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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURTIERS

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Recycling in a stink

By Isabel Coe

Environmentally-conscious residents in Summerlee Gardens were left with bulging recycling boxes for nearly three weeks because no one bothered to collect their rubbish. Excess newspapers were left littering the pavements and bottles were piled high in the black recycling boxes.

If you had taken a stroll down the leafy cul-de-sac at the time, you might have been forgiven for thinking that its residents were over-indulging in the festive spirit in the run-up to Christmas.

Richard Milne says he and his neighbours endured nearly three weeks without a collection. "Neither the black bin nor the blue bin was collected for more than two weeks. I had all my bottles in one of them and I'm sure all my neighbours must think I'm an alcoholic. There was rubbish all over the street," he said.

Late collections create build-up

The problem began when residents were issued with the new, blue recycling box for plastics, cardboard and tins. The box, which comes with a thin rope net as a cover, is meant to complement the existing black one and make recycling even easier.

Mr Milne explained that because his last collection

had also been late by almost a week, his boxes were always struggling to cope with their load: "OK, anyone can make a mistake once," he said. "But twice so far, in a row? Barnet must have been aware that something had gone seriously wrong."

Council's response

One resident complained to Barnet Council and refuse collectors promptly emptied her boxes the following day, but left the bulging boxes in the rest of the street untouched.

A spokesman for Barnet Council said it had tendered the job of emptying the boxes out to another company, May Gurney. He was unable to comment on the situation in Summerlee Gardens, but said a letter of apology would be issued to all its residents.

THE ARCHER contacted May Gurney for a comment but at the time of going to press they had not replied. All recycling boxes in Summerlee Gardens have since been emptied.

Is the new recycling service working for you? Our contact details are on page 2.



The editorial team of *The Martin*. Photo by Heleln Drake

Read all about it!

By Helen Drake

The Martin, a newspaper produced by Year 6 pupils at Martin Primary School, hit the newsstands in November with a new editorial team at the helm.

Sold to parents and carers while they waited to see teachers during a parent consultation evening, the first print run sold out and extra copies needed to be photocopied to meet demand. The cover price of 30p raised extra funds for the school. Teachers were given complimentary copies.

Lili, Rachel, Willem, Hester and Agnes have become the editors for the 2008-09 academic year. They have allowed themselves three weeks to plan and

write their second issue before the next parent consultations in the spring term.

Watch out, *THE ARCHER*

For their second issue the team are planning an interview with headteacher Mrs Morrison and

details about the latest achievements in the school. Deputy headteacher John Pickering said: "If their good work continues it won't be long before a new generation of East Finchley journalists takes over duties on *THE ARCHER*."

THE ARCHER

has a new website

THE ARCHER website has been updated with new features and a smart new look. You can read the latest issue online and explore our archive of stories going back as far as 1997.

The site gives advice on contributing to the newspaper as well as details of our advertising rates and deadlines. If you're looking for a particular story, the search box should help you find it quickly and easily.

Thanks to Ross Arnold for redesigning the site. Visit us at www.the-archer.co.uk and add us to your favourites.



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

Your contributions

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.

Copy deadlines

February issue: 16 January

March issue: 13 February

April issue: 13 March

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Councils

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 8359 3815
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 0845 111 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

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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

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

Bus stop robbery

By Janet Maitland

Police are appealing for witnesses following a robbery in Coppetts Road, N10, on Friday 5 December at about 7.15pm.

A 63-year-old woman was waiting at a bus stop in Coppetts Road, near the junction with Martins Walk, when a young man grabbed her handbag. He pulled at the bag with such force that he dragged her into the road, causing vehicles to swerve to avoid them, until the bag strap broke and he lost his grip.

When passing motorists stopped to help her, the man then ran at a 24-year-old woman at the bus stop, lunging at her bags and pulling her into the road. When she dropped her handbag, the man ran off with it. He was chased by several passers-by into the Halliwick Recreation ground, but they

were unable to catch him.

"The suspect used an unacceptable amount of force and both women have been left very distressed by the incident," said Detective Sergeant Carre Brown of Haringey's Robbery Squad. "We think there may have been people driving past who didn't realise what was happening and may have crucial information."

The suspect is described as a white male aged 16-20 wearing casual clothes. Anyone with any information is asked to contact Haringey's Robbery Squad on 020 8345 0870 or, to remain anonymous, to get in touch with Crimestoppers on 0800 555 1

Teenager injured

By Janet Maitland

A young teenage girl was injured after being in collision with a Land Rover as she crossed the High Road by Martin Primary School on Saturday 22 November. The accident happened at about 5pm, near Church Lane.

The girl was taken in an ambulance to the Royal Free Hospital with injuries to her chest, abdomen and face. Barnet police reported that her injuries were not life-threatening or life-changing and no arrests were made.

Advertising in THE ARCHER

Please note that all advertising requests and instructions for our February issue need to reach us by 14 January. We regret that we will not be able to accept any February requests later than that date.

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Planning Applications

Barnet Council

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East Finchley Allotments, Plane Tree Walk, N2

Installation of two composting toilets on the allotment site.

Flat 6, Elmhurst Court, Elmhurst Avenue, N2

Loft conversion and roof lights to front and rear elevations.

81-85 East End Road, N2

Construction of first and second floors over existing warehouse to provide a total of four self-contained flats with provision of car parking spaces accessed from Brackenbury Road.

29 Greenhalgh Walk, N2

Retention of conversion of garage into habitable room including replacement of existing garage door.

Islington and St Pancras Cemetery and Crematorium, High Road, N2

Addition of photovoltaic panels to roof of chapel

45 Juliana Close, N2

Single storey side extension.

27 Kitchener Road, N2

Erection of iron spiral staircase and balcony to rear of property giving access to garden. Alteration to brick-

work to provide internal access.

374B Long Lane, N2

Retention of rear conservatory on former patio area.

Car Park adjacent to Old Barn Community Centre, 20 Fallows Close, N2

Installation of single storey demountable building within existing car park to provide interim accommodation during building works at Newstead Children's Centre.

Haringey Council

Flat 11, Aylmer Court, Aylmer Road N2

Replacement of existing windows with white uPVC double glazed windows

32 & 34 Aylmer Road N2

Creation of common vehicle cross-over to nos. 32 and 34 Aylmer Road.

4 Cheapside, Fortis Green N2

Change of use from A1 (shop) to A3 (restaurant)

Coppetts Wood Hospital, Coppetts Road N10

Demolition of existing building except for administration building that fronts Coppetts Road; conversion and extension of administration building fronting Coppetts Road, and erection of seven blocks between 2/4 storeys in height to provide a total of 63 units with associated parking, access roads and landscaping.

28 Twyford Avenue N2

Erection of single storey side and rear extension, and conversion of garage into habitable room.

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Fencing champions: Romy Aspinall (left) and Alice Donnachie.

No stage fright for stage fighter

By David Melsome

When young actor Alice Donnachie landed the part of the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* she had no idea that she was about to uncover a hidden sporting talent and end up competing in a national championship.

As part of her acting training at Finchley Youth Theatre, Alice, of Hertford Road, was given some stage fighting lessons. She enjoyed the fencing so much that she joined a local fencing club.

Just six months later, Alice and her friend Romy Aspinall, both 15, competed in the Under-18 London Fencing Championships. They wound up fighting against each other, with Alice becoming female épée champion and Romy winning the silver medal.

Champions in training

Now the two Fortismere School pupils are set to compete in the under-class at the National Youth Championships in Stoke later this month.

Alice said: "The national championships will be daunting because they are eight solid hours of fencing. We're training three days a week to get up to standard. You need good stomach muscles and a lot of stamina."

