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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Stanley Field for sale

By Daphne Chamberlain

By the time this article is published, Barnet will probably have made the decision to put Stanley Road Playing Field on the market. On 30 November, the Council's cabinet resources committee was expected to agree that the freehold interest in the land should be marketed and disposed of as it is surplus to requirement.

The field has been neglected for years, but East Finchley has always known that it was anything but surplus to requirement. For the last seven years local people have been drawing up plans and making suggestions for its renewed use as a recreational centre.

Barnet admits that this part of the borough is very badly off for playing fields. The report going to cabinet acknowledges this, and also says: "It is considered likely that the sale of this land will raise significant levels of public concern and will give rise to policy considerations. We expect local residents to actively have a particular focus on the future of this site."

Planning advice is that re-use or redevelopment should depend on whether the current playing area is no longer needed, or can be catered for elsewhere. Sport England must be consulted.

At present Finchley Development Trust is in negotiation with a local group, including Steve Sellwood, Head Coach at Finchley Cricket Club (though he is acting as an individual). Mr Sellwood would love any development to provide indoor

facilities for cricket and other sports.

The Trust's Rob Robertson is committed to keeping Stanley Field as a sports site, as part of East Finchley's Olympic legacy. Considering the 2012 Olympic badges feature Archie, our Archer, this is particularly appropriate.

The report recommends that Barnet go for a two-phase approach, with the first phase identifying interest, proposals and bids. *THE ARCHER* will carry a full report in our January edition.

Decision on Park House

As we went to press, we learned that Barnet Council's cabinet resources committee on 30 November, which was discussing Stanley Field, may also be taking a decision about Park House, the long-vacant council property opposite the tube station. A decision is requested on letting it to third party organisations for a commercial rent. We will report in our next issue.



Children at Martin Primary wave the flag for international relations. Photo by Rachel Ellis

Raise the flags as school goes global

By Rachel Ellis

Martin Primary School is going global with a range of new initiatives linking it with schools across the world. The school has just been awarded money from the British Council in partnership with the European Union to take part in a Comenius project, which aims to improve inter-cultural understanding within Europe.

On The Way

Over the next two years, pupils will be creating an online newspaper called *The Way*, which they will share with children in schools in France, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Finland, Portugal and Belgium.

Martin School will also hold a video conference with the other schools and children from Years 5 and 6 and teachers will take part in exchanges with the partner schools.

Living languages

Headteacher Helen Morrison said: "We have a range of different global projects across the school. All these activities really bring home the importance of learning other languages and give it a real life context."

Other international projects include links with schools in Spain and Columbia and a partnership with a school in China. The school now runs Mandarin, French, Spanish and Japanese clubs.

Break-in at newsagents

Thieves broke into Pacey's Newsagent in the High Road by chiselling through a wall and stole thousands of pounds worth of cigarettes and phone cards.

When they were unable to get past a security shutter at the rear of the shop, they made a hole in the wall to crawl through, police said. They also broke into the general store next door.

The burglary happened in the early hours of Monday 15 November. Owner Ghazanfar Mehmood was quoted in *The Press* newspaper as saying: "Business is tough at the moment,

we are all struggling. There have been many times I've thought we are going to have to close, so this is not what we needed."

The break-in at Pacey's came after armed robbers twice targeted the Iceland food store in the High Road. Anyone with information can contact police on 0300 123 1212 or anonymously via Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

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Have a happy festive season!

Best wishes for the festive season and a happy 2011 to all our readers from everyone on *THE ARCHER* team.

We would like to thank all the contributors, advertisers and deliverers who help us produce the paper and distribute it to nearly 10,000 homes in East Finchley every month. We hope 2011 is a happy and prosperous year for everyone.

• Visit your community newspaper on-line at www.the-archer.co.uk •



THE ARCHER

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Your contributions

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Comments to *THE ARCHER* may
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Copy deadlines

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February: 14 January
March: 11 February

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

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

46 Bancroft Avenue, N2
Single storey rear extension.
3 Brim Hill, N2
Replacement of front door, garage door and side door. Insertion of door and windows to rear elevation to replace existing rear window. Insertion of roof light to rear. Alterations to front garden.

42 Church Lane, N2 (East Finchley Advice Service)

Conversion of existing offices on 1st & 2nd floors and rear ground floor to five residential units with associated extension at basement level and formation of bin enclosure. Access fronting King Street.

59 Church Lane, N2 (La Rugoletta)

Retention of rear extension with alterations to roof overhang.

152 East End Road, N2

Change of use from bookmakers/betting office (Class A2) to hot food takeaway (Class A5). Alterations to rear including insertion of two new air grilles, an air conditioner condenser unit and relocation of rear door.

111 High Road, N2 (Cochin Restaurant)

Alterations to existing flue to rear. Land adjacent to 320 High Road, N2

Amendment to appeal decision APP/N5090/A/09/2114802 dated 23/02/10 for the erection of a three-storey block of flats containing six

self-contained flats. Amendments include a proposed two-storey side extension to accommodate two additional studio flats.

23 Howard Walk, N2

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

Ground floor flat, 78 Leicester Road, N2

Erection of a single storey side/rear extension.

20 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single storey rear extension and raised patio to rear.

Haringey Council

1 Beech Drive, N2

Erection of front dormer and alterations to side and rear fenestration at roof level.

111-113 Fortis Green, N2

Conversion of rear ground floor ancillary commercial storage area into single one-bed studio flat including a side extension to accommodate a communal residential entrance lobby/access way.

12 Lynmouth Road, N2

Erection of rear dormer.

16 Springcroft Avenue, N2

Erection of first-floor rear extension over existing rear closet wing, and erection of glazed infill rear ground floor extension.

19 Twyford Avenue, N2

Certificate of Lawfulness for roof conversion with rear and side gables and rear and side dormers.

Confusion over library consultation

By Daphne Chamberlain

As inevitable cutbacks approach, library users eager to say what they want from the service in East Finchley are feeling angry and dismayed. Last month we reported that Barnet Council had delayed issuing paper consultation forms for a month, in case the public confused them with national questionnaires about provision for youth.

When the forms eventually arrived, notices were not immediately put up in the library. There are small notices up now but the paper forms are not on display. Staff say that they are under instructions only to give them out on request.

There is also confusion about dates. When the survey was launched, the closing date was given as the end of November and this is still the time period given online. The

end date on library notices, however, which actually start by talking about the online survey, is 17 December.

Typical of the comments around East Finchley has been: "If they don't get enough replies, they'll say we're not interested and will close the library down". This, of course, makes it all the more vital to get those responses in fast. Don't forget yours.

THE ARCHER asked Barnet for an explanation but none was available at the time of going to press.

Older assembly

Barnet now has an Older People's Assembly to help people over 55 make their voices heard on issues that affect them, including health and social services.

Anyone over the age of 55 is invited to join, even if they are not already active in any other group. BOPA is especially looking for representatives from "harder to reach" groups, such as ethnic minorities, and those who are not normally able to attend meetings.

To find out more about how you can get involved, call the Barnet 55+ Forum on 020 8447 0379 or 020 8931 3795.

New number

THE ARCHER has changed its telephone number. Our new number is 0844 579 6949, which is charged at local rates.

For advertising enquiries, dial the main number above, then enter mailbox number 75390 to leave a message. For editorial enquires, dial the main number, then enter mailbox number 63450 to leave a message.

