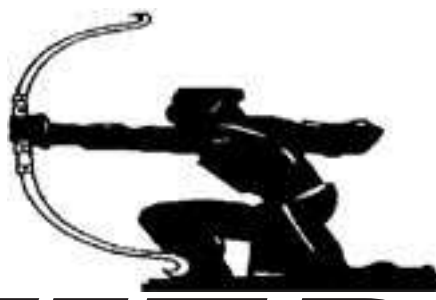


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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Despair after accident at 'Danger Corner'

By Ruth Brown

A collision at the junction of Creighton Avenue and the High Road has raised new fears that it is only a matter of time before an accident there causes serious injury or death.

Just after 8am on 6 November a truck turning off the High Road into Creighton Avenue was in collision with a cyclist.

Parents and children walking to Martin Primary School were shocked to see the mangled bicycle under the wheels of the lorry. The cyclist was taken to hospital; police later described his injuries as "not life-threatening".

Fast turn

Campaigners have long dubbed this junction 'Danger Corner', arguing that it is an accident waiting to happen because the pavement curve means traffic can turn off the High Road at a relatively high speed.

However, Barnet Council has said they designed this corner specifically to make it easy for larger vehicles to turn off, to keep High Road traffic flowing.

In a public demonstration two years ago, children held banners saying "Protect me, not traffic flow".

Last spring, the Council built out the pavement to make it slightly less rounded. A survey of 43 parents in July showed that the majority thought this had improved safety. However, 81% still thought the crossing was dangerous.

Further measures

Parents feel a pelican crossing is justified but, failing this expensive option, they are asking for the corner to be squared off, to force traffic to slow down before it turns.

In an email to Barnet Council, parents have expressed the hope that the Council "will act soon to make this corner much safer for all the children and adults using this junction".

A Council spokeswoman said there had been only three injury accidents at the junction in the last three years but it was

aware it was a busy location and that there were safety concerns.

She said: "The council will continue to work with the school to review and improve travel conditions for all road users in the vicinity, including considering what further safety improvements might be made at the junction."



In a whirl:

The scene at East Finchley Art Fair on 18 November. See the report on page 7

Youth club move

By Lucy Chamberlin

A popular youth club which was threatened with closure if it could not find new premises is finally settling into a new home.

After some uncertainty over its future, the Monday Club has switched from its old haunt at the Methodist Church to St Mary's Church Hall, further down the High Road.

Home-grown talent

The goodbye party on 22 October saw a big turnout and showcased club talent including Luena, who performed three songs, rap by 'our own boys', and Vishal mixing on the decks.

Other turns included a sketch by Baptist minister Peter Kenelly, dance with Stamp & Shout from Freedance, and Councillor Colin Rogers speaking about the progress of the club, after which everyone tucked into a tasty buffet provided by Casa Pepe, Budgens and Chorak.

The group is enormously popular and has grown to

include around 160 youngsters, aged nine to 15. With so much energy to cater for, the group had outgrown the Methodist Church.

Organisers Maureen Clemenson and Maureen Antoinette were given plenty of time to find a new home but they were concerned at one point that they might not be able to find a central venue, putting the whole club in doubt.

The good news is that the church hall at St Mary's is a large and dynamic space and Father Tony Pelegrino has welcomed them with open arms.

Sergeant Alex Kay and the community police team will continue to support everyone involved, and all the activities, such as football in Martins Primary School field, table tennis, nail-painting and many others, will carry on as normal.

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to deliver the paper for us.*

Your contributions

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Comments to THE ARCHER may
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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Barnet Council:

Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000
Council Tax 020 8359 2608
Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600
Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700
Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500
Employment Service 020 8258 3900
Haringey Council 020 8489 0000

Leisure

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library 020 8883 2664
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema 020 8446 9933

Transport

BR Enquiries 0845 7484950
City Airport 020 7646 0088
London Transport 020 7222 1234
National Express 08705 808080
Heathrow Airport 0870 000 0123

Hospitals

Barnet General 020 8216 4000
Coppetts Wood 020 8883 9792
Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500
Oak Lane Clinic 020 8346 9343
Royal Free 020 7794 0500
St Luke's 020 8219 1800
Whittington 020 7272 3070

Health Advice

AIDSline 020 8363 2141
Alcoholics Anonymous 0845 7697555
Barnet MENCAP 020 8203 6688
Cancer Support 020 8202 2211
Carers' Line 0808 808 7777
Drinkline 0800 917 8282
Drugs Helpline 0800 776600
Health Info Service 0800 665544
MIND 020 8343 5700

OAP's Advice

Barnet Age Concern 020 8346 3511
Contact (N2) 020 8444 1162

Help the Aged 0808 800 6565

Crime

Emergency 999
Finchley Police 020 8442 1212
Mus. Hill Police Stn. 020 8345 2148
CrimeStoppers 0800 555111
Victim Support 0845 303 0900
East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood
Team 020 7161 9014

Help & Advice

Childline 0800 1111
Disability Info Service 020 8446 6935
E.F. Advice Service 020 8444 6265
Gingerbread 020 8445 4227
National Debt Line 0808 808 4000
NSPCC 0800 800500
Rape & Sexual Abuse 020 8683 3300
Relate 020 8447 8101
RSPCA Inspector 08705 555 999
Samaritans 08457 909090
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Legal Advice.

Tuesdays: 7pm - 8pm.

Councillors' Surgery.

Saturdays: 10am - 11.30am

Community Services

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

Search for family

Police are trying to trace the
next of kin of a homeless man,
Peter Harris, who died after
falling down the stairs on a
bus in Golders Green.

Peter was born in London, pos-
sibly Kentish Town, in 1946. Both his
parents have been dead a long time
and, although he was one of four chil-
dren, it is thought he had no contact
with his siblings for more than 20
years. Peter spent most of his adult
life in hostels or sleeping rough.

Anyone with information can
contact The Missing Persons Unit
on 020 8733 5146.

Photographic evidence

A man and a 14-year-old schoolboy were charged
with aggravated burglary on 7 June at an address in
NW2. A witness nearby had observed both suspects
and taken photographs of them. As a result, the police
were able to identify and arrest them.

Initially, at Harrow
Crown Court, both pleaded
not guilty but after being
confronted with the evi-
dence against them, both
changed their plea to
guilty.

DC Maxwell, the Inves-
tigating Officer said: "The
case hinged on identifying
the suspects. With photo-
graphic evidence obtained
the suspects were identified

and subsequently arrested.
During the course of
the investigation Police
obtained further evidence,
which enhanced the case
against them, resulting in
both pleading guilty. You
cannot underestimate the
importance of the public's
response in this case and
without them two violent
offenders would not have
come to our notice and this
offence would have gone
unpunished."

Website is a winner

The website of the Finchley Society, www.finchleysociety.org.uk, has been commended in a special awards ceremony.

Stephen Yeo, who first
designed the site, received the
award at the London Forum
Walter Bor Media Awards
ceremony. He paid tribute to
the society's IT adviser, local
resident Tony Roberts, for
his professional design of the

present website.

The award is in memory of
the London Forum founding
president Walter Bor and is
given for outstanding achieve-
ments by civic and amenity
societies in promoting their
activities through the media.

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Planning Applications

Barnet Council

12 Abbots Gardens, N2

Single storey rear extension. Alter-
ations to rear dormer window.

The Badgers, White Lodge Close, N2

Erection of a new two-storey
detached house with rooms in
roof space and basement and
associated landscaping following
demolition of existing house.

7 Church Lane, N2

Alterations to provide a studio flat to
ground floor rear of the property.
Upper floor flat, 52 Durham
Road, N2

Dormer windows to rear roof
slopes

Flat 1, 195a East End Road, N2

Single storey rear extension
12 Greenhalgh Walk, N2
Ground floor rear extension

29 Gurney Drive, N2

Extension to roof including rear
dormer window to facilitate a loft
conversion.

56 Gurney Drive, N2

Roof extensions to provide rear
dormer window

66 - 68 High Road, N2

Proposed new shopfront and
fascia

83 High Road, N2

Conversion of first and second
floors into four self-contained
flats including second floor rear
extension.

46a Hertford Road, N2

Extensions to roof including rear

dormer window to facilitate a loft
conversion.

Finchley Manor Garden Centre, East End Road, N2

Conversion of existing buildings
to form medical centre. Demoli-
tion of glass houses to form gar-
dens with single storey day visitor
centre. Formation of 41 car parking
spaces.

