



Centre offers safe space for families to come together

By David Melsome

Where parents have separated and can't agree on how or when a child can see the parent they don't live with, a contact centre offers a safe space for that to happen in a neutral and welcoming environment. More than 20,000 children use contact centres every year.



Family life: The Muswell Hill Contact Centre offers a relaxed meeting place

The Muswell Hill Child Contact Centre (MHCCC) operates at Muswell Hill Methodist Church and is open to families of all faiths and none. It runs every other Saturday from 10am to 1pm, giving families space to move and play in, with toys and a garden.

The centre is run by volunteers who are all DBS-checked and receive regular training to ensure they offer a safe and professional service to the families, as well as the warmth and support needed. The centre is accredited by NACCC, the national association of contact centres. Families can be referred

to the centre through a solicitor, family court officer, family mediator or social worker, and parents can self-refer as well. Families are first assessed for suitability and then their visits are facilitated by volunteers. Supervised centres for higher-risk families can be found elsewhere.

At MHCCC, families are free to move around and are encouraged to see the service as a stepping stone towards independent contact outside.

Spokesperson Lucy Ellis said: "The contact centre service is founded in the belief that a breakdown of partnership between adults does not need to affect the long-term parent-child relationship. The focus is on the wellbeing of the children and volunteers don't take sides with either parent. There's also a clear set of rules that all parents sign up to."

MHCCC currently has space to welcome more families and is always keen to hear from potential volunteers too. Find out more at mhmc-contactcentre.org.uk, email contactcentre@mhmc.org.uk or telephone 020 8444 2544.



Tunnel vision: Ben Nathan's photo of the point where the Chandos Brook enters the Strawberry Vale Brook

Beauty and pollution

By Margaret Crockett

Striking photos of water courses above and below ground formed an exhibition called 'The Brook' by artist Ben Nathan, who specialises in documenting hunting culverts and other overlooked aspects of the city.

As reported in The Archer last August, the two streams running through East Finchley Allotments are tributaries of Bounds Green Brook. The image shown here was taken inside the culvert and shows the point at which Chandos Brook (also known as the allotment

stream) enters the subterranean Strawberry Vale Brook.

Where Ordnance Survey mapping fails to chart a brook, Ben researches other maps in local archives. His own circular map of the area of north London through which these waterways flow was also displayed.

The exhibition at Bruce Castle in Tottenham ran until 22 March but Nathan continues his work as a citizen scientist recording water quality tests across the Bounds Green Brook catchment. We plan to report more on water quality in our area in future editions of The Archer.

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Goats on wheels

It's that time of year, you know, spring, when everyone starts talking about GOATS, by which I mean 'the Greatest of All Time'. It's the chance to have a three-pint argument about football and cricket, but when it comes to motor racing just about everyone says Ferrari. And they are wrong. Yes, they've won the most drivers' and constructors' championships and they have been at it since Formula 1 was invented in 1950 but, if age was everything, we'd still have steam trains.

When former Alfa Romeo team manager and mediocre racing driver Enzo Ferrari launched his team in the aftermath of the Second World War, the only country with Grand Prix cars was Italy. The all-conquering pre-war Mercedes and Auto Unions were gone so it was left to Alfa Romeo, Maserati and the new boys Ferrari. By 1959, only Ferrari was left. They'd won four drivers' championships and from here on, the boys from Maranello were Italy's team. And oh boy did they go on about it.

Enzo Ferrari was a man of his time and that was probably the 16th century, the time of the Medicis when backstabbing was an art form. He called the British teams who brought modern engineering to the sport 'garagistas' and went on complaining long after his cars had started to look dated and new boys like Lotus were doing the winning.

In the real world, the scarlet Ferraris have not been as great as the myth suggests. At times, they have just made up the numbers. Between 1979 and 2000, no Ferrari driver won the world championship and, since Schumacher left in 2006, there has only been one winner. In fact, it has become a bit of a driver's graveyard.

Vettel won four championships, went to Ferrari and his career died. The same thing looks to be happening to Lewis Hamilton.

But they are Italy's team? No, not really. An Italian driver has only won the world championship twice. Yes, he was driving a Ferrari, but it was in 1952 and 1953. Brits, Germans, Austrians and the occasional Finn have won the rest.

Back in 1967, Ferrari offered a drive to Jackie Stewart which was fine until Jackie found out dear old Enzo had offered it to a couple of other drivers. Jackie went to Tyrell and in the next six years won the championship three times. The other titles went to Lotus drivers. And Ferrari? They were still making up the numbers. The greatest of all time? I don't think so.

New puzzle: Re-Griddable

Re-Griddable is a twist on the free daily online game griddable.co.uk created by two East Finchley residents, Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson. There may be more than one solution to each Re-Griddable but there is definitely at least one, which comes from a maximum scoring game of Griddable.

If you get stuck the official Griddable word-checker may help (griddable.co.uk/word-checker).

If you like playing Griddable online, why not join the East Finchley Leaderboard? Go to Groups on the site and use code BUJRM4.

Re-Griddable
No.2

Place the letters to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four downwards.

A E H O O L T Y

B			S
	B	E	
S		L	
	E		P

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution