



Making Light of Things

By Diana Cormack

By the time this paper is published, the High Road in East Finchley should be decorated with the last Christmas lights of the millennium. This will be due largely to the efforts of one man.

Regular readers will know that this is Lawrie Chivers of A1 Motors though, typically, Lawrie maintains that it is not just him and pays particular tribute to Dino Loizou of East Finchley Electrical Contractors. Hopefully, other businesses will do their bit and the fund raising suggested in our last issue will produce some of the necessary cash.

Touching

Lawrie was touched by the generosity of an eighty-year-old lady who was born and bred in East Finchley. She came to his shop and presented him with an envelope containing £100!

An American came in with his baby and handed over £50. It would be nice to hear of more incidents like that. Some local pubs are putting out collection bottles and our schools have agreed to raise money too.

High Cost

Barnet's contribution has been made on the basis that East Finchley buys the lights for future use. It costs around £800 for each lamp post to be decorated, so there will be fewer of them this year and children of Martin School will no longer be able to gasp with delight as they come out and see them at home time. Lawrie and Dino have had to underwrite £6,000 from Barnet Council and they are hoping that some of the well-known names in the High Road will be more generous. Perhaps they should ask Father Christmas!

Santa monitor

Look out for notices about his grotto appearing somewhere in the area in December. There are no prizes for guessing who is organising that as well!

Henrietta Barnett head retires

Following the announcement of her resignation from the school headship, the Henrietta Barnett School Parents' Campaign wishes Jane de Swiet well in her early retirement.

For 10 years Jane de Swiet has been an exceptional leader of a school described in the most recent OFSTED inspection as having "excellent results and a first rate ethos" and which has consistently ranked among the top ten state schools in the country.

Ill-health has now forced her premature departure but, although it is a huge blow for the school and we will all miss her, the campaign to retain grammar school status and the high standards for which the school is so well known is not affected in any way and will continue with renewed vigour.

The school now looks forward to appointing a new head who will maintain the school's national reputation and continue its commitment to single sex education of the highest standard for all the girls in our school.

Henrietta Barnett School Parents' Campaign can be contacted at: PO Box No 20357, London NW11 8ZX. Tel: 020 8349 3113

CONTACT CONTACT, the East Finchley Neighbourhood Group, who support the elderly and housebound in the area, are appealing for **VOLUNTEERS** with an hour or two to spare to help with shopping and odd jobs. Expenses will be paid. If you are willing to help a neighbour, please call the co-ordinator on 020 8444 1162.



**SMARTER SAVING
BETTER BORROWING**

Would you like somewhere ethical to put your savings whilst supporting the community?

Come and join Finchley's new credit union -
Saturday 15 January at
East Finchley Library 2-4 pm
(bring 2 forms of ID, one bearing your home address)
or call Kim George on 020 8444 8673 for information.

Heading Off

By Diana Cormack

Christmas celebrations at Holy Trinity C of E Primary School in Eagan's Close, East Finchley, will be tinged with sadness this year.

At the end of term the children will be saying farewell to their head teacher, Chris Flathers. After only two years, Chris is leaving to take up the very challenging leadership of a school in Grahame Park, not far from the RAF Museum in Colindale.

Flather's time

During his short time at the school Mr Flathers and his hard working staff have achieved a great deal. With the help of parents, the outside area has blossomed, not only with flowers, bushes and trees but also with shaded seating areas and interesting play provision, plus new fencing necessary for the chil-

dren's safety.

Inside there is now a computer suite replacing the old library and toilet area, while the practical area has been completely revamped, as has the entrance and office section. New furniture and equipment can be seen in the classrooms and the pupils have



Chris Flathers with pupils at Holy Trinity. Photo by Diana Cormack

been given a new look too, with a revised school uniform.

High Standards Together

Chris's interest in music and football has been reflected in the ability of the children, who have also benefited and developed in many other ways from his ideas and innovations. This includes a successful OFSTED inspection. His talents have obviously not gone unnoticed in the borough, but it is a great shame that East Finchley is to lose them after so short a time. His successor, Mr Duncan Mills, deputy-head of St John's C E School, Friern Barnet has a hard act to follow!

Mr Flathers says, "I've thor-

oughly enjoyed being part of the very special Holy Trinity school community. It has been a thrilling and exciting experience being Head of a school which has improved so much in the last two years."

New heading

"I believe that the school will go from strength to strength because of the outstanding commitment and dedication of the staff, governors and children.

I hope that my contribution has brought about new confidence, ambition and success.

Holy Trinity will always be special to me and I leave with so many good memories. Thank you everyone."

Out to pasture

A stretch of open grassland, bordering Long Lane and the North Circular Road, designated a public open space, is now under threat from Barnet Council who want to sell it to developers who wish to build 89 flats there. But environmentalists wish to protect wildlife and keep the land as a nature reserve for public use.

A hundred voices

At a protest held outside the pasture gates, over a hundred campaigners made their voices heard against council plans to sell off this land. Annie Brown who is chairperson of Barnet's Wild Life Trust said, "It was a brilliant and amazing demo. All kinds of people turned up, not only those interested in wildlife. We think it will make people realise that a lot of people are against the development. The main thing people are annoyed about is that this land is public open space and the council are proposing to concrete it over without consulting residents".

A final decision on the future of this grassland is expected next month after an environmental survey has been carried out.

(Almost) clean bowled

At Muswell Hill Bowling Club's presentation of prizes, Brian Conisbee of Bedford Road walked off with a good haul. He won the Men's Championship (defeating another East Finchley resident, Eddie Dyer of Blackdown Close), the Men's Handicap, Mixed Pairs, and Men's Pairs (in which Bill Barker of Brownswell Road was a runner-up), and was himself runner-up in the Mixed Triples.

Let's not fail our children

By Naomi Burgess

Despite the setback of having to cancel our meeting at Underhill on October 4, the campaign to end admission to Barnet Secondary Schools by academic selection is rolling along. We already have 500 of our first 1,000 signatures.

Altogether 30,000 parents will be eligible to vote if, and only if, we can collect 6,000 signatures to show that we want to have a vote. We have a pre-millennium target of 1,000 signatures, which is approximately 50 signatures per school. We have supporter/organisers at Brookland Juniors and Garden Suburb; is there a local parent out there from St Theresa's who would like to help co-ordinate signature collections? We would also like a volunteer co-ordinator and collector at Our Lady of Muswell and St James CE.

1. We want to give local children their schools back.
2. We want to stop 11-year-olds being branded as failures.
3. We want all children to have a chance to go to the schools that currently have limited access.
4. We want our local taxes to be spent for all our children.
5. Open access, on average, is likely to mean an additional two to three higher grades for each child across the borough.

Even an erstwhile traditionalist paper like the Daily Telegraph published a letter from the Head of an Independent

School, complaining about league tables. The school had come 245th in the A-level results league table, which was halfway down The Telegraph's third division. The Head pointed out that, had he turned away the bottom ten per cent of his A-level students, his results would have soared, but he would have failed the students. I couldn't agree more, let's not continue to fail any more of our Barnet children. Let's stop three Barnet Secondary Schools choosing whom they want to teach, leaving the other schools to teach those they reject!

Can you help?

You can sign at The Bargain Centre, 212 East Finchley High Road where Noel Lynch has petitions. He can also let you have forms for your use. Please return them to us or direct to the ERBS address on the form. You can also sign at the Labour Party stall outside Budgens on Saturday mornings. Otherwise for more information, petitions and offers of help, please contact Barnet Parents Federation at PO Box 25525 London NW7 1WN.