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THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

A REPRIEVE FOR OUR LOCAL SHOPS

NO to the Brent Cross Extension

The Finchley Society has welcomed the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions' interim decision to refuse Hammerson's planning application for an extension to the Brent Cross Shopping Centre (BCSC). The Society has written to the Government Office for London asking that this decision becomes final.

Among the reasons for the refusal are failure to conform with national planning policies, not recognising BCSC as a town centre, no need for the development and possible harm to nearby town centres. The Finchley Society sees the refusal as removing a further threat to local traders. It has

campaigned hard against the BCSC extension, acting also on behalf of the Mill Hill Preservation Society. Further information on this issue from Bill Tyler on 8883 2006.

For information on the Finchley Society and how to join phone 020 8883 2633 or visit www.finchleysociety.org.uk.



Relieve for East Finchley High Road? Photo by Tony Roberts

Camden Town Derailment: London Underground still Baffled

On Sunday 19 October at around 10am, a northbound Northern Line train from Morden via Bank crashed in the underground junction at Camden Town. Seven people were hurt, two seriously. Various investigations into the train, points, tracks and driver have been carried out, but to no avail.

Suspended service?

Reports early in November suggested that questions were being asked about the train involved, holding out the awful prospect of a complete suspension of the Northern Line while trains were inspected and repaired, much in the fashion of the Central line last spring.

According to the initial London Underground report, the front bogie of the last carriage of the six-car train became derailed, and the front of the carriage

collided with a wall between two diverging tunnels. The rear bogie of the fifth carriage derailed and the coupling between the fifth and sixth carriages parted. The train was stopped with the front two cars at the northbound Barnet branch platform, allowing most of the passengers to be led to safety. The emergency services arrived and went to the aid of those in the detached carriage.

Change and delay

As a result of this incident, services on the Northern line

were seriously disrupted. In particular, trains from High Barnet, Finchley Central and Mill Hill East travelled no further south than East Finchley, whence a tube replacement service to and from Euston was operated by buses. Many residents of East Finchley will remember the delays and crowding.

The underground link from East Finchley to Euston was not restored until Thursday 30 October, and then only a service via Charing Cross was provided. Similarly only Bank trains ran to and from Edgware. This situation remains in place.

Mystery line

What has been established is that there was no problem with the overnight maintenance on the points involved, no other problems with those points were found, the track supporting structure had not shifted, the points and signals were operated properly, the train was driven properly and at the correct speed, and the driver tested negative for drugs and alcohol.

It is clear that the underlying cause of the accident still eludes investigators and London Underground have yet to give any indication as to when full services will resume.

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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 January is the copy deadline for the February issue.

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London Electricity 0800 096 9000
OFTEL 020 7634 8700
Thames Water 0845 920 0888
Three Valleys Water 0845 782 3333
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Transco Gas Emerg. 0800 111 999

Councils

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

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Cophall Sports Ctr. 020 8361 8658
E. Finchley Library 020 8883 2664
Gt North Leisure Pk. 020 8343 9830
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OAP's Advice

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Heathrow 020 8759 4321

Animal Welfare

Nat Strays Bureau 09065 123999*
RSPCA 0870 5555999

Remember The ALMO!

By John Dearing

Barnet Council conducted a consultation in 2002 on its proposal to change the basis of council house management. One of the options offered was an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for the whole borough; this has become the option of choice in principle.

Whether or not there is further consultation, there are a number of issues that council tenants need to consider before any final vote.

Independent advisors

It is likely that Solon, the independent tenant advisors, will assemble a package called a "Tenants' Expectation Document" or something similar (if they don't, then they should be encouraged to do so). While it may be in the form of a comparison between the existing council management and an ALMO, this document needs to spell out unambiguously what should happen on a number of issues, particularly the nature of the new tenancy agreement.

This in turn should define:

- the security of tenure.
- the landlords' rights regarding eviction.
- tenants' succession rights for children, co-tenants, partners etc.
- the rules for rent increases (which should be stated as a function of the RPI).
- standards of repair, by categories, with appropriate response times.
- rights of consultation before any major changes, including improvements, significant repairs or redevelopment.

Assurances

The importance of this cannot be overstated; it is central to the process of creat-

ing the ALMO in a form that is acceptable to tenants. It needs to be unambiguous; many problems have been caused in housing transfers in other areas in the past by ambiguous tenants' documents. Of course there also need to be assurances that the provisions of such a document will be transferred to new tenancy agreements, as part of the ALMO process. Lastly, tenants' groups may need to consider pressing for representation on the board of the ALMO.

Scooter Death

Police are seeking witnesses to a fatal traffic accident on Totteridge Common, N20 which occurred at approximately 7.50 am on Tuesday 30 December.

A Nissan Primera, travelling west, was in collision with a 125cc scooter travelling in the opposite direction, near Long Pond. The scooter rider, a man in his 40s, was taken to Barnet General Hospital, where he died shortly after arrival.

The male driver of the Nissan, who is in his 20s, is under arrest on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

Anyone with information should contact the Collision Investigation Unit on 8246 9855.

Local School Fire

By Antonia Anderson

Local comprehensive school Christ's College has been beset by a further misfortune. After the two burglaries in which laptop computers were taken, the school has been hit by fire.

The fire broke out in the kitchen at lunchtime on the last Friday of the autumn term. The alarm was immediately sounded and two fire engines arrived, much to the excitement of the younger students.

Staff and students were evacuated to Brooklands and Bishop Douglass schools until they could be sent home.

The catering facilities are out of action until further notice and packed lunches are the order of the day.

Wilmot Centre and Stanley Road Field

The futures of the Wilmot Centre and Stanley Road Field are to be considered as one. This was confirmed at December's Finchley Forum, when consultation dates were announced for all the community groups concerned.



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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

Local Planning Applications

Finchley Youth Theatre, 142 High Road -

Installation of disabled access ramp to front of building with new wall and balustrade enclosure. Installation of four by five metre high banner poles.

Vale Farm, Long Lane -

Erection of two two-storey (plus rooms in loft space) blocks to provide a total of 16 houses following demolition of Vale Farm House. Provision of 22 car parking spaces with access to the Meads and Font Hills.

60 Lancaster Gardens -

Redevelopment to provide eight self-contained flats in a three-storey building following demolition of existing house. Provision of ten car parking spaces with access from Lancaster Gardens.

Land adjacent to 1-12 Norfolk Close -

Demolition of existing nine lock-up garages adjacent to the High Road and erection of a two-storey building to provide ten self-contained supported persons flats for people with mental health difficulties together with ancillary staff and communal facilities and associated changes to parking and landscaping.

Former Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Great North Road (behind the Old White Lion) -

Environmental Impact Assessment - Screening Opinion.

Hexagon, 82-92 Great North Road -

Installation of four 8.1m high externally illuminated flagpoles on forecourt.

385 Long Lane -

use of premises as two self-contained flats.

Park House, 16 High Road - change of use from Class C2 (hostel) to Class D1 (educational). Applicant H.G.S. Institute.



Traffic Group Declares War

By Daphne Chamberlain

8.30am on Wednesday 10 December marked a new phase in activities of the Agenda 21 Traffic Group. Fed up with rat-running and excessive speed in the Church Lane, Leopold Road and Leslie Road area, local residents went out to stop the cars.

Crossing and recrossing Church Lane at the junction with the High Road brought drivers to repeated standstills for half an hour. Unprintable words were reported from one, but most seemed good-tempered – perhaps because children on their way to Martin School illustrated that the demonstration was for safety reasons. Passing mothers urged a similar protest further up Church Lane, where one claimed it was almost impossible to cross.

Fed up with rat-runs

Residents said they had had enough of living in the middle of a rat-run, citing the route from Creighton Avenue into Leslie Road, across Church Lane and up Long Lane. In the other direction, Church Lane links with Ossulton Way, as well as being the turn-off point from East End Road. "It's worse since the Manor Cottage was blocked off", they said.

In support were Councillors and our MP. Alison Moore said that the Labour Party had a set of proposals for calming the traffic and protecting The Walks, which had gone by the board. Kathy McGuirk commented that the present administration was obsessed with people driv-



Rudi Vis MP with two protestors in Church Lane

ing through the borough, rather than looking after the interests of people who live here, – a view supported by more than

one person there. Rudi Vis said, "This has clearly shown that people are fed up with speed and rat-running."

Ann Owens Decision Soon?

By Daphne Chamberlain
As reported last month, the Ann Owens Centre is waiting for a decision on its future. If Barnet Council goes ahead with plans to withdraw funding from Age Concern, Ann Owens and two other day centres in the borough will be affected.

Age Concern's Mark Robinson told *THE ARCHER* that closing the building is not an option, as it also houses other projects run by the charity, which are not Council-funded. However, the present staffing structure is vulnerable to financial cuts.

Users of the purpose-built centre in Oak Lane are justifiably concerned about potential changes to what has been a happy and supportive place, but Mr Robinson has said that nothing has been decided yet.

Barnet will make its proposals public at a Council meeting on Tuesday 13 January, after which consultation must start.

Is Barnet Council Transgressing its own Code?

By Daphne Chamberlain

At a time when the Council's consultation record in East Finchley is seen as non-existent or misleading, *THE ARCHER* has been sent an interesting document. It sets out Barnet's code of practice for consulting and communicating with the voluntary and community sector.

Wilmot Centre Fiasco

Headed "Barnet Council's Commitment to the Voluntary Sector", it states, "The Council will make every effort to consult the voluntary sector on matters that will affect them at the earliest possible stage, and do so in a spirit of transparency of decision-making."

Every effort? The Finchley Children's Music Group, the After School Club and The Stanley Road Playing Field Association claim they were simply told – at the latest possible stage – that they could no longer use the Herbert Wilmot Centre.

So this Code of Practice, which was launched at a large

meeting in January 2001, attended by 76 organisations, seems to have been ignored.

Whilst this code of practice refers to dealings with voluntary organisations, the principles should surely be the same for any such exercise, such as the recent library consultation. Sadly, it would appear that the code has been completely ignored in every case, even those which it was specifically produced for.

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Forum Report

By Daphne Chamberlain

Park House

An angry contingent from East Finchley asked why Park House has not been offered for sale on the open market and why the Council has dealt only with property developer Kiafield. Margaret McPeake, Head of Housing, said there were moves to put Park House, which needs extensive repairs, on the market in the next couple of months.

Bus lane to go

Paul Bragg, Highways Officer, announced that the Council had decided to scrap the bus lane from the station to the Bald Faced Stag. They just need formal permission from Traffic for London. Parking restrictions will be imposed to keep traffic moving.

"That won't be enough. We need a filter light", was the response. Several speakers pointed out the difficulty of the right-hand turn from the High Road into Fortis Green, with some vehicles going through the red light. This, they said, had been a problem for years, and stopping the right-hand turn into Baronsmere Road had not helped.

Cllr Jazmin Naghar agreed that the junction was "hellish", saying that a filter light would be "at the top of the agenda", if removing the bus lane proved to be not enough.

Paul Bragg guaranteed that the situation would be monitored and that the ensuing review might also lead to revised signal phasing, which could include a filter.

Deansway Traffic Calmers

A Deansway resident asked for clarification on the Council's plans to remove traffic calmers. When told that calming was reviewed in regard to traffic flow, he said that restricted flow in Deansway was actually caused by parking on both sides of the road. He asked that residents should be consulted before any decision to remove the calmers was made. Ward Councillors John Marshall and Jazmin Naghar supported this request.

Causeway Danger

Concerns were raised about safety in The Causeway after dark, as overhanging trees and bushes from neighbouring land make the path very dark in places. Police records show several cases of assault, indecent exposure and mugging there. It was confirmed that the Council has the power to ensure that overhanging shrubs are cut back.

Neurological Hospital

Local residents wanted to know why there had been four very similar plans for this site, all involving consultations. Were Barnet and the developers going to go on for ever, or until the residents were worn down? They have themselves drawn up plans and a model, at their own expense, but have had no response from Barnet. They wanted a formal response and the assurance that their plans and model would be presented to Council.

The reply was that a consultation has to be carried out for every planning application, however similar. Anyone submitting a planning application has to pay about £10,000 for every submission, which would more than offset any public expense. A formal response was promised.

Viceroy Close Masts

Viceroy Close residents protested about seven new masts, causing noise and leaky roofs. Dave Prince, Planning Officer, said he had received many complaints. Antennae up to a certain size were licensed by the Government, not the local authority. Above that size, local approval was needed. He was investigating the matter. Cllr Colin Rogers asked about a possible objection on the grounds that the masts were visually obtrusive.

The next Finchley Forum will be at 6.30pm on Wednesday 18 February at Bishop Douglass School, Hamilton Road, N2.



Dollis Brook at Windsor Open Space. Photo by Tony Roberts

Help The Finchley Society to Survey Dollis Brook

The Finchley Society is asking the public to help in a survey of Dollis Brook, Hendon NW4 on the weekend of 17-18 January, from the north end of Brook Farm open space to just south of Windsor open space where Mutton Brook meets Dollis Brook to form the river Brent.

The Society plan to look at specific subjects each month and form a record which will indicate changes in the environment. Items of interest on 17-18 January are birds on a winter visit such as redwings and siskins, plants in flower, foxes and special

trees worth recording.

Details should be sent to Derek Warren on 8359 5258 or c/o The Finchley Society, Avenue House, 17 East End Road, N3 3QE.

Please also let Derek Warren know if you want more information or if you would like

to take a more active part in the surveys. The results will be made available and also displayed from time to time at local events.

For information on The Finchley Society and how to join phone 8883 2633 or visit www.finchleysociety.org

Join the Big Fun Walk

Make it one of your New Year's resolutions to join this year's North London Hospice Big Fun Walk and you will enjoy one of the most interesting charity walks around. It starts on our own doorstep at East Finchley Tube Station on Sunday 14 March and over its 7½ miles passes through eight woods and parks, skirts Buckingham Palace and ends in the shadow of Westminster Abbey.

To take part, complete and return the form below or telephone 020 8202 5586.

The walk is one of the main fund-raising events for the Hospice and last year made over £120,000. It is open to all ages and refreshments are provided en route and at the finish.

Registration Form

London Hospice Big Fun Walk 2004

Check-in: Sunday 14 March 2004 from 9.15 to 10.15am

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other:.....First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

Post code:

Tel. Day: Eve: Mobile:

Email address:

Please tick this box if walker is under 18 years old ☐

I understand that I take part in this event at my own risk, and that the NW Support Group of North London Hospice cannot be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury incurred whilst participating.

Signature Date

Return to: Mrs V Bentley, 11 Westchester Drive London NW4 1RD

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Fifteen Minutes a Day

By Diana Cormack

For the past five years children in Martin Infant School who need a kick start to their reading have been benefiting from a successful support scheme. It is structured to enable classroom assistants and parents to provide an individual programme of 15 minutes one-to-one support each day for a period of about a term. So you don't have to be a teacher, but you do have to attend a couple of training sessions and you definitely have to have a huge commitment.

Sue Mattocks, the teacher who introduced the scheme to the school, says that the support given by the adults involved has been fantastic. Parents whose children have left Martin Infants still come; some volunteers come before they go to work; one dad comes during his lunch break; a granny and a dinner lady do daily sessions. Initially they were recruited by letter but now it is by word of mouth and there are often returners keen to become involved again. Carol Masseron of Long Lane, who has a child in the infants and another in the juniors, said that taking part had taught her how to read effectively with her own children.

Training takes place every year on site with literacy

specialist Kate Grant, who devised the programme as an affordable and easy-to-implement way of helping those pupils who are slow to start independent reading. At this stage it is not for children with special needs.

Personal trainer

There is no stigma attached. Sue, who describes it as a bit like having a personal trainer, says that it does make a huge difference to the infant children's progress. In fact, Barnet has been taking an interest in the success of 15 Minutes a Day and has been asking the school for feedback. It may well be that the borough will decide to introduce this scheme, pioneered by Martin Infants, into more of their schools.



David Bell presents an award to Holy Trinity School staff. Photo by John Dearing

Holy Trinity School "A Real Beacon in the Community"

In a week when some of the country's primary schools were criticised, David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Schools, had nothing but praise for one in East Finchley. He came to Holy Trinity CE Primary School, Eagan's Close, to present children and staff with the Basic Skills Quality Mark, which is awarded to schools that meet a very high standard in the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling and number work.

Following on from last year's impressive OFSTED report, the staff participated in listing ways to meet and raise standards, an exercise which prompted new ideas but which also underlined present good practice. The government's Basic Skills Agency specifies ten areas of assessment for which evidence of achievement must be shown. This involved a lot of hard work not only by the teaching staff, but by all the support staff and, of course, the children! During a special assembly, deputy head teacher Alison Holding paid tribute to them as well as to the support given by parents and governors.

This was echoed by David Bell, who asked the youngsters to applaud the adults "who

make this such a great school for you." He described his tour round the classes to sit in on lessons, talk to staff and pupils and admire the wall displays as a pleasure and a privilege and thought the subsequent singing in the hall was "fantastic". The audience of parents, school governors, the Deputy Director of the London Diocesan Board for Schools, Dr Rudi Vis, Barnet Councillors and Education Officials agreed with him.

Afterwards, in praising

the high standards achieved by the quality of teaching and the high expectations of all the staff, the chief inspector said that good leadership and management was crucial and reminded us that head teacher Duncan Mills had been described by OFSTED as "outstanding."

He told *THE ARCHER*, "It has been a pleasure to visit this school and the children are a credit both to themselves and their parents. This is a real beacon in the community."

Swimming with Disabilities

A club meets every Monday at Park Road Muswell Hill Baths to enable children and adults of all ages with disabilities and special needs to enjoy swimming along with their family or friends in a safe club setting.

Members who need support with changing need to bring their own carers but otherwise the changing rooms are fully accessible at ground level and there is a chair hoist into the water. Helpers are available in the water for all swimming needs to improve confidence in a safe informal environment.

There are no membership fees and the club runs with a minimum of rules except safety must be observed at all times. Haringey lifeguards are also present at this time.

So whether it is MS, epilepsy, blindness, a false leg or any other incapacity, as long as your doctor gives permission,

you will be welcome.

It meets from 7.30-9 pm with drinks and biscuits afterwards until 9.30.

Make this a resolution for the New Year for you or someone you know. Any queries please contact Ian on 020 84448973.

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New Year Celebrations (The Romans had a word for it...)

Apart from Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali, there are other celebrations around the turn of the year. The Welsh celebrate Calenig, the Scots Hogmanay and the ancient Romans celebrated Saturnalia.

For many, the season ends with twelfth night and, as the decorations come down, the celebrations end and a new year begins....

Hogmanay

New Year in Scotland is called Hogmanay. It is not entirely clear why. The most likely explanation is that *hogmanay* is a corruption of the Norman French *hoguinané*, which means a New Year's gift. This reflects the fact that Scots children used to run from door to door asking for *hogmanay* – gifts of oat cakes and bread.

It is actually quite appropriate that the name derives from Norman French because the festival is of Norse origin, like *Upphellyar* in Iceland where people dressed as Vikings light enormous bonfires and hold torchlight processions. In Scotland Hogmanay has its own toned-down version of this in the practice of 'first footing'.

Tall dark man

The belief is that the new year will be lucky if the first foot to cross the threshold is that of a tall, dark man. Traditionally, after the New Year is brought in at midnight on 31 December, a valiant band of tall, dark men goes the rounds of their neighbours 'first footing' them. Valiant, because the men have a lump of coal in one hand and a bottle of whisky in the other. Drams are exchanged at each doorway, so anybody



Brhh! at the turn of the year, Church Lane 2003 Photo Tony Roberts

who first foots more than six or so doesn't usually remember much about it.

Death and rebirth

However, it is not all about getting legless. First footing reflects a pagan death-and-rebirth ritual. As the old year died, all the hearth fires of the clan were extinguished except for that in the holy place. As the new year was borne the priests carried fire – the coal, and sustenance – the whisky, to each hearth. It is no coincidence that *whisky* is a corruption of the Gaelic *uisge beatha* or *water of life*. There is more to Hogmanay than just singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

Burns Night Celebrations

By John Dearing

Robert 'Rabbie' Burns was born in Alloway, Ayrshire in 1759, the son of poor tenant farmers. Despite their poverty he was extremely well read and started writing poetry at the age of 15, mostly on the topics of women and scotch whisky. Ten years later he published his first collection and rapidly the 'Ploughman Poet' became a national celebrity, accepted into Edinburgh literary circles. Leaving farming, he became an excise man, but his first love was writing, creating such masterpieces as "Tam O'Shanter". He died at only 37 from heart disease, probably brought on by the privations of his early years. 10,000 people attended his funeral, but his legacy of more than 400 poems and songs have made him Scotland's most famous poet.

Auld Lang Syne

The ritual of celebrating 'Burns Night' on his (presumed) birthday of 25 January was started by close friends a few years after his death, and has remained largely unchanged ever since.

It commences with the Chairman inviting the company to stand to receive the haggis, which is brought in by the chef, led by a piper, to the accompaniment of a slow handclap. Burns' poem *To A Haggis* is recited, the haggis opened and then toasted by all with a glass of whisky. The meal generally commences with Cock-a-leekiesoup, followed by Haggis, Neeps and Tatties and Topsy Laird (sherry trifle).

The formalities commence with a speech by an invited guest on the 'Immortal Memory' of

the poet, commemorating his life and his continuing relevance today. There is, then, a light-hearted address to the ladies present, nominally to thank them for preparing the food, but the opportunity is taken for some humorous asides at their expense. The ladies respond in kind, detailing the foibles of the men present. Again, humour is the keynote.

Recitations

Recitations of famous Burns poems, such as *To A Mouse* ("Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie – O what panic's in thy breastie!") are punctuated by further toasts, in Scotch whisky of course.

The evening culminates with the company standing, linking hands and singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

Saturnalia

The modern Italians don't have much in the way of mid-winter festivals – *Natale*, which is Christmas, and *Anno Nuovo*, which is a bit of a damp squib. Which is strange, given that their ancestors in ancient Rome had the great granddaddy of all mid-winter binges: Saturnalia.

It was the festival of the god Saturn. It started on 17 or 19 December and lasted for up to seven days. The uncertainty as to dates may have something to do with the fact that at the end of the festival the participants had only a hazy recollection of it.

Saturn was basically the god of gloom. He ate his own children, which gives you some idea. His festival however was a total inversion of his nature and of almost everything else. Rome was a society based on slavery. But during Saturnalia slaves were masters and their masters slaves. Slaves wore the toga of a free Roman citizen and their masters wore the "pilleus"

– a felt bonnet – of slaves. Masters waited on slaves at table and both classes exchanged gifts.

Given that Rome was slavery based, Saturnalia is a puzzle. The slaves were not always happy. There were frequent slave rebellions, the biggest being that of Spartacus in AD71. So letting the slaves play master must mean either that Rome was a very self-confident society or that its citizens felt that letting off steam once a year might keep the slaves quiet. For all the booze and merrymaking, there was probably quite a lot of nail-biting done during Saturnalia.

Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany, or as it is also known, the **Manifestation of Christ of the Gentiles**, is observed on **6 January**. It celebrates the visit of the Magi, or the **Three Wise Men**, to the infant Jesus. The gifts they present symbolize significant events that take place in the life of Christ. In churches where a Christmas crib is erected, the figures of the shepherds are removed and replaced by those of the Three Kings.

This festival in the Christian Church also marks the last day of Christmas as well as being an important celebration in its own right. It is secularly known as Twelfth Night.

One of the many traditions that still take place on 6

January is the Church service held at Saint James' Palace in London where members of the Royal household (originally the reigning monarchy) present the Chapel Royal with gold, frankincense, and myrrh in remembrance of the first Epiphany.

Twelfth Night

By Ann Bronkhorst

The other name for Epiphany means more to people in our largely secular society. Straight after Twelfth Night we take down the decorations and put the sad moulting tree outside. Life returns to normal. This is the dull modern version of Twelfth Night but in past centuries it was a riotous time of tricks, masquerades and feasting.

Lorde of Misrule

In 1585 Philip Stubbs described 'the wilde heades of the parisshe' choosing 'a grand Capitaine of mischeef' who led a crowd of revellers with 'hobbie horses, dragons, baudie pipers and thunderynge drummers'. Many households also chose their own Lords of Misrule – often a child or a servant, creating a topsy-turvy world.

The Twelfth Cake

A tradition, still observed in many European countries, was the huge Twelfth Cake. If you got a slice containing a bean or a pea you were king or queen for the day. The custom survives at London's Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, thanks to a stage-struck pastrycook. In 1794 Robert Baddeley, who'd quit cookery for the glamour of acting with

David Garrick, died leaving a bequest of money for a giant cake (with wine or punch) to be shared by the cast each Twelfth Night. This year it's thought that the cake will look like an ocean liner, complimenting the present production.

A silly play?

There's another connection between theatre and this festive time of year: Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' was first performed before Queen Elizabeth on 5 January 1601. Its plot is full of pretences and disorderly games yet Pepys who watched it on 6 January 1663 thought it 'a silly play and not related at all to the name or day'.

So on 6 January as we dismantle the Christmas decorations we could plan a livelier Twelfth Night next year with



Shakespeare - what was the connection?

Bean kings and queens, masquerades and an East Finchley Lord of Misrule prancing down the High Road with pipers and drummers.



Turn of the year in East Finchley, Photo by Tony Roberts

Calenig

By Diana Cormack

In Wales it is customary to give children money on New Year's Day. Years ago groups of youngsters used to visit houses before noon to sing a special song of good wishes, for which they were rewarded with money or food. Both the song and the money given were called Calenig. Calenig was the old pagan New Year celebrated on 5 January, similar in name to the ancient Kalends of January, the start of the calendar year.

Singing, telling fortunes, masquerades and torchlight processions marked this special time dedicated to the gate-keeper god Janus who, having two faces, could look back to the past and forward to the future. People's fear of the unknown could be eased by predicting good fortune whilst giving presents at the Kalends symbolised good luck for the

year ahead.

However, in Wales it was generally believed that good or bad luck was brought by the first visitor of the New Year, according to his or her sex or certain characteristics. Sometimes the luck depended on the initial letter of the visitor's name or even on the name itself.

Scary Mary

Another ancient custom,

now being revived in some places, is the Mari Lwyd (grey Mary). A horse's skull or something frightening to represent it, would be decorated and mounted on an upright pole, with the pole carrier shrouded in a white sheet. He and his party would process to a chosen house, first looking in through the windows to terrify those inside before the leader knocked on the door. An exchange of verses followed, sung until the people indoors ran out of inspiration, then the Mari Lwyd would be allowed in so everyone could eat, dance and be merry.

Perhaps the Welsh rugby team should try something similar at The Millennium Stadium. It might help them to beat England this year!

Oh For in 04

THE ARCHER asked some people to contribute to a Wish List of things they would like for East Finchley in 2004. Here is our selection of their responses, in no particular order.

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Committee:

- The children's playground to be improved.
- The new café building to be opened and serving refreshments ASAP.

From Noel Lynch, GLA member:

- That East Finchley will continue to have a great "village" atmosphere with everyone able to live in peace and harmony.
- That *THE ARCHER* has another good year acting as "glue" for the local community.

Local MP Dr Rudi Vis:

- There are many voluntary groups in our area and joining them would encourage more help for those who need it and new friendships.
- *A get to know your neighbour* scheme would improve relations and add to safety. Simple things such as returning your neighbour's bin to the right place would help fight crime.

Councillor Alison Moore:

- Investment in youth and community provision in East Finchley – the threatened closure of the Herbert Wilmot Centre just flies in the face of reason.
- The survival and investment in East Finchley Library, a thriving local town-centre, no tube strikes and the 263 buses running on time.

Eugenia von Piccardio, a manager at the North London Hospice shop:

- That the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute will come to East Finchley so that mature people without transport could enjoy what the Institute has to offer.

From Colin Knox, our local road sweeper:

- That the public will learn not to drop litter.

From Lawrie Chivers:

- That the pension situation is remedied and that retired folk get a fair deal.

From Kevin Finn, editor of *THE ARCHER*:

- My biggest desire is that people would take time to see things from the perspective of others. This might go some way to eradicating poverty and human suffering.
- I would also like to see *THE ARCHER* featured as "this week's publication" on the popular satirical programme *Have I Got News for You*.

Floating in the Air...

The secret truth behind the library plans

By David Hobbs

The plans showing the library floating in mid air that were part of the council's recent consultation were not a conspiracy to pretend that Waitrose does not exist, but the initial signs of a project to put East Finchley in the forefront of modern technology. According to a secret internal report revealed exclusively to *THE ARCHER*, the new library would defy gravity by floating twenty feet off the ground next to Park House.

The secret report by A. Booke of consultants Gerry Bild and Bodgit, describes a hi-tech library that does not use up valuable land and which can be moved around East Finchley, offering what will be an almost 'door-to-door' service. The library is described as following council policy in having a state of the art eco-friendly hot air propulsion system enabling it to reach a height of 500 feet and a top speed of 45mph.

The report admits that this exciting new project presents certain problems, especially as people will need to be trained to fly the library. At the moment volunteer librarians are being trained by the RAF, but Mr Booke

recommends that the council recruit teenage computer games players who have reached expert level in Road Crash 2003. Skill will certainly be needed to fly several thousand tons of bricks, books and mortar around East Finchley.

When confronted by *THE ARCHER*, Mr Booke refused to comment about the feasibility of the plan, but said that if we could put a man on the moon we could move a library around East Finchley. When asked about the relevance of the proposed Waitrose development to his plans for the library he replied that the roof of the superstore would be a convenient place to park the library overnight.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Brownie Hannah McShane presents Lawrie Chivers of the Traders Association with a cheque for £20
Photo by Maureen Antoinette

Helping Others

Every year girls in the 4th East Finchley Brownie Pack raise money to help pay for the Christmas lights which decorate the High Road. This is a nice way of being involved in the community and giving other people pleasure.

If you help other people in some way or know of children who do, please let the *YOUNG ARCHER* know so we can write about them too.

A Change of View

Children in Year 3 at Holy Trinity School have been studying the local environment. Their classroom looks out over the Stanley Road Playing Field. Here is what some of the seven and eight year olds wrote about it:

In our geography topic we have been thinking how we can improve our local area.

Some of us think we should make it into a football stadium but on the other hand we would like to make it great for everyone because it looks horrible!

By Ollie

In our geography topic we have been working on the Stanley Field. Right now it isn't being used the way it should. We want to change it. We thought about our ideas and there were so many that we only picked some. We thought of making a park, we also thought of making it for local wildlife. What do you think?

By Daniel

In our area it is quite hygienic but what really spoils it is the Stanley Field. At the moment it looks like a factory has been taken away. I have got an idea of what we could put there. We could have a butterfly park with a fountain, a bench, a

playground and some animals. It would need a lot of money but we would organise a fund raiser. It really spoils my day when I look out. I bet it spoils your day when you walk past. Think about it!

By Georgia

At the moment it is just a scruffy field. We could have a football pitch. Or a pond with swans. Even maybe an outside swimming pool. Maybe a park for big and little children as well. We could have somewhere to walk and to take dogs. We could have a water fountain and even a café. There could be a picnic area for the whole family.

By Johanna

In our lessons we have been learning about the area outside our window. We have all been thinking about changing things so they look better than now. It is just old, scruffy sand and a big fence. We see a lot of dogs and foxes.

What we want is a place

where people can relax and where children can play. If we have grass it will be just gorgeous and people can enjoy the space. There are other things you can build like maybe for animals that have nowhere to live. Maybe they can have a sign that says when you come in "Bring food for the animals."

By Saffron



The fountain that never was.
Photo by Diana Cormack

RSPCA News

An RSPCA Resolution for 2004: every pet owner to come to our clinic with their pet for micro-chipping. Only £10 to give you a better chance of finding your lost animal. Also, our dog neutering offer is still open for pensioners and all those on benefits. Price depends on the size of the dog – our vet will give you an estimate.

We are now refurbished and open Monday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 7.30pm in Park Road alongside the building works. We remind those entitled that the Harmsworth

Animal Hospital, 22 Sonderburg Road N7 in Finsbury Park, tel. 020 7272 6214, is open 24 hours for emergencies and has clinics from Monday to Friday from 10am to 2.30pm.

Bring your pension or benefit book along.

Thanks to all who supported our Christmas Fair and a Happy New Year to you all and your pets.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

Seasonal Celebrations

The infant department put on a nativity performance while the junior department's production of *Beauty and the Beast*, written by the staff, was impressive.

Holy Trinity Church was packed with family and friends for the annual carol service. The children's singing is available on a CD being sold to raise money for the building fund.

The juniors had an end of term outing to the Phoenix cinema to see *Spy Kids Three*.

Fund Raising

Holy Trinity School Association's Christmas Fair made the amazing sum of £2613.

Carol singing at East Finchley tube station collected money towards the building of the new school extension.

Postal Scheme

Year 6 children operated their own postal scheme in a project run by the Barnet Education Business Partnership. They had to fill in application forms and have job interviews before setting up and running a successful system throughout the school.

Football

In its first league match the school beat St John's Whetstone 1-0.

Playing against schools from all over north London in the Spurs six-a-side tournament at White Hart Lane, Holy Trinity finished in second place.

Persil Stars

From now until June 2004 the school is collecting the stars appearing on Persil packs. They will be exchanged for art and craft materials to be used by the children. If you use these products, please collect the stars and send them to the school marked for the attention of Mrs Pothen.

Martin Schools

Christmas Shows

The infant school's seasonal production was extra special this year, in that the original story and music was written by music teacher Alan Gruner. Every child in the school took part.

The Globe Theatre Company came to delight the infant and nursery children with a performance of "Sleeping Beauty."

Art Project

The children were shown how to build a brick wall before they helped to construct a square planter in the playground. This will serve as a permanent reminder of the recent National Gallery project.

Artist in Residence

Sculptor David Aronsohn has been working with pupils on a project funded by the PTA. A display of their work will take place in the infant school hall in mid-January.

Martin Junior School

Christmas Bazaar

On 6 December the PTA organised a bazaar. The junior hall accommodated sideshows, stalls, competitions, crafts and games, while the infant hall became an international cafe and Father Christmas' grotto. Hundreds of children, family and friends had a great time; face-painting, making jewellery, wrapping presents, eating from a worldwide array of food, and listening to our own steel band. The day's profits were over £2,500

A Victorian Christmas

Year 4 took part, as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert introduced the audience to two Victorian families who experienced Christmas in very different ways. Children acted, danced and made music - all joining in with traditional Christmas carols. A group of children later shared their carols with others, singing for Age Concern at Oak Lane.

Visit to Southwark

Year 4 visited an old Victorian operating theatre to hear about gruesome amputations and surgery in past times. Next was a Victorian schoolroom situated in a room in Southwark Cathedral, where the children dressed up and had Victorian names. The Victorian teachers did not allow anyone to speak or even smile; lessons were boring and the classroom was bare.

Thames Barrier

Year 5, who are looking at water in their science and geography work, visited the Barrier, learning that there might be a massive tidal wave if the gates are raised too quickly. They noticed the pollution caused by litter thrown in the river. The children did water-sampling experiments in a special science laboratory in the Thames Barrier information centre.

Positively Mad!

The juniors spent half a day in accelerated learning workshops. They went crazy about learning throughout the day. The programme enabled them to develop techniques to improve their recall of facts in a novel and funny way, and helped them extend their knowledge of mind maps.

Charities

Children raised money for Barnado's. At the end of the Christmas performance, our "Victorian bailiffs" made a collection. When Barnado's collected the money in assembly, they were delighted and presented the school with a mascot. The next appeal was for the Meningitis Trust. Children were invited to attend annual Christmas lunch in seasonal costumes. Children donating received a "Monty the Duck" pin badge.



Body and Soul

By Sam Grove

The temple that youth religiously frequents in the 21st century is not the church but the gymnasium. This is no less so in Finchley, a town that hosts a plethora of temples including The David Lloyd, Fitness First, The Lido, LA Fitness and Compton Sports Centre. As part of my investigation into youth culture I set about uncovering the nature of this phenomenon.

A friend and I went undercover and pretended to be interested in joining a gym. We got a guided tour and a free workout; ample opportunity to grasp the finer points of gym life. The gym, it is clear, is not just a place to get fit. It is a concept. People go to change their state of mind as much as their body shapes.

At the entrance we are greeted with the statement, *'A healthy body equals a healthy mind'*. Once we entered the weights room, the walls were littered with pseudo intellectual quotes. *'Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records.'* Or *'For every disciplined effort there is a multiple reward.'* Very good so far – but some were clearly taken completely out of context; *'Justice is a concept. Muscle is the reality.'* Or actually didn't mean anything at all; *'It is scientifically proven that men who work out regularly are 65% more likely to reach their goals.'* However they seemed

to inspire a certain determination in the regulars. One man I spoke to was unequivocal about his objectives "Sam – I want the TOTAL package." Which I later learned was "an excessive mass of muscular bulkage garnished with acute and [if possible] serrated definition."

Happy faces

But for every success there is anguish. Gyms are fiercely competitive places and there are many casualties. Demoralised by their relative physical ineptitude and less than perfect physiques they take sanctuary in the saunas and steam rooms – hoping that if they can't do it lifting weights they can at least shed a few pounds dehydrating themselves. Like H.G Wells' hellish vision of the future, the ugly face of gym life is largely hidden from view. There are no pictures of them on the wall. They are not mentioned in the brochures. There are no quotes that give voice to their misery. There are only happy faces at the gym...

A Hit for the Older Generation?

By Sam Grove

The gymnasium does not host a monoculture, but attracts all sorts, most notably the old and middle aged. For those that are looking to get fit, or to meet new people there is a thriving community of mature gym-goers at the Compton Sports Centre on Summers Lane.

Prospective members should be warned however that (rather curiously) it is the older demographic group which is by far the most fashion conscious. While those in their 20s tend to turn up in rag t-shirts and baggy trousers, the 55+ age bracket can always be counted on to turn up in one-piece shell suits and the freshest pair of Nikes. On

one occasion I managed to get a glimpse of a Reebok badge stitched on a pensioner's sports jacket. It said *'Clothing tailored to enhance the performance of world class athletes'*. As he lay on the flat of his back, a spluttering, gurgling shell of a man, (having been a bit over eager on the rowing machine) he looked dismally short of world class.



Beauty therapy in action. Photo by Danielle Grimes

Isabel Douglas: From Top to Toe

By Danielle Grimes

Have you started another year with the same old resolution? Well how about making a resolution that you are sure to keep?

After the stresses and strains of Christmas – not to mention the cold blustery weather still creeping up on us – we all feel like a little pampering ready for the New Year. And what better place to go than the Isabel Douglas Health and Beauty Centre, 90/92 East Finchley High Road, . Isabel Douglas caters for all ages, genders and ailments, with treatments from Trichology to Reflexology, all with complete privacy.

I met with a warm, friendly welcome and a peaceful, meditative atmosphere; this was not a pretentious Beauty Clinic. Isabel believes that it is paramount that each member of her team has at least ten years experience in Health and Beauty, stressing quality and professionalism.

The Isabel Douglas Salon provides products such as the organic hair colour range, understood not to be absorbed into the blood stream. Children

are provided for, through treatments such as homeopathy for asthma and acupuncture for hay fever, whilst men can benefit from private Trichology sessions. Fuelled by a desire to widen the access to alternative medicines, Isabel Douglas may soon welcome a GP onto her team and introduce further treatments such as colonic irrigation and Ajurvedic massage.

Isabel Douglas began her career in Health and Beauty at the age of sixteen when she came to London from Spain in 1956. After training in one of the top

salons, she opened her first salon in Kensington in 1970. Because of family commitments, Isabel left her work, but nine years and a Master in Biosthetition later, she reopened in Muswell Hill. Isabel is committed to promoting the importance of well-being and the understanding of alternative therapies in order to cure ailments and believes that the use of medicine should be left as the last resort. Now with her latest salon, opened in 2002, Isabel hopes to share her expertise with the community of East Finchley.

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 ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 020 8346 8736
 ❖ **Private drum tuition**, beginners welcome. Contact Eddie 8444 8376
 ❖ **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

❖ **All Saints Beer and Wine Circle** Call Richard Baldwin 020 8883 7081
 ❖ **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 Mouldon on 020 8361 1696.
 ❖ **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.

Reunion in Oz

By Brian Timms

Name the canary in the window of Mr Belcher's shoe repair shop in Manor Park Road! The bird was among trivia raised at the first reunion in Australia of Finchley kids of the 1940s, who met in Melbourne in October for three days of wining, dining and laughing.

The group (using maiden names) was comprised of Shirley Crane and Carol Carnie (Perth), Pat Chick and Mary Hall (Sydney), Derek Woolley (Ballarat), Donald Carnie (Melbourne), Brian Timms (Moruya), Gill Rowsell and Joyce Stevens (holidaying from England).

Stories flowed, primed by a dozen back copies of *THE ARCHER* and a plastic bag of 100 names of long remembered ex-pupils from the Martin, Alder and Manorside schools. Above noisy restaurant chatter, Carol suddenly flashed a mobile to contact sister Lynne, 12,000 miles away in West Finchley. "Have I got news for you!" shouted Carol, passing on hot gossip.

The times of our lives

So we rattled on – Hahn's bakery in East Finchley High Road, first to supply sliced loaves; gas masks in Donald Duck style to induce kids to wear them; the German V2 rocket that exploded

in the garden of 111 Abbots Gardens in November 1944; trolley buses 517, 617 and 609; the rush that emptied sweet shops at the end of rationing; old Mrs Wallace in the corner store at the end of Church Lane; revolutionary



L-R: Joyce Stevens, Shirley Crane, Gill Rowsell, Pat Chick, Mary Hall, Derek Woolley, Donald Carnie, Sonia Carnie, Brian Timms (seated), Carol Carnie, Ann Woolley. Photo courtesy of Brian Timms.

star-shaped ice-pops from Rose's in the Market Place. Near the Alder, at the top of Long Lane, was the fish and chip shop, where questions such as "How long will the chips be Mrs?" were curtly met with "Four inches – wait your turn."

All agreed that at our time of life a reunion is more beneficial

than a psychiatrist. If only we'd been able to recall that bloody canary's name!

We believe that Geoff Voyce, June Effer and Jim Wheelan are also in Oz so if anyone knows their whereabouts, or of other Finchley exiles, please contact Shirley at wanderers@wn.com.au

Warning On Waitrose

Update by Diana Cormack

At the time of writing no planning application has been received by Barnet Council for the construction of a 20,000 square foot Waitrose supermarket which would extend from the borders of Cherry Tree Wood up to Baronsmere Road.

The property developers, Kiafield, are said to be ready to go with their application at any time but the topic was not on the agenda for discussion by the Cabinet in March. WOW organisers say they are uncertain whether this was because the question of Compulsory Purchase Orders is still causing problems within the council, or whether the letters sent in by local objectors to the proposals have been having an effect.

However, they believe that this written pressure needs to be kept up so that councillors are aware of the scale of the opposition when they do eventually discuss it. This could well be in April.

With Barnet unwilling to enter into discussions until planning permission has been sought, WOW organisers want to ensure that people maintain interest and are kept informed of any developments. Members of the protest group have distributed thousands of letters throughout East Finchley, outlining their objections and describing the possible effects of the scheme. Six shops in the High Road display current information (Plummers newsagents, Tony's Continental Stores, Chivers A1 Motors, Natural Choice, A. Scott & Sons Fishmongers and Mandara Italian Delicatessen).

Meanwhile WOW says it is continuing to make preparations for action to be taken if and when the proposed planning application is made.

We Saw Them First!

By Daphne Chamberlain

A certain Hendon and Finchley paper is behind the Times: In November, it reported "one of the first sightings of a parakeet in North London".

Last March we confirmed sightings at Kenwood and in May we told you about Linda Mitchell of Fordington Road, who has seen parakeets in her East Finchley garden since November 2000.

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>

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Click...click

It's weird out there in cyberspace and big and over the top and what your right hand's for. Even my steam powered search engine claims to have over 3,300,000,000 sites listed, only 202,000,000 about sex. That said, I guess 200 million sex sites is enough to cover every fantasy from A to Z, or as London Zoo might put it, aardvark to zebra. Even then it's not simply about sex, it's about weirdness. Someone, somewhere, but probably in America is at this very moment dreaming of fire arms and sexual perversion and clicking onto SexPistols.com only to get no sex, but lots of drugs and rock'n'roll.

Weirdness isn't about sex; AOL and all the rest can filter out anything likely to offend, exploit or pervert, but they can't do anything to stop serious perversity. They can't close down the Unofficial Austin Allegro Fan Club or any of the other 41,000 sites that mention the insult to motoring that was the Allegro. The square-wheeled, ugly duckling celebrated its 30th birthday last May and I wasn't invited. Maybe because I told the man from the Allegro Preservation Society that drivers needed preserving from Allegros, not the other way round.

If you think that's bad, there are even 104 sites relating to the worst car ever built in Britain, the Morris Marina. I may think Jeremy Clarkson should be hung upside down in the centre of Modena and poked with sharp sticks for selling his Ferrari to buy a Merc, but he's right about the Marina. Why anyone should have ever felt enthusiastic about that car is beyond me; maybe they keep them to frighten proper cars like Golfs.

No weird-out net-surfing session would be complete without a trip to my favourite piece of cyber-perversity, the Wartburg... These were East German jokes made from recycled left over German tanks and post-modern irony before the words were invented, or at least the website is. The company may have been founded in 1898, but it came into its own in the 50s, 60s, and 70s when these noisy, nasty, unreliable and uncomfortable 2-strokes polluted their way onto British roads. But here's the weird bit, they were built in a BMW factory that found itself on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain in 1945. So who said the Germans don't do irony?

Weirdness is not just about quantity and although I could go on about the perversion that is owning a Datsun 120Y Sunny, I won't, I'll just succumb to vanity and remind you that typing Kalashnikov Kultur into your search engine gets you serious weirdness; it gets you me.

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please contact the Church Office
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Visitors always welcome



Recycling

By Ann Bronkhorst

Do you struggle to grow plants in poor London soil? And have you got some old sandals you'll never wear again? The link, and the answer, is recycling.

Barnet residents are rather good at it. Last year Barnet, out of the seven boroughs in the North London Waste Authority, was the one to collect the most rubbish for recycling. The bad news is that we produce ever more rubbish, throwing out our own weight in waste every ten weeks. The good news is that recycling is booming and next year Barnet may hit its target: to recycle 18% of all its rubbish.

Mad About Waste?

