Friern Barnet **Newsletter**

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EXTENDING THE TUBE

by David Berguer

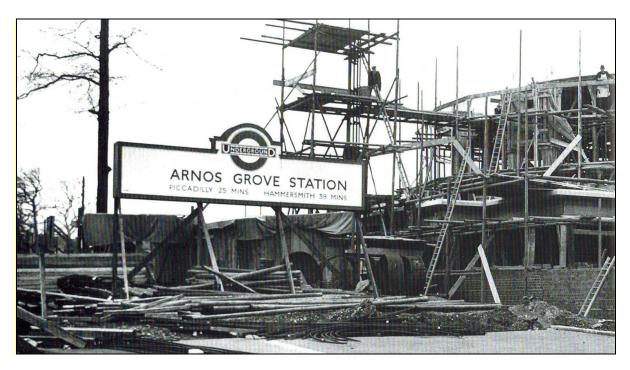
The following appeared in *Barnet Press* of 13 December 1930:

"THE COCKFOSTERS TUBE. Work for 20,000 Men. Day and night hundreds of men are working on the Piccadilly tube railway extension from Finsbury Park to Cockfosters, a distance of 7½ miles, part of the 12 miles scheme of extension of the line, which is costing £12,500,000 or a little over £1,000,000 per mile.

Employment is being given, directly and indirectly, to 20,000 men, and the work will be finished in the spring of 1932.

Nine shafts have been sunk at points ranging from a tennis court in Finsbury Park to Southgate, which is 4½ miles away. Each of these nine shafts is the scene of great activity. The way down the shaft is by means of a bucket, lowered on a rope by a crane. The bucket attains a high speed when descending and with a bump touches the ground at the bottom.

The ear-splitting sound of pneumatic shovels, the clank of iron upon iron, and the hiss of compressed air greet the senses upon entering the tunnel, which is



planned to be 12 feet in diameter. It has to be bored out of the clay by exminers from Wales and specially selected men known as clay miners. Great iron rings, requiring six men to lift each one, are placed in the tunnel at the rate of two a day. Later, when there is enough space in the tunnel, automatic machines will be used, boring at the rate of five yards a day. When the rings have been installed there is always about an inch space between the outer cover and the clay. Cement is pumped into this space by a high-pressure air machine."

Until 1932 the Piccadilly Line, which had started life as the Great Northern, Piccadilly & Brompton Railway in 1906, had terminated at Finsbury Park and passengers wishing to travel further north had to use buses or trams or change there on to the Great Northern Line where a steam-hauled service operated. People in the local area would travel to New Southgate, Oakleigh Park or New Barnet on overcrowded and decrepit rolling stock. Queues of commuters spilled into the road, and buses, motor cars and trams, which ran along the centre of the road, all vied for road space.

Over the years there had been repeated calls for the Great Northern Line to be electrified but the LNER declined to make the necessary investment, being more concerned with carrying coal than passengers, whilst at the same time opposing any extension to the Piccadilly Line. Eventually the LNER admitted that electrification was necessary but they could not afford the necessary investment and reluctantly agreed that the Underground Group could extend the tube northwards. An Act of 1929 (the Loan Guarantees and Grants Act) made it possible to raise money and plans were drawn up for stations at Manor House, Ducketts Green (later renamed Turnpike Lane), Wood Green, Brownlow Road (later Bounds Green), Bowes Road (later Arnos Grove), Chase Side (later Southgate) and East Barnet. The latter station was renamed Enfield West in 1934 and then Oakwood in 1946.

The line opened as far as Arnos Grove on 19 September 1932, to Enfield West on 13 March 1933 and Cockfosters on 31 July 1933 where a train depot had been built.

Following the precedent set by the Metropolitan Railway in the 1910s, the introduction of a new line led to a huge boom in house building and a tour today of the area north of Arnos Grove reveals thousands of typical 1930s semis. The stations themselves were designed by Charles Holden and Arnos Grove, Cockfosters, Oakwood and Southgate are Grade II* listed.

Not many people using Bounds Green Station today will know that it was the scene of a tragedy during the last war. On 13 October 1940 a bomb was dropped near the station which resulted in the collapse of the tunnel on the westbound platform. Seventeen people (three of them Belgian refugees) were killed and twenty were injured. The service was disrupted for two months.