So what is it about fencing that Alice enjoys? "I'd never tried a combat sport before. It's exciting, and quite painful sometimes, but you never know what's going to happen. With a bit of luck and technique, you can beat someone who's a lot better than you."

Épée is a style of fencing that uses a heavier sword than the normal fencing foil and where the whole of the body is a target area.

Springboard for talent

Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road creates opportunities for young people aged between 10 and 25 to take part in drama, dance and technical theatre skills workshops.

Ian Trimmer, youth drama worker at the theatre, said: "Alice was a very committed and talented member of Finchley Youth Theatre and I'm delighted she has done so well by taking on these basic stage combat skills and pursuing them to another level."

THE ARCHER Calendar 2009: it's

not too late

There's still time to order your ARCHER calendar for 2009. Use the order form on page 9 and the calendar will be delivered to your door FREE within 14 days.

Thank you to everyone who has bought a copy and helped support the crucial work of Contact, based in Church Lane. Each calendar costs £5 and every penny goes to the charity.

Contact holds social events, runs transport services and organises a befriending network, all of which make a huge difference to the lives of elderly, disabled and isolated people in our community.

The calendar has a different perspective on East Finchley for each month, some of them well-known and some of them hidden treasures. Order copies for yourself or friends now.

THE ARCHER thanks all the readers who sent in photographs to be used in the calendar; and Photobox.co.uk for designing and printing it free of charge.

Competition winners

Congratulations to the winners of our competition in November's issue to win two pairs of tickets to see the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra and the Joyful Company of Singers at artsdepot in North Finchley. They were S Carroll, of Squires Lane, N3, and Katharine Turner, of Baronsmere Road, N2.



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Hurdles cleared for Phoenix restoration

By John Lawrence

The £1 million plan to restore the Phoenix Cinema to its 1930s art deco glory in time for its centenary celebrations in 2010 has cleared two major hurdles.

First, the proposals were given the full consent of Barnet's planners, including the plan's most ambitious idea to add a glass-fronted café and terrace bar to the front of the cinema.

Secondly, the hard work of drawing up detailed documents led to the proposal receiving first-stage backing by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Now there is a lot more work to do to get the plan through a second stage that will, it is hoped, see the Fund provide 56% of the money required.

A long-term goal

Phoenix chief executive Paul Homer is delighted with the progress of the restoration project so far but is still appealing for local people, businesses and organisations to help the cinema reach its fundraising target.

If the Heritage Lottery Fund application is successful, and once other donations have been taken into account, the cinema will still need to find £280,000 from public donations.

Paul said: "We know it's a difficult time for everyone at the moment but the reaction we've had to our restoration plans has been very positive and we're extremely grateful to the people who've given what they can afford so far.

"The project we are trying to do will have a long-term positive impact on East Finchley and the whole area. We're not saying help us or we close but we do need



Phoenix manager Paul Homer.

Photo by John Dearing

to do this work on the building now if the Phoenix is to have a long-term future."

The restoration project includes the complete renovation of the cinema's 1910 auditorium and a smart new look for the exterior façade. The terrace café would be a major visual landmark in the High Road.

Timetable

The Phoenix Cinema's second submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund must be completed by the end of February, with a yes or no expected in June. One hopeful sign is that the Fund has appointed a special advisor to the Phoenix to help it succeed in the application process.

If you would like to help the Phoenix Cinema, donations can be made online at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/support/campaigns, by post to Phoenix Cinema, 52 High Road, London N2 9PJ, or by contacting Paul Homer through the box office on 020 8444 6789 or info@phoenixcinema.co.uk.

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Residents target local issues

By Caroline Broome

The East Finchley Village Residents' Association, formed in June 2008, had its second meeting on 1 December at The Five Bells on East End Road. The meeting focused on two issues that specifically affect those residents who live in or around Church Lane.

First, since gas road works started on East End Road during autumn 2008, traffic had been diverting down Church Lane, perhaps redirected by GPS systems. Concern is growing that, since drivers have discovered this shortcut, they will continue to use it.

Traffic-calming

Previous submissions by local councillors to Barnet Council regarding recommendations and suggestions, such as 20mph speed limits, better junction signage and enforced parking restrictions at junctions, have so far come to nothing.

Concerns continue to grow regarding speeding, insufficient and unenforced parking restrictions, and driving the 'wrong way' over the bridge in Church Lane. The consensus was that something must be done before, and not as a result of, a road traffic fatality. There has already been a 'near miss' head-on collision on the bridge during summer 2008.

Suggestions were made for gaining community support by planning public events, possibly including local schools, as Church Lane is designated as a Safe Route to Schools.

Stag Court

The other item on the agenda was the planning appeal to establish a supermarket at Stag Court, 201-203 High Road, adjacent to Park Road and Lesley Road. Stag Court has an existing, and as yet unoccupied, ground floor area that could accommodate a small

local supermarket such as Tesco Metro. There were discussions about potential damage to existing local trade and, with Martin School just across the road, traffic congestion, parking conflicts and possible safety risks.

If you would like more infor-

mation about the East Finchley Village Residents' Association meeting, please contact Caroline and David Broome 020 8444 2329 or Patti and Bob Owens 020 8365 4621. The next meeting is 9 February at a venue to be decided.

News from the Safer Neighbourhood Team

By Sergeant Lee Benham

I would like to thank you all for your support during 2008. We will continue to address your issues and problems in the coming year to make sure that East Finchley is a safe place to live. I would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year and look forward to working with you in 2009.

During the cold weather, please spare a thought for elderly or disabled neighbours. Perhaps you could check to see that they are warm enough or offer to buy food so that they don't need to walk to the shops on icy, slippery pavements. If you feel that someone is in need of support greater than you can offer as a good neighbour, you can contact Help the Aged at info@helptheaged.org.uk or 020 7278 1114.

Meetings and messages

We have planned a series of public surgeries for the New Year. The first of these will be at the library between 2pm and 3pm on Saturday 17 January. Please come along to meet the team, get the latest crime prevention advice and raise



any concerns you have about crime and anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhood.

Have you noticed the new frontage to our office on the High Road? We're also going to install a new electronic message board in February which will provide up to the minute information about public meetings and crime prevention advice.

The Safer Neighbourhood office is at 113 East Finchley High Road, N2 8AG. You can phone us on 020 7161 9014 or 07887 632767, email us at EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk or talk to the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) you see on patrol.



Mrs Helen Morrison, the new Headteacher of Martin Primary School. Photo by Catrin Dillon

New headteacher makes an impact

By Helen Drake

Helen Morrison, the new headteacher at Martin Primary School and Nursery, has already made an enormous impact since she started last September. Notice boards have appeared in both playgrounds, a new homework policy has been written with parents, two learning mentors have been appointed to support families and children, and parents have been invited in to visit their children's lessons.

Someone to watch

Previously Deputy Head at Gospel Oak School in Camden, Mrs Morrison is a qualified Ofsted inspector and has an MA in Leadership and Management. Her step up to headship has been noticed in the national media. She has been interviewed by the Times Educational Supplement.

Feeling welcome

Mrs Morrison applied for the headship at Martin Primary because she says she felt she could make a difference. "This is a good school," said Mrs Morrison, "but it has the capacity to be outstanding. The governors have just approved our School Improvement Plan which incorporates a whole school priority for maths and

this will be made accessible to parents who can come and ask me about any aspect of it.

"The partnership we have with our parents is high on the agenda for me. Our Early Years provision is another area of focus for the school: we have a thriving nursery and I want to make sure the local community knows about it.

"Because we are now a Primary School we received extra funding for building works which we will be starting soon alongside a rolling programme of refurbishment. We are developing our website too."

