

**MULBERRY**  
ESTATE & LETTING AGENTS

- ♦ Extensive experience of the locality.
- ♦ Free valuation without obligation.

**East Finchley**  
**020 8444 4000**  
www.mulberryestateagents.com

A multiple agency instruction with our company for a sole agency fee.

Local News Is Our Aim

# THE ARCHER



**GLH**  
CAR SERVICE  
**020 8883 5000**

February 2004 No. 129  
ISSN 1361-3952

**20p**  
where sold

*A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.*

## Waitrose Loses the Plot

By Diana Cormack

Barnet Council Cabinet has decided that its Park House site, which might have formed part of a Waitrose and library development, is to be sold on the open market. This follows on from the results of the library consultation, which scotched any possibility that developers might build a new library there as part of a financial deal.

### People Power

It was exactly a year ago that a group of concerned locals calling themselves Warning On Waitrose called a well-attended meeting for local residents to air their views. Since then, residents opposed to the Waitrose scheme have campaigned energetically. The number of local people who would have welcomed such a scheme remains unknown.

### Next stage

A spokesperson for WOW has said, "Although a significant battle has been

won, the war is not yet over." WOW will still be "on the case, pressing to ensure a suitable development of the Park House site that is of an appropriate size and scale for East Finchley."

In seeking the maximum price for Park House, Barnet Council says any proposals will be considered but that any sale will go through only when the applicant has obtained planning permission. Any planning application would be subject to traffic and environmental studies and residents would be able

to voice their concerns.

*What do you think this prime site should be used for?*

*THE ARCHER would like to know, so send your views, however optimistic or imaginative, to: THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.*



### A Taste of Things to Come?

As scientists warn that our winters could be getting colder, January's cold spell brought things to a halt in Durham Road. Photo by Tony Roberts

## Library Warning from MP

By Daphne Chamberlain

The consultation is over, and East Finchley has voted overwhelmingly to retain and refurbish the existing library. The question now is, for how long will it be retained, and how much refurbishment will there be?

At a Council Cabinet meeting on 19 January, assurances were given that Barnet would abide by the result. Questioned by Council Leader Victor Lyons, Councillor Peter Davis said, "Of course we will. That was the purpose of the consultation."

However, in a letter to *THE ARCHER*, local MP Rudi

Vis writes, "We will have to ensure that the library is retained. Already the Tories are proposing library closures in their budget proposals."

The proposal to close Totteridge and South Friern libraries is disturbing. Like East Finchley, both are libraries primarily serving their local community. South

Friern (between Muswell Hill and the North Circular) has a catchment area quite similar to East Finchley. They are both in comfortable walking distance from homes and schools, which is what the recent consultation shows people want.

At the Cabinet meeting of 19 January, it was emphasised that the East Finchley building is old, refurbishment costs are likely to be substantial, and "any decision to refurbish will be considered alongside other priorities for capital investment." The cost of the consultation will be taken from the libraries budget.

Many people would echo the wish of Finchley Society President Bill Tyler, who welcomed the consultation result, and hoped that the sale of Park House would "provide funds for the refurbishment and enlargement of the existing Grade 2 library". However, it seems that revenue from Park House will be absorbed into the general kitty, and East Finchley Library will have to fight its corner.

*Consultation results on p3.*

**Everything Electrical**

ALL DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL WORK UNDERTAKEN BY QUALIFIED ELECTRICIANS

Extra Sockets and Lights  
Security Lighting  
Fault Finding and Repairs  
Telephone and Television Points

Interior / Exterior lighting design  
Maintenance Contracts  
Installation Certificates

38, High Road, East Finchley N2 9PJ  
Tel: 020-8444 7994 Fax: 020-8444 6075 Mobile: 07973 509 322  
Internet: <http://www.everythingelectrical.com>

**Coral Pharmacy**

Cut-price Fragrances

Photo D&P only £2.99 for up to 40 exp (35m) same day service

Stockists of a wide range of vitamins, homeopathic remedies, and herbal products.  
Open Till 6:30pm (Mon - Fri) 6pm Sat - Parking Available  
129 East End Road N2 0SZ Tel 8883 0442

**PRICKETT & ELLIS TOMKINS**

36 High Road East Finchley N2 9PJ  
**020 8883 0033**

Properties urgently required - now is the time to sell!  
Estate Agents and Valuers - Established 1767

## Hotblack Dixon & Co. Estate Agents

Our success rate in N2 is very high indeed, obviously in Hampstead Garden Suburb but also in East Finchley.

We have often obtained better prices from our base in the Suburb, so

**Please call us for a free valuation or try us if you are on a multiple agency basis**

17 Market Place, Hampstead Garden Suburb  
London NW11 6JY

**020 8458 8411**

• Visit your community newspaper on-line at [www.the-archer.co.uk](http://www.the-archer.co.uk) •





## THE ARCHER

PO Box 3699  
LONDON N2 8JA

### Voicemail & Fax:

Editorial/enquiries: -  
**08717 33 44 65**

Advertising/finance: -  
**08717 33 45 28**

### e-mail:

the-archer@lineone.net

### website:

www.the-archer.co.uk

### PUBLISHED BY

**East Finchley  
Newspapers**

### EDITOR

**Kevin Finn**

### SUB-EDITORS

**Frances Loveday**

**Pam Kent**

**Ann Bronkhorst**

### EDITORIAL TEAM

**David Hobbs**

**Diana Cormack**

**Daphne Chamberlain**

### PICTURE EDITOR

**Erini Rodis**

### DESIGN & PRODUCTION

**Alison Roberts**

**Tony Roberts**

### ADVERTISING

**John Dearing**

**Toni Morgan**

### FINANCE

**Sue Holliday**

### ADMINISTRATION

**Toni Morgan**

### LEGAL ADVISER

**Francis Coulson**

### DISTRIBUTION

**Alison Roberts**

**Pam Kent**

### PRINTED BY

**Eastway Offset Ltd**

### WEB MANAGEMENT

**ARC Media**

Thank you to Madden's Ale House for providing us with a meeting place.

### Your contributions

THE ARCHER team wishes to thank all the generous people who give up their spare time, in all weather, to deliver the paper for us.

If you have a news item, memory or anecdote please send it in to us at the above address.

14 February is the copy deadline for the March issue.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Utilities (for N2)

Eastern Energy 0800 783 8838  
London Electricity 0800 096 9000  
OFTEL 020 7634 8700  
Thames Water 0845 920 0888  
Three Valleys Water 0845 782 3333  
Gas consumers cncl. 0645 060708  
Transco Gas Emerg. 0800 111 999

### Councils

#### Barnet

Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000  
Council Tax 020 8359 2608  
Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600  
Health Authority 020 8201 4700  
Com'ty Health Cncl 020 8349 4364  
Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500  
Employment Service 020 8258 3900  
Haringey Council 020 8489 0000

### Leisure

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121  
Cophall Sports Ctr. 020 8361 8658  
E. Finchley Library 020 8883 2664  
Gt North Leisure Pk. 020 8343 9830  
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007  
Phoenix Cinema 020 8883 2233  
Tourist Info Service 0870 126 4018  
Warner Cinema Village 020 8446 9933

\*Calls to 09065 numbers are charged at £1.50 per minute.

### Help & Advice

Barnet Racial Equality Council 020 8446 0445  
Childline 0800 1111  
Citizens Advice Bureau 020 8349 0954  
Cruse Bereavement Care 020 7431 7122  
Disability Info Service 020 8446 6935  
E Finchley Advice Service 020 8444 6265  
Gingerbread 020 8445 4227  
Missing Persons Helpline 0500 700700  
National Debt Line 0808 808 4000  
NSPCC 0800 800500  
Rape Crisis Centre 020 7837 1600  
Relate 020 8445 0888  
Samaritans 020 8889 6888  
Refuge National Crisis Line 0870 599 5443

### Health Advice

AIDS Helpline 0800 567123  
Alcoholics Anonymous 020 7352 3001  
Barnet MENCAP 020 8203 6688  
CancerLink 0800 132905  
Carers National Assoc. 020 8343 3665  
Drinkline 0800 917 8282  
Drugs Helpline 0800 776600  
Health Information Service 0800 665544  
Homeopathic Helpline 09065 343404\*  
MIND 020 8343 5700  
N. London Blood Service 020 8258 2700

### OAP's Advice

Barnet Age Concern 020 8346 3511  
Barnet OAPs Welfare 020 8441 4853  
Contact (N2) 020 8444 1162  
Counsel & Care 0845 300 7585  
Help the Aged 0800 096 2541

### Crime

Emergency 999  
Finchley Police 020 8200 1212  
Golders Gr. Police 020 8209 1212  
Muswell Hill Police 020 8442 1212  
CrimeStoppers 0800 555111  
Victim Support 020 8343 4435

### Hospitals

Barnet General 020 8216 4000  
Coppetts Wood 020 8883 9792  
Edgware General 020 8952 2381  
Finchley Memorial 020 8349 6300  
Oak Lane Clinic 020 8346 9343  
Royal Free 020 7794 0500  
St Luke's 020 8219 1800  
Whittington 020 7272 3070  
Western Eye Hosp 020 7886 6666

### Transport

BR Enquiries 0845 484950  
City Airport 020 7646 0000  
Greenline 020 8668 7261  
LT Enquiries 020 7222 1234  
Grey-Green 020 8800 8010  
National Express 08705 808080  
Heathrow 020 8759 4321

### Animal Welfare

Nat Strays Bureau 09065 123999\*  
RSPCA 0870 5555999



42 Church Lane, London N2 8DT.  
Tel/Fax: 020 8444 6265

### General Advice.

Monday to Friday: 10am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 4pm.  
Thursdays: 7pm - 8pm.

### Immigration Advice.

Tuesdays: 7pm - 8pm by appointment only.

### Legal Advice.

Tuesdays: 7pm - 8pm.

### Councillors' Surgery.

Saturdays: 10am - 11.30am

Contact East Finchley's  
Community Police Officer,  
PC Paul Carter, at  
The Community Office,  
Golders Green Station,  
Tel: 020 8733 5562 or e-mail:  
paul.carter@met.police.uk

### Community Services

- ❖ Credit Union, Green Man Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Careers advice, Green Man, Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Toy library, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

## Goodbye Phone Boxes

By Ann Bronkhorst

Several anonymous notices appeared recently in Durham Road: 'Greedy BT intends to dismantle the phonebox by the church because it does not make a profit. This payphone is in an isolated area and is needed by many residents.' and the notices urged us all to contact BT, giving e-mail and phone details.

Wondering whether 'Greedy BT' was quite fair I rang the BT number, 0800 661610. Courteously a Mr. Cullinane explained that BT has a duty to provide public payphones – but not everywhere. Payphone use is declining rapidly so BT is removing 10% of payphones nationwide in a 'rationalisation programme'.

BT informs local authorities of proposed removals but listens to objections within a 42-day consultation period. It seems the cherished Durham Road payphone is to be 'reprovided' thanks to concerns about the impact on the local community expressed by (or through) Barnet's Department of Highways.

### Further risk

What the helpful Mr. Cullinane and the equally helpful Mr. Chrystostomou of Highways could not tell me was whether there are more public payphones in East Finchley at



Close call: the phonebox in Durham Road.  
Photo by Tony Roberts

risk of removal. Is the process inevitable now that so many of us own mobile phones? Lack of use and, of course, vandalism are key factors. I'm told the Church Lane phone box outside Holy Trinity Church is constantly vandalised: would local people therefore want it removed? Contact THE ARCHER if you have information or views on payphone 'rationalisation' in East Finchley.

## Hospital Site: Development Plan Mark Five?

By Ann Bronkhorst

Barnet's planners have been kept busy in recent months over the proposals for the former Neurological Hospital site near East Finchley station. And now a fifth development plan is in front of them.

Over twelve years ago a scheme for luxury housing and a new access road was rejected. In the last couple of years four other sets of plans have been drawn up by Octagon Property Developers but withdrawn after discussion with the planning authorities. Each time, vigorous local opposition has centred on two main concerns: the impact of the proposed large residential blocks on nearby homes and the increase in traffic.

### Gain or pain?

It is a tense time for staff and students of Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute. In an otherwise commercial housing development, premises are included for the Institute as an educational 'planning gain'. But from March this year the Institute's accommodation problems will become acute. Park House, ex-council offices in the High Road, has been suggested as temporary classroom space but Barnet now plans to sell Park House on the open market to fund its capital programme. Will the Institute find itself homeless?

### Latest version

Laurence Holder, a spokesman for Octagon, told me that their latest amended

plans for the Hospital site would be submitted in the week beginning 19 January. "While no changes have been made to the proposed Institute building, substantial changes have been made to the residential elements," he said. Sceptical local objectors will be keen to see whether this latest version can, to quote Barnet planning officers, 'meet the test of preserving or enhancing this part of the conservation area.'

### Serious Concern

For the majority of East Finchley residents though, whatever their opinions on the Octagon development or the plight of the Institute, traffic congestion is a serious concern.

## Local Planning Applications

### 85 High Road –

Installation of external access ramp and steps.  
Installation of light on side elevation.

106 High Road –  
New shopfront.



# East Finchley GPs Not Accepting New Patients

By John Dearing

A number of people who recently moved into East Finchley have told *THE ARCHER* that they had no success when they tried to register with a GP in N2. Barnet Primary Care Trust (PCT) told one person to obtain a letters from three local GPs each stating that they are not taking new patients. Subsequently, they were allocated to a GP in N3, to whom they would have to drive.

We contacted the PCT for an explanation and for confirmation that GP lists in N2 are closed. They said that they are responsible for all patients of Barnet GPs "irrespective of where they reside". In other words, the PCT does not regard local provision of GP services as an issue. They did, however, admit that recruitment of GP staff is a local problem, and blamed "difficulty in expanding buildings". They said that East Finchley had recently got two more GPs. They did not admit that GP lists in East Finchley are full; but since they require people to prove they cannot register, it could be that they do not actually know!

The PCT Estates Strategy shows that Primary Care buildings in Barnet are in a parlous state, and in many areas such as N2 there is little scope for improvement or expansion. They believe that this is the root cause of the problem with GP lists.

## More centralisation

The PCT plan is to make significant investment in their estate over the next five years, focusing in particular on community hospitals and health clinics in areas identified as problematic (but not N2). The strategy does take into account demographic health issues such as those of ethnic minorities and different age groups, and states that it follows the overall NHS estates guidelines but also says that it has not been linked

with Barnet Council's Unitary Development Plan.

There does not seem to be much promotion of local GP-run practices, and increasing centralisation of provision is probable in the future. Nor is it likely that Barnet Council would do anything to change this, as it would involve shifting their planning emphasis away

from yet more residential development to provision of social facilities.

Nowhere is there any evidence of consultation – do people want to have to drive several miles, or wait in the rain for a bus in order to attend a GP's surgery? Surely NHS agencies should be promoting healthy practices, such as walking?



Post haste: Finchley's Post Office. Photo by Erini Rodis

## Hasty Post Closure

By Erini Rodis

**Finchley Central residents are protesting the imminent closure of their local Post Office on Ballards Lane.**

Economics are blamed and an eight-week public consultation was announced in mid January. Unless they hear from enough members of the public that they want to keep it open,

it'll be closed in April.

Automated payment of pensions and benefits into bank accounts has allowed the post office to reduce some over-the-counter services. However N3 customers are resenting the prospect of having to travel to East or North Finchley branches simply to send a parcel or a Special / Recorded Delivery item. Communities may be forced to mingle but this is also likely to make queues longer.

People are asked to write to Finchley and Golders Green, Labour MP Dr Rudi Vis at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA by the end of February, with their views.

## Ann Owens Centre – Future Uncertain

By Daphne Chamberlain

**With Barnet in deep financial trouble, a drastic prioritising of funding has begun. A full Council meeting on Tuesday 2 March will consider a recommendation to cut the grant to Age Concern by £150,000. In the present climate, any reduction to this figure is extremely unlikely.**

Mark Robinson of Age Concern told *THE ARCHER* that his trustees would be talking to Barnet in the intervening period. He said, "The trustees have got to look at how we can cope."

As reported last year, the Ann Owens Centre building is used by other Age Concern projects as well as by the day centre. It is not expected that the building itself will close,

but reductions in funding point to loss of staff.

## Nobody Knows

Morale at the Centre is obviously low. As one 'regular' told *THE ARCHER*, "This used to be such a lovely, happy place. Now the atmosphere is different. Nobody knows what's going on."

A Council spokesperson said, "It's up to Age Concern how they will prioritise."

P.A.music

**Party!**  
Promotion!  
Presentation!

Whatever you are doing!  
We have the Lighting,  
Sound & FX Technology  
to make it a Success!

**Hire & Sale**  
Open 10am-6pm  
Closed Tuesdays  
172 High Road,  
East Finchley, N2  
Fax No. +44(0)20 8883 5117  
**020 8883 4350**

## THE TRICHOLOGY CLINIC

**SPECIALIST IN TREATING  
HAIR LOSS, DANDRUFF, PSORIASIS  
AND OTHER SCALP DISORDERS**

Consultation from £29

Also offering hairdressing  
Organic colouring  
100% ammonia & peroxide free

## ISABEL DOUGLAS HEALTH & BEAUTY CENTRE

**020 8444 1516/3639**

90-92 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY, LONDON N2 9EB  
400 YARDS FROM EAST FINCHLEY STATION  
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

## VICTORY AUTO SERVICES

Formerly of High Road East Finchley  
T/A Motor Services of Muswell Hill

### Air-Conditioning - Recharge & Servicing

Mechanical repairs, tyres, bodywork, clutches, exhausts  
MOTs by appointment

109 Fortis Green East Finchley London N2 9HR  
Tel: 020 8883 9707 / 0023 Fax: 020 8482 9179

## REFILL & SAVE



Cartridge World

Retail New Cartridges    Refill Inkjets    Remanufacture Laser Cartridges

127 East End Road East Finchley N2 0SZ  
T: (0208) 883 2833 F: (0208) 815 9373  
[cweastfinchley@cartridgeworld.org](mailto:cweastfinchley@cartridgeworld.org)

## CAVENDISH

HOUSE  
DENTAL PRACTICE  
[www.cavendishdental.co.uk](http://www.cavendishdental.co.uk)

- Hygienists with prophylactic jet cleaning available
- Full range of cosmetic and tooth whitening techniques
- Nervous and disabled patients welcome
- Root canal specialist using advanced microscopic imaging
- Established 50 years
- Opening hours 8.30 a.m. To 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, Saturdays and some Sundays by appointment
- Mr N. Rote B.D.S Ncle, D.G.D.P. UK.
- Mr K. Silver B.D.S. Lon, L.D.S. R.C.S. Eng. D.G.D.P. UK.

**020 8883 1182**

240 EAST END ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY N2 8AX  
(CLOSE TO EAST FINCHLEY TUBE STATION)







# How Far Would You Go For £50,000?

By Diana Cormack

When Sippy Azizollah of Fairacres in East End Road saw this question posed in a Michelob Ultra competition she had a ready answer, for her New Year's Resolution was to raise £10,000 in aid of Lupus UK. This obviously impressed the organisers, for it has taken Sippy through to the next round of the competition, when she will be interviewed for an hour about her intentions.

The eventual winner will also become the face of Michelob, though Sippy's friends and family could find it difficult to recognise her as she has decided to take part in the next round as a Goth. "I have to go and sell myself and stand out from the others," she told *THE ARCHER*. "A Goth in a wheelchair will definitely get me noticed!"

Unfortunately, one of the particular problems from which Sippy suffers is lupus and she has resolved to raise this huge amount to thank Lupus UK for the immense help they have given her over the years. She also hopes that it will serve to give someone else a chance.



## Styling by202

Sippy is being helped to achieve her new look by staff at 202, the hairdressing salon at 202 High Road, who gave their services for free. Antoinette Alexandrou coloured and Louise Davidson styled her hair under the watchful eye of creative director Nick Davies. Delighted with the results, Sippy has been practising putting on the correct make-up, as you can see in the accompanying photo.

But Sippy's fund raising

has already begun. Various businesses in East Finchley have agreed to display collection boxes for Lupus UK and Sippy has organised a Rainbow Quiz (which finishes on 24 February) with entry forms available at The Five Bells and other outlets. She is also organising a Bring and Buy Sale with a difference at Fairacres, 164 East End Road on Friday 5 March from 12-3 pm. It is called *Three, Two, One*, with tables labelled £1.00, £2.00

or £3.00 bearing goods at those prices.

With more people than ever before being diagnosed with this distressing condition, Sippy hopes that the people of East Finchley will support all the fund raising events she has planned for the rest of the year.

## About Lupus...

Lupus is a chronic disease in which, for unknown reasons, the body's immune system attacks its own connective tissue, causing pain and inflammation. It can affect many areas including the skin, joints and kidneys, causing severe thickening, rashes, awful arthritis and sometimes kidney failure. It can also cause anaemia, neurological or psychiatric problems, and inflammation of the lining of the lungs and of the membrane surrounding the heart. Some sufferers' symptoms are made worse by sunlight. As yet there is no known cure.

# Library Result

By Daphne Chamberlain

2,224 people returned their library questionnaires, giving a response rate of 26%, which is above average for a postal survey. In addition, 127 street interviews were carried out.

75% of respondents used East Finchley Library, while 4% of non-users were unaware of its existence.

66% voted for retaining and refurbishing the existing library, 29% for a new library on the Park House site, and 5% would be happy to do nothing.

Consultation with random focus groups and with schools produced very similar results to the postal surveys. In all cases, the option to keep and refurbish the existing library was easily the most popular. Age, sex, disability and ethnic background did not significantly influence the results; location was consistently a concern.

What were considered to be the most important aspects of a library? Sharing top place for 90% of respondents were a comprehensive collection of adult books and convenient opening hours, closely followed by a friendly atmosphere for 88% and a good range of reference books for 87%. A public lounge area, including toilets, was important for 76%, with access to all facilities at

75%. Larger, clearer signage and a comprehensive range of children's books scored well with 69% each.

Shelves accessible to everyone were important for 65%, as was convenience for public transport (ahead of convenience for car parking at 53%). Designated areas for young people (59%), study facilities (also 59%), computer facilities and designated areas for adults (both at 58%) and children's groups at 53% made up the middle to lower end of the list.

At the bottom of the list, separate learning areas, music/audio and videos/DVDs all attracted 52%, with use of the internet at 50%, meeting rooms at 43% (though facilities for community activities were important to focus groups), and nearness to shops bringing up the rear at 36%.

Cabinet recommendations were that the results should be noted, the existing library retained, and refurbishment proposals costed—to be considered along with other schemes for inclusion in the future capital programme.



Fathers and children from Chandos Road and Greenfield Drive planting young oak trees in the park. Photo by Diana Cormack

# Great Oaks from Little Acorns...

After days of heavy rain, the sun shone on The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood for their first event of the year. A good crowd from all over East Finchley, including many children, came to help with a tree planting session in line with the five-year plan organised by Country Management Services.

Young English oaks were planted in places where there are gaps in the canopy or where there are areas of bramble which will give them more protection. Some will be fenced in. Park Keeper Chris Ward was there to supervise activities and to provide a welcome cup of coffee at the end of a cold, crisp morning's work.

## ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH

Tele: 020 8446 1725 ~ Web: [www.stjohnsfinchley.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsfinchley.co.uk)

Services  
Sunday 6.30 p.m.  
Thursday 7.30 p.m.

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month 6.30 p.m.  
Healing every Tuesday between 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.  
Weddings ~ Christenings ~ Funerals (at the church or cemetery)  
by arrangement with the Minister  
All are welcome

## Holy Trinity Church

Church Lane N2

Sundays: The Parish Communion 10 a.m.

Children including toddlers & babies  
are very welcome at all services  
in this multi-ethnic church.

Contact: The Revd. Laurence Hill Telephone: 020 8883 8720





# 603 – a Route to Follow

By Daphne Chamberlain

The latest bus route through (part of) East Finchley is very much a limited blessing. The 603, “an accessible, low floor double-decker” runs from Muswell Hill to Swiss Cottage – but only at school times.

It runs along Fortis Green to East Finchley station, up North Hill to Highgate Village, along Hampstead Lane past Kenwood to Hampstead station, and down Fitzjohns Avenue to Swiss Cottage. Stifling the cheers, look at its timetable: 7.30 and 7.50am and 2.40 and 3.10 pm from Muswell Hill, and 8.30 and 8.50am and 3.40 and 4.10 pm from Swiss Cottage.

The bus is not exclusively for schoolchildren. Anyone can use it, but Ken Livingstone says, “I hope this link will introduce a new generation of schoolchildren to public transport, and reduce car journeys in the area. I wish it every success.”

Most of us would echo that sentiment, only adding, “Why stop at schoolchildren?”

Esther Singer, from the Muswell Hill and Highgate Pensioners’ Action Group, contacted *THE ARCHER* to protest. She says that her friends have stopped going to Hampstead because of awkward public

transport and difficult and expensive parking. If a bus can run at school times, why not throughout the day and evening, when other people need it?

## Bus Watch meeting

She is not the only one to complain. When I rang Transport for London to check details, I was told that other callers, including one just before me, had registered the same criticism.

Transport for London will review the service in six months, but before that Bus Watch West Haringey and the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association will hold a joint public meeting to do the same. The principal speaker will be Lynne Featherstone, Chair of the GLA Transport Committee. The meeting will be at 7.45pm on Wednesday 17 March, at the Friends’ Meeting House, Church Crescent, Muswell Hill (just off Muswell Hill Road). East Finchley residents will be particularly welcome.



Holy Trinity Choir sing at the Ofsted conference. Photo by John Dearing.

# An Inspector Calls

By Diana Cormack

Among the lasting impressions which David Bell, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector for Schools, took with him from his visit to Holy Trinity CE Primary School in December was the quality of the children’s singing. So he asked head teacher Duncan Mills to allow them to be the first ever to take part in an annual event, the Conference of Senior OFSTED Inspectors.

This took place in mid January in a large hotel in Hammersmith. Transport by

coach plus drinks and biscuits at the venue were laid on for the pupils, who performed to an audience which included Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children, and well over four hundred inspectors from all parts of the United Kingdom. In his introduction, David Bell explained that he had invited Holy Trinity School to perform because of their excellent singing. What is notable is the fact that this was not a school choir. Any class could have been chosen and would have performed equally well, but Years 4 and 6 represented the school on this occasion.

Though they had not sung

together since David Bell’s visit, except for a quick run through on the morning of the event, they still delighted the audience with their five songs. Credit for this must go to singing teacher Neil Bell, who came to the school in Eagans Close a couple of years ago. At that time Barnet Singing Project had been launched using visiting teachers to bring more singing into primary schools. So successful was Neil that, when the project ended, Holy Trinity undertook the funding for his expertise. His contribution has added even more to the school’s motto of High Standards Together.

# Right On, LondOn

By Tony Roberts

I was determined not to have to pay this latest round of London Transport price rises. So I decided to brave the technology and ‘shell out’ for an oyster prepaid card.

I gave the man at East Finchley Station a twenty-pound note plus registration fee of £3 and in return he tapped in my details and handed me a light blue plastic card and matching wallet.

## Goodbye to loose change

It was a Saturday when I nervously tapped my wallet on the yellow disk at the ticket barrier for the first time. There was a bleep and a green light and the display flashed up 20 and Enter, which I did. After the same procedure (to exit) at Leicester Square and on the return journey, the indicator at East Finchley flashed up 16.40 and Exit, showing I had £16.40 left on the card.

## Hampstead for a pound.

The journey to the West End and back at the weekend had cost me just £3.60, which is a pound less than it would have done even last year. The



The Tube’s your Oyster. Photo by Tony Roberts

journey to Hampstead would have cost £1, a saving of 30 pence each way, and less than it would normally cost by bus. The idea of variable single fare pricing dependent on time of travel raises all sorts of possibilities, perhaps there’ll be special offers next.

Clapping my card to the yellow pad on the touch

screen ticket machine meant that I could see the details of each of my journeys, the fare deducted and the balance on my card.

Congratulations to London Transport for an imaginative ticketing scheme. Mind you, I’ll keep some loose change with me until the system has proved itself to be reliable!

## Hens Teeth Antiques

Antiques Bought and Sold  
Restoration, Upholstery and  
French Polishing of Period  
and Modern Furniture  
Call Martin Murray  
0208883 - 0755  
Mobile 07970 625 - 359

121

**GUS Gents Hair Stylists**

Tel: 8883 1473

**GUS GENTS HAIR STYLISTS**

8883 1473

**GUS GENTS HAIR STYLISTS**

**OPENING HOURS**

Mon-Thurs  
9.00am - 6.30pm  
Friday  
9.00am - 7.00pm  
Saturday  
8.00am - 6.00pm

**121 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY N2 8AG TEL: 020 8883 1473**

**AL CHIVERS BROS.**

**your local MOTOR STORE**

**EXIDE Batteries**  
from £32.95 inc. VAT  
3 year Guarantee

**Battery Chargers**  
from £9.99

**Anti-Freeze, Jump Leads, Wiper Blades**

**Large Range of Torches**

**Universal Hands-Free In Car Phone Kit**

**only £19.99**

**113 High Road East Finchley 020 8883 8628**





Sandy's Family History - Picture Courtesy of Sandy Bressler

## Desperately Seeking Sandy

By Daphne Chamberlain  
**Sandy Bressler from Sacramento, California, isn't exactly desperate yet, but she would appreciate a little help with her family history search. If you knew, still know, or have heard of the following Dowlens, Aslins or Dore families, you may be the people she is seeking.**

She knows from the 1881 Census that John Dowlen, 'master grocer', kept a shop in Market Place. By 1891 his son, Walter, and Walter's wife and young family were living in Lincoln Road. The children were Charles, Isabel, William and Edward. Charles, by then a banker's clerk, was still at 78 Lincoln Road in 1907, when he married Miriam Harriett Dore from 39 Leslie Road.

Miriam Harriett and her sister, Katherine, worked in a Finchley stationer's shop, which was probably managed or owned by their adoptive mother, Louisa Aslin. The girls were born in Devon, but the family split up when their mother died, and one of their brothers eventually settled in America. Sandy's husband is his grandson.

Why is Sandy's husband's name now Dore Bressler? The answer - Bressler is his stepfather's name - is central to Sandy's story. She says, "In 1984 I was on a quest to learn the reason why my husband's father died so young, since

our firstborn developed some medical problems. In the process of tracking down medical documentation, I learned a lot of my data."

### Genealogy bug

Admitting to hating history as a teenager, she adds, "Once I got the genealogy bug, I've just adored reading and learning about everything."

*Can anyone tell us any more about the Dowlens and/or their grocery shop in Market Place, the Aslins and/or the stationery shop, or the Dores? If so, please let us know.*

## Where have all the Flowers Gone?

Concerned about the number of gardens being concreted over to provide off-street parking space, the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association came up with the idea of holding a front garden competition to preserve the village atmosphere and give pleasure to people passing by. The winner of the competition, launched last year, was Anna Pollock of Southern Road, whose house now bears a blue plaque commemorating her success.

Thanks to funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest through the Scarmans Trust, the highly successful front garden competition is to be repeated in 2004.

Because it has been thrown open to all residents of Muswell Hill, Fortis Green and Alexandra Wards and many more entries than last year are anticipated, the funding, for which

the Association is grateful, will be used for more printing and promotion.

Entry forms are available to non-members through libraries and local outlets, including Capital Gardens, who will again be the main sponsors. Both Sainsburys and the Muswell Hill Odeon will rack the entry forms during March for maximum impact.

Final date for entry forms to be submitted is 30 April. Preliminary judging will take place between 15 and 30 May. Final judging of the ten best gardens will be between 5 and 12 June by a member of the Muswell Hill and District Horticultural Society. Each of the ten will receive a year's free membership of the Society.

The prize giving will take place on Sunday, 27 June at the Alexandra Park Garden Centre at 3pm, hosted by Capital Gardens, who are giving the top three prizes.



Front gardens taken over for off-street parking Photo by John Dearing



These gardens on Fortis Green still retain a wealth of greenery. Photo taken during the recent cold snap by Tony Roberts

## Archer Bridge



by Mike Graham

**Most team events are scored by a method called International Match Points (imps). You compare scores, and convert the difference according to the IMP scale. A difference of 90 to 120 points, for example, converts to 3 imps; a difference of 430 to 490 (a possible non-vulnerable game swing) converts to 10 imps.**

The point of the scale is to minimise the effect of really huge swings, which, under aggregate scoring, could effectively decide the match on just one board. Two vulnerable game swings, worth perhaps 1500 points, might cost 25 imps; but that can be recouped with four small part-score swings.

Very large swings are thus relatively infrequent. However, in the last week, my team played two matches and gained two huge swings - an 18 imp (1750 - 1990) and a 19 imp (2000 - 2240). This was the 18 imp swing hand:

Dealer North	♠	9752			
Game All	♥	932			
	♦	A3			
	♣	8652			
		N			
♠	AQ10			♠	KJ43
♥	KJ108			♥	AQ4
♦	964			♦	J2
♣	AQ9	W	E	♣	KJ73
		♠	86		
		♥	765		
		♦	KQ10875		
		♣	104		

The bidding was:

N	E	S	W
Pass	1NT (1)	Pass	4NT (2)
Pass	5♦ (3)	Dbl (4)	6NT (5)
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) A balanced hand of 15-17 points.
- (2) Blackwood, asking for aces.
- (3) One ace.
- (4) Lead-directing, showing a good holding in diamonds. I did not know, at this point, what West's intentions were; it was possible that he was about to bid a slam in a suit, in which case partner would be on lead.
- (5) About right on point count, but the diamonds are a worry...

The king of diamonds seemed the obvious lead, so I led it, and watched in amazement as partner overtook with the ace and led another one back. Down five, 500 to our side. No big deal if Three No-trump went down at the other table (minus 200 - 7 imps to our side) but the contract was Six No-trump as well, and again the king of diamonds was led. But here North ducked! South, afraid that East held AJ2 of diamonds, switched to a spade, and now there were twelve top tricks. So team-mates came back with plus 1440 to go with out 500, for an aggregate swing of 1940 - 18 imps.

I shall show you the 19 imp swing next time.

## Cure for Hunger

By Paula Allison

I'm on a quest to find the local unbeatable eatery - and Dr Hunger on the corner of Ossulton Way and East End Road is a strong contender. They have an extensive menu including traditional English breakfast, vegetarian lasagne, and lamb chops and also do take away rolls and portions of chips, all at very reasonable prices.

The cafe is kept spotlessly clean, and all the staff are very friendly and efficient.



The National Neurological Hospital Photo by Erini Rodis

## A Horror of Doing Nothing

By Ann Bronkhorst

**Whatever the future holds for the Neurological Hospital site, one local man will not forget the original building and its grounds.**

A pencil sketch on his living room wall, drawn especially for voluntary worker Eddie Dyer by an artist patient, shows a late 19th-century house with a steep pitched roof and some fine stained-glass windows. Eddie remembers an ancient mulberry tree, cedars and the crimson Virginia creeper in autumn. Patients, often wheel-chair-bound, enjoyed the terrace and the garden.

A lost idyll? Yes, but for Eddie the story continues. In 1994 he began visiting a relative in the rehabilitation unit and on retirement decided to continue as a volunteer. "I have a horror of doing nothing," he

says. Three times a week he would turn up to chat to each patient, draw them out a bit and get them laughing.

There's practical help, too, such as shopping or even tracking down *The Farmer's Weekly* for a patient. When the rehabilitation unit moved south to Queen's Square, Eddie simply went on with his work. It's further to travel but he doesn't mind. For a decade Eddie has befriended strangers, listened to their life-experiences and brought them news. With no special training he finds ways of communicating even with patients with no English or with little, apparently, to live for.

Eddie Dyer is surprisingly unsentimental about the demise of the old Hospital building; years ago he could see there wasn't enough manpower to maintain the grounds and the building was becoming steadily shabbier. Perhaps the closure of the unit on that site was inevitable. For him its significance is in what it achieves, wherever it's situated, and he intends to go on making his contribution.

## 12 Things You Didn't Know About...

Each month *THE ARCHER* profiles an eminent member of the community with 12 quick fire questions.

This month it is the turn of William Man, proprietor of the Mandarin Restaurant.



- 1 **Name:** William Man.
- 2 **Date Of Birth:** 25 August 1963.
- 3 **Chinese New Year?** Rabbit.
- 4 **Can you elaborate?** Intelligent and calm, peace loving with impeccable manners. With creative thoughts, but sometimes too moody and indifferent.
- 5 **Occupation:** Restaurateur and full time undergraduate university student.
- 6 **How long have you been at Mandarin?** 25 years.
- 7 **Favourite in house dish?** Pot Noodle, washed down with a bottle of Chinese Tsing beer.
- 8 **Main passion outside of work?** Travelling.
- 9 **What is your best physical feature?** My nose. It is identical to Jackie Chan's.
- 10 **And the worst?** My nose. Customers keep mistaking me for Jackie Chan.
- 11 **England World Cup Wins-** 1966 or 2003? Has to be 1966- because we beat the Germans.
- 12 **Your house is on fire and you can only save one possession- what is it?** My tennis rackets. They have enabled me to inflict total domination over my fellow [albeit geriatric] club members. I wouldn't want the small matter of a house fire to jeopardise that.

### Remembering D Day

6 June 2004 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day.

- ▶ Were you there? ▶ Were you in the army?
- ▶ Were you at home? ▶ Were you at school?

If you or anyone you know has any memories of D Day, please contact *THE ARCHER* at the usual address.

**KF ELECTRONICS**  
**Local Independent Retailer in Electronics and Computers**

We deal in all makes and models of Plasmas, TVs, DVDs, VCDs, HiFi, Home Cinemas, Radios, Alarm Clocks, Telephone Accessories, Washing Machines, Fridge Freezers, Dishwashers, Microwaves, Cameras, Camcorders and many more.

We build and upgrade computers and all computer parts are available.  
*And, we offer a friendly local service for all electronic products and computers.*

Free Estimation for all Repair Work      All at Unbelievable Prices  
**Tel: 020 8815 9898**  
**93 High Road, East Finchley, London N2 8AG**

[www.herrick-photo.co.uk](http://www.herrick-photo.co.uk)  
[info@herrick-photo.co.uk](mailto:info@herrick-photo.co.uk)  
020 8349 3632  
07970 983 340

**Lynn Herrick Photography**

## The East Finchley DENTAL CENTRE

*Dedicated to making you smile!*

- NHS & Private Patients Welcome
- Friendly, Experienced Dental Team
- Special Care for Nervous Patients, Children, Disabled and The Elderly
- Preventative Care
- Cosmetic Treatment, Teeth Whitening,
- Mercury Free White Fillings
- Crowns, Bridges and Dentures
- 24 Hour Emergency Cover
- Open 9am - 6pm Weekdays  
Sat. (by arrangement)

**Tele: 020 8444 3436**

144, High Road, East Finchley, London N2 9ED





# YOUNG ARCHER

## Valentine's Day

By Diana Cormack

Will you be sending a Valentine card this year? Over twenty million people usually do, giving the Royal Mail something to smile about, though when these cards gained popularity during the Victorian era they were delivered in secret by hand. They were also made by hand and hugely elaborate creations replaced the custom of gentlemen buying expensive Valentine's Day presents for ladies. But their external beauty did not always guarantee a sentimental loving message inside. They could be very personal, really rude or extremely cruel and were always anonymous.

The first Valentine card is believed to have been sent in 1415 by the Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. That seems rather fitting as one of the stories about a Saint Valentine tells how he was in jail, having been condemned by the Romans for his Christian beliefs. On the eve of his death he wrote a note to the jailer's daughter thanking her for her kindness to him, signing it simply as "Your Valentine." He is also said to have cured the girl of blindness, but that has nothing to do with the saying "Love is blind"!

### Secret marriages

However "love and marriage" does have a connection with a second Saint Valentine story. He was a priest who disagreed with the Roman emperor's orders banning soldiers from marrying, so that they could be solely devoted to fighting with no family ties. Believing that God intended men and women to share their

love and reproduce, Valentine married couples in secret. On being discovered, Valentine refused to say he was wrong and was thrown into prison, where he died.

### Lupercalia

Some say that these two Valentines were the same person. Whatever the true story, it seems that a Christian named Valentine was martyred by the Romans at some time around 14 February during the third century AD. This was fortuitous for the Christians, who had a habit of adapting ancient customs for their own use. It happened that the spring festival of fertility (Lupercalia) took place about the same time and the festivities included young Roman men and women drawing lots to find a partner.

It is an old belief that birds choose their mates on 14 February. Hopefully, present day lovebirds will continue the custom of sending cards. It's much more romantic than an e-mail!

## Haiku writing

Some of you will have read or written poems which started in Japan. They are usually something about nature and they have to be done in a certain way. You cannot use the title word in your poem and it must have three lines with five, seven then five syllables or beats.

### Wind

Trees swaying calmly  
Leaves are gliding through  
the air  
Landing quietly.

By Russell aged 9

Blowing through the trees  
Leaves are dancing and swaying  
I need my jacket.

By Ayaka aged 10

The breeze rocks and rolls  
It brings music to my ears  
Singing through the trees.

By Chelsea aged 9

It rustles through leaves  
Whispery noises from the  
trees

It moves like magic.  
By Katrina aged 9

### Lightning

Lights up the dark sky  
Sounding like a flashing whip  
Zig zag in the air.

By Milo aged 9

### Monkeys

Nibbling at nuts  
Now-you-see-me-now-you-  
don't

Silence, I am gone.

By Alice aged 10

### Snake

The slithering thing  
Rattles across the desert  
Shakes the sand away.

By Alexander aged 9

### Cats

Wonderful and cute  
Looks sweet purring like a bomb  
Pounces like lions.

By Tony aged 9

### Rugby

Swishing through the mud  
Flying through the air once  
kicked.

Now I've scored a try!

By Freddie aged 9

### Hamster

Tiny and furry  
Bottom wiggling around  
Running in his ball.

By Eleni aged 9

### Butterfly

Fluttering along  
As gracefully as can be  
Lovely patterned wings.

By Bianca aged 10

*If you have written a poem you are proud of, why not send it to YOUNG ARCHER at PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA? Put your name, age and address and we will print the best ones on this page.*

## Monkey Business

By Erini Rodis

**Welcome to the Year of the Monkey, a highly auspicious year according to Chinese astrology.**

"The monkey is clever, energetic and innovative by nature, a fast learner with good memory. Should adopt the rules related to the career and learn more to communicate with others."

Like Western astrology, the twelve animal signs each occur every twelve years with distinct

characteristics, and aspects are further influenced by the elements.

The Chinese believe that Monkey and Dragon children are intelligent, highly advanced individuals.

Couples are advised to marry the year before with the intention of timing the birth of their

children.

China's baby booms are proof that such advice is taken very seriously indeed – in fact William Man of the Mandarin alone tells me that six of his friends from Beijing are already expecting babies! (Other aspiring parents of Monkey children should get cracking...)

## How Are You, Wrigley's Woody?

By Daphne Chamberlain

**"If I'd had a house and garden I would have kept him – and called him Woody, because he found us in Coldfall Wood." The speaker (an East Finchley resident) and her own Labrador/collie cross were very nearly adopted by a lost dog who made a big impression on them.**

Woody, later known as Wrigley's, is a young black-and-tan mongrel. When he attached himself to the pair, he seemed well fed and well looked after, although limping slightly and without identification. Reluctantly, his new friends handed him over to Colindale police station, who transferred him to Battersea Dogs' Home. That happened on 27 and 28 November, and his owner claimed him on 22 December.

### A long time

Surely three weeks is a long time to wait before claiming your dog? "It is longer than usual," said a Battersea spokesperson, "but we don't want to be judgmental. It's possible that the owner didn't know about us."

### Web site

For anyone who may be a bit hazy about their procedures, Battersea's website gives a wealth of information. They accept strays (cats as well as dogs) 24 hours

a day, though owners giving up their pets are asked to bring them at set times. Anyone finding a stray dog can keep it in their own home, but should tell Battersea for their records, and must inform the police. Alternatively, the finder can take the stray to Battersea, or (dogs only) ask the Council animal warden or the police to take charge of them. After seven days the animals become Battersea's property, and can be re-homed (with compulsory microchip identification).

Woody – or Wrigley's, as Battersea named him – went home for Christmas. "When I heard that, I was so delighted I nearly cried," said his finder.



For more information see the Battersea Dogs Home's website: [www.dogshome.org](http://www.dogshome.org) or tel. 020 7622 3626 / 0901 477 8477. Barnet Animal Warden: can be contacted on 020 8359 2000 (Environmental Health).

## Basic Pancake Batter Recipe

**Shrove Tuesday, this 24 February, is remembered traditionally by the eating of pancakes. THE ARCHER's own chef has provided this recipe and some inventive ideas to ring the changes.**

4 oz/ 100g plain flour      ½ pint / 300 ml of milk  
¼ teaspoon salt      ½ oz/ 15g melted butter  
1 beaten egg      Butter for frying

(These ingredients make eight small or six larger pancakes.)

### Method

- 1 Sieve the flour and salt into a mixing bowl.
- 2 Make a well in the centre of the flour. Using a wooden spoon, gradually blend in the beaten egg and half the milk.
- 3 Beat well. (If time permits, leave to stand in a cool place for 20/30 minutes). Then stir in the remaining milk and melted butter.
- 4 Melt just enough butter in the frying pan to coat it.
- 5 Pour in three or four tablespoons of the batter and quickly tilt the pan to coat it thinly. Cook for about one minute.
- 6 Toss or turn the pancake and fry on the other side until both sides are a golden brown in colour.