Please note that this is a voicemail-only system as we are unable to staff the phone line full-time but we listen to all messages and will get back to you.

Our postal and email addresses remain unchanged.

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Police appeal after fatal accident

By Janet Maitland

Police are appealing for witnesses to a fatal collision between a woman pedestrian and a motorcycle on the High Road on 2 November. Pedestrian Anita Cash, 86, was taken by air ambulance to the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel with serious injuries to her head and chest. She died a week later.

The accident happened at about 5pm near the junction with Chandos Road, when the black Honda VT 750 motorcycle was travelling south. Its 64-year-old driver was treated for head and leg injuries and taken as a priority to the Royal Free Hospital. He was later discharged.

After the accident, the High Road was shut in both directions between Church Lane and Oak Lane until 9.40pm. Buses travelling to North Finchley were diverted along

East End Road to Finchley Central. Residents reported travel chaos in nearby roads.

"We need people to come forward so that we can fully understand what happened," said PC Don MacAlpine from the Metropolitan Police Service Road Death Investigation Unit. "I'm appealing for anyone who witnessed this accident to contact us on 020 8998 5319, or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you want to remain anonymous."

Happy Birthday, Green Man Centre

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Green Man Centre celebrated its 10th anniversary last month. Its name came from the old Green Man pub, which stood very close to its site. There were other suggestions for the name at the time, though, and also a bit of a mystery about another building whose foundations had just been unearthed.

ARCHER readers were quick to offer interesting suggestions about both the new name and the old building. So we found out quite a lot about the history of Strawberry Vale and that part of the High Road.

Time travelling

You told us about what had been there before the estate and the flyover. The riding-stable, farmhouse, villas and cottages; the smithy, coal merchant, boarding kennels, tennis courts, and the Green Man's pleasure gardens. You remembered the shops fronting the High Road, on the corner of Chambers Gardens, the baker's, the printer's, and the sawmill and wood yard at the end of Lankaster Gardens.

What emerged very clearly from this was that Strawberry

Vale and the land on and around the present Green Man Centre were very much a part of historic East Finchley.

Integration

In an ARCHER interview in December 2000, the Centre's new manager, Martin O'Donnell, told us that a difficulty of the Strawberry Vale estate was that it was cut off geographically. He said: "People only come through the estate if they are visitors. I see it as part of my role to attract others from the wider community to join in our activities."

So the Green Man Centre was launched with a programme of activities and an offer to the rest of East Finchley to share its facilities. In THE ARCHER's next edition we will report on the Green Man Centre as it is today.

Lights go down on 50 years for projectionist Peter

By Sheila Armstrong

When Peter Bayley started as projectionist at the Phoenix in 1960 it was known as a bit of a 'fleapit'. That image couldn't be more different from our newly restored cinema: the intervening 50 years have seen many changes. Now Peter is saying farewell to the projection room where he has worked for five decades.



Peter Bayley photographed in 1994 by David Tupman

The Phoenix, or Rex as it was known in 1960, was not Peter's first job in cinema; now 73, he started out 58 years ago at the North Finchley Odeon.

He invited THE ARCHER into the projection room to reminisce about his life and times at the Phoenix. He fondly remembered visits from stars such as Kenneth More, once-local resident Peter Sellers, Graham Stark and Maureen Lipman and the many film

shoots at the cinema.

One of his favourite films is *Gone with the Wind*, not forgetting *The Glenn Miller Story*. He's a great fan of both Madonna and Marilyn Monroe, especially enjoying the former's *Desperately Seeking Susan* and the latter's classic *Some Like it Hot*.

'Smartened up'

Awarded the MBE in 2002, Peter says some of the most important changes he has seen in cinema were when Cinemascope came out in the 1950s, and more recently the digitisation of film. Because

of the new technology used in projection Peter feels it's a job for a young man. And though of course most films are now digital, he's glad to see that the huge 40-year-old projector has been kept.

"The cinema has smartened up very nicely," he says of the revamped Phoenix and he's pleased to see the two Art Deco panels that are on show again at the back of the auditorium.

Peter is due to retire on 13 December and looks forward to spending more time at home "getting under his wife's feet".

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Brian Hooper, Bill Nicholson, Joanna Armamdias and George Andrew. Photo by pub manager Helena Desa

Brian's hard work helps the heroes

By Diana Cormack

Customers at The Old White Lion were invited to guess the weight of a huge pumpkin in order to raise money for the charity Help for Heroes. During the latter part of October organiser Brian Hooper went into the pub three times a day selling tickets at £1 a guess. The pumpkin was grown by Bill Nicholson at his Highgate allotment near North Hill from a seed provided by George Andrew.

When the pumpkin was weighed at 11pm on Hallowe'en, three people had guessed correctly at 75lbs/5 stone 15lbs/34.1 kg. They agreed to their names being drawn from a hat to choose a winner, who received £50 to spend in the White Lion, while the runners up were presented with bottles of wine. But the overall winner was the charity because the competition raised the magnificent total of £1,300.

A cheque was presented to Joanna Armamdias, London coordinator for Help for Heroes. The pumpkin has been donated to Coppets Wood Primary School for use as a learning aid.

This month Brian is running a raffle in aid of Great Ormond Street, to be drawn on 14 December. Why not pop into The Old White Lion and buy some tickets?

Donate food for people in need

A healthcare clinic is running a food drive during December in aid of the North London Hospice. Anyone is invited to bring items to Active Chiropractic Healthcare at 98 High Road and they will be passed on to patients and carers in need.

Donations of canned food, dried foods (pasta, dried fruit, rice), air-tight/vacuum-packed food and non-perishable food will be welcome but not fresh foods as these will not keep.

As an added incentive, the clinic is offering free consultations to new patients who drop in with an item. Existing patients will receive a voucher for a free consultation for a family member or friend to use.



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Landmark building threatened

By Daphne Chamberlain

A historic local building, 320 High Road, could be affected by what its owner calls "over-enthusiastic development next door". Number 320 is one of two Grade 2 listed gatehouses at the northern entrance to Camden and Islington Cemetery.

In February of this year an application was granted on appeal to build a three-storey block of six flats between the gatehouse and Lewis Gardens. Then the site was sold to another developer, who has submitted plans for a two-storey side extension, housing two more flats.

The owner of the gatehouse, Iggy Mascarenhas, is appealing against the new application, which would bring the new building to scarcely two metres from most of his windows.

He told *THE ARCHER* that his ground floor would be completely overshadowed, and the narrow courtyard entrance at the side of the house would become a dark alley.

Stewardship

Mr Mascarenhas says that the gatehouse has a 'Right to Light', shown by its 'Ancient Lights' sign, which has proved legally enforceable in other cases, but he wants the proposal stopped before considering legal action.

He told us, "I regard the ownership of the property as a stewardship. I do not want this development to take place on my watch. If Barnet Council allows this development, it will set a precedent for other planning cases in the borough."

Support from civic societies

The Finchley Society supports his objection. Their Planning Officer Mike Dawson called the application unacceptable, telling us, "What the inspector considered okay on appeal is quite different to that being proposed now". The Garden History Society, statutory consultee for

English Heritage, also backs Mr Mascarenhas. Planning authorities are required to consult the GHS on applications affecting all grades of registered landscapes; the cemetery is on that register so the GHS has asked for immediate consultation with Barnet.

Find out more at www.320HighRoad.co.uk or contact



320HighRoad@gmail.com.

