



Facelift for wood entrance ready for next stage

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood held their annual meeting on 11 January. Approximately 20 members of the community attended, with support also from local ward councillors, and all that much had been achieved over the past year, with plenty more plans for the year ahead.

The meeting heard that the bid to extend the wood at the High Road entrance (*The Archer*, October 2021) had been presented to Barnet Council earlier in January, and was now set to progress to the next stage.

The Friends were also continuing their objection to a planned six-storey building overlooking the wood on its western side (*The Archer*, November 2021). This was very much supported.

An outline of the new East Finchley pollinator project was provided, with information about an upcoming January meeting and a seed-swap event on 20 March. Plans to survey the wildlife in the wood were also discussed, with the Friends very keen to hear from any experts or enthusiasts within the community who might like to help with this.

The year ahead

Further plans include more work on the meadow and

orchard area, with an apple pressing event planned in the autumn. Monthly one-hour litter picks will resume on Sunday 13 February with everyone welcome, meeting near the tennis courts and running from 2pm-3pm.

A new drinking water fountain is to be installed over the next few months. The Friends are also applying later in January for two new pieces of equipment in the children's playground.

Other concerns

During the meeting a few discussion areas remained of concern. It was agreed these would be specifically focused on in the year ahead. These included the issue of rats, and the problem of flooding and drainage, which has now made the playing field impossible to use during the winter months.

Also of concern was a new proposal to start charging for the use of the tennis courts. For the

moment, having subsequently written a strong objection to the Council, the Friends have abated this proposal. However, the issue is believed to remain ongoing.

The Friends always welcome people to get in touch. They can be emailed at friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com



First impressions: The proposed new High Road entrance to Cherry Tree Wood

Wood wades onto the wetlands list

By Daphne Chamberlain

The return this winter of the mini-lake in the middle of Cherry Tree Wood attracted these winged visitors, identified by the photographer Maggie Eiseman as Egyptian geese.

Maggie told *The Archer*: "I'm no expert, but my appreciation of local wildlife has grown during our weird pandemic time, like so many people's. Egyptian geese are common in lots of London parks (Avenue House, the Heath, Waterlow Park), and you can see some which look just like these guys in ancient Egyptian tomb paintings. I was charmed when I saw the geese for the first time in our park, and watched them fly away together in the direction of Fordington Road an hour or so later."

The RSPB say that Egyptian geese, which are native to Africa south of the Sahara and the Nile Valley, are frequently seen on ornamental ponds, and now can be found on gravel pits and lowland lakes and wetlands. In the UK, the north Norfolk coast holds the highest numbers.



Flying visit: Egyptian geese on the waterlogged grass. Photo Maggie Eiseman

RICKY SAVAGE ... "The voice of social irresponsibility"

Platinum bond

Here we go again. Welcome to February, the coldest, cruellest month when your credit card is still maxed out from Christmas and your bank manager is sending you rude texts about overdrafts. The only thing to look forward to is St Florists Day and the chance to overspend on flowers, chocolates and meals in cheesy restaurants. Or is it? Because you could be celebrating the Platinum Jubilee.

Yes, that's right, because 6 February is when a 56-year-old man died in London and a 25-year-old naval officer's wife and mother of two got his job. OK, so she was in Kenya on a kind of working holiday when her husband gave her the sad news. He probably had to get down on one knee and remember to call her something different, but all the same, that was when 'the new Elizabethan age' began.

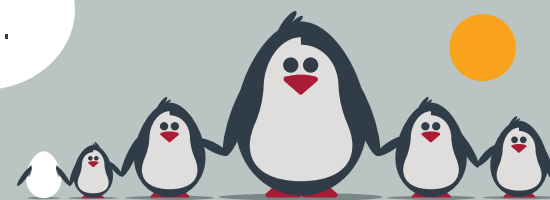
Back then things were different. Men wore hats, there was only one TV station and people 'knew their place', mostly in the queue for rationed bread, meat and almost everything else. By the time she got back to London she was in appropriate black and having to face the fact that nothing would ever be the same again: new house at the end of The Mall, new job and having to meet the Prime Minister every week. And what a PM at the time, an ageing aristocrat and former war leader who was droolingly infatuated with the new queen.

Now, 70 years on, she can look back in shock and horror at all that's changed. In no particular order, two more kids, numerous grandchildren and another 14 prime ministers. That's the good bits. The rest? Two divorces, assorted scandals, and a country that lost its Empire and lost its way. Once we were out of Europe, then inside Europe and then out again. Once there was an optimistic dream of a new age when all would get better, now there is a pandemic and a Churchill tribute act hanging on by his fingertips (at time of going to press).

But she has got one thing to look forward to, a four-day bank holiday at the beginning of June when a new platinum pudding will be launched, kids will wave flags and troops will march about wearing 19th century uniforms. Maybe she will wonder why they're doing all that in June. I mean why are we celebrating the anniversary of her coronation, not the day when she actually came to the throne? I bet a certain fat bloke in Westminster wishes we were all celebrating now to distract us from lockdown-party-gate.

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