Haringey Council

34 Aylmer Parade, N2

Change of use of ground floor shop
(A1) to light industrial (B1) Food
Preparation

43 Beech Drive, N2

Erection of new garage

4-5 Cheapside, Fortis Green, N2

Change of use at first floor level

from offices to two one-bedroom
self-contained flats.

114 Creighton Avenue, N2

Conversion of integral garage into
habitable space and alterations to
front elevation.

4 The Drive, N6

Certificate of Lawfulness for the
erection of ground floor rear exten-
sion and first floor rear balcony.

Cottages, Fortis Green, N10

Erection of two storey rear extension.

150 Fortis Green, N10

Demolition of existing building and
erection of a four/five-storey build-
ing comprising of clinic at ground
floor level, six three-bed and three
two-bed flats with ten parking
spaces, bicycle store, refuse and
private amenity space.



Send a card to Jack

By Betti Blatman

After six-year-old Jack Brown's recent return from New York where he courageously battled through 11 months of radical treatment for Neuroblastoma, a rare form of cancer which only affects children, his family received the devastating news that his cancer had returned in multiple areas: legs, knees, thighs, pelvis, hip and shoulder.

Jack, who lives in Barnet, continues to receive chemotherapy and radiotherapy at University College Hospital but he has developed pneumonia and is very poorly. His mother Yvonne and the rest of the family are asking people to send him messages of good luck to cheer him up. He's already received more than 100 and his enthusiastic smile as he rips open the envelopes says it all.

If you would like to send a card to Jack, please post it to: Jack Brown, c/o Jack Brown Appeal, 2 Simple Software, Enterprise House, 2 The Crest, Hendon,

London NW4 2HN. For further updates on Jack you can check www.jackbrownappeal.org.

Yvonne aims to set up a new fundraising website to bring a researcher to University College Hospital to work on targeted therapy for Neuroblastoma. The cost for a senior researcher for a three-year period is £250,000, which Yvonne advises is more than achievable. She is looking for someone to help with the website design and maintenance on a 'pro bona' basis. Yvonne can be contacted by email at londonderryair@gmail.com.

Hijacked in Hendon Lane

On Saturday 3 November at about 6.30pm a 57-year-old man was driving his BMW along Regents Park Road. He made a purchase at the Total garage and then drove along Allandale Avenue towards Hendon Lane. As he approached the junction of Hendon Lane his vehicle was bumped from the rear by a small grey vehicle.

He got out of his car and went to the rear to check for damage. Inside the suspect vehicle there were four or five men, one of whom got out and asked him if he had insurance. He was then charged by this man and pushed to the ground. When he fell he hit his head causing a bump to the back of his head.

The thief then got into the victim's car and made off towards the direction of the A41. In the vehicle were his mobile phone and some personal documents.

The suspect who knocked the victim to the ground and stole the car is described as a black male, in his late 20s to early 30s, about 6ft in height. The driver of the grey car is described as a white male, in his late 20s to 30s.

PC Pat Dunne of Barnet Robbery Squad said: "This was a vicious crime on a law abiding

unwitting member of the community, who acted in good faith at the scene of an accident and has now been deprived of his car by these thieves."

If you witnessed this crime or have any information about this robbery please contact Barnet Police on 020 8733 4548 quoting ref 2426248/07.

Baker's Autos going strong

Baker's Autos continues to trade at 2 Lewis Gardens.

The business is now run by friends of the previous owners Dick and Jean Baker, who retired earlier this year after 26 years in East Finchley (see *THE ARCHER* May 2007). Servicing, repairs, MOTs, etc are carried out for all makes and models. Phone 020 8883 8001 for further details.

Stanley Field campaign will not fade away

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local campaigners are keeping Stanley Field in the public eye with a leaflet blitz, and support has already come from East Finchley's popular youth club.

The leaflet campaign is organised by the Finchley Community Development Trust, with the backing of MP Rudi Vis and all our local councillors. The campaign reminds local people that the Trust and other community groups have drawn up plans for the whole site to be used for recreation by residents of all ages, but that Barnet Council is offering them only one third of the field, proposing to sell the remaining two thirds for housing.

Save open spaces

Describing himself as "an angry citizen", campaigner Robert Simon says that you can see the consequences of all the land given over to housing development in other parts of London, where young children have more than 15 minutes walk to their nearest playground.

"Where common spaces exist already, they need to be preserved. Stanley Field is the only open space for common use in our area of East Finchley. Our local playground at Market Place is often filled up with teenagers playing football, because they have no better place in the area to go," he said. Robert believes that the total amount of money gained from the sale of the land would be only about two per cent or less of yearly tax revenues for the borough of Barnet.

Expanding needs

Maureen Clemetson, co-organiser of the Monday Club for nine to 15-year-olds, told *THE ARCHER*: "Our club started two years ago and it's growing by the week. We now have 183



Rudi Vis MP, Cllr Colin Rogers, and campaigners Harriet Copperman and Robert Simon at Stanley Field. Photograph by Roger Chapman

registered members. At present we meet in the annexe of St Mary's Catholic Church, but I strongly believe that we need somewhere like Stanley Field, along with a centre there for all the community, to replace the Herbert Wilmott Centre, which was pulled down.

"We need facilities like a

dance room, a drama room, a sports field with floodlights. We need a place of happy faces, welcoming all the people of East Finchley."

For details of the Monday Club, contact Maureen on 07931 586740. Call Rob Robinson on 020 8883 4916 about the leaflet campaign, or visit Stanley Field around 12 noon on Saturdays. You can also make your views known to Barnet Council Leader Mike Freer on cllr.m.freer@barnet.gov.uk.

Friends wanted

Keeping in Touch, a new telephone befriending service, requires both volunteers and clients.

The service is run by RSVP, the borough's organisation for volunteers of senior citizen age, which also runs regular outings and a telephone book club. Please contact Katie on 020 8445 2780 for further details.

Boris on the bus

Two elderly ladies were overheard on a 263 bus:

First lady: "What do you think of this Mayor of London election, then?"

Second lady: "I'm not voting for that Ken Livingstone."

First lady: "Who're you voting for then?"

Second lady: "I'm voting for that nice Boris Yeltsin."

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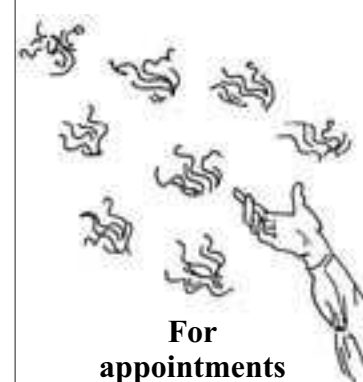
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Owners clearing the contents from one of the damaged cars. Photo by Diana Cormack

Parked cars damaged near Park House

At least 10 vehicles in one road were damaged in the early afternoon of Thursday 15 November. They were hit by an out-of-control car in Brompton Grove, the unadopted road that runs alongside Cherry Tree Wood from the bottom of Summerlee Avenue towards the High Road.

Most of the vehicles had been left parked on the made-up area of Brompton Grove at the Park House end, opposite East

Finchley tube station. Five cars were shunted together almost up against the wall bordering the bus stop on the High Road.

Others suffered varying degrees of damage when they were hit as the car in question approached or left the scene. At some point a set of concrete steps at the side of Park House was partially demolished, leaving the metal support railings bent and displaced. No one is believed to have been injured.

Looking to the future

By Diana Cormack

Did you know that the NHS provides annual eye testing for children under 16 and for full time students under 19? I learned that at 53 High Road, which used to be Andrew's and is now Panoptica Opticians.

Optometrist Rob Ward told me that he is passionate about the importance of family eye care, particularly of children's eyes, and he feels that this testing is not advertised enough. As a young family man with many local ties, Rob aims to bring new ideas and state of the art optometry to the community whilst continuing the traditional service provided by Andrew's.

Being recently qualified and a strong advocate of the NHS, he is highly aware of the role optometrists play in the monitoring and recognition of eye problems, which can sometimes give an early warning sign of other diseases. Rob wants his patients to feel involved in their treatment and is providing new technology for both testing and educating people about their eyes. Computer-generated details about eye conditions for adults and cartoon characters and images



Rob Ward; photo by Paul Harmer

for children keep patients focused on the task in hand, helping them to learn about and understand their systems.

