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# THE ARCHER

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## The long curve

A short story by Carola Groom, who chairs the East Finchley Writers Group. The group meets at The Old White Lion pub, next to the tube station, at 6.30pm every Wednesday.

Cats' eyes and grey snowflakes bore down on him. He squinted at an oncoming car; its lights bled into star shapes. His exit would be soon. Home. Tiptoe into a house already dark, cold, asleep.

The long left-hand curve and here it was: the blue sign. Junction seven, one mile.

Hadn't he passed that a while back? Never mind. One minute to the turn off. Less. Swines today, wasting his time. "A real joy to meet you too." Joke. A game to them, getting him up there for nothing.

Smoky saxophone sounds. He had his top set of speakers, his leather seats. Still the long curve. The next sign appeared at last. Junction seven, one mile.

Couldn't be. His tired brain was playing tricks. He gripped the wheel, strained forward. The exit must be now, this was crazy. Another oncoming car, pair of halogen stars exploding then gone.

He had never stopped on the hard shoulder before. It felt like going down in a fight, the queasiness of defeat. Grey snowflakes made a slow falling pattern. Watching them, it was hard to think. Everything was

muffled. He tried his mobile. No signal. He snatched the door open and scurried, teeth chattering, to the emergency phone. It was silent, dead. He slammed the receiver on its cradle. Damn. Tyres spinning in the greasy slush, he pulled back onto the carriageway. Idiot: what would he have said?

The music paused; the announcer oozed a few words. Then it started again. Drifting in: the smoky saxophone. He pressed his foot on the gas. Still the long curve. The snow firing at him. His mouth so dry it hurt. God, here it came. The blue sign. No. No way. Always the same.

Junction seven, one mile.  
*If you have written a short story of 400 words or less, we would be happy to consider it for publication in THE ARCHER. Send your work to THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or email the-archer@lineone.net. Original stories only, please.*

## I swear it's for a good cause

By Dawn Powell

No one is perfect and one of my (many) faults is that I swear too much. So when I was thinking about how to raise some much-needed cash for the Prostate Cancer Charity, I thought an excellent way would be to give up cursing for a week. To be on the safe side, I decided to fine myself £1 every time I slipped up. Really, how hard could it be?

On the first day, I was doing well until I started talking to my flatmate. I swore twice in the space of five minutes. The worse thing was that I wasn't even annoyed, I was just using the words as adjectives, which is more than a little shameful considering I work in the media and make a living from correcting other people's English.

The next day, I did much better and didn't swear for the entire day. But, then the real challenge came: I went back to work after two days' holiday. The workplace, let's face it, isn't renowned for being a stress-free environment.

I thought it would be faulty printers that would be my downfall (they always jam when they see me coming), but for once they were well behaved. It turned out the real test was my own clumsiness. By the end of the week, I was £8 poorer after dropping cups, files and knocking papers onto the floor. Another £2 went into the box after I managed to get lost while meeting a friend.

I may not have completed my mission to give up swearing, but at least I raised money

for a great charity (£288 in total including sponsoring fees), so I don't feel too much of a failure.



Strike a pose: young dancers from the Marjorie Millons School of Dancing.

## Fleet of foot for 50 years

By Felicity Drown

The Marjorie Millons School of Dancing celebrates 50 years in East Finchley this year. Generations of dancers have passed through the school and classes are as popular as ever.

The school began in the YWCA hall in Finchley Central in 1956. After entertaining East Finchley's Holy Trinity Sunday School at Christmas that year, classes moved into Holy Trinity church hall in 1957. Twenty-one years later the school moved into the Methodist Church Hall, High Road, where it remains to this day.

Principal Marjorie Millons, who was born in Mill Hill, originally taught only Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) ballet classes, entering pupils for these examinations with great success. Demand then called for the addition of "tap

for fun", which is enjoyed by children over the age of six.

In the last 20 years, the school has also incorporated classes for adults. Parents have taken the opportunity to learn and enjoy ballet and tap in popular Saturday morning classes.

### Young at heart

Marjorie is still teaching herself, encouraging all ages to discover that the love of dance keeps you fit and healthy. She is living proof that dance can keep you young at heart.

She said: "Many families have passed through the school, some pupils going on to teach or dance professionally themselves; it is wonderful that so many former pupils have kept in contact."

Current pupil Katy

McLeary, aged 10, said: "I've been going for five years. I enjoy ballet because I get to make new friends and it is good exercise. My favourite time is at the end of term when we put on a demonstration for our parents. They enjoy watching us perform what we have learnt that term. Ballet is a fun way to become healthy."

Caroline, a new recruit in the adult class, is already an enthusiast. She said: "It's so much more interesting than going to the gym." Louise, 58, said: "It's physically demanding, mentally stimulating, ultimately relaxing and above all it's fun!"

Further details on the dance school can be obtained from Marjorie Millons on 8440 0296.

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