

# THE THUNDERER

A.K.A The Inmates' Gazette

December 2007/January 2008

Number 15

St Pancras Almshouses

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## ! LATEST NEWS !

A letter has been hand delivered by the Culture and Environment Department of the London Borough Of Camden stating that **St Pancras Almshouses** has been awarded a certificate of **Merit** in the category of **Best Communal Garden or Gardening Club by Camden in Bloom 2007.**

We can be very proud of our award and we thank Julia Smith for entering this contest and of course, as always, our thanks go out to Jimmy, Julia, George and all the anonymous residents who helped to beautify our garden.

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## THE NOTICE BOARD

**THE EDNA BROWN CINEMA CLUB**

Forthcoming programmes (see inside pages).

Letters to the Editor (see inside pages)

**RESIDENTS MEETING AND CHRISTMAS PARTY.**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The Meeting will start at 5pm and the Party at 6pm, ending at the latest at 8pm.

A Traditional Christmas Dinner and Party will again be graciously hosted by our brave fellow resident Terry, 6A, and her Family at 3.30pm on 22nd December.

Please let Terry know if you wish to attend.

**A JUMBLE SALE** will be held in the Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> December between the hours of 11am and 2pm.

Clear out YOUR closets and make space for the ex-contents of someone else's Closet. This Sale could be a possible source of Christmas gifts

**As you may have read in your newspaper recently, or heard on the news, Britain is using a higher percentage of our land area to dispose of our rubbish than any other European country.**

**Each one of us could help to reduce the volume of rubbish that has to go to Land Fill sites if we were to recycle more. Luckily for us, we have Recycling Bins on the right hand side of Grafton Terrace opposite the entrance to the Almshouses and only about 25 yards away.**

**Please make it a habit to deposit all your paper, cardboard and bottles**

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**What is  
the truest definition of Globalization?  
(Submitted by a reader)**

Answer: Princess Diana's death.

Question: Why?

Answer:

An English Princess with an Egyptian boyfriend crashes in a French tunnel, driving a German car with a Dutch engine, driven by a Belgian who was drunk on Scottish whisky, followed closely by Italian Papparazzi on Japanese motorcycles:

Treated by an American doctor, using Brazilian medicines.

This is sent to The Thunderer by an Italian, using Bill Gates' technology and probably being read on a computer that uses Taiwanese chips, and a Korean monitor, assembled by Bangladeshi workers in a Singapore plant, transported by Indian lorry-drivers to a Greek ship with a Chinese crew with a Panama flag..

That, my friends is Globalization !

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**PLEASE** can you tell me why we hang a holly wreath on the front door of the house at Christmas. For years I have hung one on mine but never known why!

\_\_\_\_\_Mrs E.S., Beaconsfield.

As a mid-winter custom, the use of wreaths can be traced back to ancient Rome.

Part of the the New Year celebrations, which lasted from December 31<sup>st</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup>, involved the exchange of presents. These took many forms but originally they were branches of evergreens, which were intended to convey a wish for health in the coming year.

To make them more attractive, it became the custom to bend them into a wreath which was then displayed on doorways to demonstrate that such a blessing had been visited on the house.

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## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

To 'The Thunderer'.

Can I say a huge, big 'THANK YOU' to our two gardener residents who have worked so hard in the garden this autumn.

Firstly, to Jimmy who single-handedly dug over the rose and flower-beds, including the large very overgrown bed outside Numbers 4 and 5, composting them with the beautiful compost he has produced this year. Jimmy is a tireless worker in the garden as we have all seen.

Also, an equal pat-on-the-back for Julia who has pruned the many rose bushes around the garden with only a little help from Jimmy.

As I have not been well enough to help in the garden this year I am most appreciative of the hard work of others to keep the garden looking so lovely, for all of us to enjoy all year round.

Thank you.

Trish 4C

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It is considered to be very bad form to make 'ethnic' jokes like this one:-

### **THE DIFFERENCES**

The Italian says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have wine."

The Frenchman says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have cognac."

The Russian says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have vodka."

The German says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have beer."

The Mexican says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have tequila."

The Jew says, "I'm tired and thirsty. I must have diabetes."

