



A new orchard comes to the wood

By Debbie Linton

Five fruit trees donated by the Orchard Project have been planted by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood in the area between the tennis courts and the main path.

About 20 volunteers braved cold weather on Sunday 19 January to embed the three apple, one pear and one plumcot in their new home. The following week about 100 daffodil bulbs were also planted.

The daffodils are expected to flower next year and the trees should bear fruit once they are settled in. The Friends thanked everyone who had come along to help.

Pavilion and kiosk update

The Friends have been liaising with Barnet Council about repairing any damaged footpaths following the demolition of the pavilion. Subsidence due to tree roots has meant that it has not been possible to keep the concrete base. It is now planned to allow the area to return to woodland.

The kiosk near the tennis courts no longer has a leaseholder. The council will advertise for a new one soon, with the hope that it will be up and running in the spring.

Plans for the year ahead

About 20 people came to

the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood AGM on 14 January and discussed plenty of ideas for the year ahead. These included submitting a bid to the Council for new bins, a drinking fountain and a nature trail for under-10s.

Meetings in the wood with Barnet's Green Space Officer will continue to be monthly, and the Friends will also continue to attend the Barnet Green Spaces Network. More events in the wood, such as bird box making days and history tours, are also planned. In addition, a botanist has been appointed by the Friends to carry out a detailed survey of the wood.

Everyone is welcome to join the next litter pick on Sunday 8 March from 2-3pm. From the spring, the picks will be later at 4-5pm, starting on Sunday 5 April.

Get involved

The next Friends meeting is on Tuesday 21 April at 7.30pm. For more information or to keep in touch with the Friends, email: friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com



Fruitful expectations: The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood prepare the ground for the new trees. Photo Mike Coles.

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Standing ovation: From left, Fran Hills, Yvette Bonner, Stephen Anthony Brown, Gabriella Swallow, James Cleverton and Thomas Gould enjoy the applause at the end of the St James' concert.

Raise the roof to save the roof

By Marian Bunzl

After a century of wind and weather the roof of St. James' Church in Muswell Hill is in serious need of extensive repair. Reverend Chris Green, keen to mount a special fundraising event, was able to call on congregants James Cleverton and Yvette Bonner, a husband and wife team of international opera singers, who in turn could call on a group of world class musicians.

Their Raise The Roof fundraising opera gala took place on Sunday 5 January to a full house, providing a stream of glorious music from the Baroque to American musicals, all compered by James with appropriate anecdotes and humorous asides.

Yvette opened the concert with a joyous cascade of arpeggios in her gleaming soprano followed by an aria from James in his resonant, compelling baritone.

Stephen Anthony Brown's

ringing tenor was heard in various arias, including *O Sole Mio*, and he joined James in the famous duet from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, each voice alternatively blending and competing in almost more of a duel than a duet.

Violinist Thomas Gould gave a virtuoso performance of a piece by Arvo Pärt and composer Iain Bell personally introduced his composition *Concert Aria*, which was performed by James, Thomas, and cellist Gabriella

Swallow, who followed with a solo which evoked the sound of warm honey.

Throughout the entire concert, pianist Fran Hill provided a skilled, sympathetic accompaniment perfectly in keeping with each differing style and composer.

The concert ended with James and Yvette's vivid rendition of the drinking song from Verdi's *La Traviata*. During the thunderous applause that followed, I swear I saw the roof lift!

Motorcycle diary: to the ends of the earth

Malcolm Dunkeld, of Leslie Road, N2, sends this report from the second leg of his round-the-world motorcycle odyssey.

Most travellers who arrive in Buenos Aires fly southwards to Ushuaia and Cape Horn with good reason: the landscape along the Atlantic coast goes from bleak, to even bleaker to windy desolation.

The road south is on the billiard-smooth Ruta 3 which for 2,300km traverses a wind-swept plateau of shrub and grass, stony desert, beautiful roadside trees, small lakes and dried river beds. The place is gigantic and deserted apart from the occasional sighting of llama-like guanaco, grey foxes, choique and birds of prey.

My ride down was under perfect blue skies but the sun is invisible while driving. It rises in the east behind your left shoulder, goes behind your back and then sets behind your right shoulder.

Patagonia, the extreme end of the planet, is a maelstrom of contradictory wind that never relents and plays yoyo with the motorcycle.

Welsh surprises

Although the landscape is cursed, both beautiful and diabolical, there are treats along the way including the evocative Museo Pampeano in Chascomús, which tells the story of the gaucho horsemen of South America, and I was able to enjoy the hospitality of the wonderful Welsh community who live around Trelew.

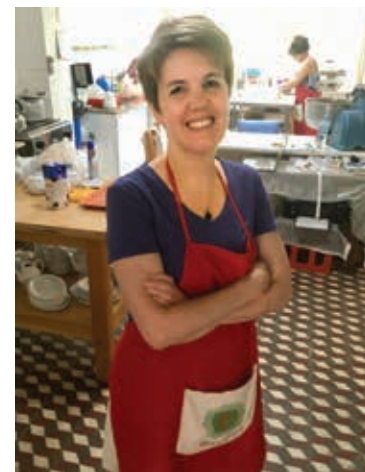
The river here attracted 19th-century Welsh immigrants who through sheer grit built a series of raised canals that irrigated

the local desert and allowed the growing of wheat and vegetables. Today the region is renowned

for its delicious Welsh teas, with some of the tea houses still run by descendants of the original Welsh settlers.

Historic ports

Another surprise was coming across a reconstructed Spanish galleon in the small port of Puerto San Julian. It turns out that in 1520 Magellan overwintered here, followed by Drake 50 years later and then Darwin aboard the Beagle. I finally arrived at the far southern town of Ushuaia in the pouring rain to find a small port of undistinguished architecture but with a spectacular setting on the Drake Passage from which boats sail to Antarctica.



Anna Rees, who is part of the Welsh community in Trelew and serves delicious tea and Welsh cakes in the Plas Y Coed. Photo Malcolm Dunkeld

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