The planning application F/03983/10 can be viewed at www.barnet.gov.uk. Barnet Council's case officer is David Campbell, tel: 020 8359 4669.

A new orchard for Cherry Tree Wood

By Charles Parkes

On Saturday 23 October, a large group of volunteers worked together on a number of amenity and biodiversity projects in Cherry Tree Wood. The event was organised by Friends of Cherry Tree Wood together with the Community Service Volunteers' GO London project. It was one of a number of Make a Difference Day events taking place across the capital.

The main project was planting a new community orchard in the picnic area. This was made up of eight trees including apple, pear, cherry, quince and medlar, sponsored by a number of local businesses and organisations and the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

The Friends also provided 700 daffodil and crocus bulbs which were planted along the main path. Additionally, 200 wildflower plants were added to the meadow area adjacent to the playing field, litter was cleared from around the Wood and the dead hedge next to the play area was spruced up.

Despite the showers, everyone worked enthusiastically and the results of all this activity should be apparent in the park next spring.

New yoga class

A new yoga class has just launched in East Finchley, specifically aimed at people over 50 and beginners.

The class is on a Wednesday at 9.45am at The Iyengar Yoga Studio in Leicester Road and is geared towards people who have never tried yoga before and people in their later years. Teacher Lisa Morris works to improve her students' strength, co-ordination, flexibility and stamina. Lisa is offering the first class for free along with discounts for seniors, students and the unemployed. Contact her on 07963 833188.

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Suspicious photographer in Cherry Tree Wood

By Janet Maitland

A local resident has asked *THE ARCHER* to issue a warning to parents following an incident in Cherry Tree Wood.

At about 1.30pm on Monday 11 October, Sandra McPhee noticed a man walking up and down taking photographs of children. After watching the man for a few minutes, she asked him why he was taking pictures.

"He didn't answer," said Sandra. "Instead he turned the camera on me and my toddler, which was really frightening. I asked him what he was going to do with the pictures, but he just walked away and carried on taking photos of children."

Sandra told *THE ARCHER* she rang directory enquiries to get the number of the local police station, but there was no reply on the number she was given. She then tried to photograph the man on her mobile phone. When he spotted her doing this, the man walked towards the exit on the High Road.

Description

A few minutes later Sandra left the wood along the same path and saw him coming back in again. She rang the police again when she got home and gave a description, but they were unable to find him.

The man is described as about 50, of medium height, with a

paunch and curly hair. "He was quite scruffy looking. He needed a shave and a haircut," said Sandra, "but his camera looked expensive and professional."

The police advised Sandra to dial 999 if she saw the man again and passed a record of the incident to the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team. "My team continue to patrol the wood looking for this man and for anti social behaviour in general," said Sergeant Andy Matthews. "While I don't want to speculate on the reason for this man taking photographs, we are treating it as suspicious."

Are you a nervous driver?

A TV documentary company wants to hear from drivers who have lost their confidence and now find themselves perhaps scared of driving in the dark or panicky when they get on motorways.

The planned programme by Matchlight will tell the stories of people who have lost their skills and follow their progress as they get them back while carrying out a short driving course. If you are interested in finding out more, phone producer Anne Buckland on 0141 332 0319 or email anne.buckland@matchlight.co.uk.

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Review: Heavenly voices at St Mary's

By Linda Dolata

On Saturday 2 October the Hampstead Singers performed at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church. The month of October is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the concert was indeed in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, giving access to really beautiful choral pieces.

Whoever designed St Mary's must have known what they were doing as the acoustics are simply wonderful. Add to this a semi-professional choir of ten of the purest voices, and the result was literally heavenly. No troupe of angels could have improved upon the soaring sound.

The Hampstead Singers were directed by Mark Denza, performing a range of pieces in four-part, sometimes eight-part harmony, with not a note out of place, several including solo parts which tugged at the heart strings.

The first half consisted of eight pieces, all unaccompanied except for the last two, Andrew Carter's *Mary's Magnificat* and *A Maiden Most Gentle*. The second half gave us another eight pieces. The last two, again accompanied by Mark Denza, were John Rutter's gorgeous settings of the *Ave Maria* and *The Magnificat*.

There were several arrangements of the *Ave Maria*, and I was hoping that the one by Gounod, based on Bach, that most of us are familiar with, would be included. Well, the concert came to an end, and then we were treated to one extra piece, the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria* (adapted by Mark Denza himself). It was so lovely that I felt the tears start, and it would be fair to say that I was not the only one so moved.

I urge *ARCHER* readers to keep an eye out for any similar events at St. Mary's. You will not be disappointed.

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Farewell to Pepe

By Diana Cormack

After 12 years of running his café at 89 High Road, Pepe Dostezad has moved on. He sold the business earlier this year and some people will remember that two years ago he also sold Top Pizza, opposite East Finchley library.

Pepe told *THE ARCHER* that he really misses the friendliness of his former customers, many of whom he used to see on a daily basis. They became more like family to him and he saw their children growing up. He also saw many changes along the High Road, where he knew most of the traders. Local schools and churches will remember Pepe for the help he gave by donating to their fund raising activities.

"I would like to say thank you for all the support I have been given over the years," said Pepe. "I grew up with the people of East Finchley and I am grateful for what they did for me. I'll always be popping in to visit." Pepe asked for his email address to be printed in case anyone wants to contact him: pcasapepe@yahoo.com



Pepe Dostezad. Photo by Diana Cormack.



The fireworks wow the crowd at Martin Primary School.

Firework display draws in community

By Rachel Ellis

The annual firework display at Martin Primary School went with a bang. A crowd of more than 1,500 people watched a spectacular 25-minute display of rockets, fountains and Catherine wheels on the school field.

The mild, dry weather on Thursday 4 November was perfect for the event. Glow sticks, cakes, burgers and chips were on sale on the night, and there were extra items too this year, with the new toffee apple and jacket potato stall being a particular success.

The display drew people from all over East Finchley

and the surrounding area, with many former teachers, pupils and parents spotted amongst the crowd as well as families from nearby schools.

The firework display, sponsored by Greater London Hire, Prickett and Ellis, and Budgens, raised around £4,000 for the school.

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artsdepot Christmas show tickets to be won

Do you fancy a family outing to the theatre to catch a bit of Christmas magic? We have tickets to give away for *Catching Father Christmas*, which runs at artsdepot in North Finchley until 2 January.



A scene from *Catching Father Christmas*, coming to artsdepot.

The show tells the story of Amy, who lies awake excitedly on Christmas Eve waiting for Father Christmas to arrive. This year, she is determined to accomplish what no one else has done: to catch Father Christmas.

What Amy doesn't realise is that there are plenty of others with the same idea. As her clothes, furniture and even the sneaky Christmas decorations come to life, Amy quickly realises that instead of trying

to catch him, she has to protect Father Christmas instead.

Brought to the stage for the first time in the UK, it's a magical adventure for anyone aged four and above. Performances are daily at 12pm and 3pm, except on 17, 19 and 22 December, when they're at and at 3pm and 7pm. A signed performance takes place on Saturday 18 December at 3pm. Tickets can be booked at the box office on 020 8369 5454.

To win a family ticket for the performance at 12pm on Tuesday 28 December, courtesy of artsdepot, send your name and contact details by email to the-archer@lineone.net or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA. One winner will be chosen at random after the closing date on Friday 17 December.