SUNDAYS

by John Heathfield

Usually we came home from school, played soldiers in the back field and then I went to hear *Children's Hour*. "Out With the Romany" was on Wednesdays and at the end Uncle Mac said "Goodnight children, Goodnight children (pause) everywhere."

Sundays was different. We listened to the Ovaltineys on Radio Luxembourg at 5.30. Ready? *One, two, three*:

"We are the Ovaltineys
Little girls and boys.
Make your request, we'll not refuse you,
We are here just to amuse you.
Would you like a song or story?
Will you share our joys?
At games and sports we're more than keen
No merrier children ever seen,
Because we all drink Ovaltine
We're happy girls and boys."

Sundays was Sunday School so that Mum and Dad could have a rest after lunch. All I can recall is being Angel Gabriel in a Nativity play at All Saints' Church organised by Ena Constable. I was in the choir too, largely because you got half a crown every quarter and sixpence for a wedding. I remember looking at one bride and thinking: "Coo, I wouldn't want to marry HER."

I noticed the notes on the stave went up and down as the tune moved and taught myself to read music. I was on the cantoris side. On decant was Mr George Fletcher, the only tenor and a member of a remarkable family whose connection with the choir went back to the foundation of the church in 1881.

BURGLARIES

Back in January the *Daily Telegraph* published a table of the most burgled areas in the country. The results make depressing reading for those of us living in North London:

Rank	Postcode	Area	Burglary claims per 1000 people
3rd	N10	Muswell Hill	40.9
5th	N2	East Finchley, Fortis Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb	34.5
8th	N18	Upper Edmonton, Edmonton	32.3
14th	N20	Whetstone, Totteridge, Oakleigh Park	28.0
16th	N11	New Southgate, Friern Barnet, Bounds Green	27.7
17th	N16	Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill Dalston	27.7

Things could have been worse, though. The most burgled area in the country was in Manchester and Chorlton-cum-Hardy (postcode M20) where they had 45.2 burglaries per thousand. It can be grim up north!

WHETSTONE NOTES

(by John Heathfield)

THE NAME

An early settlement in Friern Barnet was by the Hospitallers whose house was probably where Friary Park now stands and near the church. The old road from London ran past the church but was muddy and inconvenient so when the Bishop of London opened a gate into his park (the Highgate) in about 1340, it became possible to run a road straight across Finchley Common along the ridge. The settlement moved west to form West Town. Early forms of the name included "le Weston" (1398); "Wheston" (1417) and "Whetstonestret" (1439). All these names predate the Battle of Barnet (1417), so any connection with the Battle of Barnet is spurious.

THE WHETSTONE

The old stone which stands outside *The Griffin* is made of quartz and sandstone, containing small grains of zircon, rutile and schorl. Such stone outcrops are found in the Yorkshire Dales and in South Wales and were laid down about 240 million years ago. How it got to Whetstone is a mystery. There is a reference in the early 1500s to a "Fayre Cross" at Whetstone cross roads. Does "Fayre" mean "fair" in the sense of market fair? There is a tradition of preaching at the cross roads. Was the stone the base of a wooden preaching cross?

The Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments considered the stone to be a mounting block and if so it would have been connected to the toll gate erected by the Whetstone & Highgate Turnpike Trust about 1730. Unfortunately the earliest financial accounts are lost. I have looked at the records of all the houses in the row immediately behind the stone. It may be significant that none of them mention a stone, though they do mention things like the Queen's (Elizabeth's) Highway, the town well and the ponds. Does this mean that the stone was not there in Tudor times?

The earliest evidence of the existence of the stone is a photograph taken in 1861 showing the stone much closer to *The Griffin* and high enough for two people to sit on. It was moved to its present position when the toll gate was removed in 1863. I keep changing my mind. My position today is that it is a mounting block connected with the Turnpike Trust and put up about 1733. Watch this space for subsequent changes of mind.

WHETSTONE AT WAR

In 1939 many Whetstone men served in the local Territorial Army unit, 334 Battery Royal Artillery, which formed part of the anti-aircraft defensive ring around London. They had 30 searchlight sites about 4 miles apart all over Hertfordshire. The war diary includes the following from 1939:

- 8 Sep 14.00. Message from Field Intelligence: Suspicious character dressed as a Corporal seen driving round asking whereabouts of nearest army unit. Uses a Ford 8 saloon.
- 16.52. Man seen by Pte. Stern at Rye Park. Driving Ford 8 wearing uniform, forage cap, thickset, clean shaven with moustache.
- 9 Sep. suspicious man detained and is at Bishops Stortford police station (He turned out to be the Ration corporal who had got himself lost in the country lanes).

