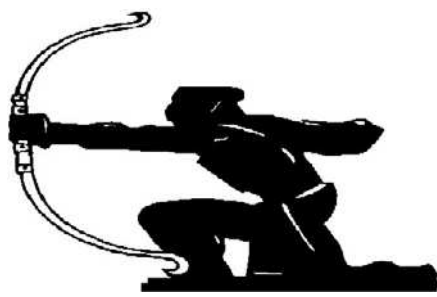


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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Fears for future of animal clinic

By John Lawrence

Our local RSPCA small animal clinic this year celebrates its 50th birthday but the volunteers who run it are concerned that their charity may not see out its anniversary year without a massive boost in support and some good luck.

Each week, dozens of furry patients are brought to the clinic, which could be described as one of East Finchley's hidden gems, tucked away as it is in Park Road.

But uncertainty over how much Barnet Council is planning to charge them for renting the small building, coupled with a shortage of volunteers for fundraising, means the future is uncertain.

Drop-in clinic on the doorstep

Chairman Ann Lewis explained that the charity running the clinic operates under the RSPCA name but is totally independent and cannot fall back on funding from the national organisation.

"Pet owners in East Finchley are so lucky to have a drop-in clinic like this on their doorstep, there really are very few like it in London, but our costs are rising all the time and we don't have enough volunteers to help us raise all the money we need," she said.

New premises sought

Branch development officer Roger Fargher, the only paid part-time member of the team, revealed that the charity would like to move the clinic wholesale into an empty shop premises, preferably in the High Road, where its veterinary services could run for longer hours alongside a new charity shop.

"We need help of all sorts really," said Roger. "We'd like

to hear from people who can shake collection tins for us, and if anyone can help us find a new home in the area and fit it out that would be fantastic."

Cats and dogs make up 90% of the pets treated by qualified vets at the drop-in clinic, which is open on Monday and Thursday evenings, but all other small pets including rabbits and reptiles are welcome. Services include vaccinations, microchipping, neutering and treatment of minor ailments.

To offer support or find out more, contact the charity on Facebook at RSPCAFinchley, on Twitter @RSPCAFinchley, on email at rogerrspca@gmail.com and by phone on 020 8365 3910.



Uncertain future: Ann Lewis at the animal clinic with young patient Chris the cat.

Stanley Field: the crucial next stages

By Daphne Chamberlain

In last month's edition we said we would be looking in more depth at the news that Stanley Field has been sold to The Archer Academy free school. Here we speak to Roger Chapman, the founder of Sport East Finchley.

Roger has been among a group of people who have worked for 12 years to save Stanley Field for community sports use. Recently he led the negotiations with three property developers who Barnet had instructed to talk to Sport East Finchley about a possible mixed development of housing and community use on the site.

At a public meeting held by Sport EF last year, it seemed that 50% of Stanley Field was the most that East Finchley could hope for from housing developers. Roger told us: "Sport EF reached an impasse with commercial developers, and by the autumn Barnet were pressing for a decision. We had been sent away to negotiate with the housing developers, and this is what we did. But the Cabinet

decision did not explicitly rule out other possibilities if they arose. Then the Academy came on the scene and offered much better prospects for community involvement and playing field provision."

Roger is also on the board of governors of the new Academy, but has stated publicly

that his primary concern is to ensure community use of Stanley Field. Conditional to the sale of the site is a legal agreement between Sport EF and the Academy (suggested by themselves) to ensure perpetual community use.

Continued on page 4...

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Copy Editor
John Lawrence

Production Editor
Alison Roberts

Picture Editor
Mike Rubens

Editorial Team
Diana Cormack
Daphne Chamberlain

Sub Editors
Ann Bronkhorst
Jeff Robson
Pam Kent

Finance & Advertising
John Dearing

Distribution
Toni Morgan
Rose Molloy

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If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address. Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

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

Leisure

Alexandra Palace	020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library	020 8359 3815
Muswell Hill Odeon	0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema	020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema	020 8446 9933

Transport

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

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Finchley Memorial	020 8349 7500
Oak Lane Clinic	020 8349 7000
Royal Free	020 7794 0500
St Luke's	020 8219 1800
Whittington	020 7272 3070

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Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 7697555
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Drugs Helpline	0800 776600
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OAPs' Advice

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Safe places for the vulnerable

By Janet Maitland

People with learning disabilities in Barnet will be able to get out and about in the community with more confidence thanks to a new scheme starting in the spring called Safe Places.

Your Choice Barnet and Barnet Mencap have been given funding to encourage shops and cafés to help people with learning disabilities if they become lost, distressed or a victim of hate crime.

Once they have joined the scheme, business owners will display stickers identifying their premises as Safe Places where people with learning disabilities can go if they get into difficulties. People who want access to Safe Places will be able to join the scheme for free and will be given a registered card to carry.

"Scenarios like public transport breaking down and having

to get off in unfamiliar places are daunting for anyone, but particularly so for someone with a learning disability," said Amanda Jackson, director of operations for Your Choice Barnet. "We want to break down the social barriers and encourage more people with learning disabilities to travel and access their local shops and cafés just like anyone else."

For more information about Safe Places, contact Your Choice Barnet on 020 8359 3456 or info@yourchoicebarnet.org or get in touch with Barnet Mencap on 020 8349 3842 or projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Attempted break-in at charity shop

By Janet Maitland

There has been an attempted break-in at the North London Hospice charity shop on the High Road. Burglars tried to force the door open sometime between early evening on 13 March and 8.15am on 14 March. They didn't manage to get inside the shop and so nothing was taken, but staff had to break the glass to get in the door as the lock was so badly damaged.

