



125 years: Bishop John Sherrington, centre, and worshippers at the St Mary's celebration service

Double celebration for church community

On Sunday 17 September, the community of St Mary's Catholic Church on the High Road, N2, celebrated a double anniversary. Bishop John Sherrington presided at a special Mass to commemorate 125 years since the parish of St Mary's was established in East Finchley and 70 years since the present church building was opened.

Attending the celebration were Mike Freer MP, Cllr Alison Moore and three of the surviving past parish priests. As well as the present parish priest Fr Peter Scott lighting 12 church consecration candles, the celebration involved a procession of children from Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School in Bow Lane, N12, and an offertory dance by the Nigerian Calabir Union Dancers.

The original St Mary's was situated on the now demolished



Victorian: The original church in the former Chapel Street

Chapel Street, roughly where Chapel Court is now, off Market Place. The church was badly

damaged during an air raid in 1940 and the present St Mary's on the High Road was the first new church to be built after the Second World War. Its unique designs and blueprints are held at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

"It was an amazing day," said Fr Peter, "full of prayer, solemnity and laughter. We have steadfastly put down roots to be here for another 125 years."



Unusual suspects: The cast of Murder with Ghosts get ready for their comedy whodunnit

Ghostly goings-on for Garden Suburb group

'Ridiculous and hilarious' are the words used to describe the next production by the Garden Suburb Theatre group, playing this month Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate village.

Murder With Ghosts is a comedy murder mystery written by Simon Brett that sees Lady Cholmondley invite a group of friends and relatives to Quittenden Manor for a weekend party because a medium has told her it will be her last. Can debonair amateur sleuth Peregrine Villiers solve the mystery of who might kill Lady Cholmondley before she meets her fate? Director Miranda Cheesman says: "I really wanted to bring something fun and spooky to

Highgate in time for Halloween. *Murder With Ghosts* has been such a fun play to work on, all the cast are basically in a competition to make the audience laugh as much as possible. We're also hoping to add a few spooky surprises to keep the audience on their toes."

The modern farce runs from Thursday 12 to Sunday 15 October, with matinees on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th. Find out more and book tickets at www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com.

Backyard ball game becomes a global sport

By Callum Conway

A racquet sport that started as a backyard game in America in the 1960s is beginning to take root in Britain and now you can play it in East Finchley. Called pickleball, it combines the skills needed for tennis, badminton and table tennis, and can be played at a fast or slow pace.

The people behind pickleball, which has millions of players and a professional league in the US, say it's "easy to learn, but hard to master" so I wanted to see if they were right. I contacted Lemon Pickleball, which is run locally by Alex, Ash and Theo, to get a game. Sessions are run at Christ's College Finchley, off East End Road, N2, and at Fortismere School in Muswell Hill.

Much easier

As a keen tennis player, I was pleasantly surprised at how much easier pickleball was to pick up. Within the first 20 minutes, I was already having long rallies with my fellow players

and by the end of the session, I felt like I'd been playing for years.

You play with paddles and hit a hollow plastic ball over a net on an indoor or outdoor court, marked similarly to a tennis court.

If you enjoy tennis but find it too difficult or if you want to play a new sport but don't know where to start then this may well be for you. Lemon Pickleball runs sessions almost every day of the week at three venues in East Finchley, Muswell Hill and Maida Vale. Check them out at www.lemonpickleball.com or contact head coach Alex on 07946 540502.



See you in court: Pickleball is played with paddles and a lighter ball

Everything in the Green Man garden is coming up lovely

By Diana Cormack

A dream came true for Strawberry Vale resident Tom Matthews with the opening of a kitchen garden at the rear of the estate's Green Man Community Centre.

Setting it up was all his idea and work began on the project in January. Eight months later a variety of plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables bear witness to the hard work put in by so many.

At the opening event on Friday 18 August guests were politely welcomed by Tom's eight-year-old grandson Sean. Tom and East Finchley ward councillor Alison Moore gave a massive thanks to all the volunteers who had helped along the way.

Special mention was made of Green Man caretaker Gary Bourne, who had given hours of free time to manage and maintain the site, and Chris Walters from Peabody Estates, who donated earth, mulch and seeds, plus East Barnet Food Hub's Max and Lawrence, who provided black boxes as containers.

Bugs and birds

Particularly impressive was



Crop ready: Councillor Alison Moore and Tom Matthews in the Green Man kitchen garden

the input from youngsters of Hope, North London's weekly group meetings. Tom invited them to take part in a competition for planning the garden and their colourful and innovative designs were on display in the Green Man, divided into four age groups.

All received special certificates as prizes and examples of their ideas such as bug hotels

and bird boxes could be seen outside, along with the plants they were growing.

"Now they know that tomatoes don't just come out of Tesco," said Tom, who hopes the experience will encourage them to participate in other activities. He also hopes the garden will become a community hub where local people can meet and socialise.