



(L-R) Martin O'Donnell and Barbara Montague from the Green Man Community Centre with Tom Landell Mills and Nancy Lopez from Groundwork. Photo by Helen Drake

## Green fingers

By Helen Drake

**The piece of unused land next to the Green Man Community Centre could soon be transformed into a tranquil garden if current plans come to fruition.**

The Green Man Users' Committee, headed by Colleen Etem, has secured £20,000 of funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to develop the land, which is owned by the Peabody Trust Housing Association.

Tom Landell Mills, principal landscape architect, and Nancy Lopez, volunteer urban designer, both from the company Groundwork based in Islington and Camden, brought their plans to the Green Man on 25 June as part of a public consultation process.

"We want to take the uses of the community centre and extend them outside, providing spaces for classrooms, facilities for young children to play and somewhere for older people to sit," explained Mr Landell Mills.

"We are also planning a terrace area that can support functions taking place at the centre. It was felt that there were already quite a few playgrounds in the locality, and that what was needed was a beautiful space in which to sit and relax. We want the space to complement the uses of the centre."

The garden, which the Green

Man Users' Committee is proposing to name the Octavia Hill Garden, after the founder of the National Trust, could be ready for next summer. To see the plans get in touch with Nick Guest at the Green Man on 020 8883 4916.

## Steps to success

By Diana Cormack

**The Phoenix cinema was recently used as a backdrop to display the talents of one of the country's youngest and newest girl bands.**

The group Love Bites, consisting of 15-year-old Hannah, her 16-year-old sister Ami and 17-year-old Nicki, all from Nuneaton, plus 16-year-old Dani from London, were reportedly seen being filmed outside The Phoenix and on Creighton Avenue.

Their debut single "You Broke My Heart" is being released on Island Records later this year. For more information visit [www.thelovebites.com](http://www.thelovebites.com).

## A survivor from our elegant past

By Kathryn Scorza

**In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, East Finchley had several elegant houses with grounds, many of them along Fortis Green and East End Road. Most are now known only from photographs, having been demolished many years ago.**

One remains, however, at 12-18 High Road, now 'GLH House', which stood opposite the site where the station would be built, long before the railway came to East Finchley.

### Early records

The parish map of 1841, compiled to show the annual tithes due from landowners, shows a house on the GLH House site of the same shape as today's building. Parish records show it was registered as 'house and garden' to Thomas Wood, who lived there. He paid a tithe of one shilling and three pennies a year. On a map of the late 1860s it was called Valona House but by the 1880s, it had been renamed The Shrubbery. It was home to a succession of families recorded on the electoral roll. A deed of around 1900 for a nearby property shows The Shrubbery and labels the rear part of the building as stables.

By 1937, when the current High Road numbering had been adopted, it had become No. 14. In the 1950s the occupant was a dentist, Sydney Puckey. In 1953, Cyril Wilds bought the house, which he let out as flats, and his Car Hire Service moved to the yard.

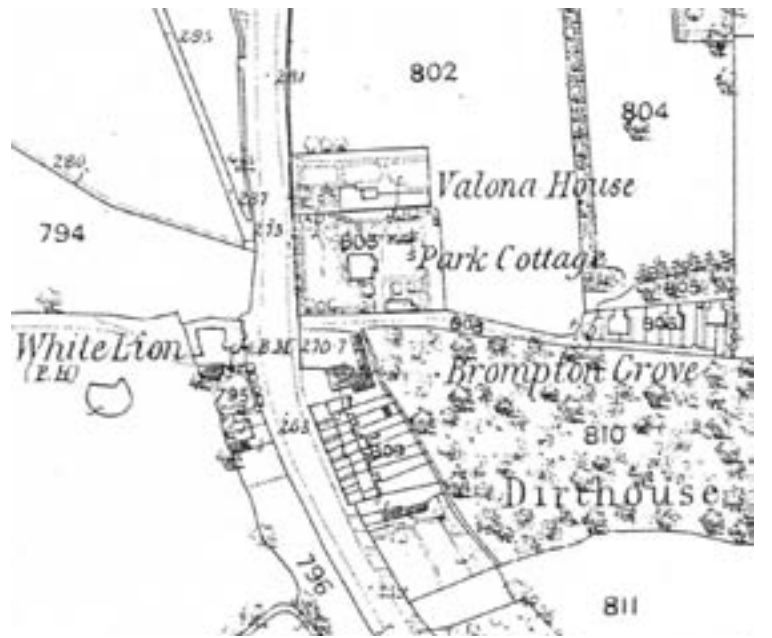
The adjoining shop was occupied by a succession of bakers from before the turn of the century. Cyril's son Nigel can remember the smell of baking bread as a child, and bought cakes at Percy Stokes, the baker, after school.

In 1968, GLH took over the newly established minicab business, working from Portacabins in the yard until earlier this year, when it took over the house.

The rear extension was destroyed by fire in the 1980s and rebuilt. The front part of the house was unaffected. The recently-added portico at the front, therefore, masks what is one of the few surviving buildings from the earliest days of East Finchley.



GLH House today (above) and (below) a map from the 1860s centred upon the GLH building, reproduced by kind permission of Ordnance Survey and LB Barnet.



## Once upon a time in Cherry Tree Wood

*The playground in Cherry Tree Wood was revamped in June. Jake Eiseman-Renyard, now 21, recalls how it used to look.*

**Having grown up in East Finchley, the Cherry Tree Woods playground has always been of sentimental value to me. I remember how it has changed over the years and I clearly recall the two occasions when I have seen it completely revamped.**

I call the old playground, as I first remember it, Edition 1. It had a wooden roundabout, two sets of swings for older and younger kids, a rocking horse, a high slide and what was known as a Witch's Hat. Conical in shape and made from metal bars, it rocked and spun around, and could be climbed on or sat inside.

The Witch's Hat was the first to go, then the big slide was removed, probably both for safety reasons. The roundabout lasted longer but was removed in 1993. The next year, the playground was rebuilt: Edition 2. The two climbing frames with their distinctive red pyramid roofs have been retained but nearly everything else has been replaced again.

Edition 2 featured a pin-ball-style marble drop game and a hopscotch grid painted on the tarmac. There were also brightly-coloured circles forming a trail, looking rather like

giant Smarties and spelling out 'The Cherry Tree Wood Hop Trail'.

Where the pedal-powered roundabout now stands, there was a set of scales, basically two rocking beams that crossed over each other, with a swing on the end of each one. Sadly, it was often vandalised and for most of its existence it was stripped of swings.

Edition 3 opened on the day of the East Finchley Community Festival in June. Features include new swings, a pedal roundabout, and what I call a zip line, where children can hang under a rail and swing back and forth.

Currently, there is still an empty space in one corner of the new playground. It has not yet been decided what will go there but I suggest some form of large outdoor Wendy house. It could be used as a piece of play equipment and double as a storm shelter for the kids.

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(An Elim Pentecostal Church)

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