

ENAS Newsletter Autumn 2012

Now that the leaves are changing colour and the weather is getting colder again, we have good memories of some excellent ENAS days out during a memorable summer! We hope you'll enjoy sharing our news and photos.

The N21 Festival and Fancy Fair



Anna, Kathryn, Joyce and family members on our stall at the Fancy Fair

One cold evening in March a crowd of people gathered in a pub in Winchmore Hill. The organisers of the N21 Festival were there to hear seven local charities 'pitch' to be chosen to be adopted by the Festival and to receive a share of the money raised by the event. Anna Leech and Sophie Castell were there on behalf of our ENAS group.

The N21 Festival was the brainchild of Anne and Hugh Humphrey to celebrate the centenary of the book *Winchmore Hill: Memories of a Lost Village* by Henrietta Cresswell. As well as celebrating the book, the Festival was a chance for the people of N21 to come together and celebrate their community. The organisers wanted to make sure that local charities would benefit from money raised throughout the festival.

The packed pub listened to some impassioned speeches and selected ENAS, The Alzheimer's Society and Noah's Ark Children Hospice to be the chosen charities and beneficiaries of the profits from the festival.

The N21 Festival was a wonderful week of arts and community events that culminated in the Fancy Fair on the Green on Saturday 23rd June. ENAS volunteers ran a stall on the day, handing out information, running a raffle and talking to local people about the NAS and what we do. Our stall and T shirts had a big impact, and we were surprised at how many people stopped for a chat. We felt very proud that some of our kids also helped out on the stall.

The N21 Festival was a great success but we were absolutely amazed when the fundraising results were announced at a ceremony on Winchmore Hill Green on Saturday 13th October. Each of the charities was presented with a cheque for **£4,375**. Sophie, ENAS Branch Officer said “We were really thrilled to be selected by the N21 Festival. We are a totally voluntary group and are 100% dependent on our local fundraising. A donation of this size will help us support many more people with autism and their families in this area”.

Taking part in the N21 Festival was a very joyful experience for ENAS.



Our stall on Station Road at the Fancy Fair. We chatted to fairgoers about autism and the work of our group



Very happy day! The team accept the cheque for £4,375!

N21 Thank You Scrapbooks from the children

When we heard that ENAS was nominated by the N21 Festival, we asked the children at one of the Florence Hayes sessions if they would like to do their own artworks by way of a thank you to the organisers. There was a wide variety of styles! They were all beautiful and a good reflection of all the different children. We then collated the designs into three scrapbooks for the three organisers, all containing some original artworks, some photos from the day, plus a story written by one of the children and a wonderful colourful cover, again designed by a child. (*See photo below.*) We presented the scrapbooks to the organisers, asking them to accept them as a token of our appreciation for choosing ENAS as one of their charities!

We are so proud of the contributions of the “next generation” to our branch.



A colourful artwork of N21 incorporating ENAS, created by Laura Baker; this was used as a cover page for a ‘thank you’ scrapbook.

Seasons in the sun and fabulous fun at Florence Hayes

Sunday 14th October was the last of our 9 play sessions at the Florence Hayes Adventure Playground for 2012. Just before we finished at 1pm, we presented our fantastic play workers Kieran and Edith with some Heroes chocolates (they really are our heroes!) and thank you cards signed by everyone who attended that day.



This was the third year ENAS have been holding our play sessions at Florence Hayes and every year the numbers grow and grow. For many families, coming to a Florence Hayes session with their family is the first time they attend any of our events and we are pleased to say the majority of them

return time and time again. The playground is one of the best in the Enfield and the indoor facility is spacious and clean. There is so much to do. Some children love being outside on the zip wire or in the tree-house, others prefer being inside making things on the craft table, playing video games with others, playing table football or table tennis. We provide healthy snacks and drinks for the children and tea and coffee is available for adults.

We are delighted to see so many dads coming too. We would like to say a big thank you to all the fathers who regularly work on the gate keeping everyone safe and to Russell who spends so much time helping in our kitchen that we may buy him an apron next year!

We have started to bring a selection of our library resources to these sessions. This gives members who may not be able to get to our regular library at Cedar House on Fridays an opportunity to browse through our autism-specific books and to borrow them for 4 weeks.