### Quick fillers or toppers

- \* Stuff pancakes with rashers of grilled back bacon and serve topped with pineapple rings, decorated with a few sprigs of watercress.
- \* Stuff and roll pancakes with hot creamed sweetcorn (tinned). Serve with grilled or fried chicken joints.
- \* Heat some shrimps in a little white sauce to fill or top pancakes, along with a wedge of lemon.
- \* Mix a small can of sweetened chestnut puree with milk and a tablespoon of rum.
- \* Mash together bananas and a little sugar, top with your favourite jam and a layer of whipped cream.
- \* Any fruity canned pie filling.





# Dame Sheila McKechnie; An Appreciation

By David Hobbs

*THE ARCHER* was saddened to hear of the death of Dame Sheila McKechnie, the director of the Consumers' Association, who died of cancer on 2 January 2004, aged 55. She was the most effective and influential consumer campaigner in Britain and helped define the modern consumer movement, empowering people to both recognise and assert their rights. As a result of her work, government and businesses now seek the views of consumers, rather than ignoring them as so often in the past.

Born and brought up in Falkirk, Scotland, she studied politics and history at Edinburgh University before going on to take an MA in industrial relations at Warwick University. After a brief period of research work at Oxford University she spent thirteen years working in the trade union movement, culminating in nine years as health and safety officer for ASTMS between 1976 and 1985. During these years she developed many of the skills that were to serve her well in her next role as director of the housing charity, Shelter.

At Shelter she raised the

organisation's profile, vastly increased its campaigning and increased its turnover tenfold. To those who felt that she should not have placed such an emphasis on campaigning she replied that Shelter was more likely to be effective 'campaigning for the homeless than providing a home for the campaignless'.

## Consumers' Association

In 1995 she joined the Consumers' Association as director and promptly became the best champion consumers had ever had. She fought successfully for change in such things as the labelling of foodstuffs, the competition laws, advertising to children and car price

fixing. She played a major role in the establishment of The Food Standards Agency and helped improve the control and scrutiny of the financial services industry. She was awarded the OBE in 1995 for her work with the homeless and made a Dame in 2001 for her consumer work.

## East Finchley

Sheila moved with her partner, Alan Grant, to East Finchley in 1997 and was, by all accounts, an avid reader of *THE ARCHER*.

*THE ARCHER* sends its condolences to Alan and all Sheila's family and friends. Sadly, there seems to be no one able to take her place as the consumers' champion.



Sheila McKechnie Photo by John Sturrock.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Transport of delight

It's a cold, wet miserable Monday, my car's decided to die on me and I've got no choice, I've got to get a bus. This is something that offends the petrol head in me because I loathe buses in the way that only a motorised lunatic can loathe them. I mean, apart from those rare times when even I am forced onto them, what use do they serve?

The average bus is badly driven, pollutes the atmosphere and is always late. The timetables aren't about telling when the next bus is due, they're a form of post-modern irony. 'Every five to ten minutes' does not mean that a bus will come along every five to ten minutes, it means that you'll look at your watch and curse the things every five to ten minutes. Naturally, when one turns up it is full, usually of violent school kids in training for suburban warfare or people using shopping trolleys as weapons. In summer the heating is on full blast, in winter they're cold enough to turn yoghurt into a frozen dessert.

The other bit of post modernism is the way that buses always travel in packs for protection. Poor thing, too scared to go out without at least two of its friends for protection. Naturally, one bus is full, one almost empty and the third is playing *No Passengers Please*, where drivers try to get the whole length of the route without picking up a single passenger to win a prize.

Lord Livingstone of Newts is big on buses; he gives them bus lanes. These are almost always empty and all they are used for is speeding taxis, maniacs driving coaches and people who think that the law does not apply to them. My own bus journey took five times as long as by car and was more traumatic than cycling in the fast lane of the M25. It made me realise that paying £5 to drive into London was a bargain compared with sitting on a big six wheeler, diesel engine, 54 seater omnibus. If we can't have buses that work, are comfortable and on time, why have the polluting menaces at all? Ah well, my car's due back on Monday...

## A Bible, a Pilgrimage and a Holy War

By Sam Grove

Back in August Sam Grove interviewed three graduates embarking upon their new careers. Five months later Sam has caught up with them to find out how far they have come.

After a stuttering start all three have found steady employment. David works in the city stuffing envelopes, Julian is a door-to-door salesman and Helen works in a renowned out-of-town furniture store. Considering the emphasis all three placed upon 'living the dream' one may question their dedication. However they all continue to harbour thoughts of bigger and better things and see their current terms of employment as merely temporary stopgaps. What David really wants to do is travel. "Sam, there's more to life than London and cheap holidays that can be summed up on one side of

a postcard. I want to experience at first hand new landscapes and cultures, broaden my horizons". Soon he will when he jets off with his uncle to Vietnam for a golfing holiday.

Julian's heart is set on more socially conscious paths of employment. "There are only so many encyclopaedias you can sell to single mums before you start questioning yourself" he told me on one of the more sombre moments of our conversation. Julian knows he wants to write a book that will "make a difference" but he doesn't know what it will be about yet.

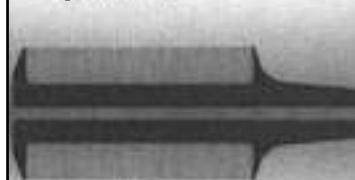
Helen is far more likely to be pushed out of her job than

to jump. If one wants to come face to face with pure evil it can apparently be found off the A106 in the Borehamwood Retail Park. After a bit of coaxing she began to elaborate. "There is this one guy that has never liked me. He doesn't like what I stand for and because of that I honestly think he's trying to destroy me."

They, along with many of their peers, are finding it tough going at the moment but while you still have hope...

### ROGER OF FINCHLEY

5 Fortis Green  
East Finchley  
London N2 9JR  
Telephone 020 8883 2354



### Registered Hairdressers (Est. 35 yrs)

Shampoo & Set.....£6.75  
Cut Wash & Blow Dry  
.....£15.70  
Whole Head Hi & Low Lights  
.....from £42.80  
Whole Head Tint.....£17.65  
Perms from.....£41.25

SEEDS SOIL

Mike, Tricia & Jimmy welcome you to  
flowers by

*Josephine's*

58/60 High Road, East Finchley  
London N2  
Tel: 020 8883 3598 & 020 8444 9569

EST 35 Years

GARDEN STUNDRIES PLANTS

**Motts Godwin**  
*Insurance*

Competitive Insurance - Lady & Mature Drivers -  
Special rates for over 30's - Immediate cover -  
private car & commercial vehicles - Low rates -  
accidents & convictions - Instalments

Telephone 209 High Road, East Finchley  
London, N2 8AN

**020 8444 1040**





## Regular Events Sport & Fitness

❖ **Badminton** on Wednesdays. Call 020 8349 0170  
 ❖ **Body Control Pilates** classes. Call Deanna Wisbey 020 8883 7029  
 ❖ **Counselling and psychotherapy service** at the Green Man Centre. For details phone 8440 4174  
 ❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.  
 ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** Wednesdays Christ Church N12. Ring Bridie. 020 8883 5269  
 ❖ **Step/Aerobics classes**, Sundays at Bar XL. Phone 0789 0033 968.  
 ❖ **Tae Kwon Do** at The Green Man Thursdays 7-9pm 07949 612 706  
 ❖ **Tai Chi** at the Green Man on Mondays 1.30-3pm  
 ❖ **Tennis Club** off Southern Road. Call 020 8440 6953  
 ❖ **Yoga & Meditation** classes at Holy Trinity Church, 020 8444 7217  
 ❖ **Yoga, breathing & relaxation**. Weekly drop-in classes - N2, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 020 8444 7783.

## Dance, Drama, Art & Music

❖ **Adult Line Dancing**. Call Footloose 020 8440 8530/ 8216 5633.  
 ❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 020 8888 5133.  
 ❖ **Ballroom dancing classes**, beginners and improvers. Phone 01707 642 378  
 ❖ **Barnet Schools Music Centre** call 020 8359 3111 for details.  
 ❖ **Broadway & West end Musical Singing Workshop** call Idit Gold 020 8449 0011.  
 ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call Vicky 020 8883 1554  
 ❖ **Country & Barn Dancing**, at Oakleigh Park, 020 8349 0754  
 ❖ **Columbian party dancing** classes, Call Nelsy 020 8444 2012  
 ❖ **Incognito Theatre workshops**, Colney Hatch Lane, 020 8883 0911  
 ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club**, Monday 9 & 23 February at Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.  
 ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 020 8346 8736  
 ❖ **Pottery Class** at The Green Man, Call Celia Holmes 020 8349 9315  
 ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church. Call 020 8883 4070 for info.  
 ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** of North London, Contact Caroline Egan 020 8340 2706

## Clubs & Social

❖ **Bingo**, Green Man Community Centre, 020 8883 4916  
 ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book a place. Every Thursday. 12.30-2pm  
 ❖ **East Finchley National Childbirth Trust**, Contact Sophie Spence 020 8444 1890  
 ❖ **East Finchley Writers** meet weekly at the Old White Lion. Contact Lillian on 020 8444 1793.  
 ❖ **Fairacres Monday Club** for Jewish people, Rene & Reuby Hyams, 020 8883 0448 or Sylvia Lee 8958 7878  
 ❖ **Finchley Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian Merryweather 8444 3251  
 ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn, 020 8349 4613  
 ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society**, informal meetings locally. Call David Moulton on 020 83611696.  
 ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill, 020 8348 3495  
 ❖ **Muswell Hill and Highgate Pensioners' Action Group** Call Bob Cottingham on 8444 7635.  
 ❖ **Muswell Hill Synagogue**, Tetherdown, 020 8883 5925  
 ❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, 020 8883 4390  
 ❖ **Old Barn pre-school club**, 020 8349 4613/1961  
 ❖ **Parent & Toddler Group**, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276  
 ❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professional and business people, Details Eric Dalton 8340 0822.