Being an independent business means that products and services not offered by some of the bigger chains are available. For more details pop in for a leaflet when you're passing or visit www.panoptica.co.uk.

Coldfall scrubs up nicely

By Ann Bronkhorst

On a bright autumn morning it's good to get away from streets and buildings into woodland surroundings. More than 18 people did just that on 6 October, giving Coldfall Wood its autumn clean-up and strengthening the dead hedge round the pool.

Children joined the volunteers, their enthusiasm contrasting with the destructiveness of some local youths who roll heavy logs into the stream and reed beds or who regularly burn out mopeds in the wood.

The team worked hard to repair the vandalised dead hedge and to extract some of the logs. Now the pool area looks great, providing an exciting new habitat already visited by a wide range of birds. By next spring's nesting time it should be well established.

Recently, however, detergent pollution was spotted in the pools, raising the question of bad plumbing once again. After 20 years of stream pollution problems, Thames Water finally tackled the issue this year. They traced drainage misconnections to 14 properties; now almost all have been rectified, so where does the latest fouling come from?

The Friends of Coldfall Wood hope local householders will keep a beady eye on their plumbers to ensure no more 'cowboy' connections damage the progress made in this much-loved ancient wood.

Start limbering up for the walk of the year

Now's the time to sign up and start raising sponsorship if you want to take part in the Big Fun Walk in aid of the North London Hospice.

This hugely enjoyable day out takes walkers on a seven-and-a-half mile journey through London's most beautiful parks, starting at East Finchley tube station and finishing near the Houses of Parliament.

Better still, the terrain is suitable for all ages and abilities. Regular participants include family groups with small children in buggies, wheelchair users, visually disabled walkers with their guide dogs and carers, keen runners who lead the field, groups happy to amble at their own pace and well-behaved family dogs.

Marshals and stewards ensure that nobody is likely to go astray. Refreshments, a sandwich lunch, musical entertainment, hot drinks and pastries are provided free, and there is face painting at the finishing line.

The 2008 Big Fun Walk takes place on Sunday 9 March. There is no entry fee but each walker must register in advance and every adult is asked to raise at least £25.

All the money raised by the walk supports the work of the North London Hospice in Whetstone, which relies on fundraising and donations to continue its work with terminally ill patients and their families.

Walkers can register online at www.bigfunwalk.co.uk and download a sponsor and check-in form immediately. The website has a gallery of photos from previous years' events and a link to the North London Hospice website. Alternatively a clear message left on the 24-hour phone line 020 8202 5586 will receive a prompt response.

New technology comes to the High Road

By John Dearing

Digital cameras have become almost ubiquitous. One of the main reasons is their convenience; you don't have to finish a film and send it away for processing before you can see your pictures, and you can load them onto your computer whenever you like.



Paresh and the new printer. Photo by Diana Cormack

However, printing them has always been a hassle. Having to source photo quality paper of the right size, to load it into your printer, and then to discover that the colour cartridge which you don't use so often is empty or blocked can be hard work.

Solutions include using a photo-printing website or finding an in-store digital printer. Now one is available in the High Road courtesy of Paresh Shah at C.W. Andrew

Pharmacy, where you can make instant prints from your digital camera.

Just go to the shop, take the media card out of your camera, pop it into the appropriate slot on the Snaplab printer, choose which pictures you want printed, and out they come, at 29p each. If you like, you can crop the image, brighten it, remove red eye from pictures taken with flash, add borders, or even join two images.

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

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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>

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www.eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk

Sunday 16 December

10.30 a.m. Christingle Service

6.30 p.m. Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Day Family Service - 10.30 a.m.

tel: 020 8346 1700

e-mail: info@eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk



Tabitha, left, and Liz Tew with their new range of special items for the home. Photograph by John Lawrence

Amazing extras

It's never too late to try new ideas. Amazing Grates, the fireplace business that has been trading in East Finchley for 28 years, is branching out.

A new collection of home-ware and accessories is now available from their High Road showroom under the name of Amazing at Home.

Candlesticks, mirrors, glassware, vases, decorative flowers, clocks and sculptures are all part of the new range sourced by Tabitha Tew, daughter of Amazing Grates owner Liz Tew.

Wherever possible, Tabitha will be finding items made by

British or Continental European firms.

Tabitha says: "We have always styled our fireplaces in the showroom so that customers can see how they might look in a room setting. Now we hope people will walk in and buy many of the items that go on and around the fireplace too."

As well as these decorative items, Amazing Grates is also stocking those fireplace winter essentials, coal and logs.

Composer in good company

One of our local young composers, Beatrice Gauld, is to have a composition played in a joint programme with Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas*. Entitled *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, the work is for choir, tenor solo, string orchestra and organ and lasts 30 minutes.

Beatrice is a talented young composer who lives in Chandos Road and teaches violin and piano (beatrice@tscope.co.uk). Her first work, *The Lemon*, for Big Band was performed in 2001 by The Barnet Band. Since then she has composed several piano solos, *Prelude for Organ*, a violin sonata, *Impromptu for Violin and Orchestra*, a Mass in D minor and a symphony. She is presently working on a piano concerto.



Beatrice Gauld

In a recent interview she said that her favourite composers were Johann Strauss and Tchaikovsky. "My aim is to write music which the audience will enjoy listening to, and the performers will enjoy playing and singing, but which at the same time will allow the players to show off. One of my

ambitions is to write a ballet."

The performance will be on Saturday 8 December at 7.30pm at St. Paul's Church, Augustus Road, Southfields, SW19. It will be given by the Putney and City Philharmonic Choirs and conducted by Stephen Rhys, MBE.

No guarantee on library's future

By Daphne Chamberlain

Fears about the future of East Finchley Library were reinforced last month. As *THE ARCHER* has warned, Barnet Council will not fund library improvements planned under the rejected Big Lottery bid. They will also not guarantee to maintain funding levels in East Finchley and other non-leading libraries, and will not confirm that these libraries will be able to provide 21st century IT and community facilities.

Labour Group Libraries spokesperson Cllr Anne Hutton had these requests voted down in a Council meeting last month. She said that the Council's two-tier library system, focusing on six leading libraries, "looks very much like the failing premier parks strategy, where resources are pumped into a minority of high profile facilities and the rest are left to wither on the vine."

She was attempting to amend Cllr John Marshall's motion, which noted "massive improvements in library facilities, IT and disabled access", an upgrade to Burnt Oak Library, major works at Chipping Barnet and refurbishment at Edgware.

Cllr Marshall said that these improvements had been facilitated by the two-tier strategy which, he claimed, was "re-invigorating libraries as centres for community life". He defended the Council vote to *THE ARCHER*, saying that Labour's proposed amendment would have committed Barnet to substantial expenditure without indicating how it would be funded.

Labour Group Leader and local councillor Alison Moore told us she was "really con-



Local councillors Andrew McNeil and Alison Moore with MP Rudi Vis outside the library. Photo courtesy The Labour Party

cerned about the future of our much valued library" and reaction also came from MP Rudi Vis, who said: "East Finchley Library is at the heart of our community and I'm appalled that it seems to be neglected by Barnet's Tory administration."

Groanbox

Boys play on

By Betti Blatman

At the artsdepot's Sunday Buzz on 28 October, The Groanbox Boys, featuring New York and London-based musicians Cory Sezmec and Michael Ward-Bergeman, played a unique blend of what they call Old Time Mountain Gypsy World Folk Blues Music.

They used accordion, acoustic guitar, banjo, harmonica and odd pieces of percussion, including their self-made "Freedom Boot" (422 bottle tops donated by organic beer maker Freedom). The music is absolutely enthralling and goes deep into the roots of popular music.

The Groanbox Boys gave a fabulous performance, despite interruptions from noise and tannoy announcements. For details of their UK tour dates, check groanboxboys.com.

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Brian Timms sporting a flynet whilst reading his favourite publication on the beach. Photo by Sandra Timms

Christmas, Aussie style

By Brian Timms

As we sit beside our swimming pools at Christmas, sipping wine, we'd just like you to know we are thinking of you. Don't get us wrong: Finchley exiles in Australia still love their birthplace. It's just that Down Under all we do with ice at Yuletide is cool our drinks.

Temperatures range from 30 to 40C, skies are blue and we try not to think about possible electrical storms, bushfires, floods, hailstorms or cyclones.

As most of the population of 20 million live near the coast, beaches are packed with revellers from a mass of ethnic origins, tossing prawns and meat on barbecues.