She added: "This is a lovely, friendly school and I'm enjoying getting to know everyone connected with it. I've been made to feel very welcome".

Journalist turns lawyer

By Emma Suzuki

When I lived in East Finchley, I was a budding journalist and reported for THE ARCHER. Some years have passed and to my dismay I haven't made it as a journalist. In fact, my career led me down a decidedly different path and I am now a solicitor specialising in employment law.

During my ARCHER days, I wrote articles on the coming of artsdepot in North Finchley and the death of the Queen Mother. Now I find myself drafting employment tribunal application forms involving claims for constructive unfair dismissal, redundancy payments, wrongful dismissal and discrimination.

As a sole practitioner at UK Employment Law Matters, I sometimes feel like a journalist in that I constantly have deadlines and keep erratic hours. So perhaps my writing ambitions are being fulfilled after all.

Emma is based in Mill Hill and can be contacted on 020 8906 7741 or emmasuzuki@ukemploymentlaw.org.uk



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Visitors always welcome



Fundraising and friendship as local members of the Greek Women's Philanthropic Association enjoy their lunch at Genzo. Photo by Polly Parperi.

Ladies who do more than lunch

On Tuesday 9 December the Greek Women's Philanthropic Association (Finchley & Barnet) held their annual fund raising lunch at Genzo restaurant in the High Road, with 120 ladies attending. The event was a great success and the proceeds went to Crisis, food baskets for needy families, the children's ward at Barnet General, Great Ormond Street Hospital and a Christmas lunch for some 80-100 senior citizens in the community.

The Association was formed some 23 years ago with the aim of helping sick and needy families in the Greek community within Finchley and Barnet. It has, however, grown and spread over a far greater area in its philanthropic work, thus making it possible to donate to other charities working for the community such as North London Hospice, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, Salvation Army and many more.

It is a registered charity and all fund raising events are organ-

ised by a committee of 13 ladies and supported by approximately 150 members, many of whom live in East Finchley.

Although this is the first function held at Genzo, Aggy and Maria Toumazou, the proprietors, have allowed the group to use their established banqueting rooms in Palmers Green for the past seven years and have assisted with their expertise. The group would like to thank them most sincerely for their support.

Happiness in helping

By Linda Sansom

Anyone walking into a recent meeting in East Finchley would have been greeted by a strange sight: a room full of people apparently asleep. It wasn't that they were bored, or tired; they were simply taking part in a meditation exercise led by the speaker at the AGM of the charity Home-Start Barnet.

Kay Sugihara, from the Heruka Buddhist Centre in Golders Green, was explaining how the benefits of meditation could help people deal with unhappiness. She said most people were practical, and so needed a practical tool to deal with stress.

The volunteers who helped families on behalf of East Finchley-based Home-Start were wonderful because they genuinely wanted to think of others and help others, and doing this made them happy, said Kay.

Achievements and challenges

Also at the meeting, held in the Old Barn Community Centre, Tarling Road, was Barnet's Mayor, Councillor John Marshall, who praised the scheme for meeting a need in the borough and helping children who would become the future of the country.

Chair Gilli Pettinger detailed the events of the past year, in which Home-Start Barnet had continued to grow, with more volunteers than ever before.

They had appointed a dedicated volunteer coordinator, continued the group for teenage parents, run two accredited courses for parents with prospects and young mums to be, and were about to start a new Sunday group for families with high needs. The twice-weekly Drop-In at Grahame Park had also continued to do well, so much so that at one point they had considered restricting the numbers attending.

She warned, however, that the next 12 months would bring challenges caused by the financial situation, which were common to all charities, and that Home-Start would have to manage things very carefully.

Lest we forget

By Linda Dolata

Anybody like myself who reads the Daily Telegraph is probably aware of the recent drive to build a £2 million memorial to the RAF's Bomber Command. Although the bombers have had a bad press by some, it must be remembered that when they were in action, there was little sign that the war would eventually go Britain's way, and the heavy Wellingtons and iconic Lancasters helped keep hopes high.

Bomber Command has no memorial, either in London or in Lincoln, where they were mostly based, despite the fact that with 55,573 killed they sustained the heaviest losses of any unit in the Second World War.

One man's war

The reason I am interested in promoting this appeal is a personal one. My father was in one of the Polish Bomber Squadrons, No. 300, from its inception near the beginning of the war, until demobilisation after the Berlin food drops in 1946.

In 1939, after standing up to Hitler's tanks for as long as possible, many of the Polish Airforce made their way south through Romania to the Black Sea, where the Brits did their best to evacuate them so that the Poles could fight on. My own father, Edmund, eventually got to Malta and later fought on with the RAF.

Find out more

If this subject interests you, a wealth of information is available. The airfields in Lincolnshire are mostly still identifiable, and there is still a Lancaster flying. Once heard, its deep-throated engines are instantly recognisable.

The RAF Museum at Hendon is the most obvious source of information, and indeed the appeal for a memorial is based there: Bomber Command Association, RAF Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon, London NW9 5LL. Online, visit www.telegraph.co.uk/bombercommand

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Barnet Cyclists raise money for cycles overseas. Photo by Peter Baker

Barnet Cyclists help to save lives

By John Silvertown

Barnet Cyclists have raised enough money to buy 27 bicycles for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These bikes are used in rural areas of the developing world to help health workers visit patients and deliver medical supplies or help children in remote villages get to school.

UNICEF can buy the bikes for just £25 each. With bicycles, each health worker is completely independent and can see patients within a 15km radius. The bike is an ideal vehicle for Africa where road conditions for other traffic can be poor. To support this cause you can make a donation on the UNICEF website www.unicef.org.uk/store.

The money was raised by members as part of Barnet Cyclists 25th anniversary cel-

ebrations.

Barnet Cyclists organise at least two easy-paced cycle rides per month and meet on the last Thursday of each month at 8pm at Carey Hall, Trinity Church, Nether Street, North Finchley, N12 7NN. For details of meetings and rides, visit www.barnetlcc.org. The group, which is part of the London Cycling Campaign, also campaigns for better cycling facilities.

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Love it or hate it - this was 2008

Do we need another supermarket in East Finchley? Will two new medical centres be good or bad for our health? And did you feel the earthquake? All questions that got us talking in 2008. Here's our round-up of the most memorable moments from the last 12 months.

• January

Actor Mackenzie Crook is pictured behind the controls of a tube train at East Finchley station, filming scenes for the British comedy movie *3 and Out*. The film is released later in the spring to mixed reviews.

A car crashes into two gardens in Church Lane, demolishing walls, gates and shrubs, and leading to calls from residents for better speed controls along this busy route.

Barnet Council leader Mike Freer brings one of his first 'Leader Listeners' road shows to Bishop Douglass School where he discusses local issues with residents from a polling district in the East End Road area.

The recently amalgamated Martin Primary School celebrates its official opening with a special assembly for children, staff and governors.

Teenagers Fred Isaac, of Huntingdon Road, and Charlie Gould, from Hampstead Garden Suburb, attempt to visit every station on the London Underground network in one day. They manage a bottom-numbing 251 stops out of 268 in 18 hours and 35 minutes but just miss out on the record set by two Swedes in 2006.



Tree falls on car (February). Photo by John Dearing

• February

High winds batter the area; a man and woman are injured when a tree falls on their car in a driveway on the Great North Road.

A proposal to replace a single house in Aylmer Road provokes fierce opposition from residents who say the plan will destroy the character of their area and threaten their privacy.

The future of the former Finchley Manor Garden Centre in East End Road remains uncertain. Proposals to convert it into a medical centre are turned down and a strip of land on part of the site is put up for sale.

Bishop Douglass School becomes the first Barnet School to offer children and adults the chance to learn Portuguese.

