



YOUNG ARCHER

I Smell A Rat

Recent excavations in Summerlee Avenue and Summerlee Gardens involved the road and pavement being dug up in order to work on the gas pipes. A sign on the Transco hut warned the workmen to take preventative measures against harm from rodents present on the site. Following on from the news that there are now more rats than people in this country, it's all getting a bit too close to home!

Right: Cherry Tree Rat caught by Nick Loudon



The Pied Piper

By Diana Cormack

A recent report by the Keep Britain Tidy group said that there are sixty million rats in this country. That works out to more than one to every person and it will soon be more, because rats have so many babies. Rats are known to carry dirt and disease so nobody wants them around, yet some people are helping them to survive. This is because rats are eating the take-away food that humans throw onto the ground instead of putting it in a bin. Now warnings are being given about this growing problem, but hundreds of years ago a small town in Germany found the answer, or so the story goes.

Hamelin, which stands on the banks of the river Weser, had a terrible problem in the middle ages - it was overrun by a plague of rats. They would fight with the local cats and dogs and they weren't afraid to go into houses, but people had had enough when the rats began to attack babies in their cradles. A crowd marched to the town hall and demanded that the mayor should do something.

The mayor was in the middle of explaining that there wasn't much he could do, when he was interrupted by the sound of piping. Everyone watched as a man strangely dressed in two different colours (which is what "pied" means) crossed the town square playing on a pipe. When he reached the mayor he stopped and asked, "What would you give me if I got rid of all the rats?"

Without hesitating the mayor replied, "All the gold in the town's treasure chest."

The people cheered, and cheered even more when the stranger said, "At this time tomorrow I will come playing my pipe and I will rid you of all those rats."

"And then I will give you all the gold," promised the mayor.

So the next day the piper played his way through the narrow streets of Hamelin town. As he did so all the rats came running out of their hiding places and followed him. He led them to the river Weser and they jumped into the river and were drowned. Not a single rat remained.

The townspeople cheered as he walked back to claim

his reward. But, instead of a treasure chest of gold, the mayor tried to present the Pied Piper with a small bag of gold coins.

"No! That's not enough!" shouted the piper.

"Well, it's all you're getting," answered the mayor. "Do you think I'd be fool enough to give away all our gold now that the rats have gone?"

Then the people clapped and cheered and congratulated themselves for having such a sensible mayor.

"You have broken your promise and you will all be punished for it," said the piper.

"What could you do to punish us?" the mayor asked angrily. He watched as the piper put his pipe to his lips and made his way through the jeering crowd.

This time, as he played his way along the streets, all the children came running out of the houses. They hopped and skipped to the tune the piper played and danced after him as if they were under a spell. He led them far away from Hamelin until they came to some mountains. Except for one blind and one lame child who could not keep up, the children followed him into a cave and they were never seen again.

Some people say that this story was made up to teach you that it is wrong to break your promise. However, in mediaeval times there was a Children's Crusade in which German children were recruited to take the Christian message overseas. Many of them never returned.

The Magpie

We see many of these black and white birds around East Finchley. The name comes from its two colours (so it is "pie" or "pied"). "Mag" comes from the name Margaret, though the bird was once known as "maggot pie" and there were some superstitions surrounding it.

Here is an old rhyme about luck for the number you see. "One for sorrow, two for joy, Three for a girl, four for a boy, Five for silver, six for gold, Seven for a secret never to be told, Eight for a wish, nine for a kiss, Ten for a marriage never to be old."

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity School

Representatives of different faiths were invited to share a favourite prayer with the children during the World Week of Prayer. Specialist singing teacher Neil Bell will be working with the juniors throughout the year and the whole school will have music lessons with Stephan Kooper.

Harvest Festival donations were taken to Barnet Homeless Action Group in Woodhouse Road, N12.

The ITC suite has now sixteen computers and the school is working on its website, to be launched this month.

Three mothers, Julia Ross, Marcella Hampson and Becky Tomlin, successfully completed the Flora Fun Run and raised £250 for the school.

The HTSA raised £159 with a fashion show and £86 from a coffee afternoon.

Mixed football and cricket classes are taking place after school. Three Year 6 boys, Jack King, Jonathan Wiltshire and Joshua Bristow, are through to the final trials for the London Borough of Barnet Primary Schools Football Team.

Martin Schools

Year 6 went on a school journey to the Pestalozzi Village near Hastings. The children experienced history and geography at first hand and have since produced impressive written and art work.

Year 5 are learning to play the drums on a new set of steel pans, courtesy of Barnet Music Services, and being taught by experienced professional musician Fred Tottsault.

Years 3 and 4 are having singing lessons with a specialist teacher who is also working with the very successful school choir and helping teachers with their music lessons.

The children in both schools enjoyed a concert given by the London Mozart Players.

Funding from Sport for All is enabling fifteen girls and boys in Year 6 to have cricket tuition at the Middlesex Cricket Club Academy.

The children took part in a sponsored maths test in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital for its 150th anniversary and are also collecting for Get Kids Going! in the New York Marathon (see October's *ARCHER*).

The infant school invited senior citizens from the Friern Barnet Day Centre to join them for Harvest Festival. Four people from different religions told the children about their particular harvest customs.

With its share of the £356 raised for Barnados, the nursery has bought a box of twenty-six musical instruments.

Martin Schools' Christmas Fair is on Saturday 7 December from 12 - 3 pm.

Cutting a Long Story Short

By Daphne Chamberlain

How short can a story be? If it's published in *THE ARCHER* the answer is no more than 400 words.

"Impossible", some would say, but would they have read Gene Lotti's "One Halloween Night" in last month's paper? That was only 163 words, but it certainly told a tale.

As we move into winter it's just the time to enjoy a good story. A word of warning - brevity is the soul of wit, and all

that, but we are not looking for dressed-up jokes. Real stories are what we are after. That is your challenge. Some say you couldn't do it. We'd like to see you prove them wrong. Send us one that takes our fancy and you could see your name in print.

Good luck - and remember - no more than 400 words!

Could you Help the Homeless?

By Diana Cormack

With the colder weather moving in, memories of that lovely Sunday in June when we had our East Finchley Community Festival begin to fade. But the stall next to *THE ARCHER*'s on that day still sticks in my mind, as well as the plight of the people they help, which must become even worse as the winter weather approaches.

Homeless Action in Barnet runs a day centre for the homeless in Woodhouse Road, North Finchley. It supports single people by providing meals, health care, clothes and washing facilities. Here they can find warmth and shelter for a few hours from Monday to Friday, as well as a friendly face and a listening ear, should they wish to discuss their problems in confidence.

Changing lives

For the past year a new venture has been running on Wednesday mornings, when a Women Only session is held. Here women who are homeless

or living in temporary or inadequate accommodation can join in an informal session with a variety of activities. At present an art teacher from Community Focus is employed for the morning. During this time the support and nurture given has achieved a lot, enabling some to regain their confidence and to move on to re-settlement and a change of lifestyle.

The centre survives on charity and sponsorship, with some input from Barnet Council. As well as needing donations, it also needs committed volunteers for its team. Work can involve cooking and serving

meals, washing up, cleaning and dealing with clothing. There is also face-to-face work with clients, home visits and working with asylum seekers on a re-settlement project. Skilled and practical people and those with befriending and life-skills are needed.

Induction training is given, so if you feel that you can help in any way on a regular basis please contact:

Homeless Action in Barnet,
36b Woodhouse Road,
North Finchley,
London N12 0RG
Telephone 020 8446 8400
Email hab@h-a-b.org.uk