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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Local Cafe staff are waiting to feed you! Photo by John Dearing

Shop revamp plan threatens café

Hundreds of customers have signed a petition to safeguard a much-loved High Road café that is coming under threat from a property redevelopment plan.

Almost 300 people have put their names to the protest to protect the Local Café on the corner of Lincoln Road, which is being told it may have to lose its current kitchen and toilet.

Run by Celal Ince and Niyazi Ozturk since 1991, the Local Café is a popular establishment that employs nine people and is a focal point for the community.

However, plans to redevelop the adjoining properties in Lincoln Parade mean the café may have to move its kitchen and toilet facilities in order to make the neighbouring property more viable. The managing agents Christo & Co have already been granted permission to change the use of that part of the café.

Mr Ince's sister-in-law Janice Ince said the renewal of the café's lease is in doubt while the discussions about the kitchen facilities are taking place.

She said: "We asked for the lease to be renewed five months ago but have had no reply to date. Maybe the landlords want to turn the kitchen and toilet area into office space but that will drastically affect the way the café is today and will mean we might have to pay to move our facilities."

Christo & Co, based in Kentish Town, have offered the café owners an alternative space at the back of their property and said they are prepared to assist with the costs of moving the kitchen.

Spokesman Mark Forrester said: "The landlord does not want the café to go. The planning application for change of use relates to a small part of the property at the back that the landlord would like to use as part of an adjacent property."

Mr Forrester said the Local Café's lease expired in January and an offer to renew was on

the table.

Of the neighbouring properties in Lincoln Parade, Thirlwell & Co, property agents, is occupied but had a To Let sign above it at the time of going to press; G Loizou and Co, accountants, is occupied; the gents' hairdressers is occupied; and there is one vacant property with a To Let sign attached.

Garden centre land for sale

By Diana Cormack

The site of Finchley Manor Garden Centre, which closed last year, is for sale at an asking price of £3,000,000.



The garden centre site is up for sale. Photo by Erini Rodis

Before the garden centre, off East End Road, opened in the mid-1990s, the land was owned by Westminster City Council, which used it as a nursery for growing their own plants.

It covers an area of 2.2 acres and has a mixture of permanent and semi-permanent structures including brick buildings and greenhouses.

Situated next to the

Marylebone Cemetery and crematorium, it is designated as Metropolitan Open Land, which is equivalent to Green Belt. It is surrounded by conservation land, which should mean that it is unlikely to get permission to be built on.

Reflecting this, it is being marketed as a commercial property but (subject to planning) for uses such as agriculture, horticulture, nature conservation, outdoor sport and recreation, all of which would preserve the open nature of the site.

Alternative uses could be for light industrial or business purposes, again subject to planning and with possible refurbishment of the existing buildings.

Do you have any ideas about how this site could be used? Let *THE ARCHER* know what you would like to see there. Our contact details are on page 2.

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If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address.

Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

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Tourist Info Service 0870 128 8080
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❖ **Careers advice**, Green Man, Community Centre 020 8883 4916
❖ **Toy library**, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

Action plan to tackle root causes of alcohol problems

The Barnet Safer Communities Partnership (BSCP) has set out an action plan aimed at halting the spread of alcohol misuse among the borough's young people and adults.

The council says "radical innovations" being proposed by the drugs and alcohol team include asking licensees to pay a voluntary levy, as already trialled by traders in Dublin, to help fund cleaning of the local area, policing and research into harm caused by alcohol.

There would also be a review and expansion of Barnet's alcohol-free zones and Pub Watch scheme, as well as an increased focus on issues such as teenage pregnancy and the effects alcohol abuse by parents can have on children within the household.

The BSCP compiled the strategy following figures estimating that 47,000 adults in Barnet drink at levels that risk harm to their health, and national statistics which have revealed that 40% of accident and emergency admissions to hospital are alcohol-related.

Work will go ahead in schools to warn young people of the sexual risk factors associated with excessive alcohol consumption, while parents will be targeted through advertising in pubs and clubs, and through information given out to young mothers and fathers and at antenatal groups.

Councillor Brian Salinger, the BSCP's chair, said: "Alcohol has been identified as one of the key contributing factors to anti-social behaviour and is a concern across the Safer Communities Partnership. Its effect on levels of crime and disorder and on accident and emergency admissions is clear to see.

"This action plan is aimed at the roots of the problem. Treatment, prevention and early intervention is the way forward to tackle the blight of alcohol abuse on our borough."

The draft action plan has been circulated to key members of the partnership and is due to go before the Safer Communities Partnership Board soon for approval.

Mail stolen from trolley

A group of men slashed the bags of a mail trolley while the postman was delivering the post in Twyford Avenue, N2 on 25 January.

They took around 300 items of mail and escaped by car. The postman managed to take the registration number of the 'getaway' car.

A small number of the stolen items were opened, their contents removed and the remainder dumped in a private car park around half a mile away in Oakridge Drive. One of our readers discovered the discarded mail and reported it to the police.

A Royal Mail spokesman told THE ARCHER that the recovered mail had been forwarded to customers, and asked that anyone with any information about the incident should contact the police.

High Road resurfacing

The High Road N2 is to be resurfaced from Bedford Road to East End Road, starting on 6 March. Work will be carried out between 8pm and 5am and is expected to take 4 nights.

An LBBC circular has been distributed around the affected area, and it warns of the need to park cars away from the High Road during the work.

Police warn car owners over key thefts

Barnet Police are issuing guidelines to drivers following a spate of thefts and burglaries where the targets have been cars parked outside homes. Since this January, there have been 383 burglaries reported to police, and 45 vehicles have been stolen.

Most modern cars have excellent security, forcing thieves to use the vehicle's keys to steal them. This often means breaking into the house or using rods or canes through letterboxes to remove the keys from just inside the front door. There are several things car owners can do to deter thieves. Firstly, if they have a garage, they should use it. The police point out that insurance companies often contact them to confirm details and, if a car is insured for overnight storage in a garage but is stolen from a street, this could reduce the value of the claim.

Secondly, if your car is especially valuable, consider getting a "Tracker" or other vehicle location device fitted, as insurance companies recommend. It may act as a deterrent or, if the vehicle is stolen, may enable it to be found before

much damage is done.

Finally, hide your car keys. Make sure they are kept in a safe place, not necessarily near the front door. To prevent the keys being hooked through the letter box there are letterbox cages and deflectors that can be bought and installed at minimal cost. Detective Chief Inspector Peter Edwards, crime manager for Barnet Police, said: "Car keys should not be kept near the front door or anywhere where they can be seen through ground floor doors and windows. It is essential that we get the message across to people." If you would like further specialist or personal advice on keeping your car and your home secure, contact PC Duncan Hillcoat, one of Barnet's Crime Prevention Officers, on 0208 733 5092 or visit www.met.police.uk/barnet

Planning Applications

East Finchley Underground Station

Refurbishment, repair and restoration internally and externally to listed building.

Corner of East End Road and access road to Christ's College School, N2

Installation of a 9.4m high telegraph pole with one integral antenna and associated equipment cabinet.

2 Lyttelton Road, N2

Demolition of existing petrol filling station and car showroom, and erection of a three-storey building with rooms in roof space (with associated dormer windows on front, side and rear elevations), comprising basement car parking and refuse storage, a car showroom on the ground floor, Class B1 office space on parts of first and second floors, and a total of

14 self-contained residential units on parts of first and second floors and third floor.

62-64 High Road, N2

Continued use as a coffee shop. Mixed use Class A1 / A3.

21 Lincoln Road, N2

Alteration to roof, including rear dormer window, and dormer window to rear wing to facilitate loft conversion.

67 Bedford Road, N2

Alterations to roof, including rear dormer window and roof extension to rear wing.

97 Abbots Gardens, N2

Part single, part two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension.

9 The Bishop's Avenue, N2

Demolition of existing house, and erection of a two-storey, detached dwelling house with rooms in the roof space and lower ground floor.



Residents blow their stack at 'botched' gas pipes

First-time buyer Melanie Bruck could hardly believe her eyes when workmen began replacing gas supply pipes around her property in East Finchley.