Two other shops run by the charity were targeted in the same week. Burglars broke into the Muswell Hill shop on 12 March and tried to get into the till. They didn't succeed but the till was broken and will cost several hundred pounds to replace. On 15 March, the Wood Green shop was broken into and some money and a rucksack stolen.

"The damage will cost us between £2,000 and £3,000," said Michele Marconi, the charity's retail manager. "Tills, locks and glass are very expensive to replace."

If you have any information about these burglaries, call 101 quoting reference number 2405951/13. To remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Our number's changed

THE ARCHER has a new telephone number. You can now call free to leave a message for our editorial team on 0800 612 0748. For advertising queries, please call 0800 612 4027. In addition, details about contributing, volunteering and advertising are always available on our website www.the-archer.co.uk

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Barnet Council

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Single-storey side/rear extension.

5 Beaumont Close, N2

Single-storey attached garage.

60 Bedford Road, N2

Single-storey rear/side extension, following demolition of existing rear extension.

7 Brackenbury Road, N2

Single-storey side/rear extension.

93 Brim Hill, N2

Repair works to existing front driveway, including new block paving.

246 Creighton Avenue, N2

Extension to roof, including rear dormer window and roof lights to facilitate loft conversion. Single-storey side and rear extension, following demolition of existing garage.

197 East End Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension, following demolition of existing conservatory.

19 Greenhalgh Walk, N2

New shed in rear garden, and removal of existing shed

52 Huntingdon Road, N2

Single-storey side/rear conservatory extension.

Land at rear of 1 King Street, N2

One two-storey dwelling house, including rooms in roof space and hard/soft landscaping. Single-storey rear conservatory to existing house, following demolition of existing extension.

52 Leopold Road, N2

Single-storey side extension.

McDonalds Restaurants Ltd, 11-59 High Road, N2

New air extract and intake system, including replacement of one window to front elevation with vent and windows above doorway on rear elevation.

Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, N2

New single-storey extension, relocation of temporary classroom and new two-storey extension. New Swale in existing orchard with associated fencing. New entrance gates with changes to levels, new gates to playing fields, new bin enclosure and new railings. Changes to landscaping in pro-

posed car parking and relocation of outdoor equipment. Demolition of three existing air-shelters, and creation of new MUGA and parking/cycling facilities.

74 Ossulton Way, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

53 Park Hall Road, N2

Single-storey rear and side extension, following demolition of existing rear conservatory.

23A Sedgemere Avenue, N2

Extension to roof, including rear dormer window, roof light and Juliet balcony to facilitate loft conversion.

Haringey Council

22 Ringwood Avenue N2

Reconstruction of existing ground floor rear extension in same footprint as existing. Ground floor side extension.

19 Lynmouth Road N2

Rear single-storey infill extension.

34 Lanchester Road N6

Single-storey rear extension.

9 Ringwood Avenue N2

Rear dormer window and extending existing rear extension.



Remarkable find in Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

Local amenity group The Friends of Coldfall Wood face a dilemma, due to a recent discovery that is exciting ecologists but arousing controversy within the group.

Three years ago a rare glow-worm found in the wood made headlines, and the following year a walker uncovered a hidden stash of money. Now an established colony of edible snails has been identified in an undisclosed area of this ancient wood.

Roman survival

For centuries the snails, Latin name *Helix Romana* and distinguished by their large, creamy-brown shells, have been eaten on the continent. Their ancestors may have been imported by Romans living here and there could be a connection with the Roman remains in Highgate Wood.

Whatever their history, it is the snails' future that is controversial. It seems that several local gastro-pubs will pay well for a regular supply of these delicacies. The Friends are divided about the ethics of exploiting Coldfall snails to please North London foodies.

Bitter divisions

Sarah Dudley, of Durham Road, stated: "I oppose cruelty to all creatures, even small slimy ones, and will boycott any restaurant that puts our snails on its menu. They should be cherished, not slaughtered." Another Friend, however, retorted that a high-protein, locally-sourced gourmet food would have green credentials. "At least it's not horse-meat," he added.

At the allotments on the Barnet side of the wood there was a different response. "We don't want the little ****s over here," announced one plot-holder. "If we find any we'll stamp on them. Anyway, they're probably carrying mange from the foxes."

THE ARCHER understands that Haringey Council, Coldfall Wood's landowner, may discuss the future of the molluscs at their next Cabinet meeting, after a trial tasting.



Lady in red: Angie A, right, and fellow performers raise cash at the Five Bells.

Angie A's Red Nose song

By Stuart Webber

Money was raised for Comic Relief in style by East Finchley resident Angie A, former backing singer for 1990s band Olive, during an evening of singing and fundraising at the Five Bells Flaming Grill.

After deciding that the official song by One Direction lacked the comedy that makes the event so unique, Angie wrote and produced a song called 'Essex Girl', her unofficial alternative based on the popular television show The Only Way Is Essex.

The night was definitely a success as enough money was raised to push Angie past her target of £300 for Comic Relief. The Friday evening was the culmination of a month of fundraising that had included

a sponsored 20 mile cycle ride, one-to-one as well as group singing lessons for donations as well as public performances in North Finchley and Wood Green.

Angie started raising money for charity two years ago. This year she was drawn to Comic Relief by their emphasis on novel ideas for fundraising, and by her desire to help disadvantaged people both in the UK and Africa. For more information about Angie and her projects visit www.angie-a.co.uk

A lasting legacy for our son Guy

As you read this, Vicky and Tony Joseph of Southern Rd, N2 are making an extraordinary journey. They and a group of 28 relatives and friends are travelling to a small village in the foothills of the Annapurna range in Nepal to build a school in memory of their son Guy who was tragically killed, aged 25, in a paragliding accident 18 months ago.