Pharmacy opening times

Pharmacy opening times for the holiday season are as follows:

25 December: CW Andrews, 32 High Road, N2;
26 December: Boots, 788 High Road, North Finchley, N12;
27 December: Tesco Pharmacy,

Ballards Lane, N3;

28 December: Oakdale Pharmacy, Viceroy Parade, N2;
1 January: Charles Sampson, 800 High Street, N12;
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Radosnego Bozego Narodzenia*

By Ann Bronkhorst

For Polish children like three-year-old Daniel the excitement of Christmas begins on 6 December when St Nicholas leaves small gifts, not in stockings but under pillows. For Daniel's parents, Tomas and Ewa, who run the Polish Deli at 36 High Road, December will mean their usual hard work, but with extra Christmas specialities to display in the shop.

The first star

Tomas remembers traditional childhood Christmases on his grandmother's farm, with homemade food, deep snow in the forest and no glittering street decorations because, as he says, there were no streets. Even today, most Polish people fast on Christmas Eve, consuming no alcohol, meat or anything sweet until the first star appears. Then special bread is shared out before the family meal (of fish) and wishes are made for the coming year. The Christ-child's birth is celebrated at Midnight Mass, as in many Christian cultures.

At their shop, Ewa and Tomas display Polish greeting cards and a tree decorated in the modern way, although Tomas recalls fondly the childhood tree hung with his grandmother's simple home-made baubles: walnuts wrapped in silver foil bound round with ribbons. The shop stocks many special foods, including fresh and pre-cooked carp, traditionally eaten once a year. They won't have live fish for sale, though some households in Poland keep live carp in the bath for a few days before Christmas Eve.

Other delicacies stocked include the ingredients for making Polish borscht (beetroot soup); little mushroom dump-



Ewa and Tomas looking forward to Christmas. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

plings; homemade poppyseed cakes; and the wheat kernels, nuts, poppyseed and honey that go into Kutia, a delicious Russian dessert.

The Christmas spirit

Many Polish families here still observe the old Christmas traditions but it can be lonely for individuals who are far away from home. St Philip the Apostle, Gravel Hill, Finchley N3 is a local Catholic church where members of the Polish community gather at Christmas and find friendship and support. For details of regular and seasonal worship at the church, and

social activities, contact Father Kawczy at kawczy@wp.pl

*A traditional Polish greeting at Christmas. Tomas and Ewa will translate in full if you pop in to see them.

Delivered down under

THE ARCHER has a loyal readership of ex-pats in Australia. One is Douglas Darville, whose brother Fred, of The Mead, N2, dispatches a copy of the paper to him every month. Here, Fred sends Christmas wishes through our pages.

Douglas lived in Beresford Road before going to Australia in the late 1950s. He took with him his five children, two girls and three boys, and also his in-laws Sid and Lily Effer, who lived in Church Lane. Sid was an ex-Dunkirk man and served three years with the 8th Army.

Douglas's two girls went to Holy Trinity School in East End Road, and transferred to North Finchley while the school at Eagans Close was being built.

During the war, Douglas was a volunteer air raid warden. He had two narrow escapes, one at Dickens Avenue where he was 75 yards away when a huge bomb destroyed four houses. The other was when a parachute mine dropped behind the drill hall at the bottom of Squires Lane.

Douglas joined the RAF and after being demobbed was a self-employed builder. He now lives in Frankston, near Melbourne, close to his five children and eight grandchildren. Now in his 80s, he is enjoying his retirement. All of his friends in East Finchley wish him a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Christmas services

East Finchley Baptist Church

Sun 19 Dec: 10.30-11.45am, All Ages Together Carol Service; 6-7.15pm Carols by Candlelight. **Sat 25 Dec:** 10.30-11.15am, Christmas morning family service. **Sun 26 Dec:** 10.30-11.30am, Communion Service.

Holy Trinity Church

Wednesday 1 Dec: 2pm, Holy Trinity School Christingle. **Sun 19 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion; 6pm, Carol Service. **Fri 24 Dec:** 4pm, Nativity Play/blessing of the Crib; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass (Bishop of Edmonton). **Sat 25 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion. **Sun 26 Dec:** 10am, Parish Communion.

All Saints' Church

Sun 19 Dec: 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies. **Fri 24 Dec:** 3pm, Children's Christmas Service with Carols; 11.30pm, Sung Midnight Mass with Blessing of

the Crib. **Sat 25 Dec:** 8am, Mass of the Dawn; 10am, Sung Mass of the Day.

St Mary's Catholic Church

Sun 19 Dec: 6.30pm, Carol Service. **Mon 20 Dec:** 7.30pm, Advent Penitential Service. **Fri 24 Dec:** 6.30pm, Children's Christmas Mass; 10pm, 'Midnight' Mass. **Sat 25 Dec:** Masses at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon. **Sun 26 Dec:** St Stephen's Day Masses at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon.

East Finchley Methodist Church

Sun 5 Dec: 10.30am, Christingle and Holy Communion. **Sun 12 Dec:** 10.30am, Christmas Gift Service for Deptford Mission and H.A.B. (Homeless Action in Barnet). **Sun 19 Dec:** 10.30am, Nativity Service; 5pm, Carols by Candlelight, carol singing for everyone, plus Christmas music items, mince pies and refreshments afterwards. **Sat 25 Dec:** 10.30am, Christmas Day Celebration Service.

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Man stabbed in road rage attack

By Janet Maitland

Police are appealing for witnesses after a man was stabbed on the North Circular Road in what appears to have been an extreme example of road rage.

The attack occurred at about 8am on Wednesday 27 October, following a driving altercation that took place along the North Circular between Station Road and Falloden Road. A traffic jam then caused both vehicles, a black BMW and a blue Ford van, to stop just before the underpass that goes underneath East End Road.

At this point a struggle took place and one of the drivers was injured with a weapon. A 38-year-old man received a head wound and was treated at a local hospital. He was discharged

later that day.

"We are very keen to speak to anyone who might remember seeing the vehicles prior to the assault or who saw the actual confrontation between the two male drivers," said Detective Constable Mark Bennett of Barnet CID. "Anyone who contacts us can be assured it will be in complete confidence."

If you have any information contact DC Bennett on 020 8733 4435 or ring Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 and quote reference number 2425818/10.

History is king at the farmhouse

By Daphne Chamberlain

There's an East Finchley influence at the Church Farmhouse Museum this month. The current exhibitions feature the Phoenix and the Regicides. The Regicides were the men who signed King Charles I's death warrant and the most famous was Oliver Cromwell, whose son Richard lived for many years in East Finchley. That may be a tenuous connection, but the Phoenix is indisputably ours.

The exhibition celebrates the cinema's centenary. On display are photographs, film posters, and ushers' and usherettes' uniforms from the 1920s. You can also watch a 1930s film report of a premiere at Muswell Hill Odeon, and study pictures of many other cinemas scattered around Finchley and Muswell Hill in the first half of the 20th century.

The old farmhouse itself is always worth a visit. Some people go there regularly, just for the pleasure of wandering

round the house. At the top of Greyhound Hill, in the Burroughs area of Hendon, it is just off the 143 bus route.

The Phoenix exhibition runs until 3 January, and the Regicides until 9 January. The Church Farmhouse Museum is open Monday to Thursday, 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm; Saturday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm; Sunday 2pm-5.30pm. Admission is free. For more information, call 020 8359 3942 or visit www.churchfarmhousemuseum.co.uk.