• March

People protest at proposals to close two Post Offices in East End Road and at the northern end of the High Road, near Strawberry Vale, as part of a national cost-cutting plan.

East Finchley Farmers' Market struggles to attract stallholders at its first Sunday outing of the year at Martin School. A French market held along the High Road near the tube station is more successful.

East Finchley feels the effects of an earthquake which sends tremors across Britain. Residents in some areas of N2 experience the shaking while others feel nothing.

More than 1,400 fundraisers wrap up warm for the Big Fun Walk in aid of the North London Hospice. The eight-mile route takes them from East Finchley station through London's parks to Westminster.



Crowds at the festival (June). Photo by John Lawrence

• June

Plans to turn Finchley Memorial Hospital in North Finchley into a major new healthcare centre offering GP services and pharmacy dispensing raise fears that doctors' surgeries and pharmacists in East Finchley will be badly affected.

Two Post Offices in East End Road and High Road, North Finchley, are shut down despite customers' protests.

High winds die away and sunshine takes their place to make the East Finchley Community Festival in Cherry Tree Wood one of the busiest ever.

Six friends set out from East Finchley on a 10,000-mile journey by jeep to Mongolia to raise money for a children's charity there.

• July

Traders warn that a Barnet Council decision to tax them for use of the pavement outside their premises will threaten their businesses and change the image of East Finchley for the worse.

It's the end of an era at Martin Primary School when headteacher Maggie Driscoll retires after 10 years in the post and more than 30 years in teaching.

Plans are unveiled to transform the derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood into a new community facility featuring a café and an upstairs space for exhibitions, public meetings and fitness groups.

East Finchley Festival master of ceremonies Antigua Joe is badly injured in a street attack in Torquay. The 56-year-old singer, whose real name is Conrad Joseph, later makes a full recovery.

Local artists open their homes and studios over two weekends for the East Finchley Open summer event.



Floods in Bedford Road (August). Photo by Sam Clarke

• August

Local GPs and pharmacists are surprised to learn that Finchley Manor Garden Centre in East End Road could be turned into another polyclinic to add to the one already

planned alongside the site of Finchley Memorial Hospital.

The proposal to turn Stag Court in the High Road into a supermarket is turned down.

Stanley Field sees football action once again when young people from the Monday Club hold a mini sports day.

A wild and wet summer is topped off when residents in Bedford Road are forced out in their wellies to unblock flooding drains after a sudden downpour.

• September

Residents in the Church Lane area set up the East Finchley Village Residents' Association to campaign for action on local issues and to run social events.

East Finchley triathlete Nino Baglioni attempts to travel from London to Paris entirely under his own steam. The run through Kent and the cycle through France go to plan but the swim across the Channel is called off due to bad weather.

Haringey Council calls a meeting to discuss the future development of Muswell Hill playing fields, adjoining Coldfall Wood. Houses will not be built on the land but the existing play and leisure facilities need improvement.

Cherry Tree Wood plays host to its second festival of the year, this time the Muswell Hill Festival and Donkey Derby.

Arsenal goalkeeper Manuel Almunia, cricket commentator Henry Blofeld and local poet Fleur Adcock are three famous names to appear at special events at the Phoenix Cinema.

• October

Barnet Council gives planning permission for a polyclinic on the site of the Finchley Manor Garden Centre, East End Road. The decision surprises many local people and businesses but is not opposed by the Barnet Primary Care Trust despite its own plans for building a polyclinic alongside the site of the current Finchley Memorial Hospital in North Finchley.



Underwear walk (October)

East Finchley Library celebrates its 70th birthday.

After more than 20 years trading in the High Road, popular Chinese restaurant Mandarin closes down with a message from William, the owner, saying: "I shall miss the chatter and the stories we have shared."

East Finchley farmers' market organizer Wayne Atkinson announces with regret that the monthly market has been discontinued after seeing many of his

producers and suppliers drop out.

Around 100 men, women and children clad in their underwear walk through East Finchley to raise money for destitute asylum seekers.

November

After rejection by Barnet Council earlier in the year, controversial plans for a new supermarket at Stag Court go to appeal, meaning the proposal could still go ahead.

Hundreds of residents in Strawberry Vale find themselves without cooking facilities thanks to a major fault in their gas supply. Replacement electric cookers are said to be impractical and very expensive to run.

The French market makes a successful second visit to East Finchley with food and craft stalls lighting up part of the High Road.

Residents receive blue boxes from Barnet Council as kerbside recycling collections start for plastic bottles and cardboard.

The East Finchley Open artists hold their annual Winter Fair at Martin Primary School.

THE ARCHER Calendar 2009 goes on sale!



The French market (November)

• December

The Phoenix Cinema launches a fundraising campaign to raise £280,000 towards the bill for restoring the 100-year-old building. Plans include a complete renovation of the 1910 auditorium and the addition of a glass-fronted café at the front of the cinema.

Barnet Council announces that kerbside recycling rates have soared since the introduction of blue boxes in November but some residents complain that their boxes are not being emptied on time, and others say that the lid-less design of the boxes makes them unsightly and prone to water-logging.

Fifteen-year-old Alice Donachie, of Hertford Road, becomes a London under-18 female fencing champion and looks forward to competing in a national championship in January.

If you have a story you think The Archer should know about in 2009, please get in touch. You can reach us by email at the-archer@lineone.net, by telephone on 08717 334465 or by post at THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London, N2 8JA.



When pirates attack

Pirate attacks on cruise and merchant vessels have made the news recently but what are they really like for the passengers and crew on board? Two cruise ship passengers were staying with friends in East Finchley before joining their vessel and were keeping in touch by email when their trip met an unexpected turn of events in the Gulf of Aden. This is how Stephen and Natalie Coomber described their experiences:

We were awoken this morning by an announcement in our cabin asking all passengers to stay inside the ship and not venture onto the decks. That got us out of bed hastily and, looking through binoculars out of our cabin window, we could see a small white boat approaching very fast from the port side, but some distance off. Then the captain announced that there had been an attack by pirates at 4.30am and again at 6am but all steps had been taken by the crew to protect us.

There were a number of large freighters within sight and it seemed amazing that pirates would attack a ship in broad daylight. Some time later, we were told the emergency was over and passengers could again go out on the decks. We found the crew manning all the fire-hoses and spraying water onto the sea, as were the ships nearby.

Fast footwork

However, less than an hour

later, our quiz was interrupted when dozens of small, fast-moving boats were noticed off to our port side. We counted 28. We always imagined pirates would travel in boats that looked like gunboats, but these were quite small, very fast and held about 15-20 men.

One peeled off and cut across our bow while another crossed the stern and we all thought this is it! Our ship changed course rather abruptly but in the end the pirate boats seemed to prefer to give chase to a nearby container ship.

We later heard that the ship in front of us had been fired upon eight times, but the pirates were unable to take her. Quite scary and enough excitement for one day. We are now through the dangerous bit (the southern end of the Gulf of Aden) and are steaming towards the Seychelles, albeit still off course.

Editor's note: Names have been changed.

Artists show their wares

By Ann Bronkhorst

Barry Jackson, Tark Butler, Daphne Carnegie and Lucy Spratt are artists working in different fields who have found that occasional shared 'open house' exhibitions suit them well. So, over the weekend of 6-7 December, Barry's home in Park Hall Road was open for visitors to browse, perhaps buy, and talk to the makers.

The smallest pieces on show were by Lucy Spratt: jewellery, mostly in silver, copper and precious stones. Many were one-off designs, often suggesting organic forms, such as shells or leaves. I coveted some exquisite rings and admired the effect of delicate jewellery displayed against bleached driftwood.

