



Finchley County Reunion

By Ann Bronkhorst

On 6 September 350 people gathered in the old Finchley County School building opposite the Hollywood Bowl. Old Fincunians had come from as far as Australia and Canada. Absentees sent messages, summed up by one from Australia: "The bonds are strong throughout the world."

This reunion was special because the building, a Finchley landmark for 100 years, is soon to be demolished. Despite Oliver Natelson's detailed report to English Heritage, all attempts to get it listed and saved have failed. This distinctive building, which has always served education in our area whether as Finchley County, Finchley Manorhill or as a teachers' centre, will be replaced by flats. Soon, the handmade wrought-iron balustrades will be crushed into rubble. So will the beautiful painted war memorial panels in the school hall, though the names may, perhaps, be re-inscribed in stone.

Cementing memories

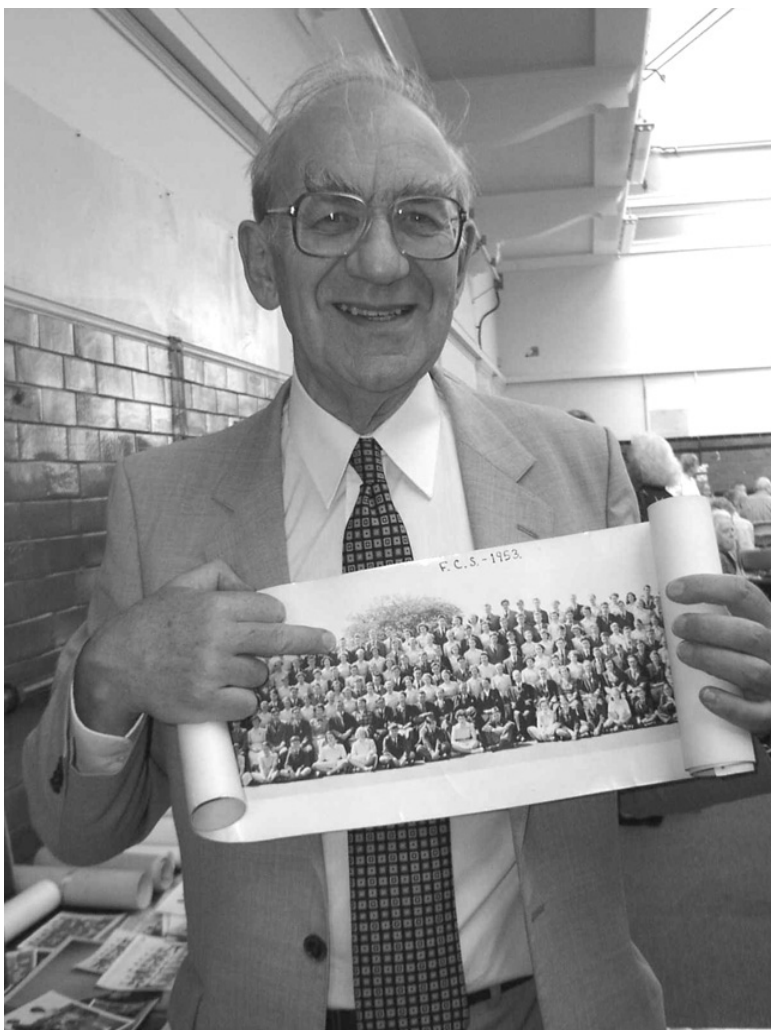
Most Old Fincunians I spoke to expressed great affection for the school. Peter Andrews, who joined in 1949, emphasised the friendly, encouraging ethos and the broadening of pupils' interests through music and drama. Peter, originally from Leslie Road, paid tribute to East Finchley's 'village' atmosphere, and the strong influence of the Finchley County School on his life. Janice Howkins felt it had been a happy school. Becoming a teachers' centre seemed a natural development, with no loss of the warm atmosphere. Naomi Sen, nee Burgess, of Bedford Road, there "to cement my memories", recalled the early sixties when a banner on the rooftop clock proclaiming 'RIP Middlesex'

marked the school's transfer to the GLC. She remembered strangers trying to buy the boys' blazers off their backs because The Kinks wore similar 'mod' jackets. School uniforms on display at the reunion reminded her of beret and cap inspections, girls' hem-lengths being measured as they knelt on the floor and

CND badges hidden behind school ties.

"School dismiss!"

Godfrey Mann, the reunion's organiser and Old Fincunians' Chairman, knew when the emotions would show. And at 3.00 pm, as the rain pelted down outside, the Finchley School Song was sung for the last time in this building.



Peter Andrews (above) and Audrey Pryde, nee Bradford (top right) with their school photos. Photos by Erini Rodis

Hello Campus!

By Samuel Grove

Eighteen to 24-year-olds have been under represented by THE ARCHER, so over the next few editions it will be investigating what life is like for this group, starting with courses and careers. Whether heading off to university or entering the job market, October can be a difficult time.

Many East Finchleians are beginning new lives at university. The image of university experience is of young adults, liberated from home and newly independent, grasping the opportunity to find themselves and become adults. There is a significant deficit, however, between the image and reality. For the majority this is less an opportunity to find themselves and more an opening to reinvent themselves. No-one at university knows how in the fourth year of secondary school you picked a fight with one of the school nerds, believing he was an easy target, and he promptly beat the hell out of you in front of the class. Or how the first time you tried a cigarette you pulled a whitey and threw up in front of loads of girls. Meeting all these new people it is irresistible to drop into your first conversation your one and only successful fight story. One person I spoke to confided that in her first few weeks at university she marketed herself as a reformed character who had

been down to the depths of hard drug depravity and for whom university was her opportunity to turn her life around; a boldfaced lie on ALL counts.

It is surprising how difficult it is to get a job after graduation, particularly in what you have been trained in. Reconciling your ideal career with the reality of limited options is the initial horror of the university graduate. One graduate in Engineering has been unemployed since February despite thorough efforts to find a job. He is often told he has a lot of time to find his direction but, debt-ridden, he can be forgiven for feeling the urgency. All these pressures, coupled with the deplorable position of living back at home, affect morale. His coping strategy involves eating, and watching television all night. If things go really bad, he warns, you might even end up in a motel on the Borehamwood Retail Estate convincing the area manager of DFS that you *really* do know how to sell a sofa.

YOUNG ARCHER

The Return of Ned the Tube Train?

By Jake Eiseman-Renyard

As I have lived in East Finchley all my life and love the tube, I was delighted to find a children's book which mentions not just my local station but also its landmark statue.

Ned's Big Day features an anthropomorphic tube train as its main character. The story is about a day in the life of Ned as he motors backwards and forwards along the Northern Line, taking children to school, families to the zoo, tourists to interesting places in London and so forth. All the Northern Line trains have names beginning with N: Nell, Norman, Nathalie, Nora, etc. I wonder if anyone else has a copy?

East Finchley station is mentioned in the book and Ned talks to Archie, the statue that has given *THE ARCHER* its name. I am hoping to re-illustrate the book, with original text and

my cartoon pictures. The main difference that I am making to the drawings is that, in the old version, Ned is one of the 1959 silver tube trains, and in my version he is one of the 1996 red and blue trains that now serve the Northern Line.

The next step in completing the new edition of *Ned's Big Day* will be finding the author Pam Coiley and reviewing my new illustrations and I hope this little book will be printed and published. The artwork has now been completed. **Pam Coiley, where are you?** If you are reading this, please contact me through *THE ARCHER*. I hope to hear from you soon.



Illustration by Jake Eiseman-Renyard