But wait, Finchley tradition lives on. "Our Christmas is not that different to what we had in England. I still make my own puddings and we have roast turkey," says Hazel Astley, née Spooner, once of Leopold Road, now of Melbourne.

"We still eat turkey with all its trimmings," says Shirley Dinham, née Crane, of Brackenbury Road, now of Balingup, West Australia, confessing she did eat salad at Christmas for some years before "scurrying back to my roots".

But instead of huddling round the fire, Shirley and Hazel now eat in the comfort of controlled temperatures. "We sit around in funny hats and air conditioning."

Churches in Australia are

packed at Christmas, with about 70% of the population being Catholic, Anglican or Lutheran.

Keeping in touch

Around a dozen of us ex-Finchleyites in Oz bond with each other with phone calls and snow scene cards, discussing issues of interest, for instance park keeping in Cherry Tree Wood or the upgrade of East Finchley library.

Some claim a factor in our departure to new lands was the shock of the BBC radio episode in which Grace Archer died in a stable fire in 1955. Now we find clutching a copy of *THE ARCHER* at Christmas a great comfort.

But even sun, sea, sand and surf can't tempt some ex-Finchley girls to the beach. "The sand is so hot it burns your feet. And you cool off in the sea only to wonder if there are sharks about," said Hazel. "Walking across red hot sand, with or without sandals, is like taking your life in your hands," said Shirley.

Then there are the flies. Anyone seen my fly net? Oh, what have we done?



Fireworks at the display at Martin Primary School last month, supported by the Finchley Development Trust. Photograph by Roger Chapman.

Fireworks fiesta

A dizzying display of fireworks filled the night sky over Martin Primary School playing field as hundreds of spectators enjoyed the celebrations on 5 November.

The 25-minute show was a huge success with the crowd. The panoramic view from the field meant that spectators could also see dozens more rockets shooting high above Muswell Hill and Friern Barnet - a magical sight.

What do the clergy do at Christmas?

By Daphne Chamberlain

What is Christmas like for East Finchley's clergy? *THE ARCHER* has discovered our very own skating minister, a pal of Jeeves and Wooster, and a Santa who wipes his feet on newspaper.

Father Tony Pellegrini, from St Mary's Catholic Church, is still recovering from last year, when Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday. "Ordinary Sundays mean three Masses, but last year there were eight over the two days of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day! When it was all over, I was ready to drop. This year I think I won't inflict myself on friends. Instead, I'll curl up with a PG Wodehouse favourite. The man was a genius. With Bertie Wooster, Aunt Dahlia, Augustus Fink-Nottle, and, of course, the incomparable Jeeves, I won't lack for cheerful company."

Simon Dyke, at East Finchley Baptist Church, loves decorating the tree with Christmas music blasting out of the stereo. "The songs we sing at Christmas are focused on the birth of Christ and all that it means for us as Christians. Without Jesus we would be without hope. That's what makes Christmas so very special, the most joy-filled of all the Christian festivals." Part of the joy in his own family is his impersonation of Santa the night before, in exchange for sherry, a carrot, a mince-pie, and footsteps painted on newspaper leading from the fireplace.

For the **Rev. Michael Giles, of East Finchley Methodist Church**, the four weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas Day is like getting ready for a big party. "Magic moments" include Christmas socks hanging above the fireplace, a Boxing Day walk, an Advent Candle lit at each Sunday lunch leading up to Christmas, and ice skating in the open air at a famous London landmark. "I love leading the Christmas Eve 11.15pm service, where in the dark of the night you celebrate the birth of Jesus, 'Light of the World'".



The Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch (often known as The Skating Minister). Artist - Sir Henry Raeburn, c.1795.

Christmas Services in East Finchley

Holy Trinity Church

- Sunday 16 December, 6pm, Advent carol service by candlelight.
- Monday 24 December, 6pm, Nativity Play and Blessing of the Crib; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass.
- Tuesday 25 December, 10am, Parish Communion.

St Mary's Catholic Church

- Sunday 16 December, 2pm, Elderly People's Christmas Dinner.
- Tuesday 18 December, 7.30pm, Penitential Service and Confessions.
- Saturday 22 December, 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; Confessions at 10.30am and 6pm; Vigil Mass at 6.30 pm
- Sunday 23 December, Mass at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon; Carol Service at 6.30 pm, followed by refreshments in the parish hall.
- Monday 24 December, 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass; 6.30pm, Children's Christmas Mass; from 11.15pm, Midnight Mass, preceded by Carols.

- Tuesday 25 December, Mass at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon.
- Wednesday 26 December, 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass.

All Saints' Church

- Sunday 23 December, 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies.
- Monday 24 December, 3pm, Children's Service with Carols; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass of Christmas with Procession of the Christ Child and Blessing of the Crib.
- Tuesday 25 December, 8am, Mass of the Dawn; 10am, Mass of Christmas Day with Carols.

East Finchley Baptist Church

- Sunday 16 December, 11am - 12.15pm, All Ages Together Carol Service (with presentation by the children and young people); 6pm - 7.15pm, Carols by Candlelight.
- Sunday 23 December, 11am - 12 noon, Christmas Carol Service.
- Tuesday 25 December, 10.30am - 11.15am, Christmas Morning Family Service.

East Finchley Methodist Church

- Sunday 2 December, 10.30am, Advent Sunday - lighting of the Advent candle ring.
- Sunday 9 December, 10.30am, Gift Service for National Children's Home.
- Sunday 16 December, 10.30am, Christingle service; 6.30pm, Carols by Candlelight service.
- Monday 24 December, 11.15pm, Christmas Eve Midnight Service of Holy Communion.
- Tuesday 25 December, 10.30am, Christmas Day Celebration service.
- Monday 31 December, 11.15pm, New Year's Eve Watchnight Service.

Pharmacies opening over holiday period

- **Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 December**, 11am-12.30pm: CW Andrews, 32 High Road, East Finchley. Telephone: 020 8883 1559.
- **Tuesday 1 January**, 11am-12.30pm: MCRX Ltd, 800 High Road, North Finchley. Telephone: 020 8445 0085.

Opening hours for East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact

Contact will be closed from Monday 24 to Wednesday 26 December and Tuesday 1 January. There will be someone in the office as usual on the mornings of Thursday 27, Friday 28 and Monday 31 December. Normal service resumes on Wednesday 2 January.

Please try to phone between 10am and 1pm. Tel. 020 8444 1162. If the phone is engaged, BT will ask you to wait for a few minutes and then will transfer you to the message service if the phone remains engaged. Do please leave a message, remembering to include your name.



The best and wurst of times

By Sheila Armstrong
Sausage tasting, beer drinking, music and good company were in abundance at East Finchley Constitutional Club's first traditional Oktoberfest on 19-21 October.

Prices were more than reasonable and the chance to sample a wide range of German beers was appreciated by most people, several from *THE ARCHER*.

Deputy Mayor of Barnet Richard Cornelius impressively opened the proceedings in German and a representative of the German Embassy came along.

Supported by REEF and organised by The Development Trust and The Constitutional Club under the guidance of Martin O'Donnell, the event was a great success and went on into the small hours. The big international rugby and football matches of the weekend were viewed there on big screens.

For anyone who hasn't found it yet, The Constitutional Club is on The Walks, parallel to the High Road and inhabits what must once have been a grand mansion called The Chestnuts, originally built as two houses. Find more details at www.efclub.btik.com.



Prost! Martin O'Donnell looks on as Deputy Mayor Richard Cornelius prepares to down the first pint (or should that be litre?). Photo by Diana Cornack

A great day at the Fair

By Janet Halton

The East Finchley Open Art Fair took place on Sunday 18 November at Martin Primary School and was voted a success by organisers Christine Watson and Monica Peiser.

At 10.30am precisely the first visitors appeared and transactions began. Animated faces could be seen and a number of stallholders said how much they benefit from talking with visitors. Some come every year, some were entirely new. Many expressed delight at the high standard and variety they found. "It's all hand made," some children were heard saying.

At 3pm the Grand Draw took place. Adam Justice-Mills, EFO Chair, introduced Reeta Chakrabarti, BBC political correspondent and East Finchley resident, who spoke about the background of the fair and drew the winners.

As visitors to the Fair know, it

supports neighbourhood charity Contact through voluntary donations at the door. These have always been very generous and are gratefully received in their entirety by Contact.

