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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURIERS**

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Ale and hearty: Bald Faced Stag staff (left to right) Martin Walsh, Charlotte Woodley and Martin Garner. Photo by Nick Young

Bald Faced Stag in Good Beer Guide

By Nick Young

The Bald Faced Stag on the High Road is the only East Finchley pub to feature in the current edition of the *Good Beer Guide*, which is published by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Customers and staff at the pub have welcomed this. "We found out about it three months ago," explained Martin Garner, the pub's general manager. "We were assessed by CAMRA members who came in here, sometimes undercover, to find out about

us and taste our ales."

The guide notes that the Bald Faced Stag serves three guest ales on the hand pumps. "As we're not a tied pub, we get to choose which ales we serve," said Martin. "We generally choose beers that are unusual and different." Recently, the pub has served beer from London breweries such as Truman's, as well as regional breweries such as Sharp's (Cornwall), the Bristol Beer Factory and Windsor & Eton.

The pub, which has an

estimated 1,000 customers per week if you include the restaurant and was recently given a three-star review by *Time Out* magazine, has even introduced a guest ale voting card system, whereby patrons can vote for which ale they would like to see served.

At the time of writing, there were plans for the pub to host a real ale festival in late November, and Martin intends to host another one in the new year.

The *Good Beer Guide* is published annually by CAMRA and lists what members of that organisation consider to be the best real ale (cask-conditioned beer) outlets in the country. The Bald Faced Stag has never appeared in the guide before.

Dismay at new cashless parking regime

By John Lawrence

Shoppers and traders have told us of their despair and frustration at the introduction of a new parking payment system in the High Road and East End Road.

Barnet Council has replaced the former coin-operated parking meters with a 'cashless' system that allow drivers to pay only by calling a telephone number and registering their credit card details.

Shopowners claim this is a guaranteed way to drive away business at a time when local stores need all the trade they can get, and motorists have told us it's enough to stop them coming to East Finchley at all.

Threat to trade

Andy Panayi, who runs AP Gentlemen's Barbers in the High Road, shook his head in bafflement as he watched council staff covering up the old meters with black bin liners in readiness for the new system.

"It's the older drivers I feel sorry for," said Andy. "They don't all have mobile phones and credit cards so what are they supposed to do if they want to park for a quick bit of shopping? The council doesn't care about them."

"This will affect businesses all along the High Rad. We all need customers in these tough times when rents are so high.

This will damage us all."

Reader Susan Bennett (see Letters to the Editor, page 11) told us she and her husband had arrived in East Finchley with a friend to eat at one of their favourite local restaurants but didn't stay long.

Susan said sadly: "We drove away to a restaurant out of the area where we could park without needing a mobile phone. We were all pensioners, none of us felt competent to go through the procedures required. We will probably not return to that parade to shop or eat."

Payment alternatives

Barnet Council has already faced fierce opposition to the new cashless system after introducing it elsewhere in the borough. As a result, shoppers are now being given a wider choice of paying for parking: they can pay in cash at a shop that operates PayPoint, or buy pre-pay parking 'scratch cards' from libraries and other local outlets.

Council leader Richard Cornelius said that 107,000 people had registered for cashless parking but there had clearly been glitches with the new system. "The scratch cards will hopefully bridge the gap," he said.

Further information on parking payments can be found at www.barnet.gov.uk/parking

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Season's greetings

Everyone in *THE ARCHER* team wishes all our readers, distributors and advertisers a happy festive season and a prosperous 12 months ahead. We thank you for all your contributions and support in 2011 and look forward to the newspaper staying at the heart of our community in 2012.

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



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Faced Stag for providing
us with a meeting place.*

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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.*

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Employment Service 020 8258 3900
Haringey Council 020 8489 0000

Leisure

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
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Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema 020 8446 9933

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“Planning threat” to the character of Finchley

The Finchley Society's chairman David Smith has written to Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer to raise concerns about the controversial National Planning Policy Framework.

In the letter, David highlighted the fact that local planning authorities are being instructed to “plan positively for new development, and approve all individual proposals wherever possible”. The Finchley Society feels that this approach would stop councils from listening to local people who have well-founded objections to planning applications.

The Finchley Society wants ministers to look again at the framework's content and to address their concerns. While the Society is sympathetic to the government's aims of sim-

plifying the planning system and securing economic recovery, it feels that this should not be at the expense of the social, cultural and environmental character of Finchley, and of residents' rights to be heard.

Peter Pickering, of the society's planning committee, said: “The Finchley Society believes that the National Planning Policy Framework as it currently stands is a threat to the character of the suburbs as well as of the countryside, and will ride roughshod over the views of genuinely concerned residents. We urge ministers to look at this document again.”

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

16 Aylmer Road, N2
Variation of condition 9 (Means of Enclosure), pursuant to planning permission C/17308/07 dated 08/01/08, to include amendments to boundary treatment at front elevation, including new vehicular automatic gates and pedestrian gates.
67A Church Lane, N2
Single-storey rear extension to community centre.
42 Church Vale, N2
Two-storey side extension with additional basement level. Single-storey rear extension. Extension to roof, including three dormer windows.
204 Creighton Avenue, N2
Temporary change of use from residential to D1 (school for 24 pupils) until July 2015.
2 Greenhalgh Walk, N2
Insertion of three roof lights to side and rear elevations to roof. Alterations to existing rear dormer window (amended description).
19 Hertford Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

Long Lane Newsagents, 409 Long Lane, N2

Conversion of ground floor shop into one self-contained flat.
28 Sedgemere Avenue, N2
Roof extension, including rear-facing dormer window and roof light to front.
36 Summerlee Avenue, N2
Single-storey rear extension. Replacement of two windows to rear elevation at first-floor level. Insertion of roof light to main roof (amended description).
2 The Bishops Avenue, N2
Erection of brick piers and two pedestrian gates at front elevation. Erection of low brick wall, brick piers and pedestrian gate at rear of garden to replace existing rear fence.

Haringey Council

1-17 Clissold Close, N2
Installation of digital aerial system.
54 Lauradale Road, N2
Erection of rear dormer window with insertion of three roof lights to front roof slope.

Eden Primary School

By Daphne Chamberlain

As we reported in September, there is to be a new primary school at 79 Creighton Avenue. Haringey Council attached the following conditions to their approval of the planning application.

Under Section 106, £82,000 is to be given towards a high-way safety scheme to improve local pedestrian and cyclist conditions.

There will be limitations on extended use outside normal school hours, which are 9am to 3pm.

Eden School is to provide a landscaping plan and an outdoor management plan.

The school must give details of visual and acoustic barriers to protect residents of adjacent properties in Ringwood Avenue.

Third-class post

By Betti Blatman

Back on 9 August this year, I posted an envelope with a second-class stamp in East Finchley to an address in East Finchley. On 12 November, the intended recipient informed me that she had just received it that morning, three months and three days after I'd posted it.

Upon closer inspection, it was post-marked “09.08.11 Greenford/Windsor Mail Centre 06.41 pm” but somehow took three months to arrive at its destination in East Finchley. Needless to say, the free-entry voucher I had enclosed for my friend and her son to enjoy a great day out at Legoland was no longer valid. Perhaps I should use first-class stamps in future?

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Arts Centre goes up for sale

By Daphne Chamberlain

Following the shock announcement that The Institute has decided to sell its purpose-built Arts Centre behind East Finchley station, principal Joy Solomon told The Archer that anyone thinking about enrolling at the Centre should go ahead, as its immediate future is safe.

Ms Solomon said that The Institute had been blessed with a beautiful building, but the building itself is not vital. What is important is the quality of tuition and provision, but obviously the ideal solution would be to lease the premises back from the buyer. The Institute want to talk to a variety of organisations representing different interests; Joy Solomon is already in dialogue with one or two of them.

The Institute is an associated college of Middlesex University, and also a registered charity. Ms Solomon told us that she is in discussion with other colleges, and that charities often help each other, for example in developing bids together. She said the future includes working along these lines. Sponsorship and patronage are also very much appreciated.

Staying in the area
If The Institute does have

to find other premises eventually, it intends to stay in North London. 75% of its current 6,000 members come from outside the original Hampstead Garden Suburb area, but Ms Solomon is committed to staying reasonably close to its roots.

The Arts Centre, in Beaumont Close, was opened almost five years ago, and is a great success with students. Unfortunately, it was enormously expensive to build and install. Ironically, the level of debt three years ago was four times higher than now, but The Institute is still under great financial pressure. Ms Solomon said, "It has been a difficult year globally, and the timescale of the banks makes it harder. However, we are not in the position of Greece! Continuity of provision is our primary objective".

Joy Solomon can be contacted at joy.solomon@hgsi.ac.uk

Warning after cat is shot with air gun

By Janet Maitland

A cat called Molly was shot with an air gun on 30 October somewhere in the vicinity of Chandos Road.

Molly's owners came home to find her seriously distressed and bleeding and had to take her to the emergency vet.

An X-ray revealed an air gun pellet lodged deep inside her, about 1cm from her spine. The timing of the shooting was sometime between 11am and 1pm.

"If the gun had been shot from any closer range it would certainly have killed her," said the owners, who asked not to be named. "There's still a chance that the pellet will cause an infection, but the vet said that as it is so close to her spine, removing it might be more risky than leaving it where it is."

The owners, who have had to pay £700 in vet bills, are keeping Molly inside while she recovers

but they're terrified of this happening again when eventually she wants to go outside.

"She may not be so lucky next time. We have always felt that Chandos Road is a very safe place to have a cat as there is so much space for her to roam but it isn't as safe a neighbourhood as we thought.

"There are sick people around who think it's acceptable to shoot a cat. You don't need a licence to own an air gun but they can be the cause of fatal incidents, not only to animals but to people too."

If you have any information that would help the police track down the perpetrator, call them on 101. If you want to remain anonymous, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Archer Calendar 2012 on sale now

Don't miss out on your copy of The Archer Calendar 2012, this year in an all-new slim-line format with plenty of space to scribble birthdays, appointments and important notes.

The calendar features 12 fun and fascinating pictures of games and activities in East Finchley and for just £5 it makes the ideal Christmas present for friends and family, or just for yourself. Every penny raised goes to support the work of Age UK Barnet at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2.

Buy it from Coral's the

chemist in East End Road, or any of these outlets in the High Road: Budgens, Black Gull Bookshop, Cherry Tree Gift Shop, East Finchley Electrical, Kokos, Mulberry Court, Stewart Duncan Opticians and Tony's Continental.

Alternatively, use the order form on page 11. Delivery is free to your door or any address in the UK or Europe.



Julia Hines's photo of a low-impact exercise class at Age UK Barnet's centre in Oak Lane, N2, is in our 2012 calendar.

Here, Lisa Dubow, Age UK Barnet development manager, explains how money raised from the calendar will be used for the benefit of East Finchley's older residents.

Last year East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact merged with Age UK Barnet and the services continue to run with us. Many older local residents depend on these services, which include two lunch clubs, gardening, a shopping bus and a transport and escort service.

Volunteers from the local community play a central role in delivering many of these services: cooking and serving food at the lunch clubs, driving older people to appointments in their own cars and taking them on public transport to appointments. Without these volunteers, the service would not reach as far into the local community as it does.

Mark Robinson, chief officer at Age UK Barnet, says



"I am extremely pleased that the ARCHER's readers will be supporting the work of Age UK Barnet in the East Finchley area. It is wonderful to see the East Finchley community working together to produce the calendar and use it to raise money to benefit local people."

For more information about services, including costs, or to volunteer to help, please call Amanda Radonich on 020 8432 1415.

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Shock of burglary in broad daylight

By Janet Maitland

An attempted burglary at a house in Helen Close, N2, on 18 October, has left the occupants deeply shocked. The burglar broke in by smashing the glass patio doors at the back of the house when the 71-year-old owner and her son were both at home. They have asked not to be named.

"I can't believe that this happened in broad daylight," said the son, who has lived in the house with his mother for 32 years. "I heard someone knock at the front door four times at about one o'clock in the afternoon. My mother, who's a bit deaf, was watching TV and I was upstairs.

"Then I heard the sound of breaking glass and I rushed downstairs. The man ran off as soon as I disturbed him. I haven't even checked if he's stolen anything, I'm just so worried about my mum. What would have happened to her if I hadn't been in the house?"

Presumably thinking the

house was empty as no one answered the door, the burglar went down a blind alleyway next to the house and climbed over the fence into the back garden. Marks on the patio door-frame suggest he used a screwdriver to break the glass.

The police informed us that they will visit the house to determine how the suspect was able to access the back of the house so easily.

If you have any information about this crime, please call 101 and quote crime reference number 2425183/11. If you want to remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



Cartoon by John Boyd

Setback for parking zone campaigners but the fight goes on

Residents fighting to overturn Barnet Council's plans to increase charges in controlled parking zones in East Finchley suffered a setback in November when a High Court judge refused permission for them to take the case to trial.

Showtime is back

By Daphne Chamberlain
Have you heard about the East Finchley man who went into a travel agent's in Muswell Hill to book a cruise? He wanted to go to New York, and indeed that's where he went, but only after the travel agent's assistant beat him unconscious and put him into a rowing boat. If this is familiar, you are either connected with East Finchley Writers or have bought their latest anthology.

Showtime 4 is, in my opinion, their best book yet. Readers of their three previous anthologies will recognise the bizarre plots and spine-chilling characters beloved by some of these writers. Be aware that even some of the humour is dark. This is not a cosy book, but most people will find something to intrigue them.

The Showtime anthologies feature short stories, autobiography, poetry, non-fiction, including travel writing, and extracts from novels. In this one, extracts from the beginning, middle and end of a novel are spaced throughout the book, which is a nice feature.

Some of the ten authors read their work at October's East Finchley Arts Festival, where they make regular appearances. Although a few have had their work published elsewhere, they are not full-time professional writers. Between them, they have experience of many different ways of life, and welcome newcomers to their group.

East Finchley Writers meet on Wednesdays at The Old White Lion. Contact Carola on 020 8883 5808 for details, or for enquiries about Showtime 4, which is available for sale online at www.lulu.com.

Lord Carlisle QC gave the reason that the case seemed similar to another challenge brought by a Barnet resident over the CPZ charges which was dismissed by the court in the summer.

The Barnet CPZ Action Group points out, however, that the earlier case was not supported by detailed legal argument and has vowed to fight on and renew the legal challenge at a court hearing in the New Year.

David Attfield, the resident who is bringing the legal challenge on behalf of the group, commented: "It is disappointing that we failed to convey to the Judge the argument at the heart of our case: that two High Court cases have established that high parking charges can only be justified if there is a need to control parking demand or manage traffic in the areas concerned. Simply saying, as Barnet does, that more money is needed to pay

for the Freedom Pass for the over-60s and to fix potholes is not enough."

Supporters build fighting fund

Funds for the continuing legal fight were boosted when nearly 100 people packed into the East Finchley Constitutional Club on Saturday 12 November for a fun quiz, auction and food by the Lazy Sally Café. The event raised over £1,500.

Local actors Barry Jackson and Carolyn Pickles were in control of the gavel at the auction, which included lots of a week in a holiday home in Majorca, pet grooming, studio photos, a tour of Lords and a home cooked meal for eight.

Local businesses donated most of the raffle prizes, including a Christmas hamper, a meal for two at the Bald Faced Stag, Phoenix Cinema tickets, plus donations from Majestic Wine and Budgens.



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Bids are in for Stanley Road Playing Field

Eight bids have been submitted to Barnet Council to acquire Stanley Road Playing Field. The bid by Sport East Finchley (Sport EF), a local community-based group hoping to retain the field for sports purposes, is one of them. The others are as yet unknown.

People are being urged to sign a petition to support the Sport EF plan and show Barnet Council the strength of feeling behind the idea in East Finchley. Over 1,000 signatures have already been collected online and on paper. You can add your name to the online list at www.stanleyroadsports.org or sign the petition at Bike and Run on the High Road.

Whole site for sport

Fairview New Homes is expected to be among the eight bidders for the field, since the company approached Sport EF with the intention of doing a deal with them to build houses on half of the site and develop the rest of the site for sports facilities.

This approach was rejected by Sport EF as its professional business plan needs the whole

one-hectare site to work for sports use. Its funder, the London Marathon Trust, which is prepared to purchase the site for sports use and substantially contribute to providing sports facilities on site, will only do so if the whole site is retained in sports use.

The retention of the whole site for sports use is a position which the local community has supported solidly over many years.

Olympic legacy

Roger Chapman, Chair of Sport EF, said: "Crunch time for the future of one of East Finchley's open spaces is near. Our bid amounts to a £2 million investment in modern sports facilities at no cost to the council. Our bid is localism and the Big Society wrapped up in one and we want the Council to be

bold enough to support its local community in providing a fitting Olympic 2012 sports legacy for Barnet."

Barnet Council will consider the eight bids at one of its Cabinet Resources Committee meetings. Stanley Road Playing Field was scheduled for discussion at a November meeting but failed to make the final agenda. The December meeting, date unconfirmed, is a special one and the meeting after that will be on 12 January.

Sport EF will keep people up to date with posts on its website www.stanleyroadsports.org and Facebook page (search Stanley Road Playing Field East Finchley).



Arrest after car overturns

By Janet Maitland

A man was arrested after two cars collided on the High Road at about 1.30pm on 21 October, outside the gates of Islington cemetery. One of the vehicles was flipped onto its roof in the incident.

Lee Garcia was driving a BMW that was in collision with a black Vauxhall Corsa driven by a woman who is believed to be in her 30s. She was trapped in the car and had to be freed by emergency services before being taken by ambulance to Whittington Hospital. Her injuries are not thought to be serious.

Mr Garcia drove away from the accident, but his car was chased by a police officer on foot who managed to catch up with the BMW. "The damage done to the car caused it to stop," said a police spokesperson. "We were then able to arrest him. He was charged with 13 offences and kept in custody until he

appeared at Hendon Magistrates court on 24 October."

The charges included failing to stop at the accident, dangerous driving and possession of Class A drugs. The other charges, some of which were for previous alleged offences, were related to driving without insurance or not in accordance with his licence.

In court, Mr Garcia pleaded guilty to possession of cocaine and to two of the insurance and licence charges. He was remanded on unconditional bail. He will be sentenced at Brent Magistrates Court on 9 January. The court will also try him for the charges to which he has pleaded not guilty.



Early queues for the Safer Neighbourhood Team's cycle security event at East Finchley station. Photo by John Lawrence

Cyclists get in line for bike security

Bikes are always vulnerable to theft but there's plenty cyclists can do to protect their faithful steeds. Cyclists were queuing early to take advantage of a free cycle marking event held outside East Finchley station in the morning rush hour on 18 October.

The East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood team and the Met's Cycle Task Force applied unique serial numbers in indelible paint and registered bike frame numbers, to deter thieves and make stolen bikes easier to trace back to their owners.

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Coldfall cash

By Janet Maitland

In August we reported that thousands of pounds had been found hidden in Coldfall Wood. You've probably been wondering exactly how much was found, whether anyone claimed it and how it got there in the first place ... and possibly what you would have done if you'd stumbled upon it whilst walking your dog.

We can now report that no one claimed the money, about £5,000, so it was returned to the person who found it. "Any suggestion as to how the money ended up there would be pure speculation," said a police spokesperson. So now you know.

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Phoenix boss moves on

By Sheila Armstrong

Paul Homer, chief executive of the Phoenix Cinema, is moving on after eight years in charge. East Finchley's loss is Hastings' gain as he goes to the new Jerwood Art Gallery there in December.

Paul will be overseeing the final phase of the new build which will house Jerwood's extensive British art collection, and open the gallery to the public in the spring of 2012, no doubt using many of the skills he has practised during the refurbishment of our own Phoenix Cinema.

Discussing the milestones of his eight-year tenure, Paul mentioned in particular the Lottery grant for the refurbishment, computerising the box office, the website (now on its fourth version) and getting digital projectors, which enable the sell-out satellite events from the National Theatre and the New York Met to take place.

Reaching out

Affectionately describing the Phoenix in 2004 as like someone talking to itself, one of his aims was to ensure the cinema included not only independent and world cinema but new mainstream films as well, attracting a new and wider audi-

ence. He said that the weekend when *Volter* came out was a turning point; takings had been generally low but this popular film injected money into the cinema at a time of great financial need.

Praising the trustees, patrons and staff - "We're a real team," he said, with typical generosity - he gave a special mention to Mark Kermode, passionate film critic and local boy, who promotes the interests of the Phoenix wherever he can. The Board of trustees, he said, were the unsung heroes of the place: all volunteers, they are very committed and their guidance has enabled the Phoenix to get where it is today.

"I've tried to do too much," he concluded. "A second screen was an ambition I was not able to realise." Most people who know and love the Phoenix would say he has done a great deal for East Finchley cinema-goers, and that he'll be a very hard act to follow. Watch this space for the name of his successor.

December at the Phoenix - and farewell, Paul

By Paul Homer

This is my last column for *THE ARCHER* as I leave the Phoenix for the last time on 2 December and ride away into the sunset. It's been an amazing, fulfilling, rewarding eight years and I'll be sad to be leaving this fantastic place and the amazing staff who I've been very proud to work with.

It's great to know that the cinema is in such good shape and I feel now, more than ever, that The Phoenix is the heart of the community. I think that's in part due to our café, a space where people can gather and meet. It makes the whole building buzz and feel vibrant.

We've lined up a great December for you to enjoy with lots of different films. We have *My Week with Marilyn* from 9 December, part of which was filmed here, so come and see The Phoenix at The Phoenix! It tells the story of when Laurence Olivier worked with Marilyn Monroe on *The Prince and The Showgirl* in the late

1950s, realising along the way that he would never be the star that Marilyn was.

We're also showing Nanni Moretti's new film *We Have A Pope* the same week: think of *The King's Speech* in Italy. The following week we have the charming French comedy *Romantics Anonymous* about two chocolate makers who don't know how to communicate. That film is playing together with road trip movie *Los Acacias* from Argentina.

Playing films from four different countries in two weeks feels appropriate. This is the sort of cinema we've tried to create here, showcasing the best films from across the world for our loyal, local audience.

I'll certainly miss the great films, the lovely customers and East Finchley. I wish you all well.

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

Free screening at the Phoenix Cinema

Community Focus welcomes everyone to come to the preview of Future Present Past (FPP) on Saturday 10 December at 2.30pm. Taking inspiration from local places of interest and experts, the FPP panel's film documents a group of young people's questions about identity, heritage and reminiscence in Barnet. The film provides a panorama of changing experience of life in Barnet over the last 60 years.



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Hava Webster, Brian Hooper, Anita Brien, George Andrew and the pumpkin! Photo by pub customer Bill.

Pump up the fundraising

By Diana Cormack

This year the annual "Guess the weight of the Pumpkin" competition held at The Old White Lion was in aid of the North London Hospice. Organiser Brian Hooper, of Fortis Green, also ran a raffle for the cause and managed to sell some tickets to a member of boy band One Direction.

Supplied from his allotment by George Andrew, the pumpkin weighed 72lbs (32.7kg), which ten people managed to estimate. The winner, drawn out of a hat, received a £10 voucher to spend in the pub whilst the others either had a bottle of wine or donated this to the charity. On 9 November Anita Brien, community fundraiser for the North London Hospice, was presented with a cheque for the admirable amount of £1,565.00.

A week of carols

During December, Brian will be running a Christmas

raffle at The Old White Lion in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Also during December the pub welcomes any groups in the local area who would like to come in and sing carols. The proceeds from their collections would be split between the groups' own charities and GOS Hospital. Singing can take place at anytime during the afternoon or evening in the week Monday 12 to Friday 16 December. For details, contact manager Hava Webster on 020 8883 6459.

Parents step up battle for safer crossings

By Emily Burnham and Karen Saunders

Mothers troubled by daily experiences of danger when walking to and from Martin Primary and East Finchley library have launched a campaign called Walk Safe N2 to improve pedestrian safety at nearby roads. This follows Barnet's refusal to do this on the grounds that personal injury is necessary to justify action. "We are not prepared to wait for this," say Walk Safe N2's founding members.

On 8 November, over 40 people attended a meeting on the High Road with Themba Nleya from the Highways Department and School Travel Plan co-ordinator Alison Sharpe. They listened to parents from three schools, other residents (including the owners of Onur Food & Wine shop), and local councillors Andrew McNeil and Colin Rogers.

John Pickering, deputy headteacher of Martin Primary School, stated: "I have taught here for 20 years: these safety issues are of longstanding personal concern to me and to the school." Chair of Governors Catrin Dillon recalled an accident at Creighton Avenue and governor Cathy du Vergier said: "My husband is often late

for work so he can help take our son, who is on the autistic spectrum, to school. Creighton Avenue is a major hazard for us." Caroline Broome spoke on behalf of EFVRA members to support the campaign.

Barnet officers see for themselves

Outside Martin School, the group witnessed a car turning from Church Lane against the red light at the pedestrian crossing. Parents described other dangerous experiences at this junction and the narrow pavements and fast traffic on Church Lane. One had changed her route to school and others prevented children riding their bikes or scooters.

After school ended, the Barnet officers remained to

observe the danger points. The traffic was heavy and a huge HGV turning into Creighton Avenue mounted the pavement.

Our demands:

- pedestrian crossing and slower corner on Creighton Avenue;
- traffic camera to monitor the crossing outside Martin School;
- improved school signs;
- Council review of the junction layout at Church Lane/High road;
- 20mph speed limit on Church Lane.

To support us, please email personal accounts of "near misses". Contact us on walksafen2@yahoo.co.uk. See also Letters to the Editor, page 11.

Ital-o-phies wanted

For over 30 years, a little-known social group has been convening on a monthly basis to explore together different aspects of Italian culture. The group meets in members' homes in East Finchley and the surrounding area for several hours on the last Sunday of each month.

Led by David Ibry, who grew up in Italy and attended Milan University, the group spends the first half of the meeting listening to a guest lecture on subjects such as art, architecture, music, film or history. Knowledge of Italian is preferred but not essential as the speakers conduct their lectures in English. After (non-alcoholic) refreshments have been served the group engages in Italian conversation.

Members come from all walks of life and their abil-

ity with the Italian language varies immensely, but no one is turned away and new members are very welcome. The £15 annual membership fee entitles members to attend all monthly meetings. Alternatively, visitors are asked to pay £5 each visit.

David also offers Italian language classes, at his home in Colindale, on a bi-weekly basis for only £3 per lesson. Anyone interested in the Social Club or the Italian lessons should call him on 020 8205 5611.



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YOUNG ARCHER

Swim for clean water

William Chapman and Petar Djordjic, two boys from Year 6 of Holy Trinity School, undertook a sponsored 10km swim for WaterAid. They had been learning about the problems of water provision in the poorer countries of the world at school so decided to raise money for this charity, which uses practical solutions to provide clean water, safe sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.



Will and Petar after their sponsored swim at Barnet Copton.

As they are both keen swimmers they decided to do a sponsored swim and were supported by their school friends, families and fellow squad members at Barnet Copton Swimming Club.

The boys raised a fantastic £166 and would like to say a big thank you to all the children of Year 6 of Holy Trinity School who sponsored them. You can learn more about WaterAid's work from their website www.WaterAid.org.



In Remembrance

By Holly, Tilly, Rosie, Matilda, Anat and Nicole
On 11.11.11, the whole of Martin Primary School gathered to listen to an assembly about Remembrance Day, held by our deputy head Mr Pickering. We also had a guest, Councillor Rogers, who recited a poem called *In Flanders Fields* written by a Canadian doctor in the war.

To pay our respects to the soldiers who are currently fighting or have fought in wars all over the world we gathered in the playground and placed beautiful wreaths of poppies, which we had made, and then held two minutes of respectful silence.

In Martin School we wear our poppies to respect the dead and wounded, not just because they look pretty or fashionable. "I believe this ceremony is hugely important as everyone, young and old, can respect the dead with pride," said Holly, Year 6.

Help for Heroes

Children at Holy Trinity Primary school have raised £196.30 for the Help for Heroes charity, including £18 donated by Luke, Leya and Danny Koumourou, who sold some of their toys.

Walking stars

On 6 October, Matthew O and Krishna from Year 5 at Holy Trinity Primary School attended Transport for London's Sustainable Travel Accredited and Recognised (STAR) award ceremony for 'Walk to School' with Mrs Christou. Holy Trinity won a bronze award.

"We travelled by tube to Liverpool Street to Bishopsgate," writes Matthew. "We learnt about how good it was to walk to school, use a bike to school and use a scooter to go to school. As you're doing those things you can actually be saving the environment."

"More schools are doing all of those things and please it would be good if you were to do it too. If you go to school by car please park and stride. You can also use public transport (if you need to use it). So please think of other ways to get to school."

Sam and Mark's Big Friday Wind Up

Two boys from Holy Trinity School featured in a popular TV show with one of their dads getting foamed. Sam and George from Year 5 were on Sam and Mark's Big Friday Wind Up on CBBC, a fun quiz programme for children. Sam and his dad Simon took part in a game called Dad on a Wheel, which was a complete surprise to Sam on the day.

Sam and George said: "It is like a fortune game with Sam's dad strapped to a wheel, and he got foamed from head to toe. We really enjoyed watching how a

TV programme is filmed and it was a really fun day out." The rest of Sam's family and George appeared at the end of the show answering a round of questions.

Walk in the Woods

The Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy is celebrating the success of its first-ever sponsored Walk in the Woods, held on Sunday 25 September. More than 30 local supporters, friends and family turned out to complete the three-mile walk, which began in East Finchley by Cherry Tree Wood and headed through Highgate Wood, Queen's Wood and Shepherd's Cot near Crouch End.

"It was a really lovely day," says Kevin Gillespie, Fundraising manager. "The weather was beautiful and it was great to see people supporting their local charity. We're already planning another walk next year, which we hope will be even more popular. We'd like to pay special thanks to volunteers from the East Finchley Community

Trust for acting as marshals on the day, and Sally at the Cherry Tree Wood café, who provided free tea and coffee for all our walkers."

The charity has raised almost £1,000 in sponsorship and donations from the event. To be added to their mailing list and receive the latest news about local and national events, email fundraising@bobath.org.uk.

Recycling bins disappear

By Nick Young

Residents may have noticed the recent disappearance of the public recycling banks which had been located on the High Road next to the Martin School. These have been removed "following a number of concerns from the local primary school", according to a spokesman from Barnet Council.

Problems relating to vandalism and flytipping have been a factor in the removal of a "small number" of recycling collection points across the London Borough of Barnet in recent years. "Residents are also now increasingly using their kerbside recycling collection service and the flats recycling service," according to the spokesman.

People who wish to continue using the recycling banks may rest assured that there are still two recycling bank sites in East Finchley. One is on the forecourt of East Finchley Station, and the other is located at the corner of East End Road and Elmhurst Crescent. The council has stated that it has no further plans to reduce the number of recycling bank sites.

PARENT & BABY/CHILD ACTIVITIES

❖ **Coffee & Kids**, Fri 9.15-11.15, Green Man Ctr. Rachel 8343 6147.

❖ **Dads' Club**: Get-togethers for dads looking after young children in East Finchley. Adam 07957 441435.

❖ **EF National Childbirth Trust** contact Ruby Yang or Patrizia Canwell at eastfinchleynct@googlemail.com

❖ **Newstead Parent & Toddler Group**, Thurs 9-12-30, Green Man Ctr. Sajni 8359 3460.

❖ **Parent & Toddler Group**, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276

❖ **Stepping Stones**, interactive play session for under 3s. Karen 07957 278860.

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Allotment autumn glory

By Sheila Armstrong

The sunny October weather was great for gardens and allotments everywhere, a final burst of colour and ripening of fruit. The garden by the station forecourt has been given its autumn tidy by the N2 Guerilla Gardeners and it's looking good.

The Archer visited two allotments in their autumn glory. The Fortis Green allotments, a year after their successful takeover from Thames Water, held an open day for supporters on 15 October. There were tea and cakes for visitors and a chance to chat to the allotmentees, new and old.

The plots were looking well cultivated in this small, established group of allotments near Muswell Hill. Many have been split into two smaller plots, the 10-pole size being very large by today's standards.

In contrast Vale Farm Allotments on Tarling Road was once a neglected, vandalised and underused site. Going from strength to strength, it's now a thriving, well-kept series of plots with some new owners. Since their previous open day in June, many improvements have been made, all plots now being on the way to full cultivation. Plot holders were enthusiastic if mindful of the amount of work still to be done.

At the Tarling Road Autumn open day on 23 October lots of autumn produce was available to buy as well as refreshments for visitors. Secretary Lily Ehrenpohl praised Barnet Council for its help in obtaining new fences and in allowing plots to be subdivided, again making them more manageable.

Allotments are popular, dare one say fashionable now, and there are many allotments sites in Barnet. Go to www.barnetallotments.org.uk or www.barnet.gov.uk for information on getting a plot.



Couture-coo

By Betti Blatman

Julie Michael started Couture Parties approximately eight years ago and has now added Pamper Parties to the list of events she organises for adults and children, all of which can be adapted to the client's requests.

I attended one of her Pamper Parties, held at Christina Hair Fashions Salon, Aylmer Parade, in early October for nine-year-old Elena. As her excited party guests arrived they were robed and given slippers in readiness for the party and offered "champagne" (fizzy apple pop) while waiting for their beauty treatments, which included manicures, pedicures, hair curling and dressing.

After their treatments, the girls were served at tables laid out for a typical afternoon tea, followed by face painting and a "Couture" pass the parcel game. Each guest left with a Couture party bag. What a delightful way to celebrate a birthday!

For more information, contact Julie on 07956 458 147 or on Facebook at [juliecoutureparties](https://www.facebook.com/juliecoutureparties)

Elena enjoys a nail treatment at Christina Hair Fashions. Photo by Betti Blatman



By Adam Justice-Mills

"Just pedal and go!" As a keen cyclist, increasingly feeling the hills, it was great to feel the quiet green surge of an electric bike take the strain. Ace Café in Stonebridge, home of performance bikes and bikers, had their Green Day this May. I went to find out about owning electric vehicles. Around 1912, there were more electric cars than other power sources but they couldn't compete with later petrol engines. So what's changed?

Electric vehicles are low-cost to run, very green and make a quiet statement about the future as they whisper by. Performance is good: the Tesla and the Quantya off-road bike are astonishing (F1 are considering electric Grand Prix). Batteries have much improved but are still costly (around half the cost of the vehicle). Batteries work for vans and buses even better than for family cars but their range is low: 60-100

miles per charge. Charging is sometimes free, but long journeys need careful planning. Capacity is generally good. The G-Wiz is tiny for someone over 5ft tall (ask Jeremy Clarkson) the Tazzari is fine and the Citroen C-Zero is a 4-seater.

There is already huge affection for these cars, or for the idea of them, with evangelical early adopters showing us the way. Perhaps they're a way forward, but if everyone got electric cars tomorrow, the UK grid couldn't cope.

So, back to bicycles. I tried a couple and was surprised at how easy they were: different, particularly when cycling slowly, but supplying an exhilarating kick when I wanted it. They're similar in price to un-assisted, high-spec bicycles: around £500 - £1,000. Typical range for pedal-assisted bicycles, as opposed to electric scooters, can be 40-60 miles: plenty for most commutes. Would I buy an electric car? Not yet, for a family car, but if I had to have a second weatherproof vehicle I'd consider it. I would buy an electric bicycle, however: love those hills!

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Bah, humbug!

It's that time of year again. The clock that started ticking back in August when Harrods opened its Christmas Grotto is about to chime. Half the population is bankrupting itself, the other half is already there and if turkeys weren't so stupid they'd be getting more worried than usual.

Yes, it's Christmas, that time of tuneless carols, repeats on TV, DFS half price sales and holiday adverts. Why not invent your own festivities instead? In the strange world of celebrations there's lot more to rejoice about in December than Christmas, especially if you use your imagination.

Start early by marking the 5th by drinking, driving up the motorway and watching a Disney film, though not necessarily in that order. Why? Because that's the anniversary of the end of prohibition, the opening of the M1 and the birth of Walt Disney. Nothing sums up Christmas more completely than drinking too much, sitting in a traffic jam and watching cartoons. And guess what? The 6th is St Nicholas' day so you can go Dutch and be the first on your street to open presents.

If that doesn't rattle your cage there's always the 11th and time to celebrate Abdication Day as Edward VIII went in 1936 and James II in 1688. A perfect time for Republicans to open a bottle or two.

By now you should be ready for the big one. Yes, it's time to go seriously Roman and celebrate Saturnalia. This means a full week of pagan debauchery, gambling, drinking and present-giving. If that's not to your taste, you can mark its medieval successor, the Feast of Fools, instead. Same thing, different era and mead instead of wine. Or both.

As you crawl out of your pagan hangover on the 23rd you can relax in the knowledge that you are only a turkey away from the main event. You can mark the end of your personal festive season in a way that's been a tradition every year since 1957 by falling asleep in front of the TV as the Queen delivers her Christmas message. It might not make sense, but it is Christmas.

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- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** on Wednesdays, Christ Church N12. Call Bridie 8883 5269
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 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.
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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 5 & 19 Dec at 8.15pm, Hall School Sports Ground, 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.
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Traditional music** at TOC, Highgate Hill on 1st & 3rd Tue each month from 8.30 pm. Free. All musicians welcome. Info 07958 282898.

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 1-3 pm 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.



Marta and Henri with some of the spinners.. Photo by Diana Cormack

Spinning for Noah's Ark

By Diana Cormack

On the hottest October day on record, 18 members of The Manor Health and Leisure Club, Fortis Green, took part in a two hour Schwinn indoor cycling event (known as spinning) to raise money for the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice. They used a cycling studio and bikes provided by the Manor club. Schwinn Instructor Marta Sterbakova organised and structured the sessions and made sure there was plenty of fresh fruit and energy drinks for all involved.

The event started at 2pm with the first session led by Schwinn Instructor Henri Berest, who put the group through their paces before they embarked on the second session led by Marta.

Marta expressed her gratitude to the Manor Health Club and to Henri for all their help and for the donations received. She was also very

grateful for the sponsorship and support given by Bike and Run based in East Finchley High Road, from whom the two best spinners received cycling jerseys. The indoor cycle teams at both Manor clubs raised a magnificent total of £4,300. Many thanks to everyone involved and Marta hopes to see you all again next year.

Tuition classes start up

A new programme of tuition classes for children is starting at the Holy Trinity Church hall in Church Lane, N2, running on Mondays and Tuesdays from 4-6pm.

First Class Learning says its programmes have been designed specifically to support children studying within the framework of the National Curriculum and claims that they

give parents an effective opportunity to help their children succeed in school. For more details, contact Diana Rameshni on 07711 842758 or diana_rameshni@hotmail.com

Singing in Highgate and Islington

Idit Gold, founder of Singing in London, started a singing club, Singing in Highgate, in 2006 with a group of local residents. The club has since opened its doors to new passionate singers from across London.

Following the success at Highgate, a new club opened in Islington in October 2010. Both clubs have members of all ages and nationalities.

Idit founded the Memory Lane singing club in Finchley in the 1990s. After a decade of establishing a thriving community group she moved on to start Singing in London.

Idit is passionate about teaching people to sing and has always engaged them in performing.

Her ultimate achievement and pride is watching her members developing their singing skills from no background at all to well-projected and confident voices, whether singing at the club or performing for the public.

Singing to support he Whittington

This year both the Christmas

concert and the Carol singing will include some members of both Highgate and Islington clubs performing *Silent Night* in Chinese and in Japanese. The audience will join in the singing.

The Christmas events are, as usual, in aid of The Whittington Hospital and this year funds raised will support the hospital's cancer service.

The Christmas Concert takes place on Monday 19 December at 8pm at Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill, N6 5HJ. Tickets are £10 on the door or online from www.singinginlondon.com. Children under 16 go free. Box office: 07904 884485. On Friday 16 December at 7.30pm there is carol singing at the Flask pub, 77 Highgate West Hill, Highgate N6 6BU. Tickets: donation £5 or online www.singinginlondon.com.



Join in and enjoy singing in London!

What's On...

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

Saturday 3 December to Saturday 31 December

• **The Enormous Turnip**, Jacksons Lane Arts Centre, Highgate. Following sell-out performances of *The Three Little Pigs* last year, *Stuff and Nonsense* return with their energy, puppetry and live music. This version of the world-famous children's story promises surprises aplenty for those in the theatre and out on the street too. Tickets £14.50 adults / £10.50 children and concessions / £43.00 family ticket (four people). Box office: 020 8341 4421.

Monday 5 December to Saturday 17 December

• **Gift time at the Gallery**, featuring jeweller Kochi Okada, decorative tiles from Rachel Dein and enamels and fused glass from Kay Graham; Garden Suburb Gallery, Fellowship House, 136a Willifield Way, NW11. More information at www.kochiokada.co.uk

Wednesday 7 December

• **Tumbleweed Comedy Night** at the Old White Lion pub, next to East Finchley station; Finlay Taylor, Wendy Wason, Dan Wright, Fraser Millward, Tom Price, Chris Boyd, Oli Bettesworth, Horse & Louis, compered by local comics Alex Perkins and Rachel Esposti; from 7.30pm.

Wednesday 7 December to Saturday 10 December

• The Guild Players, Finchley's amateur drama group, present **Puss In Boots**, a traditional family pantomime by Norman Robbins. Venue: Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, Finchley, N3 1NB, 7.45pm plus 3pm on Saturday. All tickets £8. Box Office 020 8346 6337 or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/theguildplayers.

Friday 9 December to Sunday 11 December

• **Italian market**, East Finchley High Road, all day. Come to sample and buy Italian goodies and wares.

Saturday 10 December

• **Muswell Hill Traders' Group** invite you to a day of family-friendly fun, food, drink, and fantastic special offers. Soak up the festive atmosphere in Muswell Hill shops, and enjoy the lights provided by MHTG.

Sunday 11 December

• **High Barnet Christmas Walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker; a festive guided walk around Barnet High Street. Meet outside Barnet College, Wood Street, 2pm. For more details, contact Paul on 020 8440 6805.

Friday 16 December to Sunday 29 January

29 January

• Upstairs at the Gatehouse Theatre, Highgate: **Guys and Dolls**, the musical fable of Broadway with music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Tuesdays to Saturdays 7.30 pm; Sundays 4.0 pm. Tickets £10-£16 (concessions available). Box office 020 8340 3488 and www.upstairsthegatehouse.com

Monday 19 December

• **Singing in London's Christmas Concert:** 8pm at Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill, N6 5HJ. Tickets £10 on the door or online from www.singinginlondon.com. Children up to 16 free. Box office: 07904 884485.

Wednesday 4 January

• **Tumbleweed Comedy Night** at the Old White Lion pub, next to East Finchley station; Sean McLoughlin, Paul Harry Allen, Spencer Owen, Jonny Freeman, Joz Norris, Fergus Craig; compered by local comics Alex Perkins and Rachel Esposti; from 7.30pm.

What's On at artsdepot

Sunday 4 December, 1pm and 6pm, **Street Ahead** (dance); **Sunday 11 December to Friday 30 December**, **The Gruffalo's Child** (theatre); Thursday 22 December, 7.30pm, **A Christmas Carol** (theatre).

Christmas services in East Finchley

• **East Finchley Baptist Church** Sunday 18 December, 10.30-11.45am, **All Ages Together Carol Service** followed by mince pies and refreshments; 7-8pm, **Carols by Candlelight** followed by mince pies and refreshments; Christmas Day 25 December, 10.30-11.15am, **Christmas morning family service**

• **East Finchley Methodist Church** Sunday 4 December, **Holy Communion** 10.30am; Sunday 11 December, **Gift Service** 10.30am; Sunday 18 December, **Christingle** 10.30am, **Carols By Candlelight** 5pm, Come and enjoy carols and readings about the Christmas story, carol singing for everyone, plus Christmas music items, mince pies and refreshments afterwards; Sunday 25 December, **Christmas Day Celebration Service**, 10.30am.

• **Holy Trinity Church** Sunday 18 December, **Parish Communion**, 10am, **Candlelight Carol Service**, 6pm; Saturday 24 December, **Blessing of the Crib & Nativity Play**, 4pm, **Midnight Mass**, 11.30pm; Sunday 25 December, **Christmas Day Parish Communion**, 10am.

• **All Saints' Church** Sunday 18 December, 6.30pm, **Christmas Carol Service** followed by mulled wine and mince pies; Saturday 24 December, 3pm, **Children's Christmas Service** with Carols, 11.30pm, **Sung Midnight Mass with Blessing of the Crib**; Sunday 25 December, 8am, **Mass of the Dawn**, 10am, **Sung Mass of the Day**.



Letters

Turned away by parking palaver

Dear Editor, My husband and I were taking a friend out for lunch to our favourite local Thai restaurant in East Finchley. We parked and found a meter. It was covered with a black bin bag. We sought another meter. That too was covered by a bin bag.

We assumed all the meters were out of order and began to look for a parking warden. No luck. There was no information on the covered meters. We thought of putting a note on the windscreen, then we saw a man further along the High Road looking at a sign on a post. He was using a mobile phone to pay for parking.

We drove away and went to eat at a restaurant out of the area where we could park without needing a mobile phone. We were all pensioners, none of us felt competent to go through the procedures required. We will probably not return to that parade to shop or eat.

Yours faithfully, Susan Bennett, St Regis Close, N10.

Savage criticism

Dear Editor, Referring to Stuart Rising's letter (THE ARCHER, November 2011) about gradual change to the Kalashnikov Kultur column and whether it is now being written by a different Ricky Savage, I believe the answer is both yes and no.

The KK column has always been something of a hybrid creation since first appearing over 17 years ago, and of course, dear David (oops... I mean Ricky!), has aged in the meantime, although not enough to embrace the 'grumpy old man' mode, and perhaps this has spawned a dilemma about being taken seriously or not, despite the humorous approach?

As Mr Rising points out, coherent political satire is better left to the likes of Private Eye journalists, even though they occasionally produce weak outpourings themselves. However, it is easier to criticise the self-expression of others than to generate and sustain one's own work, so can ARCHER readers now look forward to perusing the inaugural 'Stuart Rising' column by way of comparison?

Yours faithfully, Malcolm Griffiths, Midhurst Avenue, N10.

Signs of Janes and Adams

Dear Editor, I am an optician and have been following the correspondence about Janes and Adams with interest (THE ARCHER, October and November 2011). When I moved to 119 High Road this year and began the long task of turning the dilapidated and neglected shop into a beautiful, modern eye-care establishment, I was surprised and delighted to find Janes and Adams' old fascia sign in the cellar. It was a firm of good reputation as I recall from growing up in the area around 50 years ago. There's also a little, rusty safe in the cellar wall.

Yours faithfully, David Hillel Burns, High Road, N2.

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net. Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, on request at publication.

From loft ladders to headstones

Dear Editor, I could not believe my eyes when I saw what is replacing the old Loft Shop: Robertson's Memorials. Seriously, we already have the Co-op death shop across the road, now we have to look at a huge corner plot full of headstones.

"Welcome to East Finchley, death is what we do," that's what people will see every day when they drive through our high street. I would rather see another hairdressers, nay estate agent, or even a hairdresser and estate agent combo.

This is degrading to our High Road. They can stay where they are, near the Grange. We all know where they are and I, like many, will probably get my headstone there but I don't want to walk past this lifeless shop (pun intended).

Yours faithfully, Ewan Roberts, by email.

Action at Avenue House

By Daphne Chamberlain Alarm bells rang for Avenue House Estate at the beginning of the year. It was in a serious financial crisis, and there were fears that this historic building in East End Road, N3, would be sold, and its beautiful grounds lost to the public. A lot has happened since then.

The Avenue House Estate Trust has been working hard towards returning the House to a centre for local activity. Lettings are building up, which effectively preserve the grounds as a park, as AHET get no subsidies for ground maintenance.

True Friends

Meanwhile, the newly formed Friends of Avenue House are putting in a tremendous amount of time and energy in supporting AHET. An auction held by the Friends in September raised more than £7,500, which they say was "beyond our wildest dreams". They are deeply grateful for the generous support of many local businesses and individuals.

A quiz night in October alone raised £600. THE ARCHER team know that these contests are a real challenge as well as a lot of fun. Our team are going into battle again on 1 December. Keep an eye out for the next one.

Quizzes not your scene? The Friends also put on Archive Film Nights. The last one included the 1948 Olympics and London's last tram journey. Look out, too, for numerous events, not all run by Friends, some in collaboration with The North London Hospice.

The Friends acknowledge that Avenue House is not yet completely out of the woods, but they are doing all they can to support AHET. Since April they have organised more than 400 hours of volunteer labour, mainly working alongside the grounds staff and clearing litter. They are now looking at doing DIY jobs inside the house.

Keep up to date by checking the FOAH website, Facebook and Twitter, and THE ARCHER's What's On, Facebook, and Twitter.

Walk the Northern Heights

The Highgate Society has produced the first two of a series of five fully-illustrated pocket booklets, covering a nine-mile circular walk around London's 'Northern Heights', highlighting the unique character of the area.

The walk combines many of the less frequented historic streets of Highgate, along with the more famous stately houses, landscaped gardens and parks that surround Hampstead Heath and its environs.

Each walk starts and ends at a point easily accessible by public transport, and includes a detailed route map with places for refreshment on the way. The booklets cost £3 each and are available from local shops, or via the Highgate Society website www.highgatesociety.com.

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

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



Shut out from school

By Cathy Halstead

I was talking to a friend who lives in Camden about my worries about secondary schools for my kids. "But hang on," she said, "You're in Barnet aren't you? I thought Barnet had amazing schools?" And there does seem to be this perception out there, that by living in N2 I'm overflowing with choice for my children.

But frankly, it's a myth. Barnet may indeed have some great schools, but if we stay living where we are now, my daughter won't get into any of them. She's not a genius, so Henrietta Barnett is out. We're not religious, so that rules out a few more. She's not a boy, so our nearest school, Christ's College, won't take her either, and as far as I can tell we're not in the catchment area for any other school within three miles of where we live.

So what are my choices? Private school is out of the question, and converting seems a little extreme. I can sell up and move, I suppose, uproot the family and try and inch as close as I can to a school that will take her. Or I could play the system: rent a house near a good school, and help make its catchment area even smaller. But surely I shouldn't have to resort to this kind of stuff?

So I'm throwing my weight behind the Local Schools for Local Children campaign. They're working as hard as they can to try and persuade Barnet to redress this situation, and provide one simple thing: a good, mixed, non-religious local school for kids in N2 to go to. And if all of us who are in the same situation get behind them, we might just get somewhere. If you'd like to get involved, email the campaign on localschools@live.co.uk

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250 callers, plus dog, in one day

By Andrea Garman

“Where did you get that toilet seat?” One of the many questions asked when my house was part of the Open House London Weekend in September (the toilet seat in question is white and best described as ‘bog-standard’).

I have an end of terrace Victorian house in Bedford Road that has recently been remodelled and extended to let in more light and to link the house with the garden. The extension is contemporary but

17.00hrs.

People came from Chelmsford, Oxford, Nottingham and from the end of the road. They included those with similar projects in mind, someone who had lived in a neighbour-

ing house just after the war, and people who wondered what had been happening behind the large plastic jacket that had covered the house for several weeks while the façade was being restored.

The day proved to be very enjoyable. I am very grateful to the volunteer team who worked ceaselessly and I hope were not too exhausted by the end of the day.



The rear view of Andrea's Bedford Road house.

designed to complement an 1890s house.

The work itself took about seven months of my life, preceded by over a year of planning. The architect, Neville Morgan of architecture 25 ltd, is locally based.

I have visited other people's houses, the Phoenix Cinema and various other gems through Open House London, so it seemed a good opportunity to reciprocate.

The ‘volunteer team’ of the architect, my niece and a local friend were at their posts at 09.30hrs on the day. Plans and photographs of the construction phase to the ready, the Open House notices went up in the front window, and shortly before 10.00hrs, the doorbell started to ring.

With the exception of a short lunch break, the traffic of visitors didn't stop. Operating a ‘shoes off’ policy (the carpets had only just been fitted) there was an ever-present row of a dozen pairs of shoes in the hallway. 250 people and one dog later, we finally closed at



Susanna, left, and Cristina among their treasures at A Room in My House. Photo by John Lawrence.

Sisters do it for themselves in vintage style

A new vintage clothes and homewares business has opened in a largely hidden part of East Finchley. You have to search it out but it's worth it when you get there.

A Room in My House has been started by sisters Cristina Guidone-Charles and Susanna Guidone-Sorkin in a building they inherited from their late father Salvatore, who ran SG Woodwork there for 25 years.

Their studio is tucked away in King Street Mews, a narrow lane off King Street, close to Church Lane. They open their doors on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and, from here, also run the internet side of their business

www.aroominmyhouse.co.uk

Vintage clothes, jewellery, ceramics, homewares and home-made greetings cards are their specialities, harvested from vintage fairs and their own suppliers, and all topped off with a fully working, shiny white Fiat Uno parked in the corner of the shop.

Cristina said she and Susanna always thought they would go into business together. She said: “I'm a graphic designer by back-

ground and Susanna worked in styling and visual merchandising for some of the big high street stores. For years we thought we would combine forces at some point.

“When we inherited our father's workshop, it was the perfect opportunity. Because we have such a mixture of items here, people come in not knowing what to expect, then hopefully find something they really like.”

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