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL 1944

by Janet Friend

St John's School in Goldsmith Road was lit by gaslight and I can still hear the popping sounds and see the soft yellow glow when they were lit by a taper at dusk. The toilets were outside and were very damp and cold. We sat at two seater wooden desks with china inkwells embedded in the top; we used slates and chalk because paper was scarce.

The never- to-be forgotten David Steele sat behind me and dipped the ends of my plaits into his ink well. When I flicked them round, the ink covered my book and my neighbour's with black splodges. A few days later he set fire to the papers in his desk. Luckily I had worn my plaits doubled up after the ink episode.

At lunchtime we sat at our oilcloth-covered desks and dreamed of elevation to the Dining Room with its long trestle tables. To achieve this you had to eat all your "greens". Jennifer Cook sat next to me and ate mine so that we could move up together. Seventy years later she is still a valued friend, but now I eat my own greens. Lunchtime was the brightest bit of the day and school dinners were lovely (apart from the greens). To children starved of sugar, "afters" of chocolate pudding with white custard or tapioca with a dollop of jam on top (Death on the Alps) were sheer bliss.

I was never able to resists a dare, so when it was suggested that I let one side of the dining table trestle down, I did so, causing twelve plates of food to slide gracefully to the floor. Mother was called to the school. In summer term, who could collect most wasps from the dustbin without being stung? Mother was called once again to the school. When dared to set off a fire alarm, how could I resist? The foam covered all the coats in the cloakroom, burning holes into them. This was a disaster because clothes were still on ration. Mother was getting tired of being summoned to school.

When air raid sirens went off we ran to the field opposite and entered the air raid shelter – a dark, dripping tunnel with wooden slatted benches and the scurrying of rats around our feet. Here we would sing *Ten Green Bottles Hanging on the Wall* to keep our spirits up until the "all clear".

Classmates would regularly disappear to the Isolation Hospital with measles or diphtheria and be away for weeks. When polio struck all the swimming pools were closed and no one bought ice cream from the men on tricycles, as these were believed to be the source. Some children went on iron lungs and others returned permanently crippled.

Recalling all this I realise how deprived, authoritarian and Dickensian my schooling was. Our teachers would flick chalk and throw blackboard dusters at miscreants; I spent many a lesson standing on a chair with my hands on my head. Today, as a Governor and reading mentor in a bright modern primary school where the teachers and pupils are polite to each other and atmosphere is one of encouragement and nurturing, I can only be glad to have left those "good old days" behind.

JOHN PARR

by John Heathfield

John Parr, the first British soldier to be killed in the First World War, was a caddy at the very Golf Club where we now hold our meetings.

John was born in 1898 and lived at 52 Lodge Lane. His father, Edward (Teddy), worked as a milkman for United Dairies in Fredericks Place, off the High Road, North Finchley. He would have gone to Finchley Board School in Albert Street. His academic record might best be described as undistinguished and like others at the time he left school at 14 and got a job as a caddy at North Middlesex Golf Club.

1914 was a bad time for a poorly educated, unskilled working class lad. Jobs were scarce and he would have been looking for somewhere which provided accommodation, food and clothing. He joined the Army at Mill Hill Barracks, home of the 4th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, almost certainly lying about his age. Unfortunately his attestation certificate has disappeared.

In August 1914 the battalion was at Devonport, part of 8 Brigade, 3rd Division. The battalion entrained for Southampton and sailed in the *SS Mombassa* to Boulogne. On 22 August they moved up to the line of the Mons-Conde canal, which they used as a defence line. The first British shots in the war were fired by D company to which Private Parr was attached. They fired on a detachment of Uhlans – German cavalry wearing the typical flat topped caps and armed with lances. John Parr was part of the reconnaissance platoon and was sent towards Obourg to locate the enemy. There were shots fired and Private Parr failed to return. In the confusion which followed, the outnumbered British retreated towards Mons and subsequently to Nouvelles, Nine officers were killed and six wounded. A total of 453 other ranks were reported killed as killed, wounded or missing. Gradually about 200 men who had been separated rejoined the battalion. The confusion was such that the regimental war diary was not written until 3 days later.

At that period British soldiers did not wear dog tags and so John Parr's body was not formally identified until March 1915. Letters to the War Office from his frantic mother were not answered because nobody knew what had happened.

