



Joan Evans (left) and Frances Lynskey, who prepared the food.  
Photo by Daphne Chamberlain.

## D-Day party

By Daphne Chamberlain

On 6 June St George's crosses were appearing everywhere, but in Prospect Place there were strings of 'Union Jacks'. As the sun continued to shine, "You are my sunshine" greeted passers-by. The residents were enjoying a D-Day party. One of them is one of the very few survivors of Omaha beach.

Mr Evans was 19 when he sailed from Weymouth with the job of clearing the beaches. Omaha was one landed by Americans, but as he said, "We helped each other out".

His neighbours had their own memories - like being stranded in the street on the way to school while a V1 bomber flew overhead, or buying dried egg in little silver containers.

They agreed that even though rationing was in force, they didn't need to go without, and bread was much

nicer then.

Tea at last month's party was originally going to consist only of food available in 1944, but their generous spread did cheat a bit. Spam was definitely on offer though, and certainly featured in the street celebrations a year after D-Day, at the end of the war.

Residents of Hendon and Woodside Park sheltered accommodation were also at the party, which was a double celebration for one lady, being four days before her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday.



The refurbishment of the restaurant next to Madden's has exposed the old shop sign - who remembers Homebits and when did it close?  
Picture by Diana Cormack

## East Finchley's religious heritage

Part 4 - Three Catholic centres

By Ann Bronkhorst

"Build up a church in this important and growing neighbourhood," advised Cardinal Vaughan in 1898. He was in the Old Lecture Hall in Chapel Street, now Chapel Court, previously owned by the Congregationalists. Now a very different congregation had gathered for a consecration service: the Roman Catholic community at last had their own parish, St. Mary's.



The statue of Mary on the top of St Marys Church Photo by Erini Rodis

### The Chapel Street church

By 1918 the parish priest, Father Powell, was building up not only East Finchley's church but also the first Catholic parish in Muswell Hill. Then in 1940 St Mary's, Chapel Street, was destroyed by a bomb. For years worshippers used Our Lady of Lourdes School and a hut in the presbytery garden. Undaunted, the parish literally 'built up' a new St Mary's, consecrated in 1953 and thriving today.

### East End House

A Catholic community had already settled in East Finchley in 1864. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd arrived in East End Road when it was still a meandering country lane. The community owned farmland until the mid-1960s, now the site of Bishop Douglass School. A refuge for distressed Catholic women was provided at East End House until 1948 and St. Margaret's Industrial School for Girls was there for many years. In 1972 the buildings were badly damaged by fire; most were demolished

and land was sold for housing. Now just the original house remains, as a study centre for Carmelite Friars, and a small administration block for the Good Shepherd Provincialate.

### Knights

Another large villa on East End Road was also bought by a convent. Sister Mary, whose Golden Jubilee was in 2000, told me about Nazareth House and its history. The Poor Sisters of Nazareth settled in Knights in 1921; the house, with its extensive grounds, seemed to an early visitor "like a little bit of heaven". In this setting 1,240 children were cared for between

1921 and 1974. The first child came via the Good Shepherd Sisters, one of many links between the two communities. From 1974 residential care at Nazareth House has been for the elderly and in 1982 a complex of interlinked buildings opened. An integral element is the chapel with its tall roof, an East Finchley landmark, where Mass is offered daily.

St. Mary's and the two convents continue to be focal points for East Finchley Catholics. But what became of the Congregationalists who sold the Lecture Hall? Their story will be told next month.

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