Lucy is a musician as well as a jeweller; each artist seems to have another string to their bow. Daphne Carnegie is a teacher but her own artistic work is with ceramics. These included surprising stoneware vases, surprising because simple austere shapes had been given a slight twist, making them, as she said, "squidgy". Daphne's tinglazed bowls, mugs and dishes looked rather Mediterranean, with their gentle colours on a white ground.

Colour is a joy and obsession for Tark Butler and the paintings he was showing displayed his skill as a colourist. Some small landscapes and tree studies glowed with colour, while two complex paintings with Moroccan or Byzantine themes used colour and composition with great subtlety. Tark, whose second and third strings are building and teaching, is look-

ing forward to leading a class at Tate Modern in the spring.

Barry, who hosted the four-some's exhibition, is an actor as well as a wood-turner, even finding time to run two allotments. He's always looking out for felled or fallen trees and is extremely knowledgeable about the properties of different woods. His work ranged from small elegant wooden pens and candleholders to large bowls that gleamed warmly in the lamplight.

Contact Tark on 020 8883 0806 for information on studio visits and any further exhibitions.



GLH staff celebrate their awards and commendations.

Car firm's green credentials

Greater London Hire celebrated another successful win at the 2008 Greenfleet Awards held at Twickenham Rugby Stadium.

The East Finchley firm was highly commended for its fleet management and its dedication to reducing its impact on the environment.

Zoë Powers, GLH's customer relations and environmental manager, won the first European Greenfleet Manager of The Year Award, presented in Brussels earlier in 2008. GLH, as a whole, came runner up to Deutsche Post Group in The European Private Sector Fleet of the Year category.

Leading the way

By working in conjunction with The C-Change Trust, a UK charity dedicated to tackling climate change, GLH reduced its carbon emissions by 22% in that year alone. This has already exceeded government targets set for 2010. Many of its clients, including Channel 4, Endemol UK and Marks & Spencer, are turning to GLH to help them in reducing their carbon footprint.

GLH is working with the charity by funding the first Carbon Busters schools programme to help schools reach new eco-friendly standards. The programme will be piloted in Islington and come to Barnet shortly afterwards.

GLH has also opened an in-house training centre where all of

its drivers are trained to NVQ and BTEC standards in road passenger vehicle driving.

Zoe Powers said: "GLH believes that by investing in its fleet of drivers it will not only improve its own service levels but improve industry standards as a whole."

Absence levels falling in Barnet schools

The number of pupils absent from schools in Barnet is falling, figures released by the Department for Children, Schools and Families have shown, and Barnet is in the top three LEAs for the lowest levels of persistent absence among London schools.

Barnet's overall absence rate for its secondary schools in autumn term 2007 and spring term 2008 was the third lowest in London, at 4.3 per cent against a Department for Schools, Children and Families

target of 5 per cent. This compares with 4.7 per cent in 2006/07. The statistics place Barnet fifth for secondary attendance and seventh place for primary attendance among all of the 33 London boroughs.

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Marching to Finchley

By Robert Sutherland-Smith

December 1745, the year of the Jacobite Rebellion, was a year of deep concern for Londoners and the then few residents of East Finchley. Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Highlanders had crossed the border, having beaten the British army at the battle of Prestonpans, taken Carlisle and triumphantly entered Derby 120 miles away. It was Finchley 'next stop'.

Charles James Stewart, exiled grandson of the deposed Stewart King James II, had come from France raising his standard at Glenfinnan, where most of the clans rallied to his cause to reclaim the British throne from George II. If George spoke with a German accent, Charlie, brought up in France, spoke with a French one.

Final battle on English soil

Only the British Army redcoats, hastily marched up from London in the winter weather of December 1745 and camped on Finchley Common, stood between the Prince and the Hanoverian seat of government. Old Finchley Common, stretching from East Finchley (then known as the Common's east end, hence East End Road) along the Great North Road to its north end (now called North Finchley), was billed to be the scene of perhaps the last great military engagement on English soil.

There would be Highlander claymore charges, musket shots, gunpowder, fixed bayonets and the skirl of bagpipes along the Great North Road as English redcoats met the tartan-clad Highland hordes. But it was the definitive battle that never was, for by the time they got to Derby the Highlanders had seen enough of England, and started drifting back home.

Record of mayhem

The great London painter William Hogarth depicted the emergency vividly four years later, well after the crisis had passed, in his famous painting *The Foot Guards Marching to Finchley*. It still hangs in the museum of the Foundling Hospital, in Brunswick Square (nearest tube station Kings Cross).

The painter took his usual jaundiced view of British life. Debauched soldiers are shown drunkenly leaving London and saying farewell to an assortment of wives, girlfriends, tarts and girls entranced with red-coated soldiers. He conveys a desperate chaos in the ranks.

It is not a state propaganda piece, but Hogarth's somewhat mischievous take on life. Dedicated with irony to the King of Prussia, who was famous for maintaining a highly disciplined and efficient fighting force, the picture ended up in the ownership of the Foundling Hospital, of which both Hogarth and Handel were generous patrons. So when you next find yourself standing in those long, dull lines at East Finchley post office or quietly taking coffee at a High Road café, just think of what might have been that December 263 years ago. Think of Bonnie Prince Charlie on East End Road, Highlanders in Coppett's Wood and blood and gore on East Finchley soil.

YOUNG ARCHER

In the true spirit

By Helen Drake

The production of *The Night Before Christmas* at artsdepot in December was a simple tale, effectively told. Through reading her mother's childhood copy of the original poem (written in 1822 by Clement Clarke Moore) Emily learns about compassion and valuing what is important: that having lots of friends is the best present of all.

Eddie, the mouse, is made homeless on Christmas Eve. Having spied him in her room, Emily throws Eddie out of the window into the cold, whistling wind. But, says Eddie, mice have "just as much right to have Christmas as everyone else," and sets out on a mission to ask the "big cheese", Santa, what he thinks.

With lots of audience par-

ticipation and songs, Eddie outwits Cecil the cat and gets under the Christmas tree to wait for Santa, meeting some delightful characters along the way: the comical Dymotron, the robot who was never anyone's present ("don't mention Buzz Lightyear") and Lizzie, the fairy on the top of the Christmas tree, who is manically making lists of all the things she has to do

("I've still got to write the jokes for the Christmas crackers").

Before Santa arrives, Emily realises that to enjoy Christmas she needs to make friends with Eddie. Reconciled, Emily reads the final line of the poem with Eddie, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight!" leaving the audience in no doubt that Christmas should be, indeed, for everyone.

Give an ARCHER a good home

Please help us to make sure every household in East Finchley gets a chance to read and enjoy a copy of *THE ARCHER* every month. We're looking for volunteer deliverers for Mansfield Heights, Widcombe Way, Twyford Court and parts of The Grange.

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If you can help, please contact our distribution manager Toni Morgan by email on the-archer@lineone.net or by leaving a message on 08717 334465.



Get stuck in!

Children got creative with glue, paint and sparkles at the Holy Trinity School fair in December. The arts and crafts table was the perfect place to make secret presents for mums and dads.

A sunny day brought crowds of parents and pupils into the school and helped raise thousands to pay for school equipment in the year ahead.

Home made hot food and scrumptious cakes were in big demand and the two tombolas were a massive hit, one of them practically selling out after just an hour.

It was another successful school event and organisers at Holy Trinity thanked everyone who had donated prizes or food, and everyone who put their hand in their pocket and picked up a bargain on the day.

It pays to advertise

Within a week of the November *ARCHER* being delivered, the North London Hospice Shop had three new helpers.

Manager Eugenia von Piccardio was delighted with the rapid response to our article appealing for volunteers and said that others had offered to help in the New Year.

