

THE THUNDERER

A.K.A. THE INMATES' GAZETTE

February 2008

Number 16

St Pancras Almshouses

THE NOTICE BOARD

We wish to extend a very warm welcome to our new residents:- Michael King who joined at the end of 2007 and Jean Morrisroe and David Grainger this year.

We sincerely hope that you will be happy here at the Almshouses and will join us on some Saturday evenings to enjoy a film or two and that you will come to the Coffee Morning in the Library on Thursdays at 10:30 AM and, very importantly, we invite you to submit an article or a story or an anecdote to The Thunderer for other residents to enjoy.

In fact, we invite ALL RESIDENTS to write to us.

THE EDNA BROWN CINEMA CLUB

Every Saturday evening at 7 PM

February 2 nd	Kind Hearts and Coronets
February 9 th	Brief Encounter
February 16 th	Passport to Pimlico
February 23 rd	The Third Man
March 1 st	The Maltese Falcon

THESE OLD FAVOURITES WERE CHOSEN BY RESIDENTS.

LAUNDRY NEWS: The new Spin Dryer has been ordered but is out of stock for four weeks.

When it does arrive, you are respectfully requested NOT to overload it, Far better to divide your clothes into 2 loads and save our Spinner.

I am a Tax Inspector

A jolly chap, that's me
I deal with your assessments
And drink a lot of tea

You'll always find me laughing
You'll never see me cry
I find out what you're earning
And then I bleed you dry!

I check the bills you send me
I find out what you've bought
I look through your expenses
Then cut them down to nought

I squeeze out every penny
You all pay up like mice
And if I catch you cheating
I make you pay up twice!

I send you forms and pamphlets
It's fun without a doubt
To ask a lot of questions
And try to catch you out

There's only one man's tax forms
I leave there on the shelf
Oh Yes I make quite certain
I don't pay tax myself.

Samantha King 5C

**A TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND JOHN HAYWARD,
VICAR OF St MARTIN'S PARISH CHURCH
GOSPEL OAK**

Many of the Almshouse Residents will know the the Anglican Chaplain to St Pancras Almshouses, Father John Hayward, who has served us for the past five years.

Our Parish Priest, after almost 13 years of untiring service to the community of Gospel Oak, is leaving St Martin's, to take up another post in South West London.

During his present incumbency, he has seen St Martin's - mostly due to his efforts and with the support of a dedicated congregation - change from a rather inconspicuous, relatively small building, (hidden almost in the midst of a vast estate) to a thriving and much admired, Grade 1 Listed Church, which slowly but surely is becoming the beating heart of the community. Every year on the London Open day in September, between 200 and 300 visitors come through the church doors to admire the architecture of this "craziest of London's Victorian Churches" with its vast hammer-beam roof.

It is very obvious from their reaction on entering St Martin's, that, although many having no particular interest in religion, find their breath taken away by its extraordinary interior.

This very hammer-beam roof was, in 2001, in a very bad state. Leaking water every time it rained; the drips into many buckets making such a noise, as at times to drown out the organ! The fabric of the building inside was also being undermined by this constant water infiltration.

The task of raising over £500,000 to repair the roof seemed beyond anyone's dreams but Father John accepted the challenge and, bit by bit, with the usual sponsored walks, concerts, private donations, appeals to various charitable funds and a Grant from English Heritage, this vast amount was raised. We were indebted to an official fund-raiser whose positive approach inspired everyone.

After many months of restoration, a Service of Thanksgiving was held on the 27th of November 2004 for the safe delivery of the Church and its people. It must be said that without Father John's faith in the project and his burning ambition to restore this most beautiful Church to its former glory, others would have lost heart-but those of us who doubted were wrong, so very wrong!

Father John, during his time as Vicar has continued most cordial relations with our friends, next door at St Dominic's Priory Church: the Methodist Church in Agincourt Road and many other places of worship locally, both Christian and other faiths.

Perhaps one of Father John's lasting legacies, is the affection in which he is held by shop owners and stall holders in Queens Crescent market.

He has been such a familiar figure to them all, both in good times and bad, and they will find it difficult to realise that he is no longer "up the road" at St Martin's.

Those of us who remain, hopefully to continue some of his good work, will inevitably discover how much change there will be in our lives after March.

The last Sunday that Father John celebrates the Holy Eucharist at St Martin's is the 9th of March at 10.30 a.m. I do urge those residents

Who know him personally, and indeed those who do not, to please come to the Church to wish him “Farewell” and “God Speed”.

In a hackneyed phrase, much beloved by those in the acting profession, but very appropriate in this context, John Hayward will indeed be “a very hard act to follow.”

Julia Smith. January 2008.

AGE 65+

Key Issues:

This is the time to call on all the understanding and knowledge that you have gathered throughout the years. You have faced so much and have learned how to overcome setbacks and cope with losses, but you also know how to celebrate the beauty of life.

Increasing age brings the ability to become more accepting of self and of others and to develop the wonderful capacity for forgiveness.