Friends of the Earth would approve. Pressure from their supporters helped get the Household Waste Recycling Bill through Parliament recently. All local authorities must provide doorstep collections for all recyclable waste by 2010. FoE. are targeting children with a pack for KS3 and another, 'Mad about Waste and Recycling', for primary schools. Information from freephone 0808 8001111 or www.foe.co.uk/learning

Changing Rooms

Nine million of us have watched *Changing Rooms* on TV where Oliver Heath promotes the recycling message. He says "I like new uses for ordinary products – plastic bottles turned into fleeces, glass bottles into paving, circuit boards into lampshades . . . it's cheaper and you can use your imagination."

Charity Shops

Here in East Finchley three charity shops are kept busy recycling our cast-offs by selling them on. What happens to the goods they can't sell? The clothes are processed to make, eventually, paper; even handbags and shoes can be recycled. So those dreary sandals could go to a charity shop or into your doorstep black box.

Why No Green Bins?

Garden waste isn't collected yet from East Finchley except when there's a Block Cleanse – next one due in January or February, details from 8359 4600. Until then, what about our Christmas trees? The Recycling Centre in Summer's Lane will take them but some lucky Barnet residents just put their trees next to their green wheely bins. I tried to find out why we're not entitled to the Green Garden Waste Collection. I was told "It will be expanding by 10,000" but not when it will reach us. Letters to the Waste and Sustain Team, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, N11 1NP might speed things up, perhaps. And the good news is that from the same address you can buy composters at less than half their retail price, including tumblers and worm bins. Prices go up in April. Call 8359 4654 for information.

January's a time for resolutions. Mine will be to recycle a lot of old clobber via charity shops and paper collections and to dig into my garden some good compost for the worms to recycle for me.

Leave It Out

By Daphne Chamberlain

In mid-November a stretch of pavement along the northern part of the High Road disappeared. It wasn't seen again until well into December. A routine short walk over where it used to be (opposite Oak Lane) became unpleasant and potentially dangerous. This main road pavement had turned into one long, vegetating puddle.

It was a wet and windy autumn, and leaves were falling. What was Barnet's game plan to deal with this? According to the Council's Customer Care department, nine people, divided into three teams of three, were moving round the Borough to remove leaves.

They started around the middle of November, which I suggested might be a little late, and would continue "while they were needed". These were temporary workers, taken on for the leaf-fall season.

I was told that as Barnet is a big borough, with a lot of trees and green spaces, these people's work was never done. Yes, indeed – but was there no attempt to prioritise? It seems not, although anyone who complained about excessive leaf-fall should have their

problem sorted out "within five working days".

What happens to leaves when they are finally removed from underfoot? They go to Cambridge to be composted, along with all the binfuls of garden waste. The Summers Lane Recycling Centre told me they shift about 15 tons of garden waste a week at this time of year, and about 30 to 40 tons in the summer.

Wasted opportunity?

The composters get this waste for nothing, and can dispose of it how they like. Some authorities – Enfield, for example – take the compost back, and sell some to the public. "It's cheaper than buying it from garden centres," said the man at the recycling Centre. "Barnet have considered it, but they're not doing it yet."



Mayor Cohen officially switched on the East Finchley Festive Lights on 8th December, watched by Lawrie Chivers, and Councillor Coleman. Photo by Toni Morgan

Thank you for the Christmas Lights

According to the chaps who erect our festive lights, they think that our lights are the best in the borough. Well done, East Finchley!

It was a shame that we couldn't put the clown outside Martin School and the Christmas trees in front of East Finchley station. When the council put the new lampposts up they forgot to put connectors in these posts; they say they will rectify this for next year. I am amazed at the generosity of our community. One of our Canadian cousins gave me £180 towards the light fund. Many people have stopped me in the High Road with donations.

The most significant has to be the £20 donated by the 4th East Finchley Brownies. These young people are our future, it's good to see their public-spirited participation. Well done, Maureen Antoinette, the lass who helps with the Brownies.

Lastly our thanks to Deno of East Finchley Electrical, Christopher of Tony's Continental and all the businesses in the High Road who contributed to supplement the council's grant.

Acting for Families

A charity based in East Finchley is hoping to recruit more volunteers at a theatre event to be held in February.

Home-Start Barnet, which runs from The Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road, is staging an evening with Playback Theatre, a group which acts out stories or events told by members of the audience.

Aim of the evening is to attract volunteers to help the charity, which supports families in Barnet with at least one child under five and who are experiencing difficulties.

The evening starts on 4 February at 7 pm. For more information contact Home-Start on 020 8371 0674.

Renewal

By Helen Fletcher

The year draws slowly to its close,
Yet still the rosebuds come.
More slowly do the flowers unfold,
Responding to late sun.

Shaken by wind and lashed by rain,
Roots rocked loose in the soil,
Still shoots come and buds appear.
The strength in the bush no stars can find.

The bush is old, the shape is poor,
Pruned back through many a year.
Vigour has gone, the branch is weak,
And this lesson is clear.
Old stock cannot produce prize blooms.

Though as I view my little plot
From the garden door,
My spirits lift.
Scent, sight and sound
Bring joy to my heart once more.

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Grange Event is a Great Success ...despite the weather!

By John Dearing

The Old Barn Centre was the location for Barnet Homes' Grange Estate Consultation Event on the afternoon of Saturday 22 November, organised by Barnet Council Housing Operations. The centrepiece of the event was the Resident Survey, run by Wendy Bohan, processed by Market Research UK with independent advice by Solon.

Residents were asked their views on the whole environment of the estate, covering issues such as security, bins, lighting, cleaning, grounds maintenance, play areas, green spaces, community facilities and participation. Residents who want further information about participation can call the tenant participation officer on 8359 4860.

Questions and answers

The event was however, a lot more than just the consultation. Kevin Turnpenny, the area housing manager, was there to answer questions (with Tristan Greene, the caretaker). There was a presentation of the options for

the replacement and upgrading of kitchens and windows taking place on the estate, with examples of replacement windows and kitchen fittings available.

There were stands by Barnet Council (plans for the estate), Barnet College (courses available), East Finchley LA21 (planting for posterity - the tree nursery), East Finchley Credit Union, the Met. Police in the person of PC Paul Carter, East Finchley's Community Police Officer (home security advice and property marking), Barnet PCT (health checks). Councillors Colin Rogers and Alison Moore were there, debating the issues and answering questions.

Good time

For the children, Barnet Play Association organised a wishing tree, badge making, drawing and

face painting. Jugglers and Clowns involved and entertained a whole army of youngsters. Excellent refreshments were provided and, on the more serious side, there was a display and video on the topic of the proposed ALMO

(Arms Length Management Organisation).

Throughout the afternoon, despite almost continuous rain, there was a surprisingly high turnout, lots of people had a good time and the event was clearly a success for all involved.



Mark and Tom are spidermen cousins. Photo by John Dearing

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