



Tennis club sale to cover costs of church revamp

By Diana Cormack

The large number of comments made on the planning application for the redevelopment of Fortis Green Tennis Club, off Southern Road, N2, caused the end date of the consultation to be pushed back to 10 June (see *The Archer*, June 2024). Results then showed that there were over 120 objections to the proposals and five in support, which included the site owners Muswell Hill United Reform Church (URC).

The church is proposing to sell off the site to developers the Capstone Group to build five new houses and a block of three flats on part of the site. The tennis club will be given a new club house but the number of courts will be reduced from four to three.

In its response to the planning application, the church gave a brief history of its relationship with the tennis club and its development over the years. It stated that the recent redevelopment of the church's main building on the corner of Queens Avenue and Tetherdown in Muswell Hill had led to an over-running of costs, for which a loan was secured. Repayment of this would be managed by selling off the tennis club site "while continuing to keep a tennis facility for the community".

In its own response, Fortis Green Tennis Club stated that it has always been open to discussion but that "the URC and the developers have chosen to submit the scheme without addressing any of the club's serious concerns. The present proposals cannot be supported but the club is ready to further engage and discuss any alternative proposals".

With no date at the time of writing for a decision to be made, the fact that the tennis courts are in Haringey but entry for any building work and future vehicular access would be across Barnet land could influence the result. In fact, as an adjoining borough, Barnet Council has raised objections to the proposals, with many of its concerns matching those of local residents.



World in motion: Malcolm Dunkeld plans one of his ambitious motorbiking adventures. Photo Mike Coles

Ride pillion in Malcolm's motorbiking memoirs

By Ruth Anders

Seven years ago, local resident Malcolm Dunkeld undertook a remarkable journey. On his specially acquired Triumph Tiger XCX, named Hecate, he biked across Europe, Central Asia, Siberia, and via Japan to Australia. On South Australia's Oodnadatta Track, after an almost fatal accident, he was rescued by the Flying Doctor and spent weeks recovering in hospital, his wife Gillian beside him.

Now he has published an enthralling book about his immensely complex expedition. It was wanderlust that sent him out on the road, he says, combined with a highly personal need to face his demons and overcome his fear of being alone, "... something which had deeply frightened me since boyhood".

Whether describing the Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, the treacherous Trans-Siberian Highway, Vladivostok or Tokyo, he writes with riveting style. Riding through vast forests and across bleak deserts, he describes the unlikely situations in which he found himself, reflecting on the beauty of his environments, his irritations and his loneliness. Encountering hospitality, curiosity and suspicion in equal parts, he meets ruffians, prostitutes, extreme risk-takers and many just keen to help.

Much of the book reads like a magical letter from an old friend, peppered with chatty nuggets of history. Towards the end he tells the reader: "On my journey I had ridden across wild lands - the Kyzylkum Desert, Pamir Mountains, steppes of Kazakhstan, the taiga of Siberia - and journeying along (Australia's) Eyre Highway gave me the same tingling feelings I had in those places: awe at the solitude, vastness and beauty of the wilderness, combined with fear where a full complement of

dangers waits those who break down or get lost."

I first wrote about Malcolm and his adventures in *The Archer* in July 2018. This book brings to vivid life every step of the journey. By the end, we feel not only that we have been riding pillion with Malcolm, but also that we know this audacious traveller in an inti-

mate and rewarding way. Our courageous neighbour's fascinating book is a thoroughly recommended read.

Motorbiking Mountain and Steppe, Forever Eastward by Malcolm Dunkeld is available to buy from Amazon, WH Smith, Coles Books, Waterstones, Foyles and via the Whittles Publishing website.



High tea: Five Bells Computer Club volunteers meet Barnet Mayor Cllr Tony Vourou. Photo Toni Koppel

Tea time treat for computer club

By Toni Koppel

To acknowledge the 40th anniversary of Volunteers' Week in June, four volunteers from the Five Bells Computer Club in East Finchley were invited to a scrumptious tea with Mayor of Barnet Tony Vourou, at Hendon Town Hall. Around 35 volunteers from many different organisations received certificates of recognition and personal thanks from the Mayor and we were honoured to be there.

If you are able to offer or are looking for free and friendly help with your smartphone, laptop or tablet, then come and join one of our Tuesday sessions between 2pm and 4pm at the Five Bells Pub. We can be contacted at fivebells.computerclub@gmail.com. New volunteers and new learners are always welcome.

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