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Spruce up for station

By Betti Blatman

On Sunday 31 October, seven of East Finchley's guerrilla gardeners arrived at the bank of land alongside the tube station for an autumn clear-out. They did quite a lot of weeding, harvested some butternut squash and kale, and planted many bulbs and other donated plants.

The weather was very disappointing and some supporters may have been put off attending. Due to the threatening rain, the Halloween barbecue feast was cancelled but cups of tea and raspberry

cake were served instead.

The guerrilla gardeners' message is that anyone who feels like taking care of a neglected patch of ground can do so, and they will act as a network for putting people in

touch and helping each other where possible. Contact: n2gardeners@gmail.com

Call to extend yellow lines at busy junction

By Daphne Chamberlain

A letter in last month's issue highlighted the need to contain traffic flow at the junction of Creighton Avenue and the High Road. David Melsome drew attention to the difficulty of exiting Creighton Avenue as a driver, and to the inappropriate speed and lack of care of some drivers.

This junction is known to be dangerous for pedestrians, and some drivers are not happy with the road markings in Creighton Avenue near the junction.

When the pavement in Creighton Avenue was widened recently, the Highways Department did not continue the double yellow lines from the corner, past the central island to the end of the extended pavement.

Plea to Council

Local resident John Hajdu told *THE ARCHER*: "As a result cars often park here making it dangerous for drivers approaching the junction as they have to swing out, often into the oncoming traffic. On behalf of members of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association can I plead with the Council to extend the double yellow lines to the end of the widened pavement section and so correct this omission?" He added that cars are often seen parking on the widened pavements.

A Barnet Council spokesperson told us: "Barnet Council has recently reviewed the junction of High Road and Creighton Avenue following concerns from residents that the double yellow lines did not extend far enough to prevent parked cars partially blocking the road. At this time the Council is not considering extending the yellow lines as vehicles were not seen to cause an obstruction; however we will continue to monitor the junction."

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Dismount for Olympic cycle route

Cycling fans hoping to watch Olympic champions riding up The Bishops Avenue in 2012 are to be disappointed after the London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG) removed Barnet from its Olympic road cycling routes.

Originally designed to include Hampstead, near to the Spaniard's Inn, and The Bishops Avenue, the course has now been altered to exclude Barnet after being described as 'not technically feasible'. Games officials argued that Barnet's section would cause an 'acute impact on transport' and have an 'unacceptable effect' on residential areas and the operation of London's roads.

Barnet Council said it was bitterly disappointed, particularly considering that Barnet residents had contributed financially to the Games.

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YOUNG ARCHER

Zoe's toys sell like hot cakes

When eight-year-old Zoe, of Summerlee Gardens, needed some money at Hallowe'en, she decided to raise it herself with the help of her ten-year-old neighbour Rachel. Well done girls! Here's Zoe's story:



Rachel and Zoe bewitching their customers. Photo by Diana Cormack.

I wanted to buy some things for my new toy (a very cute Build the Bear Dog called Chocolate), so I thought of a plan to sell my old toys and fairy dresses to get some money.

First of all I went through all my toys. I only picked the ones in good condition. I checked to see all the pieces were there - quite tricky for the jigsaw puzzles. Then I got my dolls ready, dressed them and did their hair. It was fun, my neighbour Rachel helped me. My mum washed my dressing up clothes I'd outgrown. Then we were ready.

I said to my mum: "We should do it today, Sunday". It was a lovely

sunny autumn day. We decided to set up outside Cherry Tree Wood as most of our friends and neighbours were playing there. It was great; lots of people came and bought my toys. They said I wasn't charging enough, so I put my prices up! The Lego was very popular and the Fairy Wings and Dresses were too. We sold so much that my mum had to go back for more things.

We met some friends and lots of new neighbours and I made £35. It was such good fun, I'm thinking of doing one at Christmas, with some money going to charity. Thank you everyone that came to my stall. Zoe.

Artists offer their talents to local schools

Members of the East Finchley Open group are considering a new venture that could see them spread their artistic talents into schools across Barnet.

The group wants to participate in Big Arts Week in local primary schools and is deciding whether to extend their involvement with Barnet schools throughout the borough or stay within the East Finchley area.

Summer outreach

Last summer, members of EFO tested the idea by volunteering their time and skills to lead art projects in five primary schools. Nearly 200 children benefited from their creative talents, enjoying workshops in drawing, photography, painting, collage and ceramics. The pupils had the opportunity to learn new skills and try their hand with ideas about line, shape, pattern, colour and memory.

Previously EFO members had worked on similar projects in Martin School, but this was the first time they had extended



Pupils at Northside Primary School take part in an EFO workshop. Photo courtesy of Myra Lawson.

into wider Barnet, part of their efforts to reach out into the community. Plans for repeating this initiative next summer will be discussed again by the group in the new year.

So delighted with the experience were some of the schools

that they have already asked the artists to return to lead further projects with their pupils. Artists taking part were Ann Froomb-erg, Myra Lawson, Ximena Heasman, Adam Justice-Mills, Peter Kyte, Sheila Seepersaud-Jones and Christine Watson.

Try our wordsearch

Hidden in our grid are names of places in East Finchley. How long will it take you to find them all?

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By Jake McConnell

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New parking zone is 'nonsense'

By Milena Ciric

Residents of Lynmouth Road, off Fortis Green, are up in arms over a new Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) installed on their street. Some claim that Haringey Council introduced the CPZ just weeks ago, but did not consult them properly about its implementation. Residents now say that the CPZ is causing them more harm than good.

Majority opposes scheme

Hassan Esfandiary, 62, a Lynmouth Road resident, said: "We carried out our own survey, and found that in Lynmouth Road it was 4:1 against the CPZ."

"I even got a ticket outside my house because we were waiting for the disability living allowance, because we can't get a disabled parking permit unless we had applied for this first. It's meant to be for our benefit. It's all nonsense really isn't it? Absolute nonsense."

The retiree said that he was concerned about the undemocratic nature of the issue. He said: "We had no consultation. All the consultation we had about it was against it." Mr Esfandiary has lived in Lynmouth Road since 1972 and says he has never had any issues with parking until now.

Although unavailable for comment on Lynmouth Road specifically, Haringey Council issued a report of statutory consultation. In it, objections made to the introduction of the CPZ claim that it was unnecessary because there were no previous problems with parking in this area.

Council response

Haringey Council said: "Although only three roads expressed support for inclusion in the zone it was decided the other roads within the pro-

posed boundary should also be included in this process, as they will inevitably suffer from displacement parking if omitted from the scheme."

Talks of a meeting to address the issue are under way, but no further action has yet been taken in response to residents' concerns.

Obituary: Lois Sutherland, 1936-2010

Lois May Sutherland (née Hardwick) died on 10 November, aged 74, at Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, after suffering a stroke and complications.

Born in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, she went to college where she met and married actor Donald Sutherland. The couple later divorced and Lois came to England where she worked for Ballet Rambert, trained as a teacher and taught at Our Lady of Muswell RC Primary School, before becoming headteacher at Highgate Primary School.

She was an avid film fan and friend of the Phoenix cinema and will be remembered as a unique friend, inspiration and teacher.

Anyone wishing to attend the commemoration ceremony

on 10 December at St Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road, at 2pm to celebrate her life should please contact Eric Albani (former pupil) for details on 020 8883 4403 / 07710 309 908 or eric.albani@bt.com.