The new gas pipes attached to homes in Park Farm Close. Photo by Melanie Bruck

Where the pipes have hitherto been well hidden, the new pipes have been attached at all angles across the external walls of her maisonette in what she describes as a "terrible botch job". The work has affected many other homes in Park Farm Close too.

With the support of neighbours, Melanie is battling to get the work stopped before any more damage is done to the appearance of their homes.

Melanie, who has lived in her home for just over a year, said: "The contractors have made no effort to camouflage the pipes or even put them flush against the walls. We've suggested running them parallel with existing pipes and drains, or using slimmer piping, but they are not interested."

One morning, we came out to see a pipe laid in a zig-zag right up the side of a wall. We

insisted the contractors remove it immediately, which they did, but the rest of their work is not much better."

The best way possible?

The replacement piping project is being carried out on behalf of the North London Gas Alliance as part of the National Grid's eight-year programme for replacing old pipes elsewhere in East Finchley and across north London.

Barry Davis, who heads the team carrying out the work, met with representatives of the residents in Park Farm Close to discuss the pipe-laying.

He said: "New national regulations state that these new pipes have to be external so unfortunately there is no other way of doing it. We have the residents' safety at heart at all times and we are doing things in the best way possible."

Sat-Nav stolen from car

By John Dearing

An East Finchley man has had his satellite navigation device worth £400 stolen from his car parked outside his home. The victim had left his Renault Laguna securely parked in Huntingdon Road at 3pm on 1 February. At 7pm, he discovered that two of his car windows had been smashed and his Sony Sat-Nav device and holder had been stolen.

If anyone has any information about this incident please contact the Crime Desk on 020 8733 4544. Barnet Police are advising motorists where possible to take the system out of their cars when parked. Owners are also being recommended to make note of the serial number of the system and keep this in a safe place. Police are then able to return stolen systems to people if they find them during the course of arrests.

There is a website which enables owners to register serial numbers with them for free,

not just for Sat-Nav Systems, but also for mobile phones or anything with a serial number. It is www.immobilise.com and police have access to it to check to see if a system has been registered there when they find property.

The victim in Huntingdon Road asked *THE ARCHER* to warn people about leaving their Sat-Nav devices stuck to their car windscreen. He said: "Just don't do it! Although we knew we shouldn't have left something visible in the car, it is so easy to get used to something being there and simply forget."

Creighton Avenue landmark to be demolished

By Ann Bronkhorst

After months of campaigning, the battle over Strathlene House at 79 Creighton Avenue has ended. On 23 January, Haringey Planning Committee granted Festival Care Homes permission to demolish the large Edwardian house and replace it with a three-storey building to house a home for the elderly.

The proposed development had been criticised by Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, Friends of Coldfall Wood, Lynne Featherstone MP, Councillor Matt Davies and many local residents. The planning committee received 121 letters of objection but none in favour. A demonstration was held in Creighton Avenue earlier in January.

Concerns were expressed about the mass, scale and overall visual impression of the proposed building and its effect on the amenities of immediate neighbours. Many felt that the existing house should be refurbished, not demolished.

Traffic and parking problems were anticipated in an area already often gridlocked at certain times of the school day. There were concerns, too, about the impact on the water table, and on the Metropolitan Open Land and woodland nearby.

Last year, the developers began felling mature trees and were restrained only by swift local action (*THE ARCHER* February 2005). The new application contains no explanation or apology for that tree-felling so residents are anxious for the safety of the remaining trees.



Strathlene House makes a last stand. Photo by Erini Rodis

Grounds for permission

Objectors do not understand why this third planning application was successful. One positive reason given was the expectation of up to 30 new jobs. Planners commended the proposed building for its 'independence of form and design, offering a varied element to the street scene' despite its critics' scathing description: 'uninspired, institutional and boring'.

Social Services (and most protestors) say they welcome an affordable nursing, as opposed to residential, home, as there is

a shortage locally. The logic is puzzling, however, when the Planning Officer claims that 'the proximity to excellent passive recreation facilities such as Coldfall Woods' outweighs the considerable distance from public transport and shops.

The Committee have attached conditions to their permission, including several concerning water table and tree-protection; ecology and planting; and part-rendering of the façade. But as one objector says, "These are very small concessions compared with all the objections raised".

Get your green bin now

Barnet residents are being urged to join the green waste recycling scheme and, as an incentive, are being offered a free green wheeled bin for grass clippings, hedge cuttings and weeds by Barnet Council.

Kitchen waste such as vegetable peelings, tea bags and leftover food (but not bones) can also be recycled using the green bins. The organic waste is collected by the council and composted.

To request a green bin or for more information on Barnet's recycling services, telephone 020 8359 7400 or email recycling@barnet.gov.uk. More details can also be found at www.barnet.gov.uk/recycling.

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Photo by John Dearing

Stanley Field update

By Daphne Chamberlain

The battle to save Stanley Road Playing Field as a sports facility for the community goes on.

Paul Allen, from the National Playing Fields Association, will be meeting Barnet Council leader Brian Salinger and Barnet's Chief Valuer David Stephens on 10 March.

Mr Allen will be attempting to save the field for recreational use against the council's alternative option to build housing on the site. The NPFA's brief does not extend to discussing detailed plans or proposals.

Let's start using it again

Meanwhile, East Finchley Community Development Trust is aiming to make the field part of the community again. Watch out for details of litter-pick and field clearance days. After that, games sessions, kick-about,

even mini-marathons may be on the agenda.

The Trust hopes to incorporate the field into this year's East Finchley Festival. If you have any ideas for using the field, please contact *THE ARCHER*. Our contact details are on page 2.

April Forum

The next Finchley Forum will be at the Green Man Centre, Strawberry Vale, at 6.30pm on Wednesday 5 April. The Trust's Chair, Roger Chapman, will be spearheading the campaign to keep Stanley Field for recreation. He hopes to present lots of individual letters of support and wants to see as many supporters as possible there, taking advantage of the Forum being held on 'home ground'.

Stanley Field: make your voice heard now!

Campaign groups fighting to keep Stanley Road Playing Field for the community are sending out an urgent reminder.

The East Finchley Community Development Trust and associated groups say all those wanting to save it from building developers should act now.

Support at January's public meeting (*THE ARCHER*, February 2006) was tremendous, but it is vital that Barnet Council hears individual views.

The groups are asking all supporters to write a letter as soon as possible, giving the message that you support the East Finchley Community Development Trust's proposal

for the Stanley Road Playing Field to be developed for community use as restored playing fields and that the land should not be developed for non-recreational use.

Letters should be written to Barnet Council, but you can send or take them as soon as possible to The Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, N2 9BA, clearly marked "Stanley Field letter". From there, the Trust will record and deliver them to the council.

Open day for Barnet's twinning groups

Anyone wanting to know more about Barnet's twin towns overseas is invited to the Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon between 1pm and 7pm on Wednesday 8 March.

The Mayor, Councillor Andreas Tambourides, will be hosting a Twin Towns Associations' Open Day. He says: "Barnet is very proud of its municipal links. This is a wonderful opportunity for the residents of the borough to learn more about the associations."

There will be information stalls, photographic and craft exhibitions, film and slide shows, talks, Greek dancing and other special events. Entry will be free.

The twin town associations hope to recruit many new members to join in their social activities and overseas exchange visits. For further details call 020 8359 2010.

Holy Trinity

nursery places

Parents who would like to apply for a nursery place for their child at Holy Trinity School should do so by the middle of March.

Applications are being accepted now for children born between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2004.

Applications should be made at the school in Eagans Close by the closing date of 17 March.

Library users oppose cuts

By Sheila Armstrong

THE ARCHER reported last month on proposals by Barnet Council to cut funding at East Finchley Library, which would result in fewer staff, reduced hours and the service being downgraded to that of 'community library' status.

Residents were urged by the East Finchley Library Users Group to write to the council in protest before it finally decides on the cost-saving plans at a meeting in early March.

Do people in East Finchley want to preserve the local library service as it is now? *THE ARCHER* talked to library users to find out.

A jewel in the community

Regular user Jean Gilbert said: "A library is not just for books but information of all descriptions, a jewel in the community. Since moving here 49 years ago I have used all their facilities, enriching my life as a reader and author. Without the library I could not have written my books on music education. It would be a criminal act to impose the intended cuts."

