retirement from the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association

pest's main square, and more than 2,500 Hungarians killed.

John, his mother and a friend managed to escape to Austria. After crawling through mud, negotiating landmines and wading through an icy river, they crossed the border via an unguarded watchtower. They had found freedom, but had nothing but themselves

and John's tiny teddy, which accompanied him everywhere.

Their friend remained in Austria but John and his mother secured two of the last permits to enter England. John forged a highly successful career in the hotel business and is deservedly proud of his service to the community as a British citizen.

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:

October 2013

East Finchley viewers of ITV's *This Morning* were amazed when the programme's Take a Moment slot showed Barbara Windsor singing along with clients at the Ann Owens Age UK Centre in Oak Lane. The late *EastEnders* star was a keen supporter of Age UK. She took time to chat with those enjoying a sociable get together and helped to serve tea and cakes.

15 years ago:

October 2008

A balloon released by children at Holy Trinity Primary School arrived home after a four-year odyssey and a round trip spanning more than 1,000 miles. The tagged balloon was one of hundreds sent flying by pupils in 2004 to mark a visit by the Bishop of London. It was spotted on a north German beach in August 2008 and kindly returned to the school by the finder, herself a school teacher. Headteacher Tim Bowden said: "It arrived in its envelope full of sand: it is the genuine article."

23 years ago:

October 2000

The traffic island installed in the High Road to restrict access to and from Baronsmere Road continued to cause controversy. Drivers had been seen doing dangerous U-turns around the island to turn into Baronsmere from the North and some had even driven the wrong way along Fairlawn Avenue to avoid the queue to turn right at the traffic lights at the High Road/Fortis Green junction. Businesses in the vicinity said they have also suffered from the changed road layout but, 23 years later, the traffic island remains in place.