



# SHOP OF THE MONTH Carpet Showroom

by Claire Wilmans

With over 30 years in the flooring business, Ron Bowers is full of tips when it comes to carpet buying. Think how long you want it to last and whether it is important to you that it keeps its appearance. In the long run, cheap carpets can be expensive as they start looking scruffy sooner and you need to replace them more often.

The Carpet Showroom aims to be a "one stop shop" for both homes and businesses. There is expert advice on choosing flooring to fit their budget with free estimate, measurement and planning of how to cut and fit the carpet with minimum waste. All the fitters who work with Ron share his policy of straight talking, service and determination to do the best possible job for the client.

Ron Bowers' career began when he started a building business at twenty one. After an approach by a company who made flooring maintenance products, Ron ran their floor maintenance company for two years until 1963 when he set up his own flooring maintenance business operating out of Five Bells Forge off East End Road.

Five years later Bowers and

Co. carpet services was formed to supply and fit hard flooring to architects and building firms. The showroom on the High Road was a show case for clients to chose the flooring they visualised for the offices they had designed or built. When office taste moved from hard floors to carpet, the business expanded to offer carpets, vinyl, cushion, laminates & damp proofing.

It is the unusual challenges which give Ron a buzz (like being asked to design a carpet by a client restoring an ornate old building). He is also determined never to be beaten. He loves it when clients thank him for the work done and knows that he has done the best possible job for them. Ron would only ever be self-employed and clearly loves his work.

# Carers' Centre

By Daphne Chamberlain

The needs of carers were brought to our attention recently by the visit of Princess Anne to the Barnet Carers' Centre in North Finchley.

Caring is a 24-hour job, and those who do it need support from people who understand their problems.

The Ann Owen Centre in Oak Lane provides just that support. It is part of the Barnet Carers network, and was set up for the benefit of people in the East Finchley area.

Anyone caring for the elderly and/or mentally or physically handicapped is welcome to attend meetings at the Centre.

At the moment, there are about ten regular attendees. They get together for a chat and mutual support, but there are also experienced staff to offer practical advice.

The meetings are on the third Tuesday in every month, from 10.30 - 12 noon.

The Ann Owen Centre is in Oak Lane, N2 and the phone number is 0181 346 8736.

# A £30 Cream Tea

by Andrew Taylor

I had a marvellous time at the Archer Auction. As the Archer founder, I had attended with the desire to contribute a full hundred pounds. This is exactly what I did. My first purchase was a thirty pound bid for "tea for two" at the House of Commons. This was with our MP for Finchley, Hartley Booth as host.

I telephoned his office and spoke to a charming lady who turned out to be Adrienne, his wife. We went through our diaries and chose the 19th March for the occasion. "Come early at a quarter to Four", Adrienne warned "as the best tables soon fill up."

My wife Pam and I were looking forward to the day. At half past three we strolled though St Stephen's Gate for our appointment. It was nice going to the front of a five hundred strong queue of tourists - we felt rather important. Going through the security checks were daunting! The 'security arch' was much more sensitive than Heathrow. I had to remove just about everything from my pockets before we were finally allowed through. We reached reception where I asked for our host. Whilst we were waiting we saw a number of familiar faces including Tony Benn.

Mr Booth appeared right on time and, after saying our "hello's", we made our way to tea. We ended up in one of the House of Lords tea-rooms perhaps they have better cream cakes there? Hartley made sure we had a window seat so we could watch life on the Thames roll by.

When we mentioned how much we had bid for the tea Hartley was appalled. "Thirty pounds? Oh dear! I do hope you think it will be worth it" he exclaimed! It was, every penny! Not only was Hartley charming company, but his questions, and his answers to our questions, were not those of a typical MP. He really wanted to know what we thought of the things, and gave us full and frank answers to our questions. Even when I told him we had moved from being Conservatives to being active in the UK Independence Party, he was not put off and asked us lots of questions on what we stood for.

It would have been nice to have persuaded Hartley to cross the floor on the last day of Parliament but I couldn't bring myself to ask. It was only too evident that he wasn't the sort of person who would stab his party in the back.

We asked him if he would try to get into politics (he will not be standing in the election). Hartley is a barrister and the profession, like politics, is very much full time. He told us there might be too many Conservative MP's senior to himself, chasing by-election seats immediately after the General Election. Also, if he became involved with legal work again, he might not want to make the change back to politics. He mused: "it looks like I'll have to go back to being rich again."



John Marshall, MP, meets committee members of Khawateen and Muslim Womens Lunch Club.

# Muslim Women's Lunch Club

The Muslim Women's Lunch Club, run by East Finchley Contact in conjunction with Khawateen Association of the Asian Muslim Ladies in Barnet, is the first of its kind in the borough.

When John Marshall MP visited the club recently, the event was featured in the Daily Jang-an Urdu newspaper circulated throughout Europe.

Most of the ladies who lunch are senior citizens and or house-bound. A Barnet Council minibus brings them to the Contact premises, where the club provides vital social contact. There are about 250 Muslims in East

Finchley, mainly from India, Pakistan and East Africa. They form a minority of the local Asian population, most of whom are Gujerati speaking Hindus. In fact almost none of the club's members knew each other before attending their first meeting. (Some are referred by Social Services, and others by word of mouth.)

As the room at Contact is tiny, no more than 15 women can meet at a time, but this contributes to a very friendly atmosphere. Sometimes their after meal activity is just in house entertainment singing, telling jokes or swapping recipes. On other occasions there are dressmaking sessions or visiting speakers. One of the most popular visitors was

a beautician who demonstrated facial massage.

Now that they have got each other, the ladies have already organised coach outings to various and varied places. They have been to Lakeside, bath, Syon Park and Aga Khan Centre, the Hindu temple at Neasden and Finchley's multi-screen cinema. However, judging by the laughter when they mentioned it, one of the most memorable outings was to Margate's Adventure Playground!

All these activities are arranged and paid for through Khawateen, and their co-

ordinator/cook is Mrs Luqumani. Though not a professional, she catered for gatherings of up to 400 when her husband was president of the Islam Association. (She had teams of boys to carry and wash the meat!) Coming from India, as she does, her meals often show the influence of Hindu and Arab friends.

The Muslim Women's Lunch Club meets at Contact, East Finchley Neighbourhood Centre. Entrance in King Street off Church Lane. Tel 0181 444 1162. Meetings are usually on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 11.30am - 2.15pm.

By Daphne Chamberlain

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