So try to avoid making such jokes as they may be hurtful.

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You should also avoid making 'ageist' jokes like this:-

A senior Lady says-

“I feel my body has got totally out of shape, so I got my Cardiologist’s permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an Aerobics class for ‘Seniors’. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.”

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## AN ARCHITECTURAL ICON

I RECENTLY VISITED THE RENOVATED St Pancras International Station and was awe-struck by William Barlow’s massive train shed, with light flooding in through 18,000 panes of self-cleaning glass and the 800 iron girders now painted in the original 1860 colour of Sky Blue.

‘The Meeting Place’, a 30 ft. high solid bronze statue of a couple embracing beneath the clock, evokes the romantic nature of rail travel. The statue is by Paul Day who also created the Battle of Britain monument at Embankment. A statue by Martin Jennings of Sir John Betjeman in his trilby, looking up at the extraordinary roof of Barlow’s train shed is most appropriate as it was he who prevented the station from being demolished in the mid 1960s.

The former Midland Grand Hotel by Sir George Gilbert Scott is also being renovated and will open in 2009 as a 5-star Marriot Hotel and 67 luxury apartments by ‘Manhattan Lofts,’ including a penthouse for £10 million.

I understand the flats are spoken for, but the penthouse? No harm in asking. The whole thing is, indeed, an architectural gem and only 5 mins. walk to the two churches dedicated in honour of the Boy Martyr, Pancratius.

Chris 12C

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**The United Nations** is similar in some respects to the European Union Parliament. One point of similarity is the presence of armies of translators.

**When** the European Union Parliament meets in Strasbourg there is a large contingent of gifted linguists who translate from the language used by the speaker into any or all of the 20 or so languages of the other members of the EU.

This is done **SIMULTANEOUSLY**, while the Speaker is still speaking. As you can imagine, this requires great knowledge of languages and accents and dialects and the translator must have very good nerves and presence of mind. However, no such luck at the Hotels at which the delegates reside when in Strasbourg, but, generally speaking, the Hotel staff can ‘get by’ in several languages of which English is the most widely used. They are not trained linguists however and sometimes this leads to misunderstandings.

Recently a Non English guest, a Member of the European Parliament, phoned Room Service and asked for some Pepper and the person who took the call asked, polite as ever, "Do you want White Pepper or Black Pepper." The guest was tired and upset and screamed "No, No, You idiot! Toilet pepper." It is believed that he has now changed Hotels.

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May you have enough happiness to make you sweet,  
Enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to  
Keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.

Always put yourself in others shoes. If you feel that  
It hurts you, it probably hurts the other person too.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best,  
Of everything, they just make the most of everything  
That comes along their way.

Happiness lies for those who cry, those who hurt,  
Those who have searched, and those who have tried,  
For only they can appreciate the importance of people  
Who have touched their lives.

Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends  
with a tear.

The brightest future will always be based on a  
Forgotten past, you can't go on well in life until you let  
Go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone  
Around you was smiling. Live your life so that when you die, You're the one  
who is smiling and everyone around  
You is crying.

Submitted by 'John Doe.'

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## **EDNA BROWN CINEMA CLUB COMING ATTRACTIONS**

(Subject to unavoidable changes)

As Bernard Shaw once said “Bring a friend, if you have one.”

At 7 pm

- Saturday December 1 The Four Feathers
- Saturday December 8 The Quiet Man
- Saturday December 15 The Ladykillers
- ❖ Sunday December 23 Casablanca
- Saturday December 29 Les Miserables
- Saturday January 5 The Prisoner of Zenda
- Saturday January 12 An Affair To Remember
  - Saturday January 19 The Queen
  - Saturday January 26 Gladiator

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In our last issue we printed a request by Anne-Marie Scragg for any writings under the general heading of “The Important Things in my Life” and I know that several residents are preparing to submit an article. The following article describes one type of life changing event and is reprinted from ‘Hampstead Memories’.

### **SLEEPING AT SWISS COTTAGE STATION IN WORLD WAR II**

What was it like for a child to sleep in the station during air raids?