The success of the event depended on many people outside EFO, including the couple who make shifting of screens and tables possible with their van; the caretakers of the Institute and Martin Primary School; and headteacher Maggie Driscoll, with special mention of the Martin's catering team. They make the Arts Cafe happen on the day (income going to the school). Tasty menus and wonderful cakes were again delicious.

First film nears completion

The first feature film by Finchley-based producer Stephen Follows is in the final stages of production. *The Grind* explores the dark and sometimes explosive world of running an East End night club.

It boasts an impressive ensemble cast including Jamie Foreman (*Oliver Twist*, *Layer Cake*), Danny John-Jules (*Red Dwarf*, *Blade II*), Zoe Tapper (*Stage Beauty*, *Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky*) and Kellie Shirley (*Wimbledon*, *EastEnders*).

Vince is a nightclub manager and having fought his way to his dream life he is determined to stay there. When his best friend Bobby arrives owing money to Vince's crime-connected boss, his life takes a dramatic turn for the worse. Loyalties are tested and friendships are pushed to their limits.

Stephen, who lives in Templars Crescent, off East End Road, said: "From the moment I first read the script I knew that this project was one I wanted to tackle as producer. The writer/director Rishi Opel has created a well-crafted array of characters and a tense and gripping plot."

Stephen has previously produced many short films, includ-

ing *Space Chase*, which was shortlisted at Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner in 2006. *The Grind* will be complete in mid February 2008. International sales agents and distributors will be given a sneak preview of the film at the film market at the Berlin Film Festival before its release in cinemas in the UK in July 2008.

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All change at Finchley Choral Society

They're changing guard at Finchley Choral Society. The choir is losing George Vass, its much loved and respected conductor, and gaining the enthusiastic and charismatic Grace Rossiter, who is artistic director of the Finchley Children's Music Group.

George Vass took over at Finchley Choral Society shortly after their centenary when they were somewhat in the doldrums and has been with them for about eight years. Everyone in the choir agrees that George has been a wonderful teacher and a great musician. Under his baton the choir has come on in leaps and bounds, and is now an accomplished and dynamic group of singers.

During those eight years, George's career has also expanded. Among other major commitments, he is Artistic Director of both the Presteigne Festival in Wales and the Hampstead and Highgate Festival closer to home. In addition, he has a growing career in commissioning, conducting and recording contemporary music.

In the end something had to give and sadly it was Finchley Choral. George feels he is handing them over in good



Grace Rossiter

nick, however, and they are showing their appreciation of the years of musical growth and camaraderie by giving him a rousing send off with an elegant party and a cabaret of all the talents in the choir.

Looking forward

Grace Rossiter was the unanimous choice as his successor. The choir whittled down the 100 replies to their advert and asked four to conduct rehearsals. This process is a heady but short-lived moment of power for a choir: they get to audition the conductor. After that, it is he/she who judges them.

With Grace, it was love at first sight. They were bowled over by her enthusiasm and ideas for their future and they are now looking forward to a new era. Heartfelt thanks and best wishes to George Vass, and bon voyage to Grace Rossiter and the Finchley Choral Society.



George Vass

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YOUNG ARCHER

Martin School's Remembrance Assembly

By Diana Cormack

"Thank you, men who forced bravery into their minds to protect us". This was written by a child on one of the poppies at Martin Primary School.

As in most schools, pupils at Martin Primary were taught about Remembrance Day and the significance of the poppies sold at this time of year. But the school's Remembrance Assembly was particularly memorable because each child had made their own poppy for that special day.

In a moving and thought provoking assembly led by deputy head John Pickering, the children were able to show how much they had learned. They even knew the whereabouts of Flanders when asked by Council-



Tristan Green with poppies made by children at Martin School. Photo by Diana Cormack

lor Colin Rogers, who read the poem *In Flanders Fields* by Lt Col John McCrae, of the Canadian Army.

After assembly the children made their own tribute to those we remember by displaying their poppies in the playground. They were very interested in the medals worn by school keeper Tristan Green, a former member of the Royal Anglian Regiment who served in Bosnia and Northern Ireland.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Holy Trinity

Headteacher Tim Bowden and his wife took part in the Amsterdam Half Marathon to raise funds for their autistic nephew. Both completed the course in 2 hours, 20 minutes and 2 seconds.

Year 2 took part in a music festival at Holly Park School.

There has been a good response to Operation Christmas Child, run by the charity Samaritan's Purse. Pupils have been able to recognise and care for some of the world's poorest children by filling shoeboxes with presents.

The school's Christmas Fair will be held on Sunday 2 December from 12 noon - 2.30pm.

Martin Primary

Four children went to Hendon Town Hall to receive a cup and a certificate of excellence for the school achieving the Best Educational Garden award, Barnet in Bloom 2007.

Year 5 visited the Thames Barrier, fortunately before it was raised during the November flood warnings.

Year 2 took part in an Infant Music Festival where they performed a song they had written about the new Martin School with the help of music specialists and teaching assistants.

This year's firework display was the most successful ever. The start had to be delayed due to the number of people queuing to get in and the food was completely sold out. The PTA is grateful to Finchley Development Trust for their support on the night and to all those who came, which helped them to raise a record amount of money for the school.

Manorside School

Year 6 enjoyed a trip to Wyllotts Theatre to see Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whilst Year 4 visited a Hindu Temple in Hertfordshire.

November has seen the launch of two new after-school clubs: Multiskills for the infants and Arsenal Doubles for the Juniors, a club that combines practical football skills with numeracy and literacy.

The Autumn Disco was a huge success with children of all ages taking to the dance floor and winning prizes. Proceeds from this will go towards subsidising tickets for the entire school's trip to see the artsdepot production of *Fungus the Bogeyman* in December.

New children's groups launch in January

East Finchley has a long association with the Woodcraft Folk; groups have met in the area for many years and now two new groups are starting up.

Woodcraft is a national co-operative organisation for children, young people and adults. Its aims are to have fun, increase self-confidence, and to build social skills and understanding in children and young people.

A longstanding group for teenagers aged 13 to 16 meets at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, every Friday from 7 - 9pm. In January two new groups for the younger ages will meet at Martin Primary School on Friday evenings.

There will be one group aimed at six to nine-year-olds, known as Elfins, meeting from 6.30 - 7.45pm, and one group for 10 to 12-year-olds, called Pioneers, meeting from 6.30 - 8pm.

Children will enjoy a varied programme including games, drama, singing, art and craft work as well as an educational programme based on co-operation. In the summer months there is a great emphasis on outdoor activities such as camping and map reading.

If you are interested,

please call Kate Brown on 020 8444 4652 or email woodcraftcb@yahoo.co.uk.

You can find out more about Central Barnet Woodcraft Folk at www.cbwf.org.uk.

Well played, Bishop Douglass

By Diana Cormack

Bishop Douglass School's under-12 netball team ended their present season on a high when they were runners up in a tournament held at the Cumberland Netball Club in Camden. The girls were the only representatives from Barnet and played against several other teams from outside the borough.



The successful team with netball teacher Tracy Quirke and England player Chioma Ezeogu. Photo: Courtesy of Cumberland Netball Club

Chioma Ezeogu, who plays wing attack on the England team, was there to take the warm up sessions and to present the prizes. Along with individual certificates, the Bishop Douglass team was presented with a new netball.

Assistant Subject Leader for PE Tracy Quirke, who trains the netballers, told *THE ARCHER* that this was the first competition they had entered. She would like to have matches with more local schools in the new season and to build on this successful start.

Students quiz film producer

By Diana Cormack

One morning in mid October a large number of students from Bishop Douglass School took over the Phoenix Cinema for a special screening of Ken Loach's *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*.

Made up of sixth formers studying media, Year 11 pupils taking history and some of the Year 10 Gifted and Talented group, the youngsters were able to take advantage of this free opportunity offered during National Schools Films Week. It also gave them the chance to question Rebecca O'Brien from Sixteen Films, who has produced Loach's films for the last ten years.

Back at school the media group wrote reviews of the film, which they found powerful and moving. Bishop Douglass is currently involved with a British Film Institute project and is hoping to establish a film studies course and to have greater links with the Phoenix in future. Commenting on how focused the children had been and how well they had responded to the film, Head of English Daniela Prina told *THE ARCHER* that she hoped it would be the first of many such educational visits.