My own opinion is that when the War Office realised that an under-age boy had been killed, the papers were "mislaid." Eventually news of Parr's fate came through the Swiss Red Cross. John Parr is buried at St Symphorian cemetery, just south of Mons.

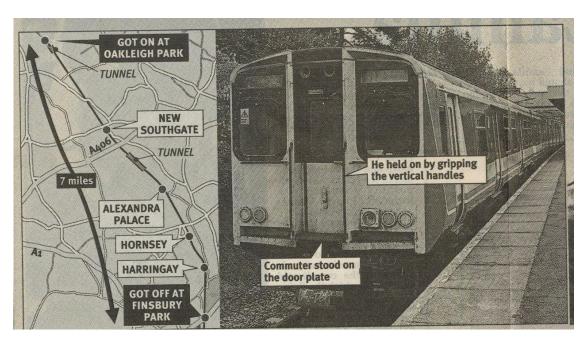
THE COMMUTER WHO THOUGHT HE WAS INDIANA JONES

The following appeared in the *Evening Standard* on 1 November 2002:

"An enraged commuter climbed onto the outside of a morning peak-hour train and hung on as it reached speeds of up to 60mph – because there was not enough room in the carriage. The man held on to the back of the train for 20 minutes while it went through two tunnels and four stations, in a move reminiscent of film action hero Indiana Jones.

His frustration at the appalling state of the railways had finally boiled over when he arrived at his station to find the platforms jam-packed and services delayed yet again. In an act that was today condemned as "stupid and reckless" – he clambered onto the rear of the train and stood on a foot plate, holding onto grab-handles for seven miles. Rail chiefs threatened to prosecute the commuter if he was caught.

The man arrived at Oakleigh Park station for a local train bound for Moorgate. Finding the main carriages full, he first tried to squeeze into the guard's van and the unused driver's cab. Then he jumped onto the back of the train. Kevin Andrews, 29, said he saw the man climb on the train on Monday at about 7.30am. "The platform was packed with people because of the delays from the weather. The train came along and we were all getting on when I saw him lean out and just grab the rails," he said. "He put one foot out and then swung himself onto the little plate at the back. He must have been hanging on for nearly 20 minutes because I think he got off at Finsbury Park. He was in his forties with longish hair and certainly did not look like a nutter."



Oakleigh Park is a quiet suburban station that serves King's Cross and Moorgate stations. Most mornings there are four or five trains an hour into the city. Mr Andrews said delays were common. "The service isn't great and if it forces people to do things like jump on the back of a train they should do something about it," he said. Another witness said "People could not believe it. He just hung on the outside of the train. It was an extremely foolhardy and reckless thing to do. He was obviously terribly frustrated — as were we all — about the delays. "The trains were all over the place, and when they did arrive they were already so full many people could not get on. But what this man did was madness. "You see pictures of this sort of thing happening in India but I never imagined I would see it in this country. It just shows how awful the railways have become." The man hung on as the train passed through New Southgate, Alexandra Park, Hornsey and Harringay stations before he finally climbed off at Finsbury Park. "He just crossed the platform and walked off," said the witness.

A spokesman for train operator WAGN said delays were the result of Sunday's storm. "We provided the best service we could. Riding on the outside of a train

is an act of trespass and vandalism and anyone caught doing so would be subject to prosecution."

If it was you who took a ride on the back of this train, do let us know more about it. We promise we won't tell anyone, and we would like to see if you still have all your longish hair after eleven years.

EMBROIDERY

by Patricia Berguer

John Neal's excellent and fascinating talk at our February meeting on "The Bayeux Tapestry" (more strictly "The Bayeux *Embroidery*") reminded me of the time when I was a pupil at St Paul's Primary School in The Avenue, New Southgate in the 1950s.

One of the lessons taught by the senior teacher, Mrs Brown, was Embroidery. We started on tray cloths and other small pieces, eventually working up to larger and more challenging items. The giddy heights were reached when we were considered proficient enough to be allowed to work on a large design on one corner of a tablecloth. The images were ironed on to the cloth from transfers, and patterns included flowers, birds and crinoline ladies.