Guy was an intrepid adventurer and traveller who loved snowboarding, scuba diving and paragliding. After graduating from university with a first class degree in marine biology, he worked as a scuba diving instructor in East Timor and Indonesia for two years before travelling to Nepal where he spent one winter learning to paraglide.

Giving children a start

When he died, Vicky and Tony were determined to salvage something positive from the tragedy and decided to set up a charity in his memory. Guy's Trust supports causes that reflect everything that Guy was passionate about and its initial project is to build the first of three Guy Joseph Early Childhood Development Centres in the impoverished Kaski district, near to where he lived.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and over a million children are not enrolled in school. The majority of these are girls, who are affected by discrimination in almost every area of their lives. The development centres will help hundreds of children get the start in life they deserve.

Vicky and Tony said: "Guy was intelligent, compassionate and non-judgemental; a gentle, caring and wise son and brother and dear friend to many people all over the world. Despite his youth and legendary sense of fun and zest for life, he had a reputation as a responsible and gifted teacher with a talent for



Always remembered: Guy's parents Vicky and Tony have set up a charity in his memory.

developing friendships with anyone, whatever their background, nationality or age."

One village, many hands

Vicky and Tony's friends, their two daughters' friends and a large contingent of Guy's friends from the UK, USA, Australia, Indonesia and Thailand are converging on the village of Dhikurpokhari to spend a week working together with

the local community in laying the foundations and starting to build the ECDC.

Guy's Trust is growing beyond the family's wildest dreams. They say it is a fitting testament to a young man who had an enormous zest for life and who inspired and was loved by so many people.

Visit www.guystrust.org to find out more.



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Stanley Field - the crucial next stages

Continued from page 1

A recognised way of achieving this aim is through Fields in Trust (FIT). Other sports and recreational grounds have followed this route, becoming known officially as Queen Elizabeth 2 fields.

FIT guarantees the continual use of an area as a public playing field, recreation ground and/or indoor leisure facilities, according to circumstances. A QE2 field cannot be sold in the future without the consent of FIT, who would require a similar contract with the potential buyer, or provision of a site equal to or larger in size and in the same area. FIT can also advise on the management and running of the property.

At the time of writing, Roger Chapman was expecting a visit from the FIT area manager to look at the field. He told us: "One reason for involving Fields in Trust is that they are likely to have greater longevity than Sport EF. This will be one of the questions discussed with FIT when we meet and how best to secure local involvement in ensuring Stanley Road is secured for future community use."

He and the Academy were also examining other legal ways to secure a deed of dedication.

Funding

The London Marathon Trust, who were backing Sport EF's original bid for the field, often work in conjunction with FIT. The Marathon Trust will put up funds, but only if there is a legally binding agreement for continual community use. Some other organisations may also fund on a similar basis.

Design and use of the site

Designing the site, which will include several pitches and indoor sports facilities, is the responsibility of the Government-run Educational Funding Agency, following Sport EF and Academy wishes. This process is in its early stages.

Obviously there will need to be supervision of the site out

of school hours. At the time of our interview, it had not been decided whether it would be the Academy, Sport EF (through funding), or an agency. Other schools, including Compton in Summers Lane, already share sports facilities with the public.

The extent of community use is still being agreed. Roger told us: "The aim is to maximise community use of the sports facilities in a way that is compatible with school use."

"There will be local consultation. As a former Kitchener Road resident, I realise the importance of this, and am already visiting New Ash Close. Sport EF, with the Archer Academy, are working out the details of how best to engage local people. This is likely to involve door-to-door canvassing, meetings and exhibitions amongst other things."

We hoped to meet with the Academy team to find out more about their wishes and plans for school and sports facilities on Stanley Field, but through unforeseen circumstances this was not possible before we went to press. We hope to bring you those details in a future issue.

Photo Editor

THE ARCHER is looking for a photo editor to prepare all our photos for printing in the newspaper each month.

This is a voluntary role that you can do from home in your own time.

Requirements are proficiency in PhotoShop (which is provided) and decent image-editing skills.

If you've got a few hours to spare each month and think you can help, please contact editor John Lawrence by email at the-archer@lineone.net, by phone on 0800 612 0748 or on Facebook (TheArcherN2).

Thank you from THE ARCHER editorial team.



Riot of fun for Red Nose Day

The staff of Sainsbury's Muswell Hill spared no efforts in raising money for Red Nose Day. On Sunday 10 March, they held a sponsored walk in Highgate Woods and raised £545. Then the following week there was a madcap array of in-store events including a Taste and Donate session, a book sale, a cake sale, and some bucket collections, all leading to a final fundraising sum of more than £10,000. Spokesman Catherine Ling said Sainsbury's wanted to thank customers for their unfailing generosity.

Graham is one of the ultra runners

The sport of ultra-long distance running has seen a rapid rise in popularity in recent years with more and more people choosing to sacrifice their evenings and weekends to train for and take part in what has traditionally been seen as the preserve of elite athletes and the somewhat eccentric.

Graham Shircore, of Elmshurst Crescent, is one of those runners wanting to test the limits of what they are capable of, both physically and mentally. Less than a year after his first marathon, this March he ran in the Thames Path 100, a non-stop, 100-mile run from London to Oxford.

The challenge was also an opportunity to raise money for a small London-based charity called Lumos. This provided a very necessary motivation boost during his training sessions which included eight-hour runs through London, marathons on consecutive days and hill training in Scotland on New Year's Day.

His wife Sophie works at the charity, which primarily helps disadvantaged children living in Eastern Europe. All sponsorship Graham raises is going towards the treatment of a medical condition. The treatment costs just £200 but will save the life of each child who gets it. In most countries it is state funded; where it is not, Lumos are also trying to get this changed.