Lois in her youth

Locked in the Wood

On Thursday 4 November a woman walking her dog was locked in Cherry Tree Wood. She managed to attract the attention of PCSO Officer Joe Mahoney of East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team who contacted Barnet. He waited with her in the dark until after 6pm when a council representative arrived with a key.

Signs at the park's three entrances state: "This is a locked park" but nowhere are closing times given. Ironically, a notice was on display stating that the gates will be locked at 4.30pm until 8.00am - but from 8 November. Locals view these timings with cynicism as a single mobile unit is responsible for locking several sites (see The Archer September 2009).

In the days when we had a park keeper, a bell was rung at closing time. Surely there should be some system of warning park users, thus preventing a potentially scary and distressing situation?

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Are you ready for the morning after?

It's that time of year again. Time for Classic FM to release another CD of carols you love to loathe. Time for an over-eating, over-spending, credit-crunching final blow-out before Slasher Osborne raises VAT and cuts jobs. And talking about jobs and Christmas, you can't avoid the weird world of the office party.

Office parties can mean anything from the ridiculous to the insane. There's the bankers' trickle-down effect, where the champagne trickles down rich men's throats, and the low rent pub crawl, where the office junior trickles down into the gutter. There's the high-tech techno party where the spotty kid from the post room photocopies his backside and the low-tech dancerrama where the Lothario from sales falls head first off the table. You could even have an international incident where the entire workforce gets arrested for doing something vaguely obscene to Nelson's Column. And that's before they serve the food.

It doesn't matter what gets served at the office party because everyone will be so far out to lunch that they'll eat sand and think it's caviar. Sell-by dates are not just optional, they are there to be ignored. Food poisoning? Blame it on the cocktails and the maniac who came up with the weird mixture of Bailey's, Bacardi, vodka and lemonade.

Music may be the food of love, but at the office party it's karaoke and the girl from accounts who thinks she's the missing link between Britain's not got talent and the Z factor, violating the collected works of Cheryl Cole, in Japanese.

Which brings me to sex. Every office party worth forgetting has at least one unfortunate romantic moment that neither participant wants to remember and which probably involves the manager's office, a fax machine, a cherry trifle and a bowl of cashew nuts. And it will be on YouTube long before the office opens the next morning.

So, if you're going to an office party remember the wise words of my great aunt: "If God had meant us to behave at office parties he'd never have given us Alka Seltzer."

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❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.

❖ **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 0433.

❖ **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029

❖ **Pilates class** Weds 3.30 & 7pm at Ann Owens Ctr, N2. Call Penny 8444 2882.

❖ **Tae Kwon Do** for children & adults at Finchley Lido Mon & Fri 7-9pm 07949 612 706. www.taekwondo-uktd.co.uk

❖ **Tai Chi class** at EF Methodist Ch, Weds at 1pm. Call James Drewe 8883 3308 or james@taiji.co.uk

❖ **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8883 7723.

❖ **Yoga, breathing & relaxation**. Weekly drop-in classes - N3, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 07956 375607.

❖ **Yoga**, pregnancy yoga, meditation classes. Call Sunnah 07941 321 772 or see www.stretchingpeople.co.uk.

MUSIC, DANCE & CREATIVE ARTS

❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 8888 5133.

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❖ **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners & improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.

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❖ **East Finchley Poetry Writing Workshops**. Monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.

❖ **Finchley Jazz Club: Live jazz** on Mon 6 & 20 Dec at 8.15pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.

❖ **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.

❖ **SwampRock** Louisiana Dance Club. Live music. Contact 07957 344 724 or www.swamprock.org.uk.

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❖ **Traditional music** at EF Constitutional Club on 2nd Mon each month from 8.30 pm. Free to join in or just listen.

CLUBS & SOCIAL

(See p8 for Parent & Toddler Clubs)

❖ **Bingo evening, 8pm Sundays**, at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2.

❖ **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5452

❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.

❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251

❖ **French conversation** in small friendly group with native speaker. 8444 9395.

❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or 8883 7544.

❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Moldon on 8361 1696.

❖ **LGBT?** 1st Weds every month in a local pub. Welcoming atmosphere. Email efinchleylgbt@hotmail.com

❖ **Muslim Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds, Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.

❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495

❖ **Northside Bridge Club**, EF Methodist Church, Thurs 7.30-11pm. 8346 8145.

❖ **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tues 1-3pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Call Anita 8886 6140.

❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390

❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professionals. Call John 8883 8114.

Review: Red Hedgehog

This is a Tuesday night at the end of October. Concentrate and relax, feel you are among friends, and enjoy outstanding performances from supreme musicians. As lorries grind up Archway Road entirely unheard, listen appreciatively amid the clearest of acoustics at The Red Hedgehog.

Dame Emma Kirkby gave herself a night off from her specialism of early music. She enjoyed soaring ever closer towards the climax of Arianna's intensely moving lament by Haydn. She relished the wry wit of Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis* and rose to the occasion with her advocacy of Mrs Amy Beach's jaunty melodies and command of French and German texts. James Lisney accompanied with vigorous, perceptive discretion, keenly alert to this pot-pourri of musical vocabularies.

The Lisneys - James (piano)

and Joy (cello) - are father and daughter. Their giving and sharing was truly intimate, sensitive, energetic, warm and accurately responsive, a rare delight. The major work was Chopin's *Cello Sonata*. Joy, still in her teens, gave an exceptional account of this late work, making the form of its alert lyricism abundantly clear. Generously, James gave his daughter space, enabling me to hear her cello ring out with conviction. The result was a genuine, arresting, serious and absorbing duo for two instruments, matching Chopin's intent.

So you want to be a TV presenter?

By Daphne Chamberlain

TV presenters have never been more in demand. Last month, anyone with ambitions in that direction should have been at the Black Gull Bookshop where Hampstead Garden Suburb resident Kathryn Wolfe was promoting her book, *So You Want To Be A TV Presenter?*

Kathryn, former director of many 'household name' programmes, including the BBC's *Breakfast Time* and *The Clothes Show*, lectures at the University of Bedfordshire and teaches privately at the Actors' Centre, Covent Garden, and the City Literary Institute. She also runs her own training company Pukka Presenting.

More channels mean more presenters

Presenters are in demand now because there are so many more programmes. Thirty years ago the UK had three television channels; now there are 831. Then, most presenters were journalists or actors. Now, Kathryn's students come from every background imaginable. Personality and the ability to get on with people are important, but just as vital is a genuine interest in what you are presenting, not a vague dream of being a presenter.

Kathryn recommends prac-

tice at home, even talking to the mirror, and then producing your own show reel, rather than buying formatted ones. Similarly, there is no need to start off with an agent.

Her book is packed with general and technical advice, including this: "If you are presenting in a blue-screen studio, pretending to be in Paris, and the Eiffel Tower is to be added to the parts of the screen which are blue, wherever blue appears in shot will be replaced by the Eiffel Tower, even if that is your blue shirt".

There were students in the Black Gull audience who had travelled from as far as Milton Keynes to hear Kathryn, and she was generous with her advice to them.

So You Want To Be A TV Presenter, by Kathryn Wolfe, is published by Nick Hern Books. ISBN 978 1 84842 062 5. Discover more on www.pukkapresenting.co.uk.



Edgeworth Johnstone and Shelley Li. Photo by Brian Schwartz

Call that art?