The station was rather a magic place. It had a beautiful arcade which housed a good buffet, a chemist shop and unusually, an umbrella repair shop. In today’s ‘throw-away’ society, this would be unheard of, but in the War, an umbrella was a valuable asset!

I cannot remember exactly what the Swiss Cottage Pub was like, but where the restaurant is now, there was a store for bedding used by the underground sleepers.

I recall my father crossing the road at night and in the morning to fetch and deposit our bedding. In those days Finchley Road could still be crossed safely!

Initially people used to just lie on a blanket on the platforms, and passengers alighting from trains stepped over the recumbent figures, but some time into the War, bunks were provided. We had many refugees from Europe seeking shelter there; I vividly remember one White Russian Count, who was an absolute delight! There was a First Aid post and we children used to persecute the nurse for Horlicks tablets (no sweets available).

When the American Forces first saw people in the Tube, they thought we were all homeless. In time, they realised that it was the only answer to getting a night's sleep, especially for men who, like my father worked near the docks all day and were in desperate need of rest at night. We soon got used to the noise of the trains and anyway they stopped at midnight, apart from one 'ghost train', around which legends grew rapidly. It never stopped and we never saw the driver. It was of course the mail train.

We enjoyed impromptu concerts with passengers and sleepers all joining in. Christmas was the best time, with Father Christmas coming down the escalator and giving every child a present, contributed mainly by the passengers. The one thing we hated was going home at 6a.m. on a cold winter morning. My father always insisted that my sister and I wore blankets over our coats on these occasions. I lived in dread that someone we knew would see us and realise we "slept in the Underground."

The night we did NOT go to Swiss Cottage station was when fog descended on London. Without street lights it was impossible to see your own front gate. My mother very sensibly pointed out that as we could not see three yards, the chance of the Luftwaffe locating the capital were slim indeed.

It is easy to glamourise what was in reality an awful period; but sleeping 'down there' did build a community, and humour was ever present. The whole atmosphere would have surprised and impressed the enemy.

Julia Smith

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### A morality story

A sales rep, an administration clerk, and the manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp.

They rub it and a Genie comes out. The Genie says,  
"I'll give each of you just one wish."

"Me first! Me first!" says the admin clerk. "I want to be in the Bahamas driving a speedboat, without a care in the world."

Puff! She's gone.

"Me next! Me next!" says the sales rep. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of Pina Colodas and the love of my life."

"OK, you're up," the Genie says to the manager.

The manager says, "I want those two back in the office after lunch."

Moral of the story;  
Always let your bos have the first say.

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## **HAVE A BEAUTIFUL DAY**

Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people  
Before meeting the right one so that when we finally  
Meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful  
For that gift.

When the door of happiness closes, another opens, but  
Often times we look so long at the closed door that we  
Don't see the one that has opened for us.

The best kind of friend is the kind you can sit on a  
Porch and swing with, never say a word, and then walk  
Away feeling like it was the best conversation you've  
Ever had.

It's true that we don't know what we've got until we  
Lose it, but it is also true that we don't know what we've  
Been missing until it arrives.

Giving someone all your love is never an assurance that  
They'll love you back! Don't expect love in return, just  
Wait for it to grow in their heart but if it doesn't, be  
content that it grew in yours.

It takes only a minute to get a crush on someone, an  
Hour to like someone, and a day to love someone, but it  
Takes a lifetime to forget someone.

Don't go for looks, they can deceive. Don't go for  
wealth, even that fades a way. Go for someone who  
makes you smile because it takes only a smile to make  
a dark day seem bright. Find the one that makes your  
heart smile.

There are moments in your life when you miss someone  
So much that you just want to pick them from your  
dreams and hug them for real.

Dream what you want to dream, go where you want to

Go, be what you want to be, because you only have one  
Life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.

John Doe

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Three elderly women were discussing the problems of growing old. One said, "Sometimes I find myself in front of the Fridge with a jar of mayonnaise and I can't remember if I am putting it away or making a sandwich." Another said, " And I can trip on the stairs and not remember if I was walking up or down." "Oh well, I don't have those sorts of problems, touch wood" said the third lady, tapping her knuckles on the table, before adding "That must be the door, I'll get it."!!