You can read more about the charity, the challenge, and how Graham got on at his sponsorship page:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/grahamshircore>



Training through the snow: Long distance runner Graham Shircore.

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Barbara Proud, left, with fellow childminders and mums at the Park Road playground.

Play area 'needs an urgent makeover'

By John Lawrence

One of East Finchley's most popular playgrounds is woefully under-equipped and in some places a danger to children, says a group of mothers and childminders. Parents and carers who take their young ones to the play area in Park Road, close to Holy Trinity Primary School, say it is in urgent need of repair and modernisation.

Two new items, a spinning cup and a small see-saw, were installed around four years ago but the rest of the play equipment, including four swings and two 'spring' seats, dates back up to 15 years.

A climbing frame and a slide have been removed without being replaced, seats on the roundabout are broken and the see-saw does not work properly. The group is also worried about large gaps in the fence around the play area that can let children wander onto Park Road.

Children's needs

Childminder Barbara Proud, who looks after three children of school age and two under-fours, has contacted Barnet Council to plead the case for the play area to be refurbished.

Mrs Proud, of Richmond Road, said: "A lot of children use this playground every day and when the Academy is built nearby there may be even more. We feel it deserves more attention and now is the time."

Her friend June Bettison, who cares for three children under three, added: "There's such a lot of space here and it could be put to better use. As it is, older children just play football among the equipment, and that can be dangerous for the little ones."

Good news

THE ARCHER contacted Barnet Council and it seems there is good news for the playground. A spokesman said: "Barnet

Council is improving the play area, including replacing the broken slide and installing two other pieces of play equipment before this summer so our younger residents can enjoy it during the warmer weather."

The council is also encouraging residents to form a 'Friends of the Park' group to get external funding to renovate the play area, which is happening in other parts of the borough. During the last two years Mill Hill Park and Lytton Playing Field play areas

were transformed as a result of local people suggesting new designs and finding funding.

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Children's Hospice Week is the UK's only awareness and fundraising week for children with life-limiting conditions and the services, such as children's hospices, that support them. This year it takes place between 26 April and 3 May, culminating in Superhero Friday, a special day of hero-inspired fundraising, on Friday 3 May.

North London-based Noah's Ark Children's Hospice cares for and supports families while their child is undergoing stressful treatment, through a variety of community and home-based initiatives and programmes.

The hospice is calling on businesses, schools, community groups and organisations and asking them to be heroes in Children's Hospice Week and help raise funds so that it can continue to provide these vital local services.

Visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk for more information and to download fundraising resources. To donate to Noah's Ark Children's Hospice during Children's Hospice Week, visit www.justgiving.com/childrenshospiceweek.



Could you be a superhero for Noah's Ark Children's Hospice?

Body found in allotment shed

By Janet Maitland

Firefighters discovered the body of a man in a blazing shed on the allotments behind Chandos Road. Crews were called to the scene shortly after midnight on 27 February. Sadly, they discovered the body of a man in one of the sheds affected by the fire. By 2am the fire was under control.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation by the police and fire brigade. The fire is not being treated as suspicious. A postmortem examination is underway to identify the deceased and determine the exact cause of death.

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Susan Bennett, left, and Caroline Broome, of Church Lane, prepare for Open Garden day. Photo by Earl Hyde.

Gardens ready to open for new season

By Susan Bennett

Last autumn as my husband Earl Hyde dragged huge sheets of wood into our sodden garden, I assumed he was about to construct an ark. Throughout the horrendously wet summer of 2012, stalwart souls bravely explored private gardens open for charity.

Despite numbers being down, the National Garden Scheme distributed £2,600,000 to nursing, caring and garden charities. So we embark on a new season with high hopes and new initiatives.

We are delighted that two members' gardens will open for the first time in East Finchley, adding to the wonderful variety on offer.

The NGS Yellow Book, with details of nearly 4,000 gardens to visit, is now available as a free app for iPads and smartphones. Meanwhile, I am preparing for our own open day, when visitors will

discover just what Earl has constructed with all those huge bits of wood.

Here are the first open days this year. Details of others to come in future issues:

Artists Susan and Earl open their theatrical garden at 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, N10, on Sunday 28 April from 2-6.30pm. Admission is £3.50, children free. Plant sale and homemade teas.

On Sunday 26 May, the garden gate will be open for the first time at 58 Summerlee Avenue, N2 from 2-7pm. Admission £3, children free, again with teas and plants.

Apple Day ripens again

By Harriet Copperman

On a sunny Saturday last October a group of local residents handed out tasters of freshly-pressed apple juice from local fruit, which was much appreciated judging by the crowds of passersby who stopped to sample and sign up to help on a future occasion.

There are several 'unknowns' for 2013, including the weather and the amount of help and support offered by the community. Last year the bad weather meant a poor crop of soft fruit (plums, blackcurrants etc) and top fruit (apple, pears etc), so there was relatively little to harvest and distribute.

If there are signs of a better harvest this year, then a greater variety of fruits may be on offer for people to taste and enjoy, possibly on several occasions rather than just one.

However, whatever the size of the harvest, without

help from others the event will be limited in size and scope. Volunteers will be needed to identify local fruit trees in the area, harvest the fruit in other people's gardens (with permission, of course), and to help at the event itself.

Anyone in a position to offer some practical help and support would be most welcome to join us at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 23 April, at the Old White Lion pub near the station. If you cannot come to the meeting you could drop a line to efabundance@btinternet.com or c/o 32 Park Hall Road, London N2 9PU.

Martin School: our school, our story

By Roger Chapman, Martin School community governor
Martin Primary School, which is 100 years old this year, opens its doors to the community on Saturday 27 April as the culmination of its School History Week.