Mike Holt, semi-retired teacher and East Finchley resident for 30 years, said he and his family, including children and grandchildren, use the library for pleasure and information. He also uses it to supplement resources in the Special Needs unit where he works. He added that the cut in evening opening hours would affect schoolchildren doing

homework.

He asked: "Why East Finchley? The borrowing figures are high. Why are the cuts not distributed across the borough?"

Pensioner Nicky Gear pointed out how difficult it would be for elderly visitors if the hours were reduced and they had to travel further to get the books they wanted. She saw this move by Barnet Council as the thin end of the wedge towards closing the listed library building. "We must fight these cuts. It could be too late if we don't," she said.

A local student, who did not wish to be named, said the cuts were causing him concern. "I use the library in the evenings for research on the internet. The government is committed to raising literacy standards, and Barnet are undermining that by the proposed cuts."

To protest against the library cuts, write to: Councillor Brian Salinger, Leader of Barnet Council, 32 The Ridgeway, N11 3LQ (email: cllr.b.salinger@barnet.gov.uk); or Councillor John Marshall, Member for Education, 66 Sandringham Gardens, N12 0PJ (email: cllr.j.marshall@barnet.gov.uk).

Martin schools - no changes yet

Changes at Martin Junior and Infant Schools, including amalgamation and rebuilding, are many years away and may never happen, according to a senior school governor.

Martin Schools, like all primary schools in the borough, are part of Barnet's Primary School Capital Investment Programme under which schools could be remodelled, rebuilt or amalgamated (*THE ARCHER*, January 2006).

Under current council proposals, the East Finchley schools might be remodelled in 2012-13.

But Dr Adam Fagan, chairman of Martin Infant School governing body, says the proposed timetable and the availability of budget to make the changes were by no means certain at this early stage.

Dr Fagan said: "In terms

of Barnet's plans for local schools, particularly those such as Martin Infant and Juniors that are not in the first developmental phase, much will depend on raising revenue through the Private Finance Initiative".

Barnet's schools plan is a response to national Government policy. Education Secretary Ruth Kelly and Chancellor Gordon Brown announced in March 2005 that the government proposed to rebuild or refurbish 8,900 primary schools across the country by 2010.

Dr Fagan said all separate infant and junior schools were encouraged at every possible juncture to debate amalgamation but there were no specific plans for Martin Schools.

He said: "Amalgamation only really occurs when governing bodies agree that it is in the best interests of both schools to do so. There is absolutely no talk of amalgamation at present."

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An open and shut case

By Diana Cormack

On 7 February passengers using The Causeway end exit of East Finchley tube station found their way barred. The ticket gates had been closed off and alongside a warning sign was a notice explaining the reason for the closure.

Station staff told *THE ARCHER* that it had been written because of adverse comments they had been receiving from members of the public about the closure.

The notice read: "A new working roster implemented on 5 February has resulted in the number of station staff at East Finchley being reduced by two. It is now no longer possible to man this gateline. Therefore these gates will remain out of service. We apologise for the inconvenience this will cause. Station supervisor."

Staff seemed certain that this situation would continue, meaning that tube travellers would have to walk down to the exit at the High Road end, then double back along the passage to reach The Causeway.

People were not pleased about this particularly because, as one *ARCHER* reader commented, "It was only once in a blue moon that these gates were

manned anyway!"

Back to normal?

On 10 February, however, the gates were in operation again. The situation could have arisen because London Underground use "roaming" staff. They are not based at a single station but are allocated to provide cover as and where necessary. East Finchley station had been using two of these workers.

A spokesperson for London Underground said: "The operation of this entry is entirely unrelated to staffing issues. The number of staff at East Finchley station has remained exactly the same as before the change in rosters on February 5.

"With the introduction of new rosters there will be no reduction in staffing levels across the tube network. Station staffing levels will remain as they currently are and no station staff will be made redundant."

Tube and water work hampers parking

By Diana Cormack

Repair work on part of the Northern Line embankment was scheduled to begin on 13 February and estimated to last 12-16 weeks. A stretch running alongside Cherry Tree Wood, from the High Road to where the tube line goes underground, will be subject to reinforcement. Although safe at present, the embankment is reported to be crumbling slowly, so the work is essential. It will be carried out from 8am-6pm on weekdays, and on Saturday mornings.

Temporary entry for deliveries and access will be made from the High Road into a compound at the end of Brompton Grove (the unadopted road running beside the park to its Summerlee Avenue entrance).

Relocation of the bus stop and pedestrian thoroughfare has been approved but drivers will not be able to park at the High Road end of Brompton Grove, an area favoured by commuters as well as by users of Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute.

Another part of Brompton Grove has been designated a no parking area due to work being carried out by Three Valleys Water company. Because of low

water pressure, a booster is to be installed inside the park next to the electricity sub-station. At the time of writing this work had not been completed.

In addition, the whole of Ingram Road, which runs into Brompton Grove, will be subject to water works also due to start on 13 February. Ingram Road parking bays will all be suspended until the work, estimated to take two weeks, is completed.

For further details phone London Underground Customer Service on 0845 330 9880 or George Grey Cheape at Dalcour Maclaren on 01869 355 740.



Photo by Paul Dearing

Red Lion roars no more

Our photograph captures another landmark East Finchley building falling prey to the unstoppable onslaught of redevelopment.

The Red Lion public house once stood proudly on the corner of Elmfield Road and Red Lion Hill but is now in the final stages of demolition. The pub has been closed and boarded up for more than 18 months. Any hopes that its frontage could be preserved

were dashed when the demolishers moved in at the beginning of February.

Planning records show that an early plan to build a town

house on the site has been replaced by an application for flats, which at the time of going to press was still being considered.

Shorter hours for station ticket office

By Paul Chapman

The opening hours of the ticket office at East Finchley tube station have been cut. London Transport say there is a falling demand to buy tickets over the counter as more travellers are using new technology, such as the pre-pay Oyster Card and automated ticket machines.

Since 5 February, the ticket office has opened a little later in the mornings: 6.30am on weekdays, 7.30am on Saturdays and 8.30am on Sundays. It is closing earlier in the evenings: at 8.30pm on weekdays, 9.30pm on Saturdays, and 9pm on Sundays.

London Transport says it will continue to seek economies but has no plans to close the ticket office.

A spokesman said: "We will bring more staff out from ticket offices so there is a visible presence on the platforms to help passengers. We are able to do this because of the success of Oyster card, which means that one million fewer paper tickets are sold every week."

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He's the tops! Asghar Shaikh can do dry...Photo by Diana Cormack

Tops score

By Diana Cormack

Over 40 years ago, one of the first dry cleaners in East Finchley opened its doors at 3 Fortis Green. It was one of four started in the mid-1960s by the then proprietor at Coral Travel Agents on the High Road.

About 20 years later the business was put up for sale and an advert in a trade magazine caught the eye of 24-year-old Asghar Shaikh, of Forest Gate. He had been working in Kensington learning the trade for seven years and thought that this might be a good career move.

Obviously it was. For, having opened on 22 July 1985, Asghar is still there running Tops Dry Cleaners and he still travels to work from the East End to East Finchley.

Asghar told *THE ARCHER*, "I've been here half my life and I've never missed a day

in more than 20 years."

Amongst his loyal band of customers, many of whom have been with him all this time, there are some well known people including television stars Michelle Collins and Steve McFadden.

In appreciation of his customers and to celebrate over 20 years in business Asghar is making a one-off special reduction to readers of *THE ARCHER*. If you mention this article to him when you take your dry cleaning or repair work into Tops, you will get 20% off your bill.

Calling all walkers

There is still time to register to take part in this year's Big Fun Walk in aid of the North London Hospice.

The annual event, organised by the hospice's North West Support Group, is in its 11th year and takes place on Sunday 19 March, starting as always from East Finchley tube station.

Walkers will follow a seven-and-a-half mile route through Cherry Tree Wood, Highgate Wood, Parliament Hill, Belsize Park, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, Green Park and St James's Park, finishing at Storey's Gate, close to Westminster Abbey.