We would start our Needlework lessons with simple back stitches which were great for outlining but, since the stitches tend to be long, they were not very good round tight corners. A variety of other stitches were taught such as split stitch, satin stitch, chain stitch and French knots, which were good for small details such as stamens on flowers. We used beautifully coloured embroidery silks which came in little bundles tied round with a paper wrapper. These were all supplied by the school, along with needles, scissors and material. In the top needlework classes the girls were shown how to make a summer skirt with floral material and I still have a photo of our class bedecked in our skirts, all stitched by hand.



The top class at St Paul's Primary – the girls outnumbered the boys by two to one. I am third from the right

In the 1970s I would buy a yard of material at Barnet Market for a pound and run up a full length skirt, almost weekly, so maybe those early lessons from Mrs Brown had paved the way – although by then I was using a sewing machine!

"ALL OVER BY CHRISTMAS" by David Berguer

reviewed by Richard Testar

"All over by Christmas", was the view in Britain at the start of the First World War. This was echoed by the Kaiser who declared to the German troops "You will be returning home before the leaves have fallen from the trees"

History showed that this was not the case.

David Berguer has again excelled himself with his latest book which sees the war through the eyes of those who lived in Britain, and in particular those from our local area. Having read David's previous books, *Under the Wires at Tally Ho* and *The Friern Hospital Story* he has yet again managed to produce an enthralling and readable book which brings history to life and is difficult to put down. David has certainly earned his place in the ranks of well-known local historians by documenting aspects of local history in such a graphic way.

With the special help of two of our members, Anthea Gray and Nick McKie it is clear that an enormous amount of research has gone into the book, and the abundance of photos and illustrations bring such a sparkle to it!

The book is particularly poignant as John Parr who lived in Lodge Lane, North Finchley, was the first soldier to die in the Great War.

David sets the scene at the beginning by giving an account of the build-up to the war and the world events leading up to the start. There was a huge drive to recruit volunteers. Even children were targeted through comics to support the national feeling at the time. The patriotic fervour not only achieved its purpose, but had uglier side effects such as the harassment of Germans (of which there were 50,000 in Britain at the time). Conscription was only introduced in 1916, which led to a flood of conscientious objections which are described in detail.

There are touching letters written from the Front, with graphic accounts depicting humour and sadness, together with many letters from home written to Anthea's father by her mother.

It is clear that what started as a jingoistic approach turned sour later on once the enormous loss of life was realised, and the whole purpose of the war was brought into question.

Every angle of life in Britain seems to have been covered; the rising costs of food, voluntary rationing, encouragement to be economical, introduction of allotments and interestingly the implementation of the Licensing Act to deter drunkenness, which in its various forms was only revoked in 2005!

Restrictions at home and their effects on the population; reduced bus services, higher fares, shortage of staff and depleted local amenities due to so many men being at war are well described. Women were recruited to fulfil jobs in transport,

industry, commerce and farming. Sanctions were brought in such as "no ringing of church bells", and bizarrely, "no purchase of binoculars without authority"! British Summer Time came in to give farmers a longer day, and many taxes were introduced, even on cinema tickets.

The strains on facilities at home are documented, such as lack of hospital beds for returning injured soldiers, which meant that such places as Avenue House in Finchley and Ewen Hall in Barnet were adapted for receiving patients. Alexandra Palace was used as a shelter for Belgian troops. Such subjects as the suffragette movement is covered and there's even a detailed account of racism at football matches.

The tone of the war changed considerably with the start of Zeppelin raids. More personal accounts are described which give a sense of reality to the fear that people suffered. When a Zeppelin was shot down in Potters Bar, the public showed jubilation – "they loved a good firework show" - and they would pay visits to crash sites to pick up relics. The later introduction of aeroplanes for bombing added further misery and bloodshed.

The book does not just stop at the end of the war. Whilst there were great celebrations to mark the Armistice, it soon dawned upon the nation that the struggle to recover at home had only just begun. Food shortages and high prices were prevalent and the shortfall of working men was evident. The sight of wounded servicemen begging on the streets and selling matches was pitiful. After the war, its futility began to be realised. A popular ditty written in 1922 summed it up:

"We won the war, what was it for?
You can ask Lloyd George or Bonar Law,
We beat the German, the Austrian and Turk,
That's why we're all walking round out of work.
We won the war, what was it for?"

David's book is enriched by detailed and comprehensive appendices, covering chronologies of the Home Front and Western Front; details of the war dead of this area; the Zeppelin and aeroplane raids on Britain; together with categories of pension beneficiaries and causes of disability.

These appendices are in themselves a worthwhile read and wrap up this book in a very neat and attractive parcel.