Samantha 5C

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## **THE DAY I WENT A-BEGGING**

I was enjoying my holiday in West Sussex on the outskirts of Worthing near Findon. After supper in the Guest House I would gaze at the breath-taking sunsets. No wonder that endless paintings of them adorned the gift shops!

But there was still one thing I was determined to do: to climb Cissbury Ring, a challenge to visitors! If one succeeded in reaching the top, the reward was a wonderful view of the whole of West Sussex. The opportunity came when four of the guests set out on a glorious afternoon to achieve this.

I joined them. But why bother with a jacket, bag, umbrella etc? It would be a delightful walk there and back in time for tea.

The two ladies walked on their own. I walked with two young men, one partially spastic and the other, his friend and carer.

We chatted: and after ten minutes or so we reached the foot of the hill and began to climb. Then half way up it all happened. The sky darkened, the rain began to pelt down followed by lightening and thunder. The ladies, like the prudent virgins in the gospel were well provided for with umbrellas and rain-coats. They vanished out of sight! The young men made for the trees. Dangerous I thought, when there is lightening. So I followed a couple a couple who began to descend to the other side of the hill.

I came to a road with houses on either side. I was drenched and penniless. I had to get shelter. There was nothing left to do but to beg for help. I rang a front door bell, and then felt a chill. A woman with a face like a hatchet demanded what I wanted. "Please" I stammered, "Would you have a towel to wipe myself?" The dog at her side eyed me with suspicion and resentment as she brought out a towel which must have belonged to him. Then she barked at me (saving him the bother) because I leaned on the glass door. "I don't know why you want to dry yourself. You're going out again this very minute." Then begrudgingly she added; "There's a bus stop at the bottom of the road."

As I moved on the rain was relentless. Feeling a sense of desperation, I rang another bell. This time a curly headed young man took one look at me and bade me enter. He left me in an elegant sitting room, and disappeared, while I dripped onto the carpet. I poked my head out, and saw him in a side kitchen.

"Please would you have a hair dryer?" I asked.

"There must be one somewhere" he smiled, "but I'm a plumber, and doing a job for the people who own the house."

"Oh Lord" I thought. If they return we will both be in hot water, and not just me frozen in the rain." Then the thought struck me:

"Phone for a cab, and I'll pay on my arrival back at the guest house."

My friend phoned for me, and as the cab drew up I grabbed his hand and shook it with all my might. "You have been wonderful." Once again he smiled.

Back at the guest house I was in the money again, and my driver thanked me for the added tip. As I knocked back a cup of hot tea, I was joined by the two lads who had been picked up by one of the Sisters who worked in the guest house.

And we never did make it to the top of Cissbury Ring!!

Mary P. 10A

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## **IN THE NEWS THESE DAYS**

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinajad calls President Bush and tells him, "George, I had a wonderful dream last night. I could see America, the whole beautiful country, and on each house I saw a banner."

"What did it say on the banners?" Bush asks.

Mahmud replies, "UNITED STATES OF IRAN."

Bush says, "You know, Mahmud, I am really happy you called, because believe it or not, last night I had a similar dream, I could see the whole of Teheran, and it was more beautiful than ever, and on each house flew an enormous banner."

What did it say on the banners?" Mahmud asks.

Bush replies, "I don't know, I can't read Hebrew."

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## **PERKS OF BEING OVER 60**

In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.

People call at 9PM and ask, "Did I wake you."

Things you buy now won't wear out.

You can eat supper at 4 PM.

You can live without sex but not your glasses.

Your joints are more accurate than the BBC Weather Report.

Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.

Your eyes won't get much worse.

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Two little kids are in a Hospital in Brooklyn and lying close to each other outside the operating room.

The first kid leans over and asks, "What are you in here for?" The second kid says, "I'm in here to have my tonsils out and I'm a little nervous."

The first kid says, "You've got nothing to worry about. I had that done when I was four. They put you to sleep, and when you wake up they give you ice cream. It's a breeze."

The second kid then asks, "What are you here for?"

The second kid replies, "A circumcision."

The second kid replies, " Well good luck, Buddy!  
I had that done when I was born.

Couldn't walk for a year."

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