New walkers of all ages are welcome to join the ranks of fundraisers who complete the walk every year to enjoy the camaraderie and views along the way, as well as the fabulous refreshment stops at Belsize Park and Regent's Park.

Last year's 10th anniversary Big Fun Walk raised more than £130,000 for the work of the North London Hospice, a multi-

faith service for the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey that makes no charge to patients or their families.

The hospice in Woodside Avenue, N12, will cost £4.8 million to run this year but only a quarter of that sum will come from the NHS. The rest has to be found from fund-raising and voluntary donations.

It continues to expand its services in the three boroughs and now manages a co-ordinated palliative care service with Macmillan nurses from a separate base in Enfield.

To register for the walk and to receive a sponsorship form, go to www.bigfunwalk.co.uk, telephone the Big Fun Walk line on 020 8202 5586 or write to Vivienne Bentley, 11 Westchester Drive, London NW4 1RD. Registration must be completed by 10 March.

Walkers, did you know...?

The first charity walk in this country took place on Boxing Day 1959. It was in aid of the World Refugee Fund. Twenty-one walkers each paid a shilling (5p) and raised £20 in sponsorship. The furthest distance walked was 50 miles.

The first person to walk on the moon was American astronaut Neil Armstrong. This was on 21 July 1969.

It has been estimated that it would take a year to walk round the equator (25,000 miles) if you went at a steady speed of 3 mph non-stop day and night.

Left-handed people are generally left-footed as well and they tend to put their left foot forward first when they walk.

The barriers are back!

After a long month of disruption to traffic using the High Road in November and December, more road works came to town in January and February.

A long stretch of the High Road was dug up by BT, another stretch by Transco and Barnet Council installed new pavements along the main stretch of shopfronts.

The new pavements have certainly enhanced the High Road but some traders questioned whether the upheaval could not have been better coordinated to minimise disruption to their businesses.

A spokesman for Barnet Council said this was not possible because some work was to pavements, the rest was to roads, and the work did not always affect the same stretches of the High Road.

The new pavements are part of a programme to replace surfaces with 'long-life' pavements in areas of high footfall, such as the High Road. The longer-lasting paving stones will need to be replaced less frequently.



Photo by Diana Cormack

What's the word on the streets?

By John Lawrence

We all use them and we all probably have an opinion. What do you think of the state of our streets in East Finchley?

An organisation that campaigns for safer streets and to get more of us walking wants to know if we think our roads are safe, well-lit and generally easy to use.

Living Streets works on practical projects and lobbies local authorities to deal with specific issues such as litter, pavement maintenance and lighting.

Street audit

Local representative Dominic Church, of Fortis Green, is considering organising a community street audit for East Finchley later in the spring.

He says: "Walking is a good way to get some light exercise, but Living Streets believe that the streetscape should be appealing and easily accessible for all, including those with impaired sight or mobility.

"A safe and inviting public realm supports the amenities and facilities that are so important for the local community. East Finchley has a lot to offer,

and improving the streetscape is the best way to make sure it stays that way.

"Priority is given to traffic planning and the desire to keep traffic moving, leading to a hostile and discouraging environment for everybody else. Pavements are often too narrow, uneven, dirty and badly lit. Pedestrian crossings are put in the wrong place and force us into small sheep pens to make way for passing traffic."

The result of poor street planning, according to Living Streets, is that as a nation we are walking less than ever before. Compared to 20 years ago we each make 100 fewer walking trips per year.

If you have something to say about East Finchley's streets or would like to take part in the street audit, you can contact Dominic on 020 8815 0082 or by email at dchurch@cabe.org.uk

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Seen and heard

In Leslie Road, the driver of a refuse collection vehicle was seen eating a Mars bar while seated in his cab. As his colleagues toiled to fill the back of the truck with the contents of wheelie bins, he finished his snack and promptly threw the wrapper out of the window onto the ground. So much for keeping our streets litter-free!



Blood service seeks donors

The terrorist attack on the London Underground last July tested the emergency plans of the National Blood Service (NBS) to the full. Not only was there a sudden urgent demand for blood but, with traffic at a standstill, special measures had to be taken to transport supplies to the nine hospitals caring for the bomb victims.

Staff at the West End donor centre had to walk to work, where they were kept on their feet by the many donors who came through the doors that day. Although stocks were good, donors were encouraged to keep future appointments in order to replenish and replace the blood used following the attack.

On an average Thursday, the NBS helpline receives up to 3,500 calls. On 7 July the NBS received its highest ever call-rate of over 10,000.

In addition to the needs of the bomb casualties, normal

services to all other hospital patients had to be maintained. It was through the fantastic support of donors that the National Blood Service was able to meet the demands placed on it at that terrible time.

If you would like to give blood, a mobile unit of the NBS will be parked outside East Finchley tube station on Friday 24 March. It will be open from 1.15pm to 4pm and from 5.15pm to 7.30pm. Appointments are not necessary, but if you wish to make one, please ring 04587 711 711.



Helping hands: Barnet Carers Centre Mental Health Carers Support and Outreach Officer, Paulina Filippou, right, provides support to carer Pamela Wells, left, at the Centre.

Caring for the carers

By Paulina Filippou

Do you provide free help and support to a friend, relative or neighbour who could not manage otherwise because they are ill, have deteriorating health, or live with a disability or addiction?

If so, did you know that you now have rights and entitlement backed by legislation and that a local organisation can give you support?

Since 1996, Barnet Carers Centre, based in Ballards Lane, North Finchley, has been providing an increasing range of services to meet the needs of many people who are often isolated, socially excluded, suffering financial hardship and experiencing health difficulties themselves.

Hidden carers

Three in five people will, at some time, be carers. Yet many people do not consider themselves as "carers" and so do not

access services that are available to them. The Centre's Primary Care Development Officer works with GPs, surgeries and other health professionals to identify 'hidden' carers and offer them support. Referrals can be taken directly from carers themselves and also from professionals in statutory and voluntary organisations.

Barnet Carers Centre helps each of the 3,000 carers currently on its database by providing advice and information through drop-in sessions and a telephone helpline, and emotional support through one-to-one counselling and carer support groups.

It offers welfare benefits sur-

geries to check carers' benefit entitlements, relaxation days and stressbuster evenings, training and information sessions, respite breaks and day trips, other social groups and a Carers' Nurse, who carries out home visits.

The Centre also offers specialist services aimed at mental health carers, multicultural carers, older carers and carers of older people, learning disabilities carers as well as young carers and siblings.

For more information, contact the Carer Support Team at Barnet Carers Centre on 020 8343 9698 or email admin@barnetcarers.org.



Photo by John Dearing

No picnic for this teddy bear

By John Dearing

"If you go down to The Grange today, you're sure of a big surprise,

If you go down to East View House, you'd better go in disguise,
For in the tree, there's lurking a bear;

We'd love to know just how he got there,

But now he's there, he'll probably stay forever!"

This hapless teddy has been in the tree outside East View House on The Grange estate for some weeks. Has a rescue been attempted? Is anyone even missing him? Get in touch if you can shed any light on his predicament. Our contact details are on page 2.

Waste not, want not

By Stella Parkinson

Residents in Barnet are being urged to follow water-saving tips to help stave off a water shortage that is threatening the south east region.

Thames Water and the Met Office say we started the year with the driest January in 10 years following a 15-month period where rainfall was well below average.

A water shortage is considered to be a real threat but it can be averted if all consumers cut down on the amount of water they waste each day. Here are the tips to remember:

- Wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl rather than under a running tap and use leftover water for house plants.

- Use the minimum amount of water required when you boil

water in saucepans and kettles; that way, you'll save energy as well as water.

- Keep a bottle or jug of water in the fridge instead of running taps until the water runs cold.

- Turn the tap off while you brush your teeth, shave or wash your hands, as this can waste up to five litres of water per minute.

- A five-minute shower uses about a third of the water of a bath. But remember that power showers can use more water than a bath in less than five minutes.

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Budding astronauts at Martin School. Photo by Helen Drake

Mad Science at Martin School

By Helen Drake

Martin Junior School pupils watched in awe as a rocket flew over the roof of their school and parachuted into the Infant School playground. This wasn't some top-secret military manoeuvre gone wrong but an experiment in rocket propulsion conducted by the after-school science club, run by the organisation Mad Science.