We would like to thank one of our members, Derek Comach, who kindly made ENAS a banner and brought it along to our last session. This was proudly displayed on the gate and will be there for every session in the future. We are delighted that the proceeds of the N21 Fair have secured us funding for this activity next year. We will be speaking to Enfield Parks Department soon to book next year's sessions and we hope to welcome many more families to Florence Hayes in the future!



Derek's great new banner! See you again next spring!

Autumn term: back to school

For many of us September may be an anxious time, with transitions to new classes or even new schools for our children. On 7th July we had Peter de Rosa, Head of Durants School, speak to our branch meeting about provision for children and young people with autism at secondary level at Durants School and in Enfield. He updated us on the current provision, plans for future developments and answered questions.



This term a number of our young people have started at secondary school. We wish them all the best as they settle into their new schools and classes. *Communication* magazine, a quarterly magazine and online journal free to NAS members has a good article 'Starting Secondary School' (p.39, Autumn 2012) and weblinks www.autism.org.uk/movingschool

Speech and Language workshops: a new initiative

How we help our children to communicate and how we communicate with them are big concerns for all parents of children and young people with autism. This October ENAS have organised a new programme of workshops to help families with speech and language issues in a very practical way.



The workshops are led by Helen Blatchford who recently joined the Enfield speech and language team in the role of Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist for Autism. The workshops are designed to be very practical and help parents build their skills to support their children at home in daily life. The friendly, supportive atmosphere and the opportunity to ask questions and explore solutions are very helpful.

The first workshop, 'Practical Ways to Support Your Child's Speech and Language Development in the Early Years', was very successful. One parent commented, "It was a really interesting workshop with tons of useful tips". The second and third workshops on 'Talking to Your Child about their Diagnosis' and 'Helping Your Child Prepare for Secondary School' will follow in spring and summer terms 2013. We will mail / email the details later.

New coffee morning starts this November!

A new support group is to begin in Winchmore Hill on Thursday mornings (9.30-11.00am). We will be meeting at La Rocca on Winchmore Hill Broadway. It is close to the 329 and 125 bus stops (Station Road stop), and the W9. It is not far from Winchmore Hill train station. Parking is harder, and Residents' Parking permits are in operation from 10.30-11.30 in most nearby roads.



Come and join us, see some old friends or make some new ones. We will start on Thursday 15th November. Please contact Sarah Potter on 0208 882 2807 or 07846 037878 for more information.

Details of our other coffee mornings and events for the rest of the year are in our Calendar for Autumn Term 2012, along with our ENAS contact details on our website at www.enfieldnas.org.uk.

Facebook



Are you on Facebook? Did you know that ENAS now have a closed **Facebook group**?

Please join us by searching on Facebook for 'Enfield Branch of The National Autistic Society' or clicking (or typing into your browser) the link below and then sending a request to join us.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/310224069056784>

Quiz Night at Winchmore Hill Cricket Club

A very successful Quiz Night was held at Winchmore Hill Cricket Club on Friday 2nd November. Over 90 quizzers attended, and we raised £600 for branch funds! We would like to thank Anna Leech for organising the event, Tony the quizmaster for his stimulating questions, the committee for helping with cater the delicious supper and also those people who kindly donated raffle prizes. The result was very close, won on a tie-break question by a team from Woodvale Tennis Club. Everyone enjoyed the evening.



The Little Mermaid – Christmas Pantomime

Acorn Theatre Company will put on a special performance of their Christmas Pantomime exclusively for ENAS and friends on 2nd January. The venue is The Intimate Theatre, Green Lanes and it will be reserved for ENAS friends and family on that evening. Tickets will be available at a discounted price of £5.00. Booking forms will be mailed out later this term. More information from Sophie Castell.



We know that this has become a highlight of the festive season for many of our families. We are grateful to Acorn Theatre Company for once again offering to do this, and for their support of our group.



'Happy Feet' Moments

Like penguins, our lives may often be challenging, and we may feel like we are huddled together against harsh elements. It's important to celebrate the happier moments too! Here are two personal stories from members about those good times.

How a visit to a fantastic model railway cheered up one of our young people, and how a mum and her son had an epic adventure in London town! Hooray for trains and buses!

A wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon! *by Emma Kemball-Cook*

Have you heard of the Chingford & District Model Railway Club? If not, let me introduce you. This is a wonderful local resource and although not actually based in Enfield, it is only just over the border. Situated in Ridgeway Park, Chingford E4 6XU, the model railways (there are two, one low level, one high level) are used to give rides to members of the public on Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday afternoons between April and the end of September from 2:00pm - 5:30pm.

Although a family of rail enthusiasts (it was I and not my husband who introduced our son to the Rev. W. Awdry's *Railway Series*), this lovely place had not appeared on our radar until very recently – we didn't know what we were missing.

Toward the end of the summer ENAS committee were contacted by one of our members, Fazilla Amide, who told us that her son had greatly enjoyed visiting the Railway Club during the holidays and did we think other members would like to know about it. Fazilla then offered to arrange a special session for our members at a fixed price for unlimited rides over a two-hour slot.

The Sunday of the session arrived and it was a lovely sunny day. Ridgeway Park was quite easy to find (east on the A406 then north to Chingford). The Railway Club had laid on three locomotives for us, one steam and two diesel (which was great because queuing for any length of time can be a big challenge for our son). There was little to no queuing necessary.

Our first ride was pulled by one of the diesel engines. This allowed us to observe the beautiful steam locomotive being put through her paces. After a picnic lunch, we had a ride behind the steam locomotive (the lovely smell of coal wafting back to us). Finally we rode behind one of the smaller engines on the high level track (high level means not at ground level, it isn't that high, you sit astride a box which you can quite easily step on and off – see picture below).

Independent of the Club, but located nearby, were the added attractions of a large inflatable slide, a merry-go-round for younger children and four trampolines – each attraction costing £1.

As we walked away from the railway my son, who had been feeling a bit under the weather, said "I know I'm not 100% today but, you know, I'm feeling really happy!" We'd all had a lovely afternoon. Thanks for organising it Fazilla!



Some of the trains at Chingford & District Model Railway Club

www.chingford-modelengineering.com

Noah's Big Day Out by Sally Potter

When I saw, via 'Contact A Family', that the London Transport Museum was offering a day for children with additional needs, how could I refuse? Well actually quite easily. A day getting my 5-year-old son Noah, and a buggy major around central London on a Saturday; or a quiet day at home in a contained environment, and no escalators to do battle with? Hmm...



We decided, however, that it would be a good thing to try. I hadn't been to the Transport Museum for years, but Noah talks constantly about trains, Tubes and buses. Public transport is the first thing he mentions in the morning and the last thing he mentions at night. Would this be the perfect day or might it be too much, for me if not for him?

The Saturday came. At least the journey was straightforward. A 125 bus to Southgate, and a chance for Noah to continue learning the names of the bus stops with a captive audience to listen to his explanations of where we were going. The Tube provided Noah with further opportunities to engage people in discussions on which stop they had begun their journey at. On arrival at the museum, people were expecting us and we got in for free!

There were two workshops on offer. Our first workshop was drumming. I had thought that Noah would love this as one of the first unusual behaviours we noticed in him as a baby was rhythmically drumming all manner of things. I thought this would be the ideal sensory experience. However, Noah licked the drums and squirmed across the floor between them during the session, whilst everyone else joined in enthusiastically. Relieved the session was over (though everyone was supportive) we made our way to the ground floor.

I could see immediately that this floor was going to have much more to offer: a Tube carriage to sit inside and the front half of a modern double decker bus to drive. Noah heaven! We glanced briefly at the Tube driving simulators, the play table and other attractions, but between the Tube and the bus there would have been enough to occupy Noah for the rest of the day.

The second workshop was interactive storytelling and again I had high hopes. I was concerned as the area was set up near the toilets and we could hear the hand driers which usually cause Noah great anxiety. Happily he didn't seem to notice them and the stories began. It was a much smaller group and each child got to touch or do something connected with each page of the story. Noah did enjoy it although kept asking when it was time to go, which thankfully didn't faze the storyteller at all.

So on balance, a good place to visit and I would recommend it 😊
Please note that you can get in to the Transport Museum for free with a DLA letter which is really helpful when your child is only interested in a few of the exhibits. SP