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Wildlife diary: a year for the birds

By Linda Mitchell

Early spring saw sunny days, with birds singing by 5am. During February's heavy snowfall, all birds seemed reluctant to take scraps I left out, though parakeets fed on the nut feeders, oblivious to falling snow. Magpies and blue tits had already started nesting.

During March, a very large "buzzard type" bird hovered above. Crows chased it off, but kept their distance. I spotted it twice more, above the covered reservoir in Woodside Avenue, and towards Southern Road.

April brought very noisy baby magpies, ladybirds, bumble bees, and a few butterflies. No frogs!

Whenever parakeets come, there are no other birds around. By May, I was so concerned that the woodpecker had not visited that I took the feeders down for a bit, to deter the parakeets from over-feeding. Swifts appeared around 17 May, the latest I have seen them arrive since I started my wildlife diary seven years ago.

Rain, rain, rain

In summer, I wondered whether the rain would ever stop. A bedraggled woodpecker came to feed, followed by two young, which was an encouraging sight. One mid-summer evening, after a really heavy downpour, a beautiful

green woodpecker drank from a puddle on the patio. I also heard my first thrush.

A sparrowhawk tried to take a robin. It had been more successful in Lanchester Road, where I saw a mutilated wood pigeon with feathers everywhere.

A new visitor is a woodmouse. He darted from one side of the garden to the other, stopping just long enough to gather fallen nuts from the feeder. His ears are enormous!

One late summer evening, I heard the thrush singing from the top of one tree, and a blackbird from the other. Then a robin joined in, followed by a flock of swifts screeching across the garden.

It was a sight to see mum and dad blackbird with their three babies, all squashed up in the birdbath together. I saw starlings all summer, and the fox visits nightly, as does the owl, who hoots into the early hours.

Winter is upon us, and I am watching my garden wildlife closely...

Help a hedgehog

By Caroline Broome

Hedgehogs hibernate between November and mid-March. Try to keep aside a hedgehog-friendly area of garden, with heaps of leaves and brushwood. If you have to light a bonfire, always check that there are no animals sheltering in the middle of the pile.

After mid-October hedgehog orphans found weighing under 500g, if left, will probably die. They need to put on weight to see them through the winter. You can provide temporary shelter indoors, such as a garage or shed. Place the hedgehog in a large box with plenty of clean, fresh hay, crumpled newspapers or dry leaves.

Very young orphans should be kept warm. A hot water bottle wrapped in a towel is ideal. Feed them two heaped tablespoons of food daily, such as tinned dog food, and include small amounts of crushed dog biscuits to provide bulk and roughage.

On reaching a weight of between 550g and 680g, the young hedgehog, if active and while the weather is still relatively mild, can be released at night back to the area where it was found, to hibernate. Continue to provide food and

a shelter with nesting material to help the hedgehog build a winter nest.

RSPCA Clinic fund raising

Thanks to all the locals who visited our sale at RSPCA Small Animal Clinic on Saturday 29 September. All monies raised go towards the upkeep of the Clinic. A personal thank you to David Broome, who bleached his hair blond for a bet and raised funds for the Clinic.

Local legend reaches 103

By Daphne Chamberlain

Dauntless Dorothy Ditcham, of Lincoln Road, passed another milestone at the end of October. She is now 103. A friend and neighbour, Margaret McAlister, told us that she has made an excellent recovery from a stroke she suffered last year, and thoroughly enjoyed her birthday party.

Described by Margaret as "our local legend", Dorothy has always been one to laugh and enjoy herself.

She first came to East Finchley in 1911, later returning to settle in the same family house where she still lives today. Memories she has shared with *ARCHER* readers include playing in Coldfall Wood when it stretched up to Fortis Green, and local residents had keys to get in.

She went with her family to East Finchley's new cinema, then called the Picturedrome, now the Phoenix, and danced at the Athenaeum at Muswell Hill, where Sainsbury's is today.

In the East Finchley of her childhood, Hahn's the baker stood where Chorak is today and brought round trays of cakes on Saturdays. Convalescing World War One soldiers, wearing bright blue trousers and jackets and red ties, sat outside their nursing home in Fortis Green.

A well-travelled lady from a musical family, Dorothy once told *THE ARCHER* that she thrived on meeting interesting people and doing interesting things.



Dorothy Ditcham enjoying her party with friends and relatives. Photo courtesy Margaret McAlister

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

It's that time of year again...

It's December. You can't move for holly, and shops everywhere have 'Carols You've Come to Loathe' blasting out of a trashy sound system. And now the turkeys are voting early for Christmas. I don't think they meant to, mostly because I've met garden furniture that's more intelligent than the average turkey, but catching flu in November is a good way to miss out on the stuffing. If you're a turkey, that is.

As the thought of a mass cull leads to panic buying in the supermarkets of Britain, I rejoice at the thought of not being force fed something as dull, dry and tasteless as turkey. If I'd been one of the Pilgrim Fathers the sight of turkey at the first Thanksgiving dinner would have had me on the next boat home.

It's not that I don't like turkeys, I'm sure they make wonderful pets, but being forced to eat the damn thing for the first half of January is something else.

So, as the last remaining turkey in London is auctioned at Sothebys, what the hell are the rest of us going to eat? It's got to be something ecologically sustainable, free range and flu free.

They say you're never more than 10 feet from a rat, so how about getting Jamie Oliver to come up with a recipe for roast rat with cranberry stuffing? Or maybe Delia could devise something to do with grey squirrels, perhaps casserole with hazelnuts.

Maybe we could clean up London by eating a pigeon each. Nigella could do something with cream. It might be the start of a whole new way of celebrating Christmas: a low carbon emission eco-friendly pigeon would be enough to turn anyone vegetarian. It certainly works for me.

Who lived in your house?

Some readers may know that pop singer George Michael was born in a house in Church Lane, that Mick Jagger once lived in a flat on the corner of High Road and Huntingdon Road and that Peter Sellers lived in a High Road flat too.

Did someone famous ever live in your house or did something noteworthy happen there? Let us know by emailing the-archer@lineone.net or writing to *THE ARCHER*, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA. You can also leave a message on our phone line 08717 334465.



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- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** on Wednesdays, Christ Church N12. Call Bridie 8883 5269
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 1178.
- ❖ **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
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- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call 8883 7110.
- ❖ **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 0208 444 7217
- ❖ **East Finchley Writers Group** Creative writing 6.30pm every Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Carola 8883 5808 or Lilian 8444 1793.
- ❖ **East Finchley Writing Workshops**. poetry writing monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- ❖ **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 50s Tea Dance** at Christ Church, North Finchley. Every Weds, 1pm. 020 8444 0280.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children beginning at Old Barn every Monday, Contact Sharon 8349 4613

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- ❖ **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5459
- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **EF National Childbirth Trust** contact Joanna 8883 0941 or joanna-brunt@cybergal.com
- ❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club: All Stars Special** 10 Dec at 8pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
- ❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood**. www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or call 020 8883 7544.
- ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Mouldon on 8361 1696.
- ❖ **Highgate Film Society**, contact Admin Office 8340 3343 or email: admin@hlsi.net
- ❖ **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 John 8883 8114.
- ❖ **Stepping Stones**, interactive play session for under 3's. Karen 07957 278860.
- ❖ **SwampRock** live music events. See www.swamprock.org.uk
- ❖ **Traditional Music** in the Alexandra pub, Church Lane from 8.30pm on the last Thursday of every month.

REVIEWS

Humbly good drama

November saw a brilliant production by Incognito Theatre Company of *Humble Boy*, a play by Charlotte Jones first performed at the National Theatre in 2001. Directed by Margaret Johnson in their cosy Friern Barnet setting and with an accomplished amateur cast, this was a tragi-comedy that often came uncomfortably close to home.

Felix Humble, an awkward and socially inept theoretical physicist, returns home following his father's death to find his domineering, materialistic mother Flora sporting a new nose job as she flirts with working class cad and retired coach company owner George Pye. But humble pie is on the menu and things are not quite as they seem.

Felix, played by Spencer Clayton, was the perfect Winnie-the-Pooh, a "big, bumbling Humble"

and terminal disappointment to his fantastically superior mother. She, with her immaculate appearance and terse, cruel phrases - "there's something deeply satisfying about the crunch of a dead bee" - was brilliantly portrayed by Lesley Kennedy, a natural in the role.

Incognito's set was a charming arrangement of a rural idyll, a perfect little cottage garden onto which anaphylactic shocks, painful dinner parties and embarrassing

liaisons were imposed by its chaotic occupants. Only the ghostly gardener James seemed to blend into its natural beauty.