If you would like to join them in contributing to this worthy cause, you can pop into the shop at 123 High Road or telephone 020 8883 6493.



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PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Holy Trinity

The Christmas Fair raised just over £2,000 thanks to great support from parents, staff and children.

The Children's Society benefited from the £100 collected at the Christmas carol service.

Children from the choir sang at two residential homes for the elderly and also at Tesco, where they collected money for the North London Hospice.

Year 6 pupils took part in a Science Challenge at St Theresa's school. A car which they constructed won the race and won £100 for their school.

Younger pupils performed their nativity play and the Juniors staged an all-singing, all-dancing

version of *Dick Whittington*.

Manorside

Year 4 pupils all greatly enjoyed taking part in a fun sports afternoon in November at Moss Hall school.

A team of inspectors from Barnet visited the school to ensure that it is meeting the high standards needed to maintain its Healthy School Status, and left impressed at how both sport and healthy eating are promoted successfully throughout the school.

The book fair in December was another great success.

Parents enjoyed the premiere of the infants' production of *Happy Feet* with dancing penguins and great songs.



Smiles for revamped dental practice

A new name has appeared on the High Road in East Finchley, although it belongs to a well-established and trusted business. East Finchley Smiles is the new name for The East Finchley Dental Centre, which first opened in 2003.

The practice has grown from strength to strength and recently one of the founding partners, Dr Darren Freedman, took sole ownership. The makeover includes updated equipment as well as an increased range of general dental services and cosmetic treatments.

East Finchley Smiles, at 144 High Road, is one of the few local dentists offering NHS services to adults and children alike.

New practice manager Melissa Freedman said: "We keep hearing in the news that there are no NHS dentists yet we have space for new patients all the time."

Every year as part of the Barnet PCT every dental practice is assessed and this year East Finchley Smiles was awarded 100% in its annual assessment and clinical governance. The practice has a website at www.eastfinchleysmiles.co.uk

Practice makes perfect

By Sippy Azizollah
Doctors at Woodlands Medical Practice in Leopold Road have started a patient group.

Patients' views and ideas will be represented by other patients at meetings held every few months in discussion with the GPs. The process will be informal and specific to these people.

There will be a suggestion box in the waiting room which will be passed on to the patient group. So if you're registered at Woodlands, now's the time to voice your opinion or email: woodlands.medical-practice@nhs.net

Songs keep Yiddish alive

By Betti Blatman

Whilst recently at the Spiro Ark Centre to see Klezmer Klub's Sing Yiddish London event, I was seated near their singer's mother, whose daughter Vivi Lachs lives in East Finchley. Klezmer Klub was set up in the early 1990s and presently consists of Vivi Lachs (voice/dance leader), Gabriel Ellenberg (accordion), Jon Petter (clarinet), Caroline Hall (trombone) and Julia Doyle (double bass).

They play an exciting mix of klezmer dances and songs imbued with their trademark energy and enthusiasm. The Yiddish songs, sung in the language of the Jews in Eastern Europe, have been collected to form their own repertoire covering a variety of themes: love, politics, trades unions, music hall and songs about working class life in London.

Vivi is passionate about singing Yiddish songs as they communicate life and joy as well as the depths of sorrow and poverty. They are often infused with Jewish humour

and the desire to survive.

The band is due to record a CD called London Yiddish Songs next year. Their next gig is on Saturday 17 January at 8pm at the Cellar Upstairs Folk Club at the Exmouth Arms, Starcross

Street, London NW1. Telephone 020 7281 7700 for details. Entrance is £7 with concessions at £6. Contact Vivi Lachs by email on vivilachs@gmail.com or www.myspace.com/klezmerklub



Just to say...

Late last year, patrons of 2 Destino, 128 High Road, were surprised to find an array of tempting food waiting for them on the counter. Androulla Costi and Rosario Castro-Garcia told THE ARCHER that it was their way of saying thank you to customers at the flower and gift shop.

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KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

A whole new year

We live in dangerous times, when our only hope is that even though he couldn't save Woolworth's, Brown Gordon will save the world. But while waiting, we need to find something to celebrate. We can start by hurling worn bankers from the top of Canary Wharf in memory of 1929 and the mythical plummeting bankers of Wall Street. Then, in this dog-eat-dog world, we can remember that Charles Darwin was born 200 years ago and start evolving into something even weirder.

Prison warders everywhere can jangle their keys in celebration of the 200th birthday of Dartmoor Prison. They might get together with the FBI who'll be rolling out several barrels to mark the 75th anniversary of the removal of John Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde, Charles 'Pretty Boy' Floyd and George 'Baby Face' Nelson from the gene pool.

And then there's politics. This year will be the 250th anniversary of the birth of William Wilberforce, 200 years since Abraham Lincoln was born and 100 years since the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People was set up. On 20 January, Barack Obama will become the next president of the United States of America and that will be something worth celebrating.

This year is going to be a big one for music, especially if you like dead composers. Three of England's finest wrote their last notes 75 years ago and sure as easy listening is easy listening Classic FM will mark the passing of great Englishmen Frederick Delius, Gustav Holst and Edward Elgar by extracting the pretty bits and playing them randomly throughout the year.

But why stop there? Not when every string-bending axe man is going to be honouring Leo Fender's birth in 1909 with extra feedback. They may even shed a tear for Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper on the day in February that marks the fiftieth anniversary of 'the day the music died'.

Don't worry if you forget 3 February because I'm sure Classic FM are going to follow up their last collection of orchestral rock with a Songs of Buddy Holly Special. It will probably feature Catherine Jenkins and Russell Watson dueting on Peggy Sue, ably backed by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the band of the Scots Guards. That really will be the day that the music dies.

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- ❖ **East Finchley Writers Group**, Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Carola 8883 5808 or Lilian 8444 1793.
- ❖ **East Finchley Poetry Writing Workshops**. Monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club: Live jazz on Mon** 19 Jan at 8pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
- ❖ **Line dancing** Tuesdays from 8.30pm at The Constitutional Club. Call Maureen 8440 8530.
- ❖ **Memory Lane Singing Club** - friendly singing club meets every Friday in Finchley. Call Valerie 8458 4508.
- ❖ **Over 50s Tea Dance** at Christ Church, North Finchley. Every Weds, 1pm. 020 8444 0280.
- ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards La. Call 8888 4412.
- ❖ **Street Dance** every Tuesday at Old Barn for children of various ages. Contact Lorna 07976 203669.
- ❖ **SwampRock** Louisiana Dance Club. Live music events. Contact Carole Lareman 8810 7454 or www.swamprock.org.uk.
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children at Old Barn on Mondays, Call Sharon 8349 4613
- ❖ **Traditional Music** in the Alexandra pub, Church Lane from 8.30pm on the last Thursday of every month.

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- ❖ **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9 pm, 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
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
- ❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or call 8883 7544.
- ❖ **Highgate Film Society**, call 8340 3343 or email: admin@hlsi.net.
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- ❖ **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tuesdays 1-3pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Call Anita Shaw 8886 6140.
- ❖ **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.

What kind of fool am I?

By Sheila Armstrong

Even if you can't remember Anthony Newley you may well know his hit song *What Kind of Fool Am I?* from 1961. So the audience at the Theatre Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate in mid-November had a very nostalgic evening at the show *Newley: the Fool who Dared to Dream*. Using Newley's songs, the show told his story from his early life through his marriages and successful career both here and in the States.

Newley was played by David Boyle, who looked remarkably like him. He has already played Newley at the Edinburgh Festival and The Pleasance Theatre, N7. In this latest show he collaborated with writer and director Pete Gallagher to bring the genius of Newley back to the stage. Joan Lane of Wild Thyme Productions was the co-producer and she in fact introduced writer and direc-

tor Gallagher to Boyle in 2008. *ARCHER* readers may remember her vaudeville version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at The Gatehouse.

