



# Make friends with a book at Chorak

By Daphne Chamberlain

Who doesn't like a good story? Storytelling has been with us since humans learned to speak, and was never a solitary activity. Now more of us are rediscovering the pleasure of sharing our reading with others. It's enjoyable to discover stories with the rest of a group; to talk about the characters and guess what's happening next; and to make new friends as the weeks go by.

The Reader Organisation, which started in Liverpool, is setting up groups nationwide where we can do just this. Earlier this year I reported on one at the Ann Owens Centre. I enjoyed it so much that I'm now a regular member, and the good news is that another one is starting in East Finchley.

Unlike conventional modern reading groups, you talk about the stories as you read them. People take turns to read aloud, with pauses to talk about what's happened so far. Nobody is forced to read or even to talk, because the sessions are relaxed and friendly.

There are always a couple of trained volunteer facilitators

who select what to read (often a short story and a poem, but also novels on a serial basis), and keep the ball rolling.

As Stephen Fry said recently, "Reading aloud and being read to can be a deeply affecting, life changing business." It's also fun. Drop in whenever you can.

The new group is at Chorak, 122 High Road. Part of EFAB, it is open to everyone in the community. It meets weekly on Wednesdays, from 10.30am to 12noon, starting on 8 October. For further information, contact Project Co-ordinator for Barnet, Paul Higgins, on 07985 718744. Find out more about shared reading on www.thereader.org.uk.

## The support group

By Dennis Evans

Conceived by an elderly left-wing lady, and a man with politics well to the right.

We decided to bury our political differences for the duration of the strike.

News filtered down slowly...

Then it came: families in mining communities queuing for food at soup kitchens.

We had meetings and fund-raising parties, set up rotas for early-morning collections at the Tube station.

On my first morning, the local vicar shouted abuse. Aimed a kick at the collecting bucket.

Would I have to practise self-defence on a 'man of God'?

The following week, having done his homework, he put a tenner in the bucket.

Visits to and from the families, strong friendships formed.

Came the climax, came the tragedy. Family against family, divorces.

Police against neighbours, neighbour against neighbour.

The alliances we'd formed were let go. We went back to our old allegiances.

But the warmth remained.



Tee Tarjan at MighteeFit ready to welcome you. Photo Mike Coles

# Health studio settles into new home

By Diana Cormack

After five years of being based by the Five Bells off East End Road, the MighteeFit Health Studio has moved to bigger and brighter premises at 2A Fortis Green, formerly home to the Noble Sage art gallery.

Director Tee Tarjan, who lives locally and is a former pupil at Christ College, told THE ARCHER that he wants to bring a playground theme to the centre, with an emphasis on fun to help people achieve their fitness goals. With this in mind it is the only facility in North London to have been fitted with astro turf. Another unique feature is the rig, which has been specifically designed for MighteeFit.

### Fitness teams with nutrition

Tee has plenty of experience in the fitness field, dating back to opening the local LA Fitness centre in 2001. Previous to that he played football for his school and for Barnet County. An interesting aspect of his experience is that, for the last four years, he has run the McDonald's Wellness Centre at their East Finchley European HQ next to the tube station. Nearly half of the 650 staff participate and the restaurant offers a healthy eating option alongside their usual fare.

This is an aspect of health education which Tee is eager

to bring to others, particularly youngsters. He believes they should be made aware of the benefits and value of good nutrition. So MighteeFit is running a Teen Eat course for 10-15 year olds and hopes to set up similar classes in local schools. Adult

nutritional advice and guidance is also available.

Call 0203 224 3043, visit www.mighteeFit.com or email info@mighteeFit.com for more information or just pop in for a look round and a warm welcome.

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