By Sheila Armstrong

The Black Gull Bookshop hosted an evening event in late October for two local painters, Edgeworth Johnstone and Shelley Li. Readers of *THE ARCHER* may remember we reported on Edgeworth's recent exhibition in Chorak, Muswell Hill. His background is Indie music, and Shelley, originally from Shanghai, started out doing business studies.

Edgeworth and Shelley belong to the Stuckist movement, which is against conceptual art, the sort of stuff that gets submitted for the Turner prize. Stuckists dispute that conceptual art is art, believing it to be exploitative and done for an elite. They brought some of their paintings along for discussion, and also talked about their new book *Stuck Near Tate Modern*.

A lively discussion ensued with members of the audience pressing for a more specific definition of Stuckism. Just what is a Stuckist? Luckily

East Finchley resident Charles Thompson, one of the founders of Stuckism, was in the audience to put the theoretical position and move the discussion along. For more information go to www.stuckism.com.

The Black Gull Bookshop holds its events in a small informal area with chairs and a sofa surrounded by books. Brian, the bookshop manager, says they are happy to hold evening events, so if you are looking for a small friendly venue in East Finchley get in touch with him at the bookshop on 020 8444 4717.

Hands-on help for Coldfall Wood

A programme of Saturday morning woodland caretaking has been organised by the Friends of Coldfall Wood and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, and anyone keen to help is welcome.

Dates are 4 December, 8 January, 5 February, 5 March and 2 April, all from 10am to 12.30pm and starting at the middle entrance to Coldfall Wood, on Creighton Avenue. Wear wellies, old clothes and strong gloves; tools will be provided and so will tea and coffee. Details: info@coldf

allwoods.co.uk

In addition, BTCV are running further conservation sessions in the wood on Thursdays from 10am to 3pm, starting from the same meeting point. The next ones will be on 4 and 16 December; details from l.berman@btcv.org.uk

What's On...

Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 December
• **Muswell Hill Traders' Christmas weekend** with carol singers and Father Christmas giving out presents. Festive refreshments and mince pies provided by individual shops.

Wednesday 8 December

• Late night seasonal shopping in Muswell Hill from 6 - 8pm, with discounts and refreshments.

Thursday 9 to Saturday 11 December

• The Guild Players present *See How They Run*, a farce by Philip King, 7.45 pm at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, N3. Tickets £8. Box Office enquiries 020 8346 6337, or visit www.guildplayers.org.uk

Thursday 9 December

• Salsa Thursdays upstairs at the TOC, 90 Highgate Hill, N19. Bachata 7.30pm, salsa 8.30pm. First class free, otherwise £6 for one hour or £8 for two hours. Every Thursday. Call Azari on 0779695 6767 or email info@bachatauk.com

Friday 10 December

• Chickenshed Theatre, Southgate, presents *Bad Jelly's Bad Christmas*, in aid of Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, 7.30pm. Tickets £19 (£17 concessions) from Chris Harbour at Noah's Ark on 020 8449 8877 or charbour@noahsarkhospice.org.uk. For more information visit www.chickenshed.org.uk.

Saturday 11 December

• Martin Primary School Christmas Fair, 12-3pm, Plane Tree Walk. A range of exciting stalls: browse, pick up a bargain or purchase a special Christmas gift. Food fair and Father Christmas too.

Sunday 12 December

• Tea dance, 2.30-5pm, at Christ Church Hall, 620 High Road, N12. Admission £4, including tea or coffee. Details from John and Betty on 020 8444 0280 or 07763 142854. Tea dances every Wednesday, 1pm - 3.30pm.

• High Barnet Christmas Walk, a

guided walk with Paul Baker, City of London guide. Meet at Barnet College, Wood Street, 2pm. Contact Paul on 020 8440 6805 or visit www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net.

Sunday 19 December

• Carols by Candlelight, 5pm. Come and enjoy carols and readings about the Christmas story, plus Christmas music items. Soloists: Andrea Whitaker (soprano) and Viola da Cunha (mezzo soprano). Free admission. Mince pies and refreshments afterwards. East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2 (opposite Creighton Ave). Venue fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Friday 24 December

• On Christmas Eve in Budgens, High Road, from 11am to 4pm Sippy Azizollah will hold a raffle in aid of the North London Hospice. Tickets £1 a strip.

Sunday 26 December

• Boxing Day tea dance, 2.30-5pm, at Christ Church Hall, 620 High

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

Road, N12. Admission £4, including tea or coffee. Mince pies and bring your own drink. Details from John and Betty on 020 8444 0280 or 07763 142854. Tea dances every Wednesday, 1pm - 3.30pm.

Until 31 December

• Jackson's Lane Theatre, Highgate, presents the Little Angel Theatre's production of Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*. Box office 020 8341 4421.

What's on at artsdepot, North Finchley

Wednesday 1 December, 7.30pm, Occams Razor, The Mill. Sunday 5 December, 1pm - 2.45pm, Sunday Buzz Free, Accord Duo. Sunday 12 December, 8pm, Los Desterrados. Saturday 18 December, 7pm - 11pm, Clive.

Wednesday 5 January

• Tumbleweed Comedy Show at the Old White Lion pub, next to E.Finchley station, 7.30pm. Tickets £5 on the door.

**Letters to the editor****Think about the staff**

Dear Editor,

I was very sad to read about the second armed robbery at Iceland on the High Road. I have never known the staff there to be less than courteous, smiling, and helpful to their customers. They work hard enough without being subjected to these events not once, but twice.

It's equally sad to see any shop on our High Road targeted in such a way. These are desperate times, made more desperate by an uncaring government intent on turning the unemployed into beggars or thieves.

In such times, I hope the staff are aware that their customers support their daily efforts and respect the strength it takes to move on from the actions of a mindless few.

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Brown,
Address supplied.

Sort out our roads and buses

Dear Editor,

When the North Circular was going to be 'done', ages ago, various roads were railed off "to stop rat runs for those trying to evade the road works" for the North Circular. The main ones that affected us coming up towards Gravel Hill from East End Road were Windermere and Mountfield. We have daughters living in Beechwood Avenue and it is a short journey through Windermere, instead of the congestion and fuel wastage of coming all up East End Road and then left into the High Road. Even if we turn into Windermere, we cannot turn left at Mountfield. There are rumours that some powerful resident or residents in Windermere successfully petitioned the council to leave the rails intact long after the completion of the North Circular. The 143 bus used to go up East End Road into Gravel Hill; that made a shortish walk up, and took so much less time to get to Brent Cross. I did ask London Transport but they just said it would be considered. I wish more people used our lovely H3 and it might then run more often than once an hour instead of stopping at 2.30pm.

Yours faithfully,
Lorna Roberts,
East End Road, N2.

Happy memories of Helen

Dear Editor,

I was very sad to hear about the death of Helen O'Toole. From 2004, for a year and a half, Helen was one of our wonderful reading helpers who helped children with reading in Holy Trinity Primary School. She joined our scheme enthusiastically and was delighted to be placed at Holy Trinity School where she herself had been to school.

She had a lovely rapport with the young children who were always delighted to come out of their classes twice a week to read and play with her. During her time with them she was able to make a significant difference to the children's confidence which impacted on all areas of their abilities and personalities.

She was not with Volunteer Reading Help for very long, but in the time she was she made a wonderful contribution to the work we do and was a delight to have as part of our organisation.

Yours faithfully,
Harriet Watson,
Volunteer Services Manager
London North West Branch,
Volunteer Reading Help.