Boyle was more than ably supported by Kate Eason, Victoria Hart and Anita Markham who played about 30 roles between them. So, another good show at the Gatehouse, followed by Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, which is playing till the end of January.

Review: Season's Greetings

By Lucy Chamberlin

Alan Ayckbourn's classic *Seasons' Greetings* provided a festive treat for Incognito's December theatregoers. Diane Lefley led a brilliant cast through the shenanigans of a family Christmas which descends into anarchy and farce.

What with misunderstandings, character clashes and entertaining banter between couples, laughs were ten-a-penny, and the scenarios, apart from the liaison between Clive and Belinda and the shooting at the end, entirely believable.

A particular high point was Bernard's (David Longstaff) disastrous but hilarious puppet show rehearsal, assisted by his arch-enemy and militant chauvinist uncle Harvey (Chris Goldie) and the comically pregnant and confused Pattie (Jackie Pearce).

Drunk in charge of an oven

Desiree Silverstone grew on us as Bernard's wife Phyllis. Initially "drunk in charge of an oven", she continued to have immense fun being sozzled and giggly, and delivering one-liners to great effect. She confused gay people and train drivers ("I'm so glad you're not a train driver") and entreated Clive to "teachhh me all aboutt Englishshhh Lisherashure" creating priceless innuendo.

David Parsons, as retiring guest novelist Clive, was every woman's target, but his painful exchanges with the repressed, unpredictable Rachel (Julianne Mullen) somehow carried over into his awkward conversations with the rest of the family, making a travesty of his brief declaration of love for Belinda. Diane Lefley's Belinda was entirely credible as the long-suffering wife figure, attracted by the romance of a young writer.

As always, the set was custom-built and immaculate, utilising the small space to create the illusion of two separate rooms, a hallway and a staircase.

Peter Kenyon's direction brought out both the play's humour and its irony, as a familiar family Christmas held together by tradition is deconstructed by its members' individual fears, misunderstandings and desires. Ayckbourn makes hugely enjoyable theatre, and Incognito did ample justice to it, with a production that thoroughly entertained.



Rivka Sinclair with some of her work

Artist's big break

By David Melsome

When artist Rivka Sinclair needed treatment after breaking her collarbone, she couldn't help noticing that University College Hospital had a very nice art gallery.

It immediately inspired her to create her own solo exhibition for the space and that is now running at the hospital's 'The Street Gallery' in Euston Road.

Rivka, of Summerlee Gardens, is a full-time artist who likes to experiment with different painting styles and techniques, sometimes combining mixed media for textural effects.

Although Rivka Sinclair's landscape and location paintings are based on real places, the work itself is very imagi-

native and is done mainly from memory, which gives it a special evocative quality. Rivka has lived in East Finchley for 40 years but grew up in Jerusalem, a place that continues to be a source of inspiration for her work.

Her exhibition is part of a wider hospital art project that aims to improve hospital life for patients and staff through the use of art. All her work is for sale and a percentage of the sales will be donated to the hospital. Find out more at www.rivkasinclair-artist.co.uk.

What's On...

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

Friday 16-Thursdays 29 January:

• **In the Woods: exhibition of paintings by Emily Ault** of Queen's Wood, Highgate, at Highgate Gallery, 11 South Grove, N6; 020 8340 3343; www.hlsi.net

Sunday 25 January:

• **Historical High Barnet, a guided walk with Paul Baker** through 1,000 years of history. Meet outside Barnet College, Wood Street, at 11am; £7, under 12s £3. For details of this and other walks, phone 020 8440 6805.

• **Jewish Book Week: Reluctant Refugee**; Gillian Slovo, Edie Friedman and Caroline Moorehead discuss the dehumanisation faced by refugees, by giving submerged narratives a voice through fiction, testimony and journalism; The Tricycle Theatre, 269 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 7JR, 6pm. Price: £6.50. Tickets and information: 020 7372 6611.

Thursday 29 January:

• It's always on tap and we don't think twice about it but how do we get our water? Illustrated talk to the **Finchley Society: 'Our water supply, from source to tap'** by Ian Pilsforth, legal adviser to Three Valleys Water; Avenue House, East End Road, N3, 2.30pm. Entry for non-members £2.

What's on at artsdepot, North Finchley:

Thursday 15 January to Sunday 15 March, 12-4pm: **Vardi Hahana, One Family**. Sunday 18 January, 1pm: **Matsukaze**. Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 January, 7.30pm: **Oh, What A Lovely War**, The Compton School. Sunday 25 January, 1pm: **Darren Dutson-Bromley**. Thursday 29 January, 8pm: **Clive James in the Evening**. Friday 30 January, 8.30pm: **Folk in the Foyer**. Sunday 1 February, 1pm: **Nice Toy**. Sunday 1 February, 8pm: **The Al Pitcher Picture Show**. Tuesday 3 February, 7pm: **Gallery Talk, Mark Rothko**. Thursday 5 February, 8pm: **Ballet Boyz**.

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Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

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



Letters

Rumblings of a ghost train

Dear Editor,

Just before Halloween, an article in the Metro newspaper caught my eye. "Spooky stories on the Tube" mentioned a "phantom steam engine that thunders along a stretch of the Northern line from East Finchley". I am a lifelong resident of East Finchley and I have heard nothing about this before.

That said, a stretch of line that now ends at Highgate Wood depot but once ran to Crouch End, Finsbury Park and King's Cross was steam worked until 1954, and steam trains ran from there to East Finchley and High Barnet until the 1940s.

An empty surface station at Highgate is reputedly used by ghost trains, so could the phantom engine be related? I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has witnessed this ghostly train.

Yours faithfully, Jake Eiseman-Renyard, Fortis Green, N2

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

School gives pensioners a special treat

By Diana Cormack

The annual festive party for senior citizens organized by staff and Year 10 students at Bishop Douglass RC School in Hamilton Road was a resounding success. Polite, smiling pupils greeted guests at the door and each received an individually-addressed Christmas card.

They were escorted to the festively decorated hall, then other pupils showed them to their tables where they were welcomed with a glass of wine or soft drink. The school's kitchen staff prepared a traditional Christmas dinner and dessert, which was served by the children.

Live entertainment was provided by students reciting poems they had written on the theme of Christmas. The Year 7 choir sang Christmas carols and songs for everyone to join in and, courtesy of a couple of teachers, there was a Beatles sing-along. The evening ended with a bingo session before Father Christmas, who was in attendance, gave every guest a gift. The students raised the necessary money by washing staff cars at break time and by selling food they made in Home Economics lessons. They showed the true spirit of Christmas.

Strictly panto

By Daphne Chamberlain

Pantomime is back for another season. Well, what can we say? Amazing costumes, oodles of energy. Dodderly it was not! The Guild Players presented Aladdin as their Christmas show, and we all loved it.

This was a show in the strictly panto tradition, with all the usual over-the-top characters, evoking ecstatic grins on the faces of some small boys in my row, and the classic question overheard in the interval, "But why is he a girl?"

Keeping all ages happy

I went to the matinee, when many children were present, and the audience participation was whole-hearted. The show kept a good balance between pleasing both adults and children, and the entire cast should be congratulated on the way they drew the audience in.

This is sometimes difficult to do when the audience is very close, and when a lot of them

know the performers, but the actors were excellent. So was the three-piece band, though it seemed a shame that the actor with the most impressive voice (the villain, Abanazer) didn't have more to sing. Full marks, though, for avoiding the love duets, which usually seem so tiresome to a child.