Naturally you will be contemplating the fact of death and this can lead to an enlightening sense of the bigger picture and a maturing of spiritual awareness. As we look back on life it becomes possible to see how each separate stage leads inevitably to the next and how, in the end, we can only realise our unique and amazing potential by living with awareness and learning from every single one of our experiences.

Challenges

How to:

- Face uncertainty with grace
 - Leave a positive legacy
- Share your many gifts with others
 - Accept the ageing process

What to do:

- Reflect on the changing nature of your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. What attitudes and approaches bring light and understanding to you and those around you? Use your wisdom and be glad for all that you can offer to others.
- Learn to relax and enjoy the moment, there is so much to appreciate, as you know.
- Keep up with your friendships; these are as valuable as gold dust.

Submitted by Doreen. 9C

From the Bard of Pond Street

PUT YOUR RIGHT FOOT OUT !

It may appear a little “cockney” to spend time writing about feet. Yet we rely on them to provide special meanings. For example: “putting one’s foot in it,” “stand on your own two feet,” He never put a foot wrong.”

I doubt if anyone can remember when, to the delight of their elders, they took their first steps unaided, followed soon after by groans and moans when they didn’t know when to stop.

One of the advantages when we reach that “certain age”, as a kindly neighbour calls it, is free foot treatment at a local health centre, roughly every two months.

During my visits there I have been attended to by a variety of people: a man with a bored expression who, looking as though he was serving a sentence, advised me to get a private chiropodist; the chirpy young mother who talked non-stop, but gave full satisfaction; the charming Indian lady who, distracted by a few cordial remarks on my part, held my foot in her hand, seeming to forget what she was meant to do with it.

But the “jewel in the crown” was my last visit. The young man from some far away land set to work with such dedication, elegance of manner and skill. As he handled the tools I was reduced to silence, and wandered into a day dream. He had become Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564). He was putting the finishing touches to his statue of David! (I don’t mean our Editor, but the Old Testament King). The specks that were floating around as he chiselled away, were not old dry skin but fragments of the finest marble from the mountains of Massa Carrara in Tuscany.

His work was nearing completion. Would he then, as it was recorded, strike my foot and say to his masterpiece: “Speak”. I waited in trepidation! Then he raised his head for the first time and enquired: “Would you like me to cut a piece of felt to cover your bunion?” The spell was broken and I gulped: “Oh yes please. Thank you very much.”

Mary 10A

MORE THAN A MEANS OF TRANSPORT

The motor car or automobile, which we all take for granted, is a very important aspect of social history.

When Henry Ford exclaimed in the 1900's-"Everyone wants to be some place he ain't"-he put America and Europe on wheels with his Model 'T' or 'Tin Lizzie', no fewer than 15 million were produced. This enabled ordinary working folk to travel around independently to places and at times of their choosing which made a massive impact on their lives.

Another motoring icon was the Volkswagen (or People's car), commissioned by Adolph Hitler and designed by Dr Ferdinand Porsche, even the advertising became legendary-they stressed the advantages of its air-cooled engine which couldn't boil in the summer or freeze in the winter-there was no radiator and therefore no water, 21 million 'Beetles' were produced.

Andre` Citroen was another visionary engineer, his 1934 'Traction Avant' (front wheel drive), followed by the '2CV' or deux chevaux (2 horse power), every French farmer had one, and then in 1955 the amazing 'DS', pronounced 'day-esse' (goddess)-all three designed by Flaminio Bertoni-automotive works of art, technically and for their styling.

The Mini, designed by Alec Issigonis (also responsible for the Morris Minor 1000), was a completely new type of small car, a great favourite, but they made a loss on every one produced, because of their complexity.

In the 1920s and early '30s Herbert Austin and William Morris (Lord Nuffield) produced their very popular Austin Seven and Morris Minor, competing with each other.

Then, in 1932 Ford marketed their first car specifically for Britain, designed by the talented Bob Gregorie, the Model 'Y' priced at just £100 complete and which had a certain advantage over the Austin and Morris, i.e. it was professionally 'styled' so it looked more attractive-sales boomed.

The other famous small car was the very stylish 1936 Fiat 500 'Topolino' (little mouse), now collectable.

So there we have American, German, French, British and Italian car makers still in business-although the Mini is now in German hands. Sadly many British manufacturers are no more, you may remember some of these names:-

Austin, Morris, Wolseley, Riley, Hillman, Humber, Singer, Sunbeam-Talbot, Armstrong-Siddeley, Jowett, Alvis, Lea-Francis, Rover, Standard, Triumph, AC, Allard, Frazer Nash, Healey, HRG-all these have bitten the dust since WW2-RIP.

I doubt if Henry Ford envisaged that the automobile would become a victim of its own success.

Chris 12 A

CHRISTMAS EVE 2007 IN BETHLEHEM

During the morning of December 24th I was at my sister's flat in Jerusalem when my Daughter, who was on a visit, suddenly said-
"Dad, Let's go to Bethlehem".

I started to consider the idea, bearing in mind the strained relations (to say the least) between Israelis and Palestinians.