Look after our local traders

Dear Editor,

It is sad to see that a number of our local shops and businesses have closed down over recent months, no doubt struggling to hang on through the dark months of the recession. It is at times like this that people in East Finchley must show their support more than ever for the traders on their doorstep.

The shops that line the High Road and East End Road, and other local shops round our way, can only keep going if we go in and spend our money. Once they are gone they will never return, and our community will be a poorer place without them.

So next time you've got to pop out for a bit of shopping or fancy a meal, think first about the friendly faces in our neighbourhood who are looking for your business. Shopping and eating locally is more pleasurable, not to mention better for the environment.

Yours faithfully,
Frances Cooper,
Kitchener Road, N2.

A tribute to Helen

Last month, *THE ARCHER* reported the sad news that Helen O'Toole had died at the age of 33. Helen was a former member of our team and well-known in the local community. Here, we print an edited version of the tribute delivered at her funeral on behalf of her parents Mary and Charles.

Helen was a floppy baby and it was clear she had some problems. However, it was not until she was 18 months old that she was diagnosed with Morquio Disease. This was to dominate her life but it never overpowered her or prevented her from doing what she wanted to do.

She grew up at ease with her identity as a disabled person and never felt self-conscious about her disability, although she had some very powerful curses for anyone who patted her on the head. From the beginning, Mary talked to Helen about her differences and helped her to explain herself to other children. Helen loved Holy Trinity nursery and school, and remembered this as a very happy time in her life.

She had to endure a number of major operations during her life and accepted them all very courageously. She very seldom complained of pain. She knew from an early age that her life was at risk but this did not stop her from agreeing to treatments that were painful and prolonged.

When she was eight, Helen had a pioneering treatment for instability of the spine. This involved screwing a metal cage to her head, which had to be done without anaesthetic so that Helen could tell them when her neck was in the right position. The success of this treatment led to the establishment of this type of surgery for people with Morquio Disease in Britain and indeed internationally.

Helen made many friends through the MPS Society and was able to support other young people who were facing the same treatment that she had.

After leaving school, she took enormous delight in developing her wheelchair dancing, drama and other creative arts with Community Focus in North Finchley. She took a lead in a dance group called Free Wheels. When this folded due to lack of funding, Helen organised her friends to set up their own independent dance group called Happy Go Lucky.

Before long, Helen was desperate to live independently. Mary and Charlie investigated all sorts of possibilities, but eventually found that the only way to qualify for council housing was for her parents to evict her, so that she would be technically homeless. "Please evict me," Helen raged, and she also gave her parents other incentives to take this painful step.

After many setbacks, and much difficult negotiation, Helen moved into a wonderful flat off Nether Street, near North Finchley, with 24-hour support. She delighted in furnishing and equipping her flat and in getting her garden planted. She loved to invite her friends and to have parties.

Helen was a courageous, bright and vivacious person. She showed great strength and was an independent spirit who embraced life to the full. She had wit, bravado and gutsiness, as well as being bolshie and bloody-minded. She was generous in her friendship, with a quirky sense of humour. One of her t-shirts read: "I'm not small, it's an optical illusion".

Helen maintained her



An inspiration: Helen O'Toole independence to the end. To live the way she did was a great achievement. We are immensely proud of her. Helen, we celebrate your life and we salute you.

When Helen knew she was dying she asked that her money be given to charities that she was involved with (she didn't have any money, she was a great one for spending). Helen's family express their appreciation for the many messages of support and the donations in memory of Helen. The £2,000 raised has been shared between the Happy Go Lucky dance group and Community Focus. Read another tribute to Helen in our Letters - see left.

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The power of puppetry

By Angela Anderson

Founded in 1961, the excellent Little Angel marionette theatre has been converted from a former chapel tucked away behind St Mary's Church in Islington. It's known as "the home of British puppetry" and has a well-deserved reputation for high-quality, imaginative productions that tour nationally and internationally.

These puppets are not only for children. I only discovered the theatre four years ago watching a production of Jack and the Beanstalk set in the 1950s with Jack's mother wearing wide skirts and tight belts and one of the baddies driving a large Cadillac. I spent the first two minutes thinking "how delightful for the children" before becoming very engaged with the story myself, feeling dismayed when things went wrong for Jack and shouting with delight when they all lived happily ever after.

Professional puppetry

I work as a volunteer at one of their Saturday morning puppet clubs where children design and make their own puppets before writing and performing a play in the theatre at the end of term. The Little Angel Youth Theatre course, run in conjunction with the National Theatre, is for 11 to 15-year-olds. Adults too can learn professional puppetry skills at Little Angel.

Their Christmas production this year is Alice in Wonderland, featuring all the well-known characters and including hand shadows, Victorian photo portraits and witty songs. Hold On, Mr Rabbit is the accompanying production for younger children, based on Alice but featuring Elsie following her toy rabbit as he disappears through a picture frame.

If you don't have your own children, borrow a friend's and take them along; you will certainly enjoy it as much as they do. Anyone who has seen War Horse, the First World War play with its life-size animals, can attest to the power of puppets and our ability to believe in them. More details can be found at www.littleangeltheatre.com.



No strings? or The Little Angel puppets cast their spell. Photo by Lynette Shanbury



Take charge and recharge

By Adam Justice-Mills

So, it's Christmas morning and as I unwrap the new executive toy I wonder whether batteries are included, and what their green credentials are.

Batteries keep us going when we can't plug in to get electricity, so they are incredibly handy (we use 700 million every year in the UK).

That's provided you don't need much power because they don't hold a lot of energy unless they are big and heavy (a low "energy density") so battery-driven cars have only become viable recently.

Small and smart

Batteries are getting smarter, though. Remember the huge batteries on your old mobile phones and laptops? Smarter means more complex and costly to make, and might also mean more "rare earth" materials too.

The energy they hold has to come from somewhere so that means nasty chemicals during manufacture and - unless you charge them from a solar cell - the electricity grid when they are re-charged. Then there's the energy to re-cycle them when they get to the end of their life.

Battery downcycling

So how can you make sure these nasty chemicals don't escape and that the energy to make and re-charge them is kept to a minimum? Firstly, you can try "downcycling" disposable AA or AAA batteries from high-power devices

like digital cameras and toys into low-power ones like TV remotes and clocks. You'll be amazed how much longer they keep working.

The good news is that, over their whole life cycle, rechargeable batteries are better, having 28 times less impact on the environment than disposable ones. So get loads of rechargeable ones (and an efficient or solar charger) and feel better immediately.

Luckily, there are places you can dispose of dead batteries safely. Retailers should have "battery back" disposal bins for consumer batteries and the council tip at Summers Lane will take complete, undamaged lead-acid (car) batteries too. So, take charge and re-charge!

Diwali delight

A party for senior citizens to celebrate Diwali was almost called off, until a lucky chance meant it could go ahead after all.

The Barnet Elderly Asian Foundation was short of the usual funds for its annual celebration for people from the Hindu, Sikh and Jain communities. Then chairman Dipak Jashapara had a stroke of luck when he found a leaflet on a bus.

The leaflet was advertising the Fred Wolff fund, which makes charitable donations in memory of its namesake, a Jewish refugee whose family fled Nazi persecution and who lived in Barnet towards the end of his life.

The fund's generous help meant that more than 150 over-50s from the foundation celebrated the Festival of Light in early November with dancing, music and socialising at the Shree Aden Depala Mitramandal Centre in Church Lane.

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