Between 11am and 2pm you are invited to visit the school, to tour the buildings, see an exhibition prepared by the children about the history of the school, look at the results of archaeological work undertaken on the school field, explore the second world war air raid shelters and let us know your memories and stories about the school and what it means to East Finchley.

Memories of schooldays

We particularly welcome former pupils, teachers and their families to re-visit the school and share memories to help record the history of the school. You'll have a chance to explore your old classrooms and catch up with old friends.

Images, stories and memorabilia are being collected for our centenary project so we'd like people to bring in their photographs of the school, its pupils and activities. You may also be able to help us put names to faces in the archive of photos we have and tell us what you remember. We'll have scanners to copy any photos or school books you are willing to share, and will also be recording short interviews for our archive and exhibition.

Hands-on help

We also want more volunteers to join our growing group to help us with our work in researching, transcribing, undertaking oral histories, website development, exhibition work and many more things. Come along on the day and find out more.

This is an exciting time for the school as our expansion plans take place. It will be one of the last opportunities to see the school laid out much as it was in 1913 before changes take place. If you can't make it on the day send your thoughts, photos or memories to us at martinprimary100@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Martin.School.Centenary

Charity jazz night was a blast

Monday 11 March was full of joy as the Hall School Cricket Pavilion in East End Road, N3 staged a marvellous evening of jazz. This was organised by John Bayne, one of the leading exponents of the bass saxophone in the country.

A seven-piece band was booked to play and over a dozen other professional musicians brought along their varied instruments to just 'sit in'.

One of the audience brought along a keyboard which he auctioned for a very welcome £90 and almost £700 was raised during the evening, all of which will go to The Royal Free Cancer Care Units, where Pam

Kent (former Finchley Jazz Club secretary and Archer team member) is currently receiving such excellent treatment.

During the last session there were 17 musicians on the stage, all giving their very best to entertain. Maybe another event will be organised in the summer – it will be advertised in The Archer so watch this space.



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Through my eyes

By John Lawrence

When was the last time you came across a blind or partially-sighted person in a book or TV drama? Seldom are they seen and, when they do appear on screen, they're often portrayed as a stricken victim or someone with sonic superpowers.

Author Red Széll wanted to redress the balance and so based his first novel *Blind Trust* around a protagonist who cannot see. His hero gets caught up in a violent conspiracy featuring extortion and betrayal in a fast-moving tale set among the wealthy denizens of Hampstead.

Losses and gains

Red's motivation for writing was very personal. He has been losing his sight since he was 19, when he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic eye disorder whose effects he describes as "a bit like looking through a misty window into a dark room".

After a successful career in journalism and recruitment, he was proud to become a stay-at-home dad looking after his two daughters while his wife Kate worked as a City lawyer. And he used his time to write fiction.

Red said: "I was determined to write a plausible blind character and put the reader behind his eyes in a first-person narrative. It lets readers experience the world of a blind or partially sighted person, as well as some of the humour and kindness that

nine out of ten people show to someone like me."

Typing in bold

How much Red, 43, can see of the world around him changes with the amount of light in the room and even the amount of sleep he's had the night before. As a novelist, he clearly needs to be able to write in all conditions.

"On a good day, I'll write 3,000 words, on a bad day 800," he says. "I drop my youngest daughter at school, get home to have a coffee then sit down and start typing. I work in 16pt bold text and when I'm finished for the day there's a voice program on my laptop that reads back what I've written. Whenever I hear something that doesn't sound right, I edit it there and then."

Red, who lives in Hampstead himself and is an accomplished rock climber on the side, is now working on his second novel called *Well Sited*, a sequel of sorts with the same hero but this time set in the cut-throat world of property development. He hopes it will be published in time for the summer. Find out more about Red's work at www.blindtrust.co.uk



Red Széll is writing his second novel with a blind hero.
Photo by John Lawrence.



Piano queen: Yllka Istrefi.

A pianist born to play

By Ami Patel

Kosovan-born Yllka Istrefi came to London in 2001 from Israel, where she began her prolific career as a piano teacher and performer. With almost 30 years' experience in playing classical piano, Yllka is practised in the works of Mozart, Debussy, Grieg and Liszt.

When asked what inspired her to be a pianist she answered, "I just wanted to play." Yllka, who lives in Aylmer Road, confesses that her first love was the Turkish March and after hearing it played by her father she was determined to learn it.

The passion to play and share music has continued through her adult life. In 2008, Yllka completed a Master's Degree in Piano Performance at the Royal College of Music following which she had various jobs in the music industry. She is now a full time teacher and concert pianist.

Alongside her interest in traditional composers, Yllka performs contemporary pieces and recently played Toccata by Ash Madni, an Oxford-based composer, at St Anne's College,

Oxford University.

Currently working on new pieces including Rachmaninov's Second Piano Sonata, Yllka is preparing for concerts here and in Italy. Her next per-

formance in London will be in October at the Fairfield Halls in Croydon.

For details of Yllka's upcoming concerts and private lessons, see www.yllka.com.

Runners come out for lighter evenings

Spring is in the air for the East Finchley Flyers running group. The group has been going out on Tuesday evenings since November last year despite some poor weather conditions.

However, now that the weather is getting finer and the evenings lighter they expect the numbers of runners joining them to swell. The group has been doing runs between 5km and 10km with routes up to Alexandra Palace

and Highgate Village. With lighter evenings on the way, more runs will incorporate the parks and woodlands in and around East Finchley. They will also be going out on Sunday mornings doing longer runs up to 15km incorporating Hampstead Heath. For more information contact Nick on 07593 367134 or just turn up at East Finchley tube station on Tuesdays at 7pm and Sundays at 11am.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Headteacher Steve Hilborne and pupils celebrate Manorside Primary's outstanding Ofsted report.