I phoned my niece to ask her to accompany us but she thought it was a terrible idea and was afraid of being shot or kidnapped for ransom and graciously declined my invitation.

The Bus company told me that there is no Bus service to Bethlehem as they only run buses in Israel.

I then phoned James (Jameel), an Arab Taxi driver who was born in Jerusalem to ask if he would take us, be our guide there and bring us back to Jerusalem.

"No problem" he said, "I'll pick you up in 10 minutes. Bring your British passports to prove that you are Tourists, as Israelis are not allowed into the Palestinian Territories".

And so it came to pass that we set off on our great adventure in Jimmy's Skoda Taxi a few minutes later.

It was a bright sunny day, but cool enough for us to wear our Fleecies, as we set off a few minutes later toward, I thought, the first Check Point.

Bethlehem is very close to Jerusalem and is probably about as far as Mill Hill from Hampstead and when I asked Jimmy what to expect at the check point he told me not to worry because there are many roads into Bethlehem and he would drive where there were no check points and so

after quite a short time we were in Bethlehem having passed a checkpoint that was unmanned.

The Police in Bethlehem had blocked the roads to Manger Square because they expected thousands of visitors so, acting on Jameel's advice, we went to the Bethlehem Hotel which is built into the side of a hill and took the lift up to the 5th floor, went through the laundry room and out through a Clothing Store onto a street at a higher level that was within reach of Manger Square.

Jameel called one of his mates who is a Taxi Driver in Bethlehem and we drove the short distance to Manger Square.

We were then handed over to a local guide (probably Jameel's cousin) who escorted us into The Church of the Nativity through the Gate of Humility. The guide explained the history of the Church and at one time this entrance was a huge arched opening but during the course of centuries under the rule of the Mamelukes, the Crusaders and later the Ottoman Empire this entrance had been changed and changed again and now the lintel is so low that one must bow down in order to enter and thus it acquired the name 'Gate of Humility'.

You may remember that this Church was occupied by Gunmen a few years ago with many hostages trapped inside. There was a stand off for several weeks but it was impossible to storm the Church as the walls are very very thick and the hostages lives would have been put in jeopardy, so in the end the gunmen were granted free passage and their hostages were released.

Inside the Church we inspected some of the original Mosaic Floor that had been uncovered by British archaeologists in the 1940s. It was in perfect condition.

We then went down a few stairs to the grotto and saw where Jesus was born. There is a brass or gold Star of Bethlehem set into the living rock at the exact place where he was delivered and many of the visitors prostrated themselves on the ground to kiss the star.

We had to keep moving as there was a constant stream of visitors, or pilgrims, and when we got back to ground level outside the Church the crowd was getting larger as they were expecting the Latin Patriarch to arrive in procession from Jerusalem.

The crowds were excited and happy but we felt very safe as there was a large Police presence everywhere and we noticed Police Snipers on all the roof tops surrounding Manger Square.

As the procession was delayed we asked Jameel to join us for lunch but we insisted that he take us to a restaurant that he would have gone to if he had not had any tourists in tow.

He led us to what can only be described as a cavern just below Manger Square and we ate the only dishes on offer (there were no menus) which

were Humus (a paste or pate` made from ground chickpeas and sesame seeds), Falafel (also made from chickpeas and spices but fried in oil), Pita bread and orange juice. There was no cutlery as the custom is to tear a piece of bread and scoop up the humus with it.

We thought it was delicious and the falafel was the best that we had ever tasted.

My daughter kept popping out to see if the Patriarch had arrived and to take some photos but I stayed in the 'cavern' which just happened to have a huge Flat Screen TV which was showing what was going on outside.

When we came out we were almost deafened by the Drum Bands of Scouts and other groups and also large groups of bagpipers. The reason for the bagpipes is that Jordan (formerly called Trans Jordan) was an ally or protectorate of the British and they got to like bagpipes and continued the tradition. I believe they are a feature in India and Pakistan for similar reasons.

In one group there was a boy on stilts dressed as Santa Claus and there were Christmas trees around and I saw Christmassy pictures in the shops with lots of snow which looked out of place in this environment.

We behaved as all tourists do and bought some souvenirs and made our trip in reverse by entering the clothing shop, through the laundry to the lift, down to the lobby and back into the Skoda and so back to Jerusalem, also without benefit of road blocks.

It was certainly a day to remember and I am very thankful to my daughter for suggesting it.

David 4A

WHAT IS A SENIOR CITIZEN?

A Senior Citizen is one who was here before:- the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards..... and before man walked on the moon.

For us, "Time Sharing" means togetherness, not holiday homes, and a "chip" meant a piece of wood.

"Hardware" meant nuts and bolts, and software wasn't even a word.

"We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something that butchers did.

"A Stud" was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and "going all the way" meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought “fast food” was what you ate at in lent; a “Big Mac” was an oversized raincoat and “crumpet” we had for tea.

In our day ; “grass” was mown, “pot” was something you cooked in, “coke” was kept in the coal house and a “joint” was cooked on Sundays!

We are today’s SENIOR CITIZENS.

A hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed.

Submitted by Mary 10A
