

## Happy birthday library

On 17 April, Hampstead Garden Suburb Community Library in The Market Place celebrated the first anniversary of the day its doors were opened by volunteers as an independent entity, following closure in a cost-saving exercise by the Borough of Barnet in March 2012.

Thanks to 40 plus regular volunteers, the library is open to the public Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10am-5pm except Bank Holidays, Christmas, New Year and Easter.

Under the guidance of the volunteer management team, led by Jeremy Clynes, the tiny one-room library now has a fresh and welcoming look to it.

Membership has risen to over 1,100 in 12 months and the place has become a community hub, with Suburb organisations advertising their events in the window. The tiny tots have their two Sing Song sessions on Thursday mornings, slightly older children their Story and Rhyme Time on Tuesday afternoons and there are reading and craft sessions during the holidays. A thriving link with Brookland Infants School has been established with the signing-up of all the children in the reception classes on their recent visit to the library.

Adults are catered for with a successful reading group meeting

to discuss a different book on the first Friday of each month, two computers and copying facilities for public use and beginners' computer classes for adults. The library has a website, a regular e-newsletter and, in addition, Garden Suburb Police Safer Neighbourhood Team run regular bike-marking and advisory sessions there too.

Unlike some other boroughs, contact with Barnet's library service has been maintained from the outset. The original stock of books and DVDs was gifted to the volunteers and since then a large stock of new reading material for adults and

children has been provided. Volunteer management team leader Jeremy Clynes, who also runs the website and produces the newsletter as well as doing sessions on the front desk, said: "We all enjoy face to face contact with the public, particularly when very young children come in for the very first time. Just watching their faces makes keeping the library open worthwhile.

"We hope everyone of all ages in the Suburb and beyond, who lives within reach of us, will come and join us so that this community library can stay open for many years to come."

MARJORIE HARRIS

## Garden Suburb Junior chess masters



The chess team at Garden Suburb Junior School has won first prize in the Barnet Schools Chess League Division One. The twelve players representing their school played a number of

matches over the last term and became champions on January 30. The school has a thriving chess club with top coaches Rob Willmoth and International Master Lorin D'Costa.

## Garden Suburb Juniors win again

The winning team from Garden Suburb Junior School at the Barnet Eurovision Song Contest! Nineteen schools from all over Barnet took part and eight made it through to the final which took place at Ashmole Academy in Southgate. The Upper School Choir sang a Spanish folk song 'Viva la Media Naranja' and they

won first place! The Spanish and Music teachers teamed up to prepare the children for the competition. The children were thrilled to be crowned winners and performed the song again in front of their school and the Infant School the next day. The children proudly wore their gold medals to school for the day.



## Bigwood Update

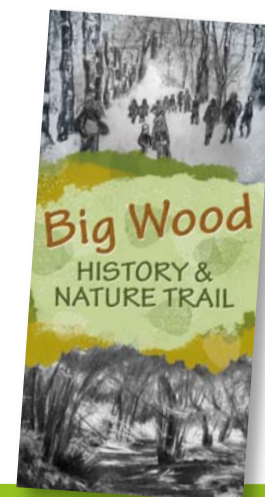
The Bigwood Volunteer Group has worked throughout the winter and spring in the wood carrying out work according to the five year plan which was drawn up last year in conjunction with Barnet. The number of glades has been increased to six with plans to create two more in the autumn and over 50 oak saplings have been planted. The work is vital to preserve the character of the woodland which is classified by English Nature as ancient woodland. The group are carrying out selected coppicing which has been practiced in the UK for at least 400 years. Most mature trees will sprout repeatedly from the stump when cut down so can live for centuries. When the forest floor is opened up, by cutting hazel and clearing ivy etc, to sunlight, nutrients are available for wild flowers and young trees to grow. A properly run coppice cycle gives a diverse age and habitat for wildlife.

The volunteer group along with Barnet successfully applied to the Forestry Commission for a grant to help the work in Bigwood. With the funds we have produced a leaflet on the wood which is freely available to anyone in the Suburb who is interested. There is a history section tracing the history of

the wood back to 704! and an updated heritage trail to help people identify trees and some interesting aspects of the wood. We are grateful for the research carried out by Susan Osborn and Colin Gregory. The front cover of the leaflet features drawings of the wood by Sally Lewis and Chris Gregory.

The leaflet can be obtained from the Suburb Library in Market Place, the Gallery at Fellowship or the Trust Offices. Alternatively a copy can be downloaded from the Trust website where a subsection has been created for Bigwood

More volunteers would be welcome to help with the work when it restarts in the autumn. Contact details are in the leaflet.



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NIGEL SUTTON



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