The eight-week course started on 19 January at Martin School. It is called "The Academy of Future Space Explorers", and is a joint collaboration between Mad Science and space agency NASA.

Louis Masseron, in Year 6, was hugely enthusiastic. He said: "It's really brilliant. We've been learning about lasers and have seen lasers in action and have got to handle them. We've learnt about living in space and how fast it takes to leave the earth's atmosphere."

With other topics included in the course such as making rainbows, investigating the life cycle of stars, creating a lunar eclipse and probing

the mysteries of meteors, the children certainly have had plenty to spark their imaginations.

Maggie Driscoll, headteacher of Martin Junior School, said of her pupils: "They love it. It's a brilliant experience for the children, extending their knowledge and adding to their enthusiasm for science."

Mad Science is a Canadian company set up by two brothers, Ariel and Ron Skilien, who discovered that children like "fun, cool science". For further information see the website www.madscience.org. The nearest Mad Science office is in west London and can be contacted on 0845 330 1881.

YOUNG ARCHER

The power of Pericles

Following a series of workshops on Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Year 6 in Martin Junior saw a performance of the play at their school by actors from the National Theatre. As well as learning a tremendous amount about drama and Shakespeare, the children were also required to write a review of the production. Here is a really good example of one, written by Ellen Ellis:

This morning I went with my year and year five to see a shortened production of *Pericles* in the school hall. The play that had originally been written by William Shakespeare had been shortened and directed by Carl Heap.

To help the children to understand it the script had had some words changed. Sometimes, luckily more fre-

quently, it worked but unfortunately sometimes it didn't. One of those words was "flapjack" which broke up the script somehow, but it soon went back into the rhythm.

The set worked extremely well with the acting. One of my favourites was the front of the stage. This could be moved to suit the scene e.g. front of a boat.

I adored the costumes because although they were practical, they also worked brilliantly. They contrasted greatly between the flamboyant colours

of the rich, and the dull clothes of the poor fishermen. I particularly liked Thaisa's costume at the beginning.

The actors were absolutely fantastic. They made you believe that they were who their character was and in changes of character it was quick and easy to understand. I thought that they also sang well.

In short, I would definitely recommend this for any person, young or old. The costumes were wonderful, the set clever and the acting was fantastically brilliant. A definite five stars.

Lots on offer at Holy Trinity auction

A meal cooked in your own home by a gourmet chef is one of the lots on offer at a fundraising auction at Holy Trinity School.

Other goodies available through the event on Friday 24 March include a cricket coaching session at the Middlesex CCC in East End Road, tickets for a stadium tour at White Hart Lane and a host of tickets for family days out.

The auction will be combined with a fun quiz, all designed to raise funds for the school while being a great evening's entertainment. Tickets will be available from the school office in Eagan's Close.

Have a go heroes

By Helen Drake

Encouraging children to "have a go" was one of the key messages taken away by attendees at the Literacy Evening held at Martin Infant School on 25 January.

The audience was taken through all the stages of literacy - speaking and listening, reading and writing - by teacher Wendy Diamant, and were given information on how to help their children at home.

Displays set up in the Infant Hall meant parents and carers had a chance to make letters with their fingers in sand and salt, try out educational games, count out money in the role play area and see examples of school work.

The Literacy Evening, organised by headteacher Kevin Anscumb, was the first of a series of curriculum-based events aimed at keeping parents abreast of current teaching methods.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Edited by Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

The bid for funding to increase the range of activities currently on offer has been successful. These will be available not only to Holy Trinity children and their families but also to members of the wider community. For instance, use of the ICT facilities after school and the planned resource centre for outdoor adventurous activities will eventually be open to children from other schools.

Reception and nursery children learned a great deal on their enjoyable visit to the RAF Museum, Hendon.

THE ARCHER editor John Lawrence has been visiting Year 6 to tell them about writing and editing news stories.

Recent fund raising events included a "Soles for Souls" day, where children brought money in return for being allowed to wear trainers to school, raising £141 for the RNLI Lifeboat Appeal.

Junior pupils raised money for Children in Need with a playground charity wheelchair push.

Relaxing therapies and pampering treatments were on offer at the HTSA's Indulgence Evening.

Money will be allocated to Holy Trinity if their School Travel Plan, aimed at improving travel safety to and from school, is approved.

Joint ventures to build on the links between Holy Trinity and Martin Schools are being planned.

Martin Schools

Thirty juniors have taken part in the World Class Maths and Problem Solving Tests, in which many gained merit or distinction. Out of these excellent results one girl was so skilled that she also took part in the 11-14 Test. Competing against children up to four years older, Susannah Fleiss gained a distinction and has now taken the Primary Maths Challenge, where 10,000 British primary children compete. She is one of only 57 to qualify for the final.

Inspired by Hogwarts, the junior school has recently introduced a house system with the names Earth, Fire, Water and Air, suggested by the school's mealtime supervisors. The children's eagerness to gain house points has been reflected in all areas of their school life including studying hard, showing good manners and being helpful and friendly.

Among the ideas submitted by the whole school community for The School Travel Plan is to encourage children to walk and lead a healthier lifestyle by wearing pedometers to check if they have walked 10,000 steps a day.

A surprise performance in assembly by a clown from Zippo's Circus delighted the juniors. The visit was organised as a thank you from the travelling community.

A brilliant performance of Shakespeare's "Pericles" by actors from the National Theatre was much appreciated by Years 5 and 6. This was the culmination of weeks of workshops led by an actor involving Year 6, some of whom helped with the professional production. Class 6G are preparing to perform "Pericles" next term.

Martin Infant School is taking part in a programme about inclusion made for the Teachers' TV channel. It will show a child from Tree House, the centre for autistic children on Woodside Avenue, during the time he spends at Martin School. Head teacher Kevin Anscumb will speak about the benefits this brings, such as developing the children's social and personal skills, breaking down barriers and preparing them for later life, as well as extending the staff's special needs skills.

The Infant School Council has been actively involved with the juniors in preparing a School Travel Plan. One of their suggestions is a school walking bus.

Don't forget the Open Afternoon on Tuesday 7 March.

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

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

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Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)

Visitors always welcome



Embrace a tree

By David Attfield

If you were in Cherry Tree Wood on the morning of Sunday 22 January, you would have seen the curious spectacle of groups of children and adults seemingly throwing their arms around the trunks of trees.

What you were witnessing was a "TREESure hunt", an event organised by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood to find the oldest tree in the wood.

Led by Ana Sanchez-Martin, the group was looping pieces of string and measuring tape around the trunks of trees to measure their age.

At the same time, a smaller but harder group of volunteers was assisting park keeper Chris

Ward in clearing the debris - mainly dumped garden waste - that has accumulated over the years along the Brompton Grove perimeter fence.

The events were attended by an enthusiastic crowd spanning a wide age range, some of whom took advantage of the newly opened Cherry Tree Wood café for hot drinks and snacks.

Following the success of these activities, the Friends of

Cherry Tree Wood are hoping to hold further events later in the year. If you would like information about the Friends, you can contact them by email at info@cherrytreewood.co.uk or by writing to 88 Summerlee Avenue, London N2 9QH.

And if you are wondering which is the oldest tree in the wood, it's the oak tree just off the path towards the café: estimated age 280 years.



Just getting the measure of it. Photo courtesy of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

Schooled in the art of pampering

By Caroline Hunt

Holy Trinity School underwent an amazing transformation on 9 February for its first Indulgence Evening.

After the noise of busy school activity had died away, the school was transformed for the evening, with soft music, subtle lighting, and air scented by rose petals, providing the perfect ambience for relaxation.

Around 60 people came along to enjoy the range of pampering treatments that were on offer. Indian head massage and reflexology, eyebrow shaping and eyelash tinting, manicures and nail treatments, and the exotically named Hopi Ear Candles (a natural alternative to ear syringing) were provided by a team of local therapists, all of whom were kept busy by a steady stream of clients. In between treatments there was ample opportunity to relax

with herbal tea or fruit juice, or browse the stalls selling beautifully designed greetings cards and handmade jewellery.

