



Cyril Wilds

By Daphne Chamberlain
Cyril Wilds, who died earlier this year at the age of 92, was the founder of the GLH car service, former Vice-President of the British Music Hall and President of the Concert Artists' Association, one-time local Conservative councillor, and a fount of knowledge about East Finchley.

Cyril was born in 1909 at 13, New Oak Road, though the family soon moved to Long Lane. He attended Martin and Woodhouse schools and was a pocket-money deliverer for Andrew the chemist.

Cars and stars

His involvement with cars started with the basics - cleaning them. The best market was in The Bishop's Avenue, where he soon progressed to chauffeuring the owners. One day, one of his passengers asked why he didn't use his own car. When Cyril replied that he couldn't afford it, the man wrote out a cheque for £1,000 (this was 1928).

seeing tours.)

A driving force

In 1953 Cyril bought a site opposite East Finchley station, tarmacked it over, and installed lock-up garages and minor repair facilities. Chauffeur-hire was added in 1966, and two years later a new minicab service, started from Trinity Road by his son and a friend, moved to the present site. When GLH became a limited company in 1974, Cyril stayed on for a while as shareholder and director, while still doing some chauffeuring from home.

Eventually he retired to Hove and then to Quadring in



Barnet Borough landscape architects Avra Ploumi and Megan Williams with Local Agenda 21 officer Stuart Gadsden and East Finchley ward councillor Colin Rogers. Photo by Erini Rodis



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The other great passion of Cyril's life was the stage, and before long he was driving hosts of stars - too many to mention. Having been involved in a song-and-dance troupe after leaving school, he knew the places where stage people hung out, and he also profited by the custom of "doubling up". This was when a performer had to play at two venues a night, often miles apart. (There were also American customers, who shipped over their Cadillacs for someone to drive them on sight-

Lincolnshire, but *THE ARCHER* was sent to him regularly, and when I interviewed him five years ago he was very up-to-date on developments in this area - as well as being a mine of information about the past. Speaking personally, I am grateful to Cyril Wilds for his many stories of East Finchley, which encouraged my interest in local history.

As John Scott, proprietor of Greater London Hire, told *THE ARCHER*, "East Finchley was very much part of his life".

Pigeon corner plans - how did you vote?

After a lot of hard work by the East Finchley Local Agenda 21 Partnership, their proposed plans have been voted on by local people. A roughly 50-50 split in the number of votes came in via *THE ARCHER* and from displays at the East Finchley library and Finchley Youth Theatre.

Many people gave full explanations as to why they were voting for certain options; others took the opportunity to make their own comments or suggestions, which will also be considered. There were no strong themes running through these except that it would be good to get local schools involved in the project. In addition, many mentioned that they felt the pigeons were a problem.

The Results

Votes for Budgen's Corner

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 1. Serpentine bench | 43 |
| 2. Central feature | 41 |
| 3. Refurbish existing corner bed | 20 |

Votes for along the High Road

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Current beds, better quality | 46 |
| 2. Canopy | 37 |
| 3. Replace north-most bed with seating | 28 |

Votes for along East End Road

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Addition of trees | 65 |
| 2. Wedge planter along wall, climbing greenery, mural | 31 |
| 3. Intermittent kerb-side planters | 11 |

Some people only voted in one or two areas, hence the reason why the total number of votes in each area is different (104, 111 and 107 respectively).

Meetings are due to take place involving LA21 and council officers to discuss how to take things forward. At present the project is seen as a success for the Council and the community working in partnership (with a little help from your friends at *THE ARCHER*!).

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