The play's resolution finally comes with the offering of a chance "to be, just to be," one of a number of necessary insect puns. The social order of the hive is re-established, and we are left to muse on many things.

Incognito's next performance is *Abandonment*, by Kate Atkinson, from 21-26 January.

Partition drama fails to engage

Review by Amit Sen

The Partition, screened at the Phoenix Cinema earlier this autumn, was originally commissioned by Channel 4 in 1987.

Written by political activist, writer and journalist Tariq Ali and directed by Ken McMullen, it is an adaptation of a short story by a well-known Urdu writer, Saadat Hasan Monto, entitled *Toba Tek Singh*.

Set in a 'lunatic asylum' during the partition of India in 1947, this is an allegory which seeks to contrast the lives of the inmates with the violent political events occurring outside and poses the central question: which is saner?

With a stellar cast including Saeed Jaffrey, Roshan Seth, John Shrapnel and Zohra Segal, the film is beautifully choreographed and is a fresh and unique piece of work.

Politicians and madmen

The action moves back and forth between the cabinet rooms of the newly emerging independent Indian government as it tries to wrestle with dividing the country, and the asylum in which the inmates agonise over the real horrors unleashed upon real people by madness and by violent partition.

That said, the end result is fragmented and confused. The film neither engages the audience in real political debate, as it pretends to do, nor is it narrative story telling. The music is used almost as wallpaper and contributes very little to the work.

The story behind the making of the film is more to do with the entitlement of liberal artists in the West. In this instance it happens to be a highly stylised and fictional adaptation based on a short story, a kind of partition of the senses, rather than about the partition of a country.



El with her artwork. Photo by John Lawrence

Art of glass

Working from a small kiln in a shed in her back garden, artist El Glinor creates works of art in recycled glass that she hopes will bring joy and excitement to those who see them.

El works meticulously to create extremely detailed pieces inspired by classic French and Venetian glass paperweights. They look equally beautiful with light shining on them or through them.

She said: "I'm inspired by the refined detail and the thoughtful colour co-ordination of the French and

Venetians. I try to bring that beauty and craftsmanship into the present day world."

El, who lives in Muswell Hill, had her glass work on show at Chorak in East Finchley and Muswell Hill throughout November. You may be able to catch it there still in December. If not, watch out for more of her exhibitions early in the New Year.

Golden Age for the Phoenix

By James Luxford

Although the London Film Festival was in full swing, the Phoenix Cinema managed to host an event that even the big names of Leicester Square would have envied.

Thursday 25 October saw a special preview, more than a week in advance of the film's release, of *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, followed by a question and answer session from the film's director Shekhar Kapur and its star actor Geoffrey Rush, who plays Sir Francis Walsingham.

The film follows on from the Oscar-winning 1998 film *Elizabeth*, which shot lead actress Cate Blanchett to superstar status. It revisits Queen Elizabeth I (Blanchett) a few years later as she grows more aware of the challenges to her throne, particularly the formidable opposition she faces from King Phillip II and his mighty Spanish Armada.

The Golden Age also explores the growing threats from her cousin Mary Queen of Scots (Samantha Morton) and Elizabeth's love for adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh (Clive Owen).

The Q&A was conducted via satellite as Kapur and Rush were 'unfortunately' (as Rush put it) in Los Angeles. During the session, the director and star talked about the many challenges of making the film, particularly as a 'sequel' to a historical film is quite unusual. Lasting for more than three hours, the Q&A brought a touch of Hollywood glamour to East Finchley.

Regular visitors must be getting used to that by now, as the cinema has seen filmmakers such as Ken Loach, Terry Gilliam and The League of Gentlemen appear in the past year alone. With more to come, it looks like The Phoenix is going from strength to strength.

What's On...

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

Thursday 6 - Saturday 8 December

• **The Guild Players** present *The Fumblings At Friar's Bottom*, a comedy by Richard Coleman. Performances at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, N3, at 7.45pm. Tickets £7. Box office 020 8346 6337. www.guildplayers.org.uk

Friday 7 December

• **Dyslexia from inside**, a talk by Elisabeth Landsbury, Feuerstein therapist, at a coffee morning hosted by **Friends of Barnet Libraries**, East Finchley Library, 11am - 12 noon. Everyone welcome.

Saturday 8 December

• **East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact Winter Fayre**, Martin Primary School, High Road, N2, from 12 - 4pm.

• **Sir Chrystemas**, a buffet supper concert of Christmas music with the **London Ripieno Singers**, Instrumental Ensemble and soloists; music by Sweelinck, Buxtehude, Darke, Ireland, Hanson, Gardner and the Christmas Music from Handel's Messiah; All Saints' Church, Durham Road, 7.30pm. Supper and concert, £15.00, must be prebooked on 020 8444 9214. Catering by Amici Delicatessen. Concert only, £10 at door according to availability. Organised by East Finchley Arts Festival.

Monday 10 - Friday 14 December

• **Community Focus Open Exhibition** by local professional and amateur artists, artsdepot, North Finchley, 10am - 5pm. 30% of money raised from sales of art will go towards the work of the Community Focus charity. Details: 020 8369 5484.

Saturday 15 December

• **North London Chorus** celebrates 30 glorious years of music at 7pm at St Michael's Church, Highgate, N6, with a programme of choral classics to exhilarate and uplift: Messiah Part I (arr. Mozart), Pergolesi Magnificat, Bach Cantata BWV 133, and Schoenberg Friede auf Erden (Peace on Earth). Tickets from 020 8883 8123 or Les Aldrich Music Shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, Muswell Hill, N10 (020 8883 5631). Former chorus members welcome to participate in Hallelujah Chorus finale. Retiring collection to support North London Hospice.

Friday 4 January

• **Laughter and tears**, a miscellany of recorded musical items presented by Ian Harvey, 11am - 12 noon at East Finchley Library. Refreshments provided. Everyone welcome.



Letters

We can't do without plastic bags

Dear Editor,

The campaign against plastic bags shows a superficial and simplistic attitude on the part of environmentalists. It is no accident that plastic bags have been used in their millions since they were invented. Apart from being cheap to produce, they are watertight, hygienic, weigh nothing and have a multitude of uses.

In fact, large numbers of plastic bags are already recycled by being re-used, as rubbish containers, bin liners, sandwich bags, etc, and can be taken backwards and forwards for shopping instead of acquiring new bags on every trip.

One fact ignored by the advocates of the big 'bag for life' is that there are many older and weaker people who simply cannot lift or carry heavy bags. One cloth bag is no substitute for several smaller plastic bags, which will not wreck the shopping if something spills, leaks or gets squashed.

You can't line a dustbin with paper or cotton. The only beneficiaries would be rats, maggots and bin-cleaning companies. A ban on plastic shopping bags would lead to an increase in sales of rolls of plastic bin liners and food storage bags for fridge and freezer. It would not obviate the need for plastic.

The practical solution is surely a campaign for people to take their plastic bags back to the shops to use again. This could be combined with the existing campaign for plastic bags to be made ultimately (after reasonable use) biodegradable.

Yours faithfully,
Valerie Jablon,
Address supplied.

Break the bag habit

Dear Editor

Shopkeepers have as much responsibility as their customers for reducing the number of plastic bags. For years I have carried my own shopping bag but, even when I put this on the counter, unless I say "I've got a bag" my purchase is put into a plastic bag before I can prevent it.

Charging for bags is of course the best solution. This is probably a step too far at the moment, but instead of being given a bag customers should be asked, "Do you need a bag?" The more discouraging this can be made to sound the better.

Yours faithfully
RC Winton
Creighton Avenue, N2

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

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How secure is our library?

Dear Editor,

How secure is the future of our library? It has been classified as 'local'. As such, the Council in a full meeting has refused to confirm that its funding would not be reduced. In fact, cut backs have already begun. Reduced staffing. Reduced book stock. Lunch time closures. Fewer evening openings. Fewer magazines and journals. Fewer reference items.

Perhaps the changes are purely administrative. More worryingly, perhaps they are part of a deliberate plan. Run the facilities down in stages, each small enough to lessen the likelihood of an outcry, but cumulatively leading to such a decline in use that the Council can claim it is only common sense to close the library altogether. After all, if we want "to enjoy twenty-first century library, community and information technology facilities" (to use the Council's words) a 'leading' library is only a bus ride or two away.