Holy Trinity parents Sarah Tapp and Lucy Ormerod, a qualified aromatherapist, masterminded the evening. Sarah was delighted at the response and said: "It was good to see so many friends, as well as people from outside the school, chilling together in a relaxed atmosphere. It was also great to raise a bit of money for the school, and to see that all those sleepless nights paid off!"

The aim now is to make the Indulgence Evening a regular part of the Holy Trinity School calendar, involving even more therapists and a wider range of treatments.

Parking tariff reduced

Barnet Council has reduced its all-day parking tariff in the borough's car parks following complaints and comments from residents. The charge for parking in an off-street car park for more than 90 minutes has fallen by 25 per cent from £4 to £3.

The reduction, which was agreed by the Cabinet Resources Committee last November, took effect this month and applies to the borough's 12 medium and long-stay car parks.

Fees for stays of less than 90 minutes will remain the same and thus continue to be consistent with on-street tariffs.

Occupation rates at some off-street parking facilities have been falling and a contributory factor is thought to be the level of the long-stay charge. It is hoped that the new £3 all-day rate will encourage motorists to make greater use of the council car parks.

The two main off-street car parks in East Finchley are not council-owned. In Viceroy Close, behind Budgens supermarket, charges are £1 an hour. In the tube station car park, all-day bays are available for £2.50.



Olivia Chemutai Koimur, a star of the future. Photo by Helen Drake

A star in the making

By Helen Drake

Martin Junior School pupil Olivia Chemutai Koimur, aged 11, was featured on the front page of the Muswell Hill Journal in February when she became the first girl to win the Charlotte Coleman Scholarship at the North London Performing Arts Centre

Competing against 36 other hopeful children, Olivia explained that she had only had one rehearsal on the stage before the final performance, and that she felt "excited but nervous" when she stepped out in front of the large audience.

She knew her performance of "Roxy" from the musical *Chicago* must have been quite good as the audience gave a "loud cheer" when she had finished, but she didn't know she had won the scholarship until two weeks later when the letter arrived. Olivia said she felt "proud and relieved" to have won. She particularly wanted to thank her whole family for supporting her and for taking her to and from her after-school classes.

Olivia enjoys dancing, acting, and singing as well as

playing the guitar and drums and attends classes virtually every day at the North London Performing Arts Centre in St James' Lane, Muswell Hill. Winning the scholarship means that Olivia will have the fees for all her classes paid for a year.

Clearly a popular girl, Olivia was recently voted Captain of Fire, part of a new "house" system at Martin Junior School designed to encourage good behaviour.

Headteacher Maggie Driscoll said: "We are really proud of Olivia. Even as an infant she showed great talent in shows and assemblies. This has continued throughout her years at Martin Juniors. She has worked hard and been committed and this has really paid off. I'm sure she'll be a star in the future".

Bums on (new) seats

By Lucy Chamberlin

The Phoenix Cinema is nearing the £60,000 fundraising target that will enable it to install new seating.

At the time *The Archer* was going to press, the last few thousand pounds were due to be collected and work on the replacement seating was scheduled to begin.

Manager Paul Homer said the fundraising appeal had been a successful one, with popular, thought-provoking films shown during January and February boosting takings further.

Many of the previous furnishings in the High Road cinema had become threadbare, so it is hoped this latest investment will upgrade our local favourite, and make an enjoyable experience even more comfortable.

Although on half capacity for much of March while the work is carried out, the cinema will remain open throughout.

EFCDT
East Finchley Community Development Trust

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Our Volunteer Programme based at the Green Man Community Centre can help place you in a position that best suits you.

As well as being very fulfilling, volunteering can help you learn new skills, enhance your job prospects and meet new people.

We have a number of East Finchley based voluntary organisations who would really like to hear from you.

For more information please call Margaret for a friendly chat on 020 8883 4916.



Regular Events

SPORT & FITNESS

- ❖ **Finchley & Hornsey Ramblers Group** Call Vivien 8883 8190
- ❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** Wednesdays Christ Church N12. Ring Bridie 8883 5269
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 1178.
- ❖ **NIA workshops** (dancercise) Saturdays 11am-12pm at La Fitness, East End Road. Call Dorit on 8248 3919
- ❖ **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029
- ❖ **Pilates class** Wednesdays, 2.15-3.15pm at Youth Theatre, N2. Ring Penny Hill 8444 2882.
- ❖ **Tae Kwon Do** at The Green Man Thursdays 7-9pm 07949 612 706
- ❖ **Tai Chi** at the Green Man on Mondays 1.30-3pm. An "ageing well" class for older people.
- ❖ **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8440 6953.
- ❖ **Wood Walk**, meet 10am at Cherry Tree Wood cafe on 1st & 2nd Mon of month for 1 hr walk, Call 8883 8750.
- ❖ **Yoga, breathing & relaxation.** Weekly drop-in classes - N2, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 8444 7783.
- ❖ **Yoga classes** Tuesdays 8-9:30pm at EF Methodist Church. Experienced teacher. Call Rosalind 8444 8134.

DANCE, DRAMA, ART & MUSIC

- ❖ **Art Classes.** For info call Henry on 020 8888 5133.
- ❖ **Ballroom dancing classes**, beginners and improvers. Phone 01707 642 378
- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call 8883 7110.
- ❖ **East Finchley Writing Workshops.** Creative writing, poetry and prose Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club** - 6 & 20 Mar at 8pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3. New members welcome
- ❖ **Line dancing** Tuesdays from 8.30pm at The Constitutional Club. Call Maureen 8440 8530.
- ❖ **Memory Lane Singing Club** - a communal singing club. Call Idit Gold 8458 4508.
- ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 8346 8736
- ❖ **Pottery Class** at The Green Man, Call Celia Holmes 8349 9315
- ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church. Call 8883 4070 for info.
- ❖ **Street Dance** every Tuesday at Old Barn for children of various ages Contact Lorna 07976 203669.
- ❖ **SwampRock** events: Call Carole 8810 7454 or Neil 01727 830280 www.swamprock.org.uk
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** of North London, Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children beginning at Old Barn every Monday, Contact Sharon 8349 4613

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **East Finchley National Childbirth Trust**, Contact Sophie on 8444 1890
- ❖ **East Finchley Writers** meet weekly at The Old White Lion. Call Lilian 8444 1793
- ❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
- ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Mouldon on 8361 1696.
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- ❖ **Muswell Hill and Highgate Pensioners' Action Group** Call Bob Cottingham on 8444 7635.
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390
- ❖ **Old Barn pre-school club**, contact 8349 4613/1961
- ❖ **Parent & Toddler Group**, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276
- ❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professionals. Call Eric 8340 0822.
- ❖ **Stepping Stones**, interactive play session for under 3's. Karen 07957 278860.



Helene Davidian with a sample of her own glasswork.

Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

Think again, Brian

By Daphne Chamberlain

Three years ago, outspoken art critic Brian Sewell was very dismissive about the quality of stained glass to be found in East Finchley. While presenting a Channel Five TV series called *The Naked Pilgrim*, he referred to some stained glass windows in a church as "late Victorian, as bad as any in Tooting or East Finchley".

Just why is anyone's guess, as we couldn't contact Mr Sewell to get an explanation, but *ARCHER* deliverer Helene Davidian may soon be putting the record straight.

Helene, a member of the British Society of Master Glass Painters, lectured on stained glass at Barnet College for 17 years. In spare moments she still creates pieces herself, just doing what catches her creative fancy, usually along the lines of decorative boxes or mirrors. Her ambition, however, is to make the first comprehensive survey of stained glass in North London, although time is her enemy.

Her grandmother's house in Highgate had "beautiful stained glass in the front door, windows and internal doors. When I took friends to see the outside recently, none of it was left." Then there is the rose window in Christ Church, North Finchley, designed by John Constable's brother, now broken by stone-throwing vandals.

In East Finchley, her favourite examples are in the chapel of the Marylebone Cemetery, East End Road, and a Mark Angus design in St Mary's Catholic Church on the High Road.