Manorside's school report

Last month Manorside Primary School in Squires Lane, N3, was awarded an outstanding rating by Ofsted in every single category. Staff, children and parents were delighted as all of them work together to ensure that the school is "the caring learning environment" that Ofsted identified in its report.

The report said: "The pupils gain greatly in self-confidence because the school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well." A well above average proportion of the pupils at Manorside come from minority ethnic backgrounds and from families where English is spoken as an additional language, and this did not go

unnoticed. Here Manorside was praised for its diversity.

Headteacher Steve Hilborne was very pleased with the outcome of the inspection. He said: "This just confirms what we already knew. Our teachers and children are outstanding. The staff work incredibly hard to bring out the best in the children, and in turn they fulfil their potential."



Checkmate! The Martin School under-9 chess team

Nice moves, lads

By Michelle Imber

Congratulations to the Martin School under-9 chess team who took part in the recent Chess Jamboree. It was a very tough event with 18 schools from five different London boroughs competing.

Martin School played some great chess and finished in 2nd place, ahead of some of the best school chess teams in the country.

The team won 20 out of their 24 games finishing only two points behind the winners and are now becoming a recognised force in school chess events.

Our photo shows the team: back row, Rees Lyon, Louis Girling, Jake Imber, Joe Collinge, Kiran Jackson, Sahr Kamanda, and front row Eric Dyer, Arun and Raul Kapoor-Parsons.

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People power pays off for Walksafe

By Harriet

Connides and Emily Burnham
Local road safety group Walksafe N2 held a celebratory 'walk in' on their new zebra crossing at the junction of the High Road and Creighton Avenue.

"We are so pleased that our journey to school is safer and less stressful," says mother-of-two and Walksafe member Jayne Lobley. "The zebra crossing is a huge improvement, though we will monitor the degree to which cars still speed around the corner of Creighton Avenue".

Campaigners are looking forward to the imminent installation of a 20mph speed limit on Church Lane with two vehicle-activated signs, which record vehicle speed. It remains to be seen whether the new pedestrian island on Church Lane at the junction with East End Road resolves all issues at this location, as some drivers remain unaware that the road is two-way here.

An additional demand was a three-way traffic light at the junction of the High Road and Church Lane. The Council would not support this, but Councillor Graham Old, Chair of the Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment Committee, agreed to review the junction next autumn. Walksafe is appealing to residents to email details of dangerous incidents to Cllr Old and to copy the email to walksafenn2@yahoo.co.uk.

Facebook spreads the word

A number of people have raised concerns with Walksafe about pedestrian safety in other locations. The group have posted some tips on their Facebook page.



Safer walking: Walksafe campaigners celebrate the new Creighton Avenue crossing. Photo by Erini Rodis

"We want to share what we have learned through our campaign and to provide inspiration to others who want to bring about changes in their area," says member Karen Pepper.

The campaign group said it would like to thank everyone who provided support over the past year including our local councillors and *THE ARCHER*.

Holiday family appeal

A Spanish family who contacted *THE ARCHER* via our Facebook page (TheArcherN2) is appealing for a host to help them enjoy another visit to London this summer.

Maria Hidalgo Mateos and her two daughters aged 13 and eight, last stayed with a family in Creighton Avenue and would like to return to anywhere in East Finchley in the last week of July and the first week of August.

They are particularly keen to find a host with a coeliac member, as Maria's youngest daughter is coeliac herself.

Maria says she is able to give references from her last visit. If you can help, contact her on mariahidalgomateos@gmail.com

Youth music prize

Youth Music Centre is holding its third annual concerto prize at Union Church Weston Park, Crouch End on 20 April between 2pm and 10pm. Many talented young musicians will give their best in front of a panel of distinguished adjudicators.

The event aims to bring the chance to play with an orchestra to students at a radically early stage in their musical lives. Each age group will produce a winner who will play a movement of their concerto with one of the very able YMC orchestras on 12 May at 6pm in HGS Free Church, Central Square in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

This year there will be representatives of the double bass classes giving us a taste of the famous bass solo of Saint Saens's *Carnival of the Animals*. Famous concertos and double concertos by Bach, Vivaldi and Boccherini alongside works by Böhm, Bartok and many other exciting composers will be performed. Entry to both events is free.

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- **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
- **Phoenix Cinema activities,** Bringing up baby screenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from box office on 020 8444 6789.
- **Stepping Stones,** interactive play session for under 3s. Karen 07957 278860.
- **Teddy Bears' Music,** singing for 0-3s in Holy Trinity Church, N2; Thursdays 9.45am & 10.45am. Liz 07836 284538.



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.



Curb these rogue landlords

By Chris Mathewson

So Newham Council will license all its private sector landlords, not just those who own houses of multiple occupation. But will Barnet follow suit?

I am a state pensioner, long resident in private sector rented accommodation in Barnet, legally 'regulated' with a 'fair' rent and security of tenure. For many years, I got along very well with my landlord until he had to sell the property, which was snapped up by a supposedly 'respectable' organisation on the local high street.

They wanted to convert it into flats. Accordingly, they wanted me 'out' and harassed me by, amongst other things, taking up my floorboard and filling my wardrobe and bed with building dust. My co-tenant suffered similar indignities.

The landlord didn't approve of my anger, but they did offer me alternative accommodation until the refurbishment was complete. This, they advised, would take four months.

It actually took four YEARS! Doubtless I was expected to quit and thus lose my regulated tenancy but it wasn't to be. I spent these years in a house with the landlord's Polish workers. Two rats lived with us, the shower exploded while I was using it and threw sparks all over me, the boiler failed twice, and then the hall ceiling fell in, crashing onto the floor below and only by chance failing to injure anybody. Fawlty Towers had nothing on this place.