The show built to a lively climax. In the words of their last song, they finished on top, and those costumes were fabulous.

The Guild Players rehearse and perform at Ballards Lane Methodist Church, N3. For more details about this established company, who put on several shows a year, visit www.guildplayers.org.uk.

Phoenix in January

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer

The Phoenix has plenty of wonderful films this month to keep you warm, in heart at least. We continue our popular season of live opera from the New York Met with La Rondine on 10 January and Orfeo ed Eurydice on 24 January. If you've yet to experience the brilliance of live opera in the cinema, these are two great productions to begin with.

I'm delighted to be screening the debut film from Jonas Curan, Ano Una, on Sunday 18 January in a double bill with Walter Salles' Linhade Passe. Ano Una is made up entirely of static shots of still photographs, all taken by Jonas Curan (Alfonso's son) during one year in his life. At the end of the year he took the photographs of his life and re-assembled them into a new narrative, recording dialogue and a soundtrack over them. It's a remarkable feat of filmmaking and a touching and sweet film.

We have a special event in the daytime of Wednesday 21 January called Representation of Older Women in Film. We're gathering a panel of filmmakers, academics and industry professionals to examine how older women are portrayed in films. The discussion is accompanied by a screening of Fassbinder's Fear Eats the Soul, a film as radical today with its central relationship between an older white woman and a younger black man as when it was first

released in 1974.

We continue our strand of silent cinema, Into Great Silents, with Anthony Asquith's Shooting Stars from 1927, on Sunday 25 January at 2pm. As ever, this will have live piano accompaniment from renowned musician Stephen Horne, offering a glimpse of how The Phoenix would have screened films 80 years ago.

Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

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A view of St Paul's Cathedral and Thames wharfs in the 19th century, one of the London views on show. Photo reproduced by permission Church Farmhouse Museum.

Historic views

A photographic exhibition highlighting the capital's Victorian past is due to go on display at Church Farmhouse Museum in Hendon, nearly 40 years after some of the vast collection on which it is based was first publicly displayed there.

The Historic Views of London exhibition contains images from former Barnet resident Bernard Howarth-Loomes's personal collection, now held by National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh.

Running until 16 March, the exhibition contains many scenes, familiar and unfamiliar, from across the capital including steam boats on the

River Thames, Euston Arch, Crystal Palace, the Kodak factory at Harrow and views of 19th century streets crowded with people and traffic.

The exhibition is based on a new book also entitled Historic Views of London edited by historian and Barnet borough resident Dr Ann Saunders, which includes more than 170 photographs.

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The day Abbots Gardens was bombed

On 15 November 1944, just six months before the end of the Second World War, a German V2 rocket landed in Abbots Gardens, killing five people. Here David Smith recalls that fateful day.

Our road is, by London standards, fairly quiet but it became for a few days the focus of much attention and activity by the emergency services.

East Finchley at this time was a dangerous place to live. Four high explosive bombs had been dropped on Brim Hill and a V1 blew up in Widecombe Way. There was a parachute mine in Ossulton Way, and another in Chapel Street that killed many people there and in the High Road. A large group of incendiary bombs fell between Totnes Walk and Brim Hill, and a high explosive bomb fell at the end of Aveton Road, where Prospect Ring is now.

So imagine the scene on this particular day in November 1944. At No 107, Mayzell Houghton was boiling a kettle to make a cup of tea. Next door, at 109, Margery Fulford had just walked to the shops to buy some torch batteries for the black out, leaving behind her mother Mrs Payton and her son John, aged five. They were probably sitting near the coal fire to keep warm. It is quite likely that John was listening to Children's Hour on the BBC Home Service. Round the corner at No 17, I was sitting by the fire with my mother. Margaret Edge, from No 15 next door, was with us, practising on our piano.

Huge blast

There was no means of knowing when a V2 attack might happen: no air-raid siren was sounded and the first thing that people would experience was the explosion, followed by the roar of the rocket motors catching up.

At 5.18 pm there was an almighty bang and the house shook. Our piano played all its strings at the same time, an uncanny sound. We heard the sound of falling and smashing glass from all around. We went to the front door and looked out, to see smoke rising above the rooftops. In fact, the 'smoke' was dust. Surprisingly, nothing caught fire.

My mother feared the worst. The Fulfords were good friends of ours and I went to nursery school with John. Margery Fulford was coming back from the shops when the blast occurred. She says she saw a cloud of dust rising in the air and hurried home, to find her house reduced to a pile of rubble. Her mother and only child were trapped beneath the debris. The road was empty.

Occurrence No 568

Then the emergency services arrived and started to search. I have copies of the Air Raid Damage Reports for Occurrence

No 568. The first one is timed at 17.46, 28 minutes after the event, and talks of approximately 20 casualties, some trapped. At 20.55 the WVS Canteen was sent for to provide drinks and food for the rescue workers and residents who could not cook anything. At 21.15 the form records the stark facts: "Boy & Woman released Dead. Removed to Mortuary".

The road remained closed for some time. We heard later that Mrs Houghton had been permanently blinded by the explosion of her gas stove. During the evening we had a steady stream of callers because our telephone was the only one still working in the road. Many people wanted to tell their relatives that they were still alive.

Destruction and rebuilding

The damage caused by the explosion was colossal. Nos. 107-113 were destroyed. Other houses including Nos. 105 and 115 had to be rebuilt and many others partly rebuilt where side or front walls had been shattered. In the outer circle the following houses were listed as war damaged: Nos. 79-129 with the exception of No. 121. In the inner circle it was Nos. 48-70 inclusive. Most other houses in the vicinity lost their windows and suffered what was described officially as "superficial damage" to doors and ceilings.

The Fulfords returned to Abbots Gardens, living firstly at No. 63 and then very pluckily returning to No. 105, only two doors away from the site of their shattered first home. Here they raised two children, Alan and Sheila.

The names of those who died as a result of the bomb attack were: Arthur John Fulford, aged five. Alice Helen Payton, aged 64. Florence Annie Eveleigh June Lamperd, aged 14 Ruby Lamperd, aged 39.



Little Red Riding Hood (Lauren Appleby), Cinderella (Emma Odell), Jack (Daniel Summers) and the Baker (Dominic Brewer) go Into the Woods. Photo by Scott Collier

Fairy tales go wrong in the Woods

By John Lawrence

There's still plenty of time to catch the Christmas show at the theatre Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate, and it comes highly recommended. Into the Woods is the Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine musical that brings together Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel and Jack and the Beanstalk and mixes them up into a new tale of giants, witches and magic spells.

Each character desperately pursues their hearts' desires and, by the end of the first act, they all reach that 'happy ever after' moment. Then, in the second half of the show, they are forced to deal with the consequences of their wish fulfillment and to question whether they are truly happy.

This is a show that can be enjoyed on many levels. Sondheim fans will savour some of his most intricate and at times downright beautiful tunes and lyrics. Adults, and particularly parents, who have seen loved ones go off into the big, bad world will recognise the themes of longing and loss. Meanwhile, children can enjoy watching their favourite fairy tale characters making a mess of things and behaving badly.

Every member of the large cast is terrific and director Racky Plews has captured all

the emotional power of Sondheim and Lapine's story as well as doing a tremendous job of choreographing the frantic action scenes.

TV and stage star Paul Nicholas appears as narrator, interacting and singing with the cast thanks to some very clever video technology. Don't miss this ambitious production. It's funny and moving, with a

lot of heart, and it's only down the road.

Into the Woods runs until 1 February with evening performances from Tuesday to Saturday and a matinee on Sundays. Tickets range from £8-£15, with £40 family tickets available. Telephone the box office on 020 8340 3488 or visit www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com

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