Tracking down stained glass

Don't dismiss a humble panel in your front door. Helene is interested in it all, and would like to know, if possible, whether the glass came with the house or was specially designed or individually commissioned. Once she has located examples, she can trace and record builders and architects. She will either visit homes personally and take photographs, or work from photos and descriptions sent to her.

Helene plans to lodge the results of her research with The Finchley Society, for whom she is giving a talk on 27 April. She can be contacted on 020 8444 3669.

From B minus to A plus

By Marian Bunzl

A typing slip in *THE ARCHER*'s What's On listing for 14 January indicated that we in the North London Chorus were to perform an unheard-of work, the Bach Mass in B Minus.

Actually, B minus was too high a mark for our performance during the rehearsal period for the concert. The B minor is beautiful, but it is a long and complex work. Our conductor was driven to equal fits of fury and despair as each choir section in turn lost its way, lost pitch and completely fell apart. He had sleepless nights, lost weight and took up smoking again. The final rehearsal was a complete disaster and we had a collective nervous breakdown in the pub.

On the night, however, St. James's Church, Muswell Hill,

was lit up and full to the last pew. We had wonderful soloists from the world of opera and equally wonderful orchestral players with period instruments. Our conductor came on in his black satin jacket, white shirt and orange socks, lifted his baton and, like the flick of a light switch, we were there!

As a mere alto, I am not qualified to give a formal musical critique. All I can say is that it was a cracking performance, our conductor heaved a sigh of relief and the audience gave us a standing ovation.

Animal ambulance

Animal lovers will not want to miss a talk by Barry Smitherman about the history and work of the wildlife rescue and ambulance service which rehabilitates sick and injured wild animals and birds and releases them back into the wild.

The talk will be given to the Finchley Society in Avenue House, East End Road, N3, on Thursday 30 March at 8pm. Non-members are welcome.

Barry and June Smitherman founded the rescue service in Trent Park in 1985 and in 2001

took over Enfield Council's Pets' Corner there. Currently they are raising funds to build an animal hospital to treat the many casualties they receive daily. Their work earned each of them an MBE in the 2005 Honours List.

Easter fun at St Mary's Parent and Toddler group

By Helen Drake

St Mary's Parent and Toddler group warmly invite parents and carers to bring their pre-school children to an Easter Party on Friday 7 April at 10am.

Children can dress up, and search for the treasure left by the Easter bunnies. Mask making and face painting will also be on offer. Tickets for the Easter Party cost £2 per child; buy early to avoid disappointment.

Michele McMillan, Lorraine Elliott and Kris Curran are the new co-ordinators of the group, which runs on a drop-in basis at St Mary's Church Hall on the High Road, East Finchley, Tuesday and Friday mornings, 9.30am-11.30am during school term times. There is also an outdoor space for when the weather gets warmer. Parents and carers who come to the group are asked to contribute £1.50 for the first

child and 50p for any other children. The price includes unlimited tea and coffee, with fruit or biscuits mid-morning for the children, and toast at 20p for two slices.

St Mary's Mother and Toddler group will close for the Easter holidays after the party on 7 April and will re-open on Tuesday 25 April. For further information please contact Michele on 07968 354 283 or e-mail Michele_angels@hotmail.com.

Organisers are also trying to find out how many years the St Mary's Parent and Toddler group has been running. Please contact them if you have any information.

What's On...

E-mail your listings to the-archer@lineone.net

Tuesday 7 March

Open Afternoon at Martin Schools, 228 High Road, from 2pm. Come and visit the infant and junior schools, meet some of the staff and see how the schools work. All parents welcome, especially new parents and prospective parents.

Tuesday 14 March

Pre-course taster in basic computer skills from 5pm-6pm at Holy Trinity School, Eagans Close. Are you interested in learning about word processing and using the internet? For details, call the school on 020 8883 1824.

Friday 10 March

Marylebone Birdwatching Society has a talk entitled In the Shadow of the Moon Mountain. David Cottridge talks about birds of the Negev desert in Israel, 7.15pm Methodist Hall, Agincourt/Lisburne Road, NW3. Non-members welcome. £4 charge. (£2 members).

Saturday 18 March

Finchley Choral Society performs Handel's Messiah, 7.45pm, St Jude-on-the-Hill Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11.

Thursday 30 March

The Finchley Society presents The Work of the Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service (Enfield), a talk by Barry Smitherman, 8pm, Avenue House, East End Road, N3. Non-members are very welcome.

Saturday 8 April

The North London Chorus presents a concert of music by Holst, Britten and Elgar along with Fauré's Requiem, St Michael's Church, Highgate. Call 07787 788246 or Les Aldrich Music shop for details and tickets.

Is 2006 the year you learn how to surf the web and use email?

The Green Man Community Centre offers a wide range of courses to help you make the most of new technology. If you just want to learn how to use email or even get a professional qualification we have the course for you.

Learners study at their own pace with a friendly tutor on hand to offer help and advice if needed.

For more information about the courses on offer call Helen on 020 8815 0703.

The Learndirect Centre is managed in conjunction with Barnet College



Darkness on the edge of town

Pedestrians and drivers using one of East Finchley's busiest roads were forced to suffer a month of darkness after the street lights went out.

Lights on both sides of Church Lane between the railway bridge and the High Road were affected by a fault in the electricity supply for most of January.

Surrounding roads and houses were unaffected but the absence of adequate lighting made conditions difficult after dark for the large number of motorists who use Church Lane as a route through from East End Road to the High Road, and for pedestrians navigating the narrow and uneven pavements.

One female resident of nearby Long Lane said: "I walk home from the tube every night and it felt quite dangerous walking down there in the evening. There were no lights on the road and none from surrounding buildings to help you see where you were walking or to help oncoming cars see you."

A spokesman for Barnet Council said six lamp posts had been out of action owing to a problem with the electricity supply. This had been reported to EDF Energy who carried out repairs at the end of January.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Pets cornered

Back when men were men, one man and his dog could keep a whole flock of sheep under control and everyone knew how to look after animals. I mean, they were either dangerous, or edible, or pets, and sometimes all three.

Now it is going to get strange because the Government wants a new pet protection act telling us how to look after pets. Naturally there will be consultation, but who will they consult? The pets? Well that's the problem. Have you ever tried asking your cat what it wants? I did. It wasn't pretty, but that's cats for you.

According to Thomas, the local Feline Federation spokescat, all a cat wants is its favourite food, favourite place to sleep and the right to torture small furry animals and birds. Oh, and the inalienable right to do exactly what it wants. Unsurprisingly this led to a threat of strike action from a mouse called Jerry. He demanded on behalf of the Rodent Liberation Front that all cats should be locked up, insisting on the right to scamper about eating cheese without the threat of becoming a tasty snack for Tom and his chums.

Which brings us to dogs. As Butch explained, in between barking and chasing parked cars, Bulldogs for Britain feels that any attempt to accommodate the wishes of cats goes against the rights of man's best friend to do what a dog does and chase cats. He insisted that in a fair and pet-loving society leads should be banned, there should be more lampposts and cats should not be allowed to escape up trees. And that was before he got onto the subject of walkies.

Away from the cartoon world of politics, pampering pets is a national obsession. Cats get Viking-style funerals complete with burning long-boats and enough cat food to get them to Valhalla. A well-loved dog can expect a mausoleum, and even if a mouse does not get the full requiem mass - that after all is reserved for hamsters - it does get its own grave in the flowerbed. Of course by the time the Government has finished with it, the whole thing will have been focused, consulted and sponsored by some pet food company. And the result? You'll run the risk of being arrested if you don't let your cat do exactly what it wants. So no change there then.

THE ARCHER needs volunteer distributors for Strawberry Vale and The Grange.

Distribution takes place once a month.

A typical round takes 30-45 mins to deliver.

Other rounds are available in the East End Road and Long Lane areas. We also require drivers to drop to our distributors (average 8 drops each). Please contact 020 8883 0433 or distribution@the-archer.co.uk for details

London Borough of Barnet Special Treatment Licence

NOTICE IS GIVEN that Mariana Arando, Debbie Felgate and Mette Knudsen on 15th February 2006 applied to the London Borough of Barnet for a special Treatment Licence to offer body massage at Utopia Health and Beauty Clinic, 1a Leicester Mews, East Finchley, London N2 9EJ.