Back in my original accommodation, the new boiler packed up and the shower needed repair. Meantime, tenants downstairs suffered their own problems. Their bathroom ceiling fell in and then their rent was increased by £30 a week. They were threatened with eviction when they refused to pay, but then the wife's pregnancy (of which the landlord had been fully aware) forced them to accept the increase. Where was Barnet's Tenancy Relations Officer?

These details represent only the tip of the iceberg. Approaches to the council proved largely fruitless, though I have nothing but praise for the local rent officer who awarded me a substantial reduction in my rent.

Decent landlords have nothing to fear from licensing. Even as I write, Ed Miliband is calling for greater powers to deal with rogue landlords, 'respectable' or otherwise. Bring them on!

Thorn in your side

By Janet Maitland

Have you ever thought of using plants to deter burglars? Barnet Boroughwatch has produced a list of attractive shrubs and trees which will make intruders think twice about trying to enter your property, if you plant them along a boundary or under a ground-floor window.

Plants with prickly leaves make good barriers, such as holly (*Ilex agulfolium*). Thorny shrubs are also off-putting, such as purple Berberis (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea'). Intruders will also find it painfully difficult to get through plants with spines, such as Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), or spiky needles, such as Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Globosa').

Other plants work as a barrier because the stems are so dense they are impossible to push through, such as golden bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*). Ordinary privet hedging also works in this way, especially if it is kept well pruned.

Although it's tempting to hide your property behind tall hedges, Barnet Boroughwatch advise you not to plant anything higher than three foot tall in your front garden or you will simply be providing a helpful screen for burglars. For a copy of the plant list, contact Barnetboroughwatch@gmail.com

Burglars use twig trick

By Janet Maitland

Criminals are using a low-tech but effective way of identifying unoccupied properties. Police report that would-be burglars are inserting small twigs or bits of paper around the door frames of houses, returning some time later to check if they're still in place. If they are, the burglars break in, confident that no one is at home.

This trick was tried on 14 different properties in Edgware over a period of just two days in January. Barnet Boroughwatch advises you to keep a close eye on your door, and to call the police on 101 if there are any signs of these markings. Dial 999 in an emergency.

Plant swap day

Bring your spare seeds and plants along to a swap day at Martin School in Plane Tree Walk from 2-4pm on Sunday 21 April. Seedlings and plants will all be part of the free exchange.

A reminder of how things used to be

By Diana Cormack

If the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations last year made you feel nostalgic, there's a little museum in Lonsdale Road, Notting Hill, where you can take a quick trip down memory lane. The Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising has a stock of memorabilia capable of stimulating thoughts and pleasures of the past dating back from the 1980s for almost 100 years.

The objects on display cover many aspects of daily life, which would have been found in most homes. There are food containers of all sorts; toys and games; comics and magazines; fashion and design features; travel pieces and technology items.

Described as "an unexpected reunion with your past", the museum is suitable for a wide age range and is good for family outings and groups as well as offering a school visit service. It is open almost daily

(closed Mondays, except Bank Holidays) and until the end of August there is a special exhibition showcasing souvenirs and commemorative products from present and past royal jubilees. In contrast "Waste Not, Want Not" concentrates on how the past can teach us to make better use of resources today.

So, if a look back in time is the order of the day, call 020 7908 0880 for more details or visit www.museumofbrands.com



An old-time night out

In February, 17 elderly and housebound people were taken to the superlative Old Tyme Music show at Lauderdale House in Highgate by the Rotary Club of Golders Green. They had an exciting evening adding their own voices to their favourite old songs. The picture, courtesy of Neville Robinson, shows Jean Henry, from East Finchley, aged 103, with Derek Marcus, pianist and organiser of the evening, and Barbara Kneally, one of the singers from the Lissenden Players.

Editor's note: Those snails again...

Are you smacking your lips at the thought of harvesting edible snails from Coldfall Wood (see page 3)? Probably not. In any case, we have to own up and say the story was our April fool. Yes, we're late, but what can we do when we're only a monthly paper? You can put your knives and forks down now.

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KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Death wish list

Once upon a time when men were men, women were women and a dog was a man's best friend there were no lists of 1,000 things to see and do before you died. For one thing, the ancient world only had seven must-see attractions and once you'd seen one hanging garden you'd seen them all.

Once the Romans had gone and the ages got dark the list got shorter so by the time you got to the 14th century your to-do list was probably down to: be born, work, go to church, get married, have children and die. Obviously plenty of people missed most of the middle bits, especially when the Black Death was doing its bit for population control.

The Victorians had more ambition. Apart from birth, marriage, children and death there were lots of opportunities to travel to unknown lands, meet unusual people and catch unusual animals and exotic diseases. And that's before you get to members of the British aristocracy ensuring that you don't need to go to Athens to see the glory that was Greece because they'd brought half of it home to decorate their country estates.

But now it's different, now our mind-blowing lack of imagination means we need to be told what to do. We need books telling us what to watch, read and do before we die. It's all there, from bungee-jumping off the Eiffel Tower to making a porn film on your smartphone, to back-packing across suburbia or white water rafting off the Viagra Falls. And on the subject of smartphones, there's even an app to make sure you don't miss out any must-dos by mistake.

The only problem is what to do when you've done them all by the time you're 30. Does this mean the end? No, it means it's time to find a whole new list to work through. There's already one on wines you should drink, beers you should get drunk on and cocktails you should shake. But what about coffee? Yes, what the world needs is the 1,001 coffees you should drink before you burn down Starbucks. And at number 1 would be the mind-destroying super-strength heart attack in a cup that's Death Wish, said to be the strongest coffee in the world. There is a coffee to die for!