I am stunned by the amount of work that has gone into David's book. How he finds time to write and run the Local History Society I do not know. What I do know is, like his previous books, it is so inspiring to be able to learn history in such a compelling way. I only wish that the history books on offer when I was at school had the same appeal as this! So curl up on the sofa in front to the fire and you will soon be absorbed!

All Over by Christmas runs to 277 pages with over 140 illustrations. It is priced at £15.99 and is obtainable from Waterstone's North Finchley and Barnet or other good bookshops (ISBN 9 780956 934499) or direct from the publishers, Chaville Press, 148 Friern Park, N12 9LU at £15.99 plus £3 post and packing.

THE COST OF MOTORING

by David Berguer

Amongst the Society's archives are things which we call Paper Ephemera and which consist over 400 items, ranging from things of general historical interest (ration books, driving licences and wartime government pamphlets) to those of purely local interest (letters, invoices and brochures from local companies, Council rent books and publicity from local groups).

We have put a large amount of the material on our photographic website (www.friern-barnet.com) under the Album entitled "Paper Ephemera") and in doing so we came across a number of items relating to motoring which had been kindly donated by Karl Ruge. Here are a few interesting facts:

- The insurance premium for Karl's car from 31 May 1950 to 31 May 1951 was £3 14s 0d
- In May 1950 Walter Mortlock charged 10 shillings for "First aid repair to tail of exhaust pipe"
- In the spring of 1955 Godfrey Davis charged £7 a week to hire a Hillman Minx or a Ford Consul, plus 4d a mile
- In 1957 Hartland Garage presented the following bill: "To rubbing down Wolseley 680, recellulosing offside and nearside rear wings, compounding, waxing and polishing car all over, touching all chips, cleaning and polishing chrome to best possible - £9 15s 0d"
- The cost of a re-mould tyre in 1960 was £4 10s 9d
- In July 1960 H A Saunders were selling an "Austin A35 2-door saloon. 1st regd 1.3.58. Recorded mileage 24,456. Finished with Black exterior and Red upholstery. Fitted heater. £445"
- Car tax for a year to March 1970 £25
- In 1973 a car and driver could travel to Aberdeen on Motorail for £52 return



In this brochure from George Grose Ltd the maximum speed was quoted as 50mph with an mpg of 85 to 90 and "no reverse gear necessary"!

If you have any old bills from local companies or any other paper items of interest – don't just throw them away, give them to us and we will keep them for posterity. You can see how interesting they could be in fifty years' time to someone researching life in the early 21st century!

A LOCAL TRAGEDY

The following came from Barnet Press of 23 February 1962:

"Two-year-old Adrian Terence Collins, the elder child of Mr & Mrs T Collins, of 23 Friern Court, Friern Barnet Lane, drowned on Saturday afternoon in a shallow pond close to his home while his parents, neighbours and police searched adjoining streets.

His body was found in a pond on North Middlesex Golf Course a short distance from the back of the flats. A verdict of accidental death was recorded by the coroner, Mr C L Ottaway at a Barnet inquest yesterday (Thursday).

Mr Collins, a municipal engineer, said that his son would have been three in a month's time. On Saturday he was cleaning his car in the forecourt of the flats when his son wandered off to collect twigs. A neighbour helped him search for Adrian in neighbouring roads and one of the first places he looked was near the golf course pond as Adrian had "a great affinity for water." He was nowhere in sight then. The boy was discovered by Mr Phillip James Bunyan, of 33, Friern Court, who said two doctors were on the golf course, and one of them, Dr J G Hagan, Finchley's Medical Officer of Health, gave artificial respiration without success.

The coroner said the boy's death was obviously an accident. There was no question of neglect on the part of anyone. "Perhaps the father feels he should have kept the boy under his personal observation all the time," commented Mr Ottaway, "but young children do the most unexpected things. The only question is whether this fence was a reasonable one. It seems to be a temporary fence, reasonably constructed, with apparently just a small hole which this child knew about and got through."

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 28 May 2014 prior to the talk by Dr Stan Gilks on *Life in a Big Company*. With this Newsletter is the official invitation to attend, along with a Nomination Form and a copy of last year's minutes.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

For those of you who have not renewed your subscriptions for the year commencing 1 April 2014, a further copy of the membership Renewal form is enclosed. If you have not renewed by 1 June you will no longer continue to receive copies of the Newsletter.

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