



Fundraising and friendship as local members of the Greek Women's Philanthropic Association enjoy their lunch at Genzo. Photo by Polly Parperi.

Ladies who do more than lunch

On Tuesday 9 December the Greek Women's Philanthropic Association (Finchley & Barnet) held their annual fund raising lunch at Genzo restaurant in the High Road, with 120 ladies attending. The event was a great success and the proceeds went to Crisis, food baskets for needy families, the children's ward at Barnet General, Great Ormond Street Hospital and a Christmas lunch for some 80-100 senior citizens in the community.

The Association was formed some 23 years ago with the aim of helping sick and needy families in the Greek community within Finchley and Barnet. It has, however, grown and spread over a far greater area in its philanthropic work, thus making it possible to donate to other charities working for the community such as North London Hospice, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, Salvation Army and many more.

It is a registered charity and all fund raising events are organ-

ised by a committee of 13 ladies and supported by approximately 150 members, many of whom live in East Finchley.

Although this is the first function held at Genzo, Aggy and Maria Toumazou, the proprietors, have allowed the group to use their established banqueting rooms in Palmers Green for the past seven years and have assisted with their expertise. The group would like to thank them most sincerely for their support.

Happiness in helping

By Linda Sansom

Anyone walking into a recent meeting in East Finchley would have been greeted by a strange sight: a room full of people apparently asleep. It wasn't that they were bored, or tired; they were simply taking part in a meditation exercise led by the speaker at the AGM of the charity Home-Start Barnet.

Kay Sugihara, from the Heruka Buddhist Centre in Golders Green, was explaining how the benefits of meditation could help people deal with unhappiness. She said most people were practical, and so needed a practical tool to deal with stress.

The volunteers who helped families on behalf of East Finchley-based Home-Start were wonderful because they genuinely wanted to think of others and help others, and doing this made them happy, said Kay.

Achievements and challenges

Also at the meeting, held in the Old Barn Community Centre, Tarling Road, was Barnet's Mayor, Councillor John Marshall, who praised the scheme for meeting a need in the borough and helping children who would become the future of the country.

Chair Gilli Pettinger detailed the events of the past year, in which Home-Start Barnet had continued to grow, with more volunteers than ever before.

They had appointed a dedicated volunteer coordinator, continued the group for teenage parents, run two accredited courses for parents with prospects and young mums to be, and were about to start a new Sunday group for families with high needs. The twice-weekly Drop-In at Grahame Park had also continued to do well, so much so that at one point they had considered restricting the numbers attending.

She warned, however, that the next 12 months would bring challenges caused by the financial situation, which were common to all charities, and that Home-Start would have to manage things very carefully.

Lest we forget

By Linda Dolata

Anybody like myself who reads the Daily Telegraph is probably aware of the recent drive to build a £2 million memorial to the RAF's Bomber Command. Although the bombers have had a bad press by some, it must be remembered that when they were in action, there was little sign that the war would eventually go Britain's way, and the heavy Wellingtons and iconic Lancasters helped keep hopes high.

Bomber Command has no memorial, either in London or in Lincoln, where they were mostly based, despite the fact that with 55,573 killed they sustained the heaviest losses of any unit in the Second World War.

One man's war

The reason I am interested in promoting this appeal is a personal one. My father was in one of the Polish Bomber Squadrons, No. 300, from its inception near the beginning of the war, until demobilisation after the Berlin food drops in 1946.

In 1939, after standing up to Hitler's tanks for as long as possible, many of the Polish Airforce made their way south through Romania to the Black Sea, where the Brits did their best to evacuate them so that the Poles could fight on. My own father, Edmund, eventually got to Malta and later fought on with the RAF.

Find out more

If this subject interests you, a wealth of information is available. The airfields in Lincolnshire are mostly still identifiable, and there is still a Lancaster flying. Once heard, its deep-throated engines are instantly recognisable.

The RAF Museum at Hendon is the most obvious source of information, and indeed the appeal for a memorial is based there: Bomber Command Association, RAF Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon, London NW9 5LL. Online, visit www.telegraph.co.uk/bombercommand

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Barnet Cyclists raise money for cycles overseas. Photo by Peter Baker

Barnet Cyclists help to save lives

By John Silvertown

Barnet Cyclists have raised enough money to buy 27 bicycles for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These bikes are used in rural areas of the developing world to help health workers visit patients and deliver medical supplies or help children in remote villages get to school.

UNICEF can buy the bikes for just £25 each. With bicycles, each health worker is completely independent and can see patients within a 15km radius. The bike is an ideal vehicle for Africa where road conditions for other traffic can be poor. To support this cause you can make a donation on the UNICEF website www.unicef.org.uk/store.

The money was raised by members as part of Barnet Cyclists 25th anniversary cel-

ebrations.

Barnet Cyclists organise at least two easy-paced cycle rides per month and meet on the last Thursday of each month at 8pm at Carey Hall, Trinity Church, Nether Street, North Finchley, N12 7NN. For details of meetings and rides, visit www.barnetlcc.org. The group, which is part of the London Cycling Campaign, also campaigns for better cycling facilities.

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