If there is no such plan, I wonder what is the point of dividing Barnet's libraries into leading and local. The general tightening of public expenditure that is clearly on the way could eventually allow a cash-strapped Council to argue that between them the six leading libraries provide the comprehensive service required by law. So there would be no need to keep open the other, by then manifestly, second-rate and therefore underused libraries.

I suggest there are two actions we can all take to try to avoid this happening. Whenever we become aware of a reduction in facilities complain to the Leader of the Council (not to the staff, who are just as much victims of what is going on as we are). Use the library as often and as much as possible. All loans and visits are electronically recorded, and the figures influence Council decisions.

Yours faithfully,
Leslie Gilbert,
Chandos Road, N2

Litter mystery deepens

Dear Editor,

Earlier this year we also had the same distinctive litter that David Mel-some describes (The Curious Incident of Litter in the Night Time, The Archer, October 2007), along Southern Road and Shakespeare Gardens. It always appeared at night too, sometimes in a neat pile by a front garden wall, other times in the gutter.

It does seem to have stopped over the past couple of months, tying in with the new appearances in Church Vale. Perhaps whoever it is stopped because of the new CPZ around here.

Some residents thought that maybe it was a prostitute working from a car - I hope not.

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied.

Plastic with a capital P

Dear Editor,

The proliferation of plastic bags is indeed a problem, and I sympathise with the wish to turn East Finchley into a plastic bag-free zone, but what about the problem of the hygienic disposal of soiled cat litter (or any other noxious, liquid waste)?

My cat Perkins, who pees for England and whose tray has to be changed up to four times a day, produces urine that soaks through the litter plus several layers of newspaper beneath it, and would certainly soak through the strongest of brown paper bags.

Just think of the ghastly smell that would emanate from a dustbin containing bags of leaking cat pee. The poor dustmen would have to wear gas masks! I always use recycled plastic bags for this purpose, and without them my dustbin would be a health and safety hazard.

Yours faithfully,
Jenny Lee
Cherry Tree Road, N2

Look, vote and buy at CF art show

By Nicola Sim

Community Focus, the inclusive art centre based on level 2 at artsdepot in North Finchley, is set to showcase the work of its members and other Barnet residents in the CF Open Exhibition from 10 - 14 December.

The exhibition launch will be held on Monday 10 December from 5.30pm, with the official opening at 7.30pm. All members of the community are invited to join exhibitors for food, drinks and prize-giving.

Visitors will be able to buy the art on display, which will include photography, painting and mixed media, and even vote for their favourite work. Thirty per cent of any money raised will go towards fundraising for the charity, which in 2008 will celebrate its 30th year of providing accessible creative activities and outreach projects in Barnet.

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



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

Can East Finchley become a transition village?

By Harriet Copperman

Over the last year, this paper has been seeking views on why we like living in East Finchley. For myself, having lived in Muswell Hill for 25 years, I feel like I've moved to another town altogether, though it's probably less than a mile.

Facilities and amenities include good public transport, strong community spirit, local shops and services, an independent cinema, a youth theatre, open spaces and ancient woodland, schools and further educational facilities, playing field, allotments, local voluntary newspaper and a local farmers' market.

Careless townies

Many readers will be aware of the issues of global warming and 'peak oil' (how do we cope when fossil fuels become increasingly rare?). Anyone with children or grandchildren should want to think about them carefully because basic life and living will become much more difficult over the next few decades. We may think that, living in London, we are shielded from floods, food shortages and loss of electricity and other fuels. In fact, we are more vulnerable than people living in rural communities who at least have some knowledge of self-sufficiency or access to the necessities of life.

As 'townies' we give scant thought to where our food comes from, the water that comes out of the tap, the light when we flick a switch or the warmth when the central heating is on. We complain if these essentials/utilities are not deemed cheap enough. The reality, however, is that we are squandering these resources literally at our children's peril.

Planning ahead

However, over the past few years, a new approach has developed in order to delay the impending shortages. It is called 'Transition towns and neighbourhoods'. East Finchley already has a well developed sense of community, but do we have the will to engage in a neighbourly sense in order to plan for a sustainable East Finchley in say 2020?

Would you be interested in our community working towards a degree of self-sufficiency in food and energy? It would certainly be hard work, but that is the only way anything is achieved.

We can continue to do nothing, except perhaps change our light bulbs and hope for the best, and also hope that we or our children don't end up like 80% of the world's population with no access to running water, or we can really come together as a community and 'have a go'.

Further information is available at www.transitionculture.org. Send your thoughts about whether and how we should go forward with this concept to THE ARCHER.

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Carey with her re-vamped book. Photo by Diana Cormack

A write retirement

By Diana Cormack

After they retire, people often say they have never been so busy and wonder how they ever found the time to go to work. This comment could certainly be made by Carey Miller, of Woodside Avenue, who spent more than 30 years in primary school teaching, 11 of those as head of a Beacon school in Kings Cross.

During that time, Carey was twice invited to Highgrove to discuss education with Prince Charles and also to Buckingham Palace in recognition of her services to education. Besides her great involvement in teaching, Carey brought up three children with her husband David and wrote 11 children's books.

Carey's monsters

These books have sparked a new venture for Carey since her retirement. Her *Dictionary of Monsters and Mysterious Beasts*, first published in 1974, has been very successfully revised and revamped. Now she uses it as a basis for the primary school workshops she runs for Years 4, 5 and 6.

They are able to hear at first hand an author's experience in writing for children, and have an interactive discussion on the content of the book, which The Muswell Hill Children's Bookshop describes as: "A welcome re-issue of an accessible and informative guide to many strange and wondrous creatures

found in folklore and literature. It will particularly delight nine to 10-year-old boys."

Carey's visits to schools do not stop there; she is on the governing body of three primary schools and sits on an independent appeals panel for schools in Haringey. She is also a local magistrate. Despite all this, Carey has found the time to write a children's novel entitled *Hagstone*, which she hopes to see published next year.

A call across the pond

Tracy Paris was born and raised in Manor Park Road before moving to America, where she has since brought up her own family. Scanning the internet for anything connected to East Finchley, she came across *THE ARCHER* and thought she'd get in touch to trace the friends and family she's lost touch with since those happy days.

I lived with my grandmother Eva Simmonds at 49 Manor Park Road from 1958 when I was born until she died in 1970. I have nothing but amazing memories from that time in my childhood and still remember fondly how safe and friendly the area was.

I went to Martins school in the High Road and then to Manorside Girls' School. We walked everywhere in those days and I remember every road and shortcut like it was yesterday. Back then it was perfectly safe and normal to walk across 'the old barn' when I visited my best friend Lesley or to go under the tunnel on Manor Park to get to Church Lane, probably going to the indoor swimming pool where I learned to swim.

My cousins Lee and Gary stayed with us frequently, as my Nan's home was home to lodgers and family, always bustling and smelling of the best cooked meals around. It was home in the true sense of the word.

The living room was not to be used except for special occasions and we all ate our meals together at the kitchen table. If we were really lucky we could run down to Jack's corner shop for sweets. Oh, the good old days.

So much time has passed and so many things are different. I moved to America in 1986 and have since lost contact with family and friends. I'm trying desperately to find people: my cousins John and Sue Simmonds and their children Lee, Lecia, Lucy and Luke, my cousins Lee and Gary Simmonds, and my best friend, Lesley Drayton.



Tracy Paris

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I can't tell you how many times I think about and miss East Finchley. There was NO better place to grow up!

Tracy now lives in Fairfax, California, and works as a clinical research manager for the California Kidney Cancer Foundation. You can get in touch with her via *THE ARCHER* by emailing the-archer@lineone.net or by writing to *THE ARCHER*, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

TreeHouse support

John Hajdu, whose presidency of the Northern Heights Probus Club for retired business people ended in July 2007, chose TreeHouse, the national charity for autism education, to benefit from the club's annual charitable donation of £200.

Mr Hajdu paid a visit to TreeHouse, based in Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill, and presented the cheque to Gill Bierschenk, TreeHouse Headteacher.

Established in 1997 by a group of parents, TreeHouse runs a school for children and young people with autism and campaigns for better autism education nationally.



John Hajdu photo by John Dearing

To all our readers...

Season's Greetings and a very Happy New Year to all our readers and advertisers from everyone on *THE ARCHER* team. Your contributions and support throughout 2007 have been much appreciated by us all.

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