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to:

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
BUILDING 4
NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK
OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH
LONDON N11 1NP

within 28 days of this notice, specifying the ground of opposition, and must be prepared to attend a hearing before the Appeals Panel of the Council.

Letters to the editor

Mystery buildings

Dear Editor,

I am wondering about the possible existence of a farm in Cherry Tree Wood in the 19th century. The 1895 Ordnance Survey map (Godfrey edition, 1885) clearly shows piggeries right up against the railway embankment. Three other buildings close by can be seen with a magnifying glass.

Were these just barns for storing hay and straw from fields in North London/Middlesex/Hertfordshire, in exchange for soot and horse manure from inner London? (This is how the wood acquired its earlier name of Dirthouse.)

Or were any of these buildings used for processing watercress from the extensive watercress beds in what is now an open grass field? Two elderly East Finchley residents (both born around 1912) once told me that that part of Cherry Tree Wood was wet - possibly flooded in winter - which is confirmed by the existence of a large willow tree, recorded in 1930.

Were some of these buildings lived in? By 1930, in my recollection, there was no trace of them, since the whole of that area was covered with grass and hawthorn bushes. Presumably they were wooden structures. Were they burnt down by accident, or were they demolished and removed for timber?

Yours sincerely,
Peter Crockford,
Leslie Road, N2.

Readers with any answers to Peter's questions are welcome to contact him via THE ARCHER. Our contact details are on page 2.

East Finchley needs a full library service

Dear Editor,

I am writing to protest at the shortsighted attitude of the Libraries Committee of Barnet Council in wanting to reduce the opening hours of East Finchley Library (THE ARCHER, February 2006). It would appear that they have not bothered to consult with either the library staff or the residents who use the library.

They are proposing to close it at the times when most libraries are in greatest demand - the lunchtime and evening when people would visit their libraries during their lunchbreaks or on the way home from work. Not every resident of East Finchley is around to use the library in the limited hours they now propose to have it opened.

The proposed total of closed hours - eight hours per week - does not constitute a saving in the cost of the utility services (light and heating) serving the building and the true availability of the library for use by residents is reduced still further by the time taken to carry out closing duties (and subsequent opening ones) - a useless exercise for the lunchtime closure.

In addition, as East Finchley residents are all fully aware, the local schools make great use of the libraries, so they too will be penalised by the lunchtime closure, not just the adult readers. The annual loan use of this library - 128,200 loans - does not warrant downgrading the library from Town Centre to Community.

This is the first step towards closing the library, which we know is what

the ruling Tory Council really want, and reducing the library facility in the ward to possibly a travelling library, unless the Council decides to get rid of these vehicles too, depriving the disabled and housebound readers of their books.

It is essential that East Finchley Library continues to operate on its current opening hours and with its full complement of staff. Getting rid of 25% of the library staff is no financial saving. Come clean, Barnet Council. Disclose the total amount of redundancy pay you will have to give them. Far better keep them employed and continue providing a full library service to the residents of East Finchley.

Joyce M. Arram
Summerlee Gardens, N2

Narnia memories

Dear Editor

I was interested to read your article (When Finchley Went to Narnia, THE ARCHER, February 2006) about the Finchley connection to the Narnia children and the Rev. Peter Bide.

Mr Bide lived in Hampstead Garden Suburb whilst he was working with my husband, The Rev. Dr Kenneth Slack of the British Council of Churches, 1957-63. Mr Bide remained a very good friend to the author C S Lewis after his marriage.

Yours faithfully,
Millicent Slack
East End Road, N2

Bus service is letting us down

Dear Editor,

Your correspondent Roger Beeson (Letters, THE ARCHER, February 2006) will have struck a resonance with many of your readers with his complaint about the Northern Line.

People arriving at East Finchley station and needing to proceed along East End Road to Finchley Central are faced with another nightmare, waiting for up to 30 minutes in all weather, with the noise of trains overhead and inhaling fumes from four lanes of traffic, for the 143 bus.

During the daytime it is the patient pensioner, the children, and those with young children, who have to put up with an inadequate and unreliable bus service. Often, especially after schools come out in the afternoons, the buses are overcrowded. (I note a maximum of 30 standing is officially allowed. Let us hope there is not a serious accident when 30 schoolchildren are standing like sardines in a small vehicle.)

It is not surprising that boredom and frustration lead to graffiti at the bus stops, defacing the timetables (not that they are very relevant!).

Poor travelling conditions must contribute to stress, hypertension, depression, and requests for early retirement. A frequent, reliable public transport service is an essential requirement for a civilised society.

Can THE ARCHER campaign on this issue? Can your readers suggest what one can do? I have already approached our MP and the bus company.

Yours faithfully,
Marian Howard
East End Road, N2

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net.

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, at publication.

THE ARCHER replies:

THE ARCHER has been publicising the plight of East Finchley's bus users for the past three years. We report regularly on our local Buswatch group's campaign for better services. Hazel Burnett from East Finchley Buswatch replies to Mrs. Howard below:

Sadly, Mrs. Howard's experiences with one of the only two buses which travel north/south through East Finchley are all too familiar. Perhaps she would like to know about our group, East Finchley Buswatch, which is recognised by Transport for London and affiliated to West Haringey Buswatch. We actively campaign for improvement in the bus routes which serve East Finchley. Mrs. Howard is not alone and if she would like to join us she will be very welcome; the more people who become actively involved the better.

Meanwhile, I am arranging for Mrs. Howard to be sent an information sheet, which gives guidance on who and where to contact to make complaint.

We ask all your readers who use the local bus services not to stand around grumbling at bus stops, not to give up and say "What's the use?" but get going - join our campaign. The louder our voice the more clearly we'll be heard.

If Mrs. Howard or any of your readers would like to know more about our group, or would like our information sheet, please ring 020 8444 6824.

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Budgens' fund razor

By Diana Cormack

Hair flew at High Road supermarket Budgens when staff member Louis Venables set about some serious fundraising.

Brave Louis volunteered for a sponsored head shave and body wax as part of the store's efforts to raise money for local schools.

Armed with an electric razor and a large collection of waxing strips, his colleagues Valerie Francis and Rachael Lund carried out the daunting task. Why Louis? "Because he's the bravest," Rachael told *THE ARCHER*.

After his head had been shaved in the staff room, the waxing process was carried out at the front of the shop near the check-outs, with helpful comments from onlookers.

Although Louis is a former pupil of Martin School, the £180 collected from this "hair-razing" event is to go to Holy Trinity School, which Budgens has chosen as one of its charities for 2006.

Last year, the fundraising efforts of Budgens staff in East Finchley gained them second place out of their top five regional stores. This was achieved by collecting £1,437.19 for their chosen charity Clic, which cares for children with cancer. They also raised £546.11 for the North London Hospice and assisted Sippy Azizollah with her in-store charity fund raising events.

Budgens' staff want ideas for other fundraising activities for local schools. If you have any suggestions, please tell someone at the High Road store or pass them on to *THE ARCHER*. Contact details are on page 2.



Going...
Going...
Gone.

Louis Venables is given the brush off by Rachel Lund and Valerie Francis.

Photos by Diana Cormack



Do you share a Royal birthday?

Were you or anyone you know in East Finchley born on the same day in the same year as the Queen? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

On 21 April the Queen will be celebrating her 80th birthday. She will be spending the day at Windsor Castle where the Prince of Wales will host a family dinner in her honour.

Two days earlier, there will be another celebration in the form of a reception and lunch for people from around the country who share Queen Elizabeth's exact birthday.

If you or any local person you know is reaching their 80th birthday on the same day as the Queen, we would like to hear about it so we can help you celebrate too. Please get in touch by using one of *THE ARCHER* contact details printed at the top of page 2.

A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said: "This anniversary is not intended to be a mini-jubilee but the Queen's 80th is a landmark personal anniversary. It's right that it should be appropriately celebrated."

So there will also be two services of thanksgiving, one with members of the Royal Family in St George's Chapel, Windsor, on 23 April and a national Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on 15 June.

Also in June, the Queen will host a birthday garden party at Buckingham Palace for children chosen from all over the United Kingdom.

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