



Chinese Dragon Photo by Toni Morgan

Happy New Year!!!

By Irene Zevallos

A 15-day celebration has taken place to welcome the Chinese New Year. It's a time to share magnificent food, tradition and even superstition!

Chrissie, from Malaysia, has been living in London for 28 years. She explains: "it is a season to give, time for charity. New Year celebration is for everybody. We cannot do much during the week here though, because of work; but during the weekend, we have dinner parties with friends and family."

Poo Woo

On the second day, Chinese pray to all the gods. The third and fourth are for parents-in-law. The "Poo Woo", or fifth day, is for people to stay home and welcome the God of Wealth.

From the sixth to the tenth is time to visit relatives and

friends.

There is a display of farmers' produce on the seventh day. They make a special drink from seven types of vegetables and also celebrate the birthday of human beings, eating noodles and raw fish for longevity and success.

Tian Gong, God of Heaven, is honoured on the eighth day; before offerings are made to the Jade Emperor. From the tenth to the twelfth everybody is invited for dinner.

Rice congee and choi sum (mustard greens) only! ...during the thirteenth day, to cleanse the body. "We don't eat meat during the first day either. We usually have eel with por-

ridge rice", says Chrissie.

Parades and presents

On the fourteenth day, preparations for the "Lantern Festival" start, where children take lanterns in a parade.

"Ang Paus", which are delicate red envelopes containing money, are given away; especially to children. Perhaps also as a way to make them behave, as they cannot be told off... that would bring tears for the child during the whole year.

Chrissie remembers: "my mum used to hide them under the pillow and my sister and I would wake up in the morning to find them. When we grew older, we used to get them while having tea with the family."

She is married to an Irish man and they have two children, who have been brought up with western ideals mixed with oriental culture, where tradition and respect hold hands and everything has a purpose and a meaning.

Mothering Sunday

The Age Old Present Problem

By Diana Cormack

It's Mothering Sunday on 30 March and, apart from the usual box of chocolates, bunch of flowers or going out for a special meal, some people may be trying to think of another suitable gift. This can become even more difficult when, like mine, your mother is elderly, infirm and living in a care home. Most of her visitors come bearing chocolates or flowers and she had enough toiletries at Christmas to last for a year. She can no longer read or play board games, doesn't watch TV and is confined to a wheel chair. So one of the few options left is to buy her some item of clothing.

However, finding something suitable is not always easy. I have had many disappointing trips going to Brent Cross with the following criteria in mind:

- It has to be of a certain mature style as well as having fastenings and openings that her carers can deal with easily.
- The material must be machine washable and need little or no ironing.
- Hopefully it has a reasonable price tag.

Back in time

Then one day I happened to be in Kentish Town Road where my eye was caught by a really old-fashioned-looking shop. It had large plate glass windows on either side of an opening into which another

display window jutted out. At the end of this were the two glass entry doors. On my way in I was able to see plenty of things that I thought might be right for my mum.

Stepping inside was like going back in time. It is worth a visit just to see what clothes shopping used to be like. You can make up your own mind about which era you prefer. All I know is that when I want something for my mum, I go there first and I've never been disappointed. The shop is called Blustons Fashions, 213-215 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2JU.

It's not very pc, but I have to confess that I call it "the old ladies shop." However, now I sometimes see clothes there that I quite fancy myself!



Children enjoy the snow and a day off school. Photo by Toni Morgan.

East Finchley Baptist Church

just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2
Sundays at 11.00 am and 6.30 pm
for more information contact 8446 3571

Visitors always welcome

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.
Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.
Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life and a riotous Youth Club for church members. Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy, on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children. Experienced singers are always welcome. Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

Taxi!

A new deal brokered by the council is set to bring more freedom to residents with disabilities in the borough who find it difficult or impossible to use public transport.

Until now it has been too costly to include black cabs within the borough scheme which allows disabled residents, using a system of pre-paid and subsidised vouchers, to travel by taxi. Following negotiations with the ALG (Association of London Government) and TFL (Transport for London), Barnet Council has secured an agreement which will allow registered black cabs to be used by residents for the first time.

The new scheme will oper-

ate alongside Barnet's own local mini-cab service and should greatly increase the number of vehicles which disabled people can call upon. TFL has been keen to extend its black cab service into other boroughs but only when they decided to invest more cash did the scheme begin to look practicable for Barnet.

Transport for London

Barnet was quick to explore whether TFL would agree to include Barnet residents within the current black taxi

scheme and at what cost. The result is that TFL have agreed to bring the scheme to Barnet at an annual cost of £237,000 which they will fund.

Those who take part in the scheme are able to buy vouchers at a nominal fee and pay towards their journeys according to the distance travelled.

Taxicard users will also have access to Freedom Passes. The take-up of these passes and the availability of black cabs in this part of London will both be closely monitored.