# A Night Out at the Torrington

By John Dearing

**I paid a belated first visit to The Torrington in North Finchley on Saturday 10 January, with friends over from Germany who wished to take in some live music while they were here.**

The Ian Parker Band played two hours of soul-edged Blues, Jazz and Rock in The Back Door Club there. The whole audience was captivated from the moment of the first chords by a set that was both expertly performed and intensely emotional. They play there again on 14 March - don't miss it (for information about events at The Back Door Club see [www.thetorrington.co.uk](http://www.thetorrington.co.uk)). I enjoyed it so much I bought both the CDs on offer and have played them many times since.

### Intimate

The club has what is often described as an intimate atmosphere, and that evening it was comfortably crowded. Unfortunately, the pub let itself down somewhat by not only having no Real Ale, but no Bitter Beer at all!

We left eventually at about 12:40 and walked straight onto an N20 night bus going south. Whatever the problems with buses by day, this bus appears to be prompt, fast and surprisingly frequent.



Ian Parker. Photo courtesy of [www.IanParkerband.com](http://www.IanParkerband.com)

# Hotwire Films

By Sam Grove

**In four months of writing for *THE ARCHER* this is easily the most interesting of my assignments. Three guys from Fortismere School (Joe Asher, Simon Ryninks and Zak Klein) along with a number of friends started their own Film Production Company, *Hotwire Film*, back in 2000.**

They have since made three films, the last of which, *The Author*, is their longest and best. I must admit I was sceptical, particularly having found out their genre was comedy. I was half fearing something like an episode of the *Vicar of Dibley* on CCTV. I was very pleasantly surprised, particularly with the camerawork from Simon Ryninks (also Director) and Joe Asher.

The quality of the footage is excellent and the film contains a vast array of camera tricks, stylish increments and a meticulous attention to detail that contributes to a very professional product. The viewer is allowed to concentrate on the creation, which is also very strong. *The Author* follows Ed Thomas (Zak Klein, also writer) who, in attempting to beat an English coursework deadline, inadvertently writes a classic short story that brings him instant fame. Such is the richness and imagination of the film that each scene could be watched as a sketch – and yet all the scenes are neatly attached

to form an engrossing, albeit flippant, story. Woven into the fabric of the film are quite biting critiques on, say, the ephemeral nature of fame or the indolence of youth – but as they are delivered in such a surreal form they might well be tacit ironic celebrations of them.

### A lot of fun

*The Author* remains ambiguous all the way through. Having watched it twice I'm still not entirely sure what it means. That is a strength, rather than a weakness. The film exudes confidence. It does not feel the need to explain itself in any way nor to spoon-feed the viewer its intentions (even if the material borders on being somewhat esoteric). Above all it's entertaining because it was clearly a lot of fun – the laughter is infectious throughout. I wholly endorse this for wider viewing.

If any reader is interested in seeing a copy of *The Author*, or indeed any of Hotwire Film's other productions – *Quest* or *Coochin'* – they should contact Joe Asher on [contact@hotwirefilm.co.uk](mailto:contact@hotwirefilm.co.uk).

# The Ellerdale Trio comes to East Finchley

**Martin Schools in East Finchley not only have a wealth of talented pupils, but also many exceptionally talented parents and carers. Sarah Down is one such parent.**

Sarah has two daughters at Martin Schools and is also an accomplished pianist. She studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music, and also at the Britten Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies where she was also a staff accompanist. She is a founder member of the Ellerdale Trio with whom she has performed extensively throughout the UK. She made her Purcell Room debut as an accompanist in 1982 and her concerto

debut in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1986. She has recorded for Radio 3 and Classic FM. She has also recorded a CD of songs by Walter Leigh with the Soprano Elizabeth Nash which is now available.

Martin Smith (violin), a former member of the Duke String Quartet, is a member of the London Mozart Players, and has also worked with the English Chamber Orchestra and other of the country's leading Chamber Orchestras. He has also made solo appearances throughout the country and also in Europe and the USA. He made his South Bank debut in 1992 with the London Soloists Chamber Orchestra, of which he was appointed Leader in 1996.

Martin co-founded the Ellerdale Piano Trio in 1992.

Melanie Woodcock (cello) combines freelancing on the modern instrument with a flourishing career on the baroque cello, working among others with the London Handel Orchestra, the Parley of Instruments, Florilegium and the Wren Baroque Soloists, with whom she has toured extensively and recorded. She is also an established teacher.

### All Saints concert

We are therefore proud and delighted to announce that the Ellerdale Trio will be playing a concert of wonderful trios by Mozart, Martinu Bergerettes, and Dvorak's *Dumky* op.90 at All Saints Church, Durham Road, N2, on Saturday, 28 February at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 each (concessions £6), available at the door, or contact Martin Schools PTA on 020 8883 4672, or 020 8883 5997. Proceeds to Martin Schools PTA.

## 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.  
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>

## What's On...

E-mail your listings to  
[the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net)

**February 8: A Victorian Evening** - musical entertainment with a difference, 8 pm at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2 (opp. Creighton Ave.) Admission incl. Refreshments free. Collection in aid of The Bothy.

**9 – 14 February:** Incognito Theatre Productions presents **Twelfth Night**, at Incognito Theatre, Holly Par Road, Friern Barnet tel 020 8361 8310 for tickets or visit [www.incognitotheatre.com](http://www.incognitotheatre.com) for details.

**14 – 15 February:** Starmakers Children's Theatre Club presents **Bugsy Malone** at Finchley Youth Theatre, 142 High Road. Performances start at 7pm. Tickets £5 from the box office 07963 473045 or by e-mailing [starmakersticketline@hotmail.com](mailto:starmakersticketline@hotmail.com). For more information on Starmakers, contact Kelly Barry on 07763 855580.

## 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  
please contact the Church Office  
Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)**

**Visitors always welcome**





## Letters to The Editor

Send your correspondence to:  
 "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.  
 (Due to space restrictions, letters over 200 words will be edited)

## Remember the ALMO

Dear Sir,  
 [I refer to] 'Remember the ALMO' (Archer Jan 2004)

Firstly [John Dearing] refers to a consultation with tenants in 2002, but has ignored the further consultation with tenants in 2003 which confirmed overwhelming support amongst Barnet tenants for the change in management arrangements (not ownership as he implies) of Barnet's housing stock to Barnet Homes (the new Arms Length Management Organization) that has been set up.

He says that there is a need to define:

1) the security of tenure.  
 There is no change to the security of tenure.

2) the landlords' rights regarding eviction  
 There is no change to the landlords right regarding eviction

3) the tenants' succession rights  
 There is no change to the succession rights

4) the rules for rent increases  
 There is no change to the rules for rent increases, which are in effect now fixed by the government.

5) standards of repair  
 There is no change in repair arrangements, but the Council will be looking to Barnet Homes to maintain the present high standards and where possible to improve the repair service.

6) rights of consultation before any major changes, including improvements, significant repairs and redevelopment.

These rights are mainly enshrined in statute but the Council will be looking to Barnet Homes to further improve tenant and leaseholder consultation.

Mr Dearing also refers to problems caused in housing transfers by ambiguous tenants' documents. Clearly he has totally misunderstood the creation of Barnet Homes and its purpose which is to manage not own the council stock. This change is not a stock transfer.

Lastly he ends by stating that tenants groups may need to consider pressing for representation on the board of the ALMO. Tenants' groups do not need to press for representation. The shadow board of Barnet Homes has been meeting regularly now for several months and the aim is that they will take full responsibility from 1 April. That board includes five tenant and leaseholder representatives, and that has been a key part of the structure of the board from the day the Council first started consulting residents on whether or not to go down this route.

The creation of Barnet Homes should if all goes well enable the Council to access an additional £88 million to help improve our housing stock between now and 2010.

If any resident requires more information about Barnet Homes and its work, they are more than welcome to write to me c/o Town Hall, Hendon, NW4 4BG

**Councillor Brian Salinger**  
 Lead Member for Housing

## The Archer replies:

The purpose of the article was simply to suggest that, on such an important matter, tenants would be advised to seek independent advice rather than rely purely on the Council's assurances, and to suggest topics for such advice. It was not intended to promote opposition to 'Barnet Homes' (the ALMO) - Ed.

## Thank you for the Music

Dear Editor,  
 I just want to congratulate the carol singers from East Finchley Baptist Church who braved the cold wet weather

to sing outside Budgens on Saturday 13 December. It was about 4.30 pm, dark, cold and dismal.

Although, like everyone else, I did not pause for long because of the weather, I want them to know that I really appreciated their singing. It gave me that first sense of Christmas cheer which fills the brain with images of warmth and cosiness. They sang in well-rehearsed harmony and were accompanied by the cheerful sound of the accordion.

Thankyou,  
**Heather Pomroy**  
 Elmfield Road

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



## Well Done!

By John Ashton, High Road, N2  
 Having heard the results of the library consultation I bet the 'nimby' brigade are celebrating! I bet too that Warning on Waitrose are enthusiastically waiting for Barnet Council to announce that we won't be getting a new supermarket or library.

