Inside a house full of history

By Margaret Crockett

Number 1 King Street is a fine property in the heart of East Finchley's old village dating back to the middle of the 19th century. A listed building due to its architectural interest, aesthetic merits and intactness, it has a fascinating history of owners and occupiers.

Sisterhood: Far left, the front aspect of 1 King Street in the 1990s when it was occupied by nuns, who enjoyed the property's private rear garden. Photos courtesy of the Daughters of Wisdom

Hugh Petrie, Heritage Development Officer at Barnet Local Studies, told The Archer that the house is not on the Tithe Map of the parish, drawn up before 1850 but is on the Ordnance Survey of 1863.

Hugh said: "I've always thought that this was the home of Edward Claridge. He was landlord of the nearby Red Lion pub, and had property in Church (Bulls) Lane, and is first on the list of the 1871 and 1881 census. But equally it could be Edmund Graves, a plumber, and Ann Graves, his wife, a laundress, who appear in Kings Corner in 1861 with their five children."

By the 1980s the house was being used as a small nursing home. Then readers may remember that from 1989 the property was home to nuns from the order of the Daughters of Wisdom. The Order purchased Homeleigh House next door in 1992 and internal access was created between the two properties.

The Sisters were active in the local community. For example, Sister Avis taught at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in North Finchley and Sister Kathleen Mary revived the Wednesday Club for elderly parishioners at the parish church of St Mary's in the High Road, N2, which included cooking their mid-day meal, taking them on outings, as well as cooking Christmas dinner. The Sisters had frequent visitors to their house, including Archbishop Vincent Nichols, then head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Modern makeover: The rear garden as it is today

Over time most of the Sisters moved to new communities. By 2012 only two sisters remained and both properties were sold. Although sold as a vacant possession, the current owner Alan Warwick was happy to rent the nuns the ground floor of number 1 until 2014, when the remaining Sisters moved to Romsey. Number 1 King Street then became home to the Little Ladybirds independent childcare facility.

The fully restored house as it looks in 2026

After the childcare facility moved out last year, Mr Warwick renovated Number 1 inside and out. "Numerous local residents have stopped me in the street to thank me for doing such a lovely job in saving this most attractive house in the centre of the old village from further neglect," he said.

The handsome property is now up for sale, ready to start the next chapter in its long and colourful life.

Summer weather for autumn nature club

By Diana Cormack

On the first Sunday of October, the final meeting this year of the Children's Nature Club took place in Cherry Tree Wood. With the seasonal theme of autumn, an enthusiastic bunch of children aged eight and under launched into their interpretation of that time of year.

Using crayons, felt tips, leaves and glue, they produced some interesting and colourful artwork, with rainbows being a favourite feature.

None of those was in sight on what was a beautiful summery afternoon, though there were many falling leaves to accompany everyone singing 'Autumn Leaves are Falling Down' led by Friends of Cherry Tree Wood organiser Kate Brown.

Assisted by Friends leader Roger Chapman, the free event took place in the Nature Circle next to the children's play park. Keep in touch with **friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com** for news of the start of next year's Nature Club

Youngsters get busy creating art at the Nature Club

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