



Fake Samaritan fails to con real thing

By Janet Maitland

A man posing as a Samaritan got a shock when he tried to con money from a local man who is a genuine volunteer with the charity.

Peter Gibson was returning home from a shift at the Samaritan office in Soho at about 10.30pm on 16 April when he was stopped, when going into the station car park, by a man who said he had just been mugged and needed money to get home.

When the man said he was a psychotherapist doing some work in Muswell Hill for the Samaritans, Mr Gibson was suspicious as he knew that there wasn't a branch there. The man then claimed to be doing outreach work for the Bounds Green office, but Mr Gibson knew this branch doesn't do outreach work.

"I offered to take him to the police to report the mugging," said Mr Gibson. "The man was then very rude and ran off." After phoning the police to report the incident, Mr Gibson drove his car out of the car park, passing the conman who was

now talking to another potential victim. I slowed down, hooted and waved my mobile phone at him," said Mr Gibson. "He ran off towards Cherry Tree Wood."

Plausible liar

Mr Gibson was aware that a man posing as a Samaritan had been stealing money from people for about ten years. "Colleagues told me the man was plausible as he seems to have a working knowledge of the Samaritans," he said. "I wouldn't have known this man wasn't genuine if I hadn't been a real Samaritan. He's using our good name and playing on the fact that most people would be sympathetic. I would advise people to report him to the police if he approaches them."

The man is described as middle aged, casually dressed, of medium height and wearing glasses.



General Manager Martin Garner with the Pearly Family Photo - Sinead O'Kane

Flag of St George flies high

By Diana Cormack

When I was a teenager we moved to Wales, back to my father's birthplace. It may have been the Land of My Fathers, but my mother was a Geordie and I too was born in Newcastle upon Tyne. As an RAF family we lived in many different places and I attended several schools. So I moved from a stiff, traditional English South Wilts Grammar School for Girls to a mixed Llandeilo Grammar School where the Welsh Nationalist leader's children were pupils.

I soon learned that being English did not make me particularly popular and having my accent mimicked or being spoken to in Welsh by people who knew I didn't understand was a common occurrence. With time, and the fact that I was quite naughty and the best shooter in the netball team, most of this faded. But the difference was highlighted every year on the first day of March.

St David's Day was celebrated with a school eisteddfod along with Welsh national dress, flags, daffodils and leeks aplenty. We had the afternoon off and returned the next day to classrooms filled with the lingering aroma of leeks. I wondered why St George's

Day wasn't made much of in England, so on April 23 I'm always on the look-out.

This year Budgens had a large knight in shining armour on display with suitably coloured roses and balloons around him. Tony's Continental Store put up a large St George flag (he is also the patron saint of Greece). The Windsor Castle had flags and bunting inside and The Bald Faced Stag had similar decora-

tions both inside and outside. The Stag also made a night of it, with typically English food and drink on sale plus two sets of Pearly Kings and Queens and a Pearly Prince. They provided the entertainment, singing traditional songs for people to join in and collecting for charity.

Were there were other places in East Finchley who commemorated the day, I wonder? And next year will more join in?

Woman struck by bus

By Janet Maitland

A woman was seriously injured when she was in collision with a 263 bus at the junction of Baronsmere Road and the High Road at about 8.30pm on 21 April.

"CCTV footage shows that apparently the lady walked straight out in front of the bus," said a police spokesperson. "Thankfully she didn't go under it. She was taken by ambulance to a central London hospital.

Here the injuries were found to be to her face and were serious, but not life-threatening."

Baronsmere Road and the area round the bus were taped off to allow for police investigation. The roads reopened at 11.30pm.

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Library volunteers

Barnet Council is encouraging teenagers, aged 14 to 18 years, to volunteer at a local library during the summer holidays. The teenagers will be supporting children aged 4-11 taking part in this year's Summer Reading Book Challenge.

To get an application form, email justina.gore@barnet.gov.uk or lendahand@barnet.gov.uk. Alternatively you can call Justina Gore on 07867 660 499. For more information on the Summer Book Challenge, log on to www.readingagency.org.uk.

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