Let's join the real world for a change and take a cold hard look at both the library and the supermarket.

The Disability Discrimination Act is not unknown, the council will have known for years that libraries like East Finchley's would cost a fortune to modernise and make accessible for the disabled. So, if money's tight, it is common sense to find someone to pay for a new library and if that includes a supermarket then maybe the local people get a decent place to shop as well. To me it makes sense.

It should make sense to all those 'Nimbys' and 'WoWers' as well. Put simply, a new Waitrose would have meant road improvements and helped most local shops by bringing more people into the area. A new library would have conformed to the disability act and offered more modern facilities, more books and more computers.

So what have the moaners achieved? Well, what they'll probably get is Park House sold off for executive flats that no one locally can afford and whose new owners leave the area to shop. They will probably end up without a library: any proceeds from Park House will go back into the kitty, so when it proves expensive to modernise or if there are further cutbacks then our library will be a prime candidate for closure (a modern library at the centre of transport links would probably survive). Maybe then they will wake up and realise that you can't stop progress even in East Finchley.

## 263 Bus Timekeeping

Dear Sir,  
 I have been monitoring intervals between successive 263 buses for nearly three years, from the time Arriva operated them. The most detailed data is from the time Metroline took over from First National, on 2 February 2002.

From February to October 2002, 14% of Metroline 263 buses travelled in pairs, or within one minute of each other (i.e. two as a pair in every 14 buses). From mid-January to August 2003, there was an apparent improvement to 9-10% in pairs (two as a pair in every 20 buses).

However, from 25 August 2003, the number of pairs suddenly jumped to 26% (two as a pair in every eight buses), and maintained this poor timekeeping past the end of October, which is worse than it has ever been.

At 26% in pairs, the 263 route is now even more unreliable than the 134 (24%) or the 43 and 143 (13%), and is probably the most unreliable Metroline route in North London.

Although Metroline claim that traffic congestion is the main cause of poor timekeeping, it is worth noting records for the period including August 2002. This was when water main replacements on Barnet Hill caused appalling hold-ups. However, timekeeping has actually been much worse after that particular congestion was removed.

These conclusions are not based on small numbers, as I have around 3,000 records for the 263 route alone, plus some 600 records for other Metroline routes.

Long intervals of around 18 to 25 minutes - some much longer - constitute about 10% of waiting times. These long waits have continued into January 2004.

**P.J.W.Crockford.**  
 Leslie Road.

## Footnote:

Agenda 21 Traffic Group are continuing discussions with Barnet about the 263.

## Hippo home?

Dear Editor,  
 Need the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute look any further for a home? The Grade 2 listed Golders Green Hippodrome, a large and distinctive building, is losing the BBC Concert Orchestra and its future is uncertain.

It is well placed for public and private transport and for the suburb residents. Certainly there would be problems over ownership as, according to the *Ham and High* the BBC believes Barnet Council is the freeholder but the council press office has denied this. A lot of work would be needed to convert the building, no doubt, but surely this superb theatre should at least be considered for use as educational premises?

Yours faithfully,  
**Dudley Taylor**  
 East Finchley

## The Solver 2003

All your computer problems solved  
**No call out charge,  
 No fix, No Fee!**  
 Call Mark Banks  
 0788 4182179  
 E-mail:  
 Thesolver2003@aol.com

State Registered  
Chiropodist/Podiatrist

Miss H.C. MIKELLIDES BSc (Hons)  
 SRCh MChS DpodM

♦ Nail Surgery & Replacement  
 ♦ Verruca treatment ♦ Sports injuries  
 ♦ Skin complaints ♦ Biomechanics  
 ♦ Local Anaesthetic

COOTES PHARMACY 020 8883 0073  
 134 High Road East Finchley London N2 9ED  
 Mobile: 07958 443 623

Cree Godfrey Wood  
Solicitors

Commissioners for Oaths

Hours: 9.30am to 5.30pm.

email: admin@creegodfreyandwood.co.uk

28 High Road, London N2 9PJ

Tel: 020 8883 9414 / 9496 / 0989

www.creegodfreyandwood.co.uk

## C-4-C CASH FOR CHEQUES

WE CASH  
 Wages Cheques, DHSS Cheques,  
 Inland Revenue Cheques,  
 Personal Cheques CASHED  
 PAWNBROKING SERVICE  
 Sale and Buyback on Jewellery  
**CASH LOANS**  
**020 7267 9102**  
 325 Kentish Town Rd. London NW5  
 Written details available on request

## Midhurst Butchers

Certified organic meat  
 at reasonable prices  
 Free-range poultry  
 Home-made sausages  
 (including Boerwors)

2 Midhurst Parade,  
 Fortis Green, London N10  
 Tel. 020 8883 5303

**PHONE CITY**  
 EAST FINCHLEY BRINGS YOU

**Repairs Software Unlocking**

**750min+50txt**

**£3.50/month**

MINUTES APPLY OFF PEAK WEEKENDS LOCAL NATIONAL CALLS TO ANY T-MOBILE CUSTOMER.

**020 8442 1111**

**FINCHLEY Mobile Service Centre 54 High Road East Finchley London N2 9PN**  
 Subject to terms and conditions.

Orange  
 Vodafone  
 H3C-Mobile  
 O2  
 3





Shoes, Trainers, Sandals, Bags and Luggage

Complete Repair Service by a craftsman  
Same day if required

Key Cutting

1 Manor Park Rd. N2, behind 88 Church Lane, opposite Trinity Church  
Tel: 07956 329 150 Open 12-8pm (not Wednesdays)

# THE ARCHER

Published by East Finchley Newspapers, P.O. Box 3699, London N2 8JA. [www.the-archer.co.uk](http://www.the-archer.co.uk)

## Help us with Distribution

*THE ARCHER* needs volunteer distributors for the following areas:

- Strawberry Vale • The Grange
- Falloden Way • Ossulton Way
- Brim Hill • Great North Road
- Kitchener & Beresford Road

Please call us on 020 8883 0433 or e-mail [distribution@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:distribution@the-archer.co.uk) for information.

## MUSWELL HILL BOOKSHOP

Now holds regular author readings and discussions. If you would like further information or to join our mailing list contact us at:



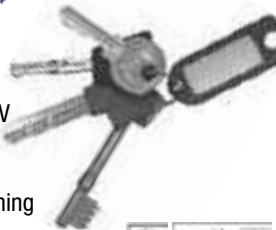
72 FORTIS GREEN ROAD, N10  
020 8444 7588

## SECUREBASE

DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL SECURITY

Your Security problems Solved!

- Locks • Keys • Safes
- Grilles • Alarms
- Access Control • CCTV
- Burglary Repairs
- Emergency Door Opening



ESTABLISHED 1988

0800 279 0791

112 High Road, East Finchley N2  
[www.securebase.co.uk](http://www.securebase.co.uk)

# No.1 Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

Remember the tree house featured in September's *ARCHER*? Its mystery builders, we can reveal, are Luke Bowman and Peter Levy who go to Fortismere School. Peter, of Church Vale, told *THE ARCHER* their story.

Over eighteen months ago the boys found the right tree, a strong, healthy oak. Gradually they collected materials – wood, steel nails, coach bolts, etc. – and climbing gear (they've learned rock-climbing at the Climbing Centre in Green Lanes). Through the summer and autumn of 2002 they worked steadily and by Christmas the house was nearly completed.

Sounds easy? It wasn't! At first they chose the wrong wood. Only two inches thick, it looked elegant but was "too easy to smash" as Peter said ruefully. And sure enough, several attempts were made to smash up their tree house. It was saved by its height and by the boys' climbing, design and carpentry skills. The hardest part was putting up the beams; "You were hanging in mid air." Once one of the boys fell about six feet but was safely roped and so was unhurt. The weather did its worst, too. During one gale they watched anxiously from below (wearing helmets)

as the house was buffeted by the wind but held fast.

### Tree house tips

Any advice for would-be tree house builders? First, get permission – Luke and Peter checked with the Friends of Coldfall Wood. Choose a healthy tree with few dead branches and harm it as little as possible. Don't cut steps into the trunk or use copper or zinc-coated nails; untreated steel nails are best. Take safety seriously: helmets, proper climbing gear, good-quality tools.

School lessons in resistant materials may be useful but probably Luke and Peter have learned far more skills by constructing their tree house. Peter hopes to do a Modern Apprenticeship, later, in joinery and carpentry. Already both boys understand wood, tools and design principles better than most adults. I wonder what they'll tackle next?

The late January pictures on the right show that Luke and Peter's thorough work has paid off, and the tree house is weathering the winter well.

Photos by Tony Roberts



TOP FRAMES \* LATE CLINIC \* ALL TYPES OF CONTACT LENSES FITTED \* DYSLEXIA CLINIC

**January Sale - Up to 80% off!**  
**Designer Frames - Giorgio Armani - Hugo Boss**  
**and many more - Up to 50% off!**  
**FURTHER REDUCTIONS,**  
**CLEARANCE FRAMES FOR AS LITTLE AS £4,**  
**see in store for details**

[asd2020@lineone.net](mailto:asd2020@lineone.net) 126 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY, N2 9ED (020) 8883-2020

# STEWART-DUNCAN OPTICIANS