Regular Events

Sport & Fitness

- **Badminton** Weds eves 8-10pm all abilities, contact George 8349 0170 or John 8444 7163.
- **East Finchley Flyers running club**, Tuesdays 7pm at the tube station, 7k run and socialising. Nick 07795 503752.
- **Finchley & Hornsey Ramblers Group** Call Vivien 8883 8190
- **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- **Keep fit for the Retired** 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.
- **Pilates Beginners Classes** Tue 9.30-10.30am, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Church Lane N2. Contact: Michelle 07767 804 564
- **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.
- **Ballroom Dance Classes**, Wednesday eves for beginners & improvers. St Mary's Church Hall, N3. 8444 0280.
- **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners & improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.
- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **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.
- **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. 07958 282898.

Clubs & Social

- **Bingo evening**, 8pm Sundays, at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2.
- **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9 pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5452
- **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- **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 Ladies Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds, Ann Owen Ctr., Oak La. Call 8432 1415 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. Anita 8886 6140.
- **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390

Daisy Pulls It Off

Review by Margi McAlister

Daisy Pulls it Off is now showing at Upstairs at the Gatehouse, that gem of a theatre in Highgate. Written by Denise Deegan and directed by Thom Southerland, it tells the story of Daisy Meredith, an elementary school pupil who wins a scholarship to Grangewood School for Girls, in the depths of the English countryside.

Set in 1927, the play shows how Daisy overcomes the prejudice she encounters because she is poor and not well connected.

Daisy (Holly Dale Spencer) is excellent and holds the stage for the whole performance. The cast is wonderfully chosen. Sybil Burlington (Suanne Braun), the spiteful Upper Fourth bully, plays 'beastly' tricks on her, aided by the school toady Monica Smithers (Norma Atallah) who has the audience in stitches with her creepy tittering and obsequiousness.



Will Daisy pull it off? A scene from the show Upstairs at the Gatehouse. Photo by Mitzi de Margary

Daisy's only friend is jolly Trixie Martin (Gillian McCafferty) who thinks up 'top hole' and 'capital' plans with Daisy to find the hidden treasure that will save the school from closing.

The humour never flags, notably, due to young and older members of the cast playing the schoolgirls with the awful gymslips and hockey sticks that some of us remember. There is a particularly well-choreographed hockey game when Daisy regains some kudos by scoring the winning goal for Grangewood.

The music throughout, played with animation by Joanne Cichonska on an upright piano in a corner of the stage, adds greatly to the emotional impact and atmosphere.

Don't miss seeing this marvellous production which appears to be a parody of a girls' boarding school from the pages of Enid Blyton but carries a thoughtful and sentimental truth. It is running until 14 April 2013. Judging from the hilarity and laughter from the audience, you won't be disappointed.

What's On... E-mail your listings to: the-archer@lineone.net

Sunday 7 April

- **Bothy Gardens open**, 3-5pm. Visit the secret garden at Avenue House, East End Road, N3.

Monday 8 April

- **Folk and country music** with amateur and guest acts including: **Lily and Meg**, **The Coach House Company** and **Good Clean Fun**, 7.30pm at Birchwood Hall, Fortis Green, Muswell Hill. £5.00 entrance, tickets at door. Bar. Supporting www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.

Friday 12 April

- **Battle of Barnet** special anniversary guided walk with City of London guide Paul Baker. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road, 2.30pm. More details from 020 8440 6805 and www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net

Sunday 14 April

- **Free market at Avenue House**, East End Road, N3. 10am-4pm.
- **Free music concert at East Finchley Methodist Church**, High Road, 7.30pm. **Pocket Penguin**, exploring the sound world of melodica and guitar. Free admission, collection in aid of Palestinian music school Al Kamandjati. Venue fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Thursday 18 April

- **200 Years of Fashion**, original costume fashion show narrated by Frances Musker, former V and A curator, and presented by the Friends of Avenue House. Must be booked in advance. Tickets £20, (including wine and canapés) available from Avenue House, East End Road, N3 at reception in working hours, or phone 020 8346 7812 in working hours, or contact info@avenuehouse.org.uk.

Sunday 21 April

- **Seed and plant swap day**, Martin Primary

School, Plane Tree Walk, 2-4pm. Bring your spare seeds, seedlings and plants for this free exchange.

Wednesday 24 April

- **Friern Barnet and District Local History Society** hosts a talk on **Octavia Hill** by Pamela Wright. 7.45 pm at St John's Church Hall, Friern Barnet Lane (next to Whetstone Police Station).

Thursday 25 April

- **The Finchley Society's outreach meeting** at Christ Church, High Road, North Finchley. Mike Gee's slideshow presentation, A Walk around Finchley. Doors open 7.30 pm. Show starts 8pm, finishes around 9.30. Refreshments before show and in interval. All welcome.

- **Age UK Barnet's fourth annual quiz night**. 7pm at the Meritage Centre, Church End, Hendon NW4 4JT. Tickets £12 in advance including supper. Telephone: 020 8203 5040. Fully licensed bar available; opportunity to buy a raffle ticket or 10 for chance to win fabulous prizes. Maximum six people per table.

Thursday 25 April to Saturday 27 April

- **The Odd Couple** (female version) by Neil Simon, an amateur dramatics production by the Guild Players. 7.45pm and Saturday matinee at 3pm, Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, Finchley, N3 1NB. Tickets £8 / £7 each for groups of 10 or more, from www.guildplayers.org.uk or on the door (advance booking advisable). Box Office enquiries 020 8346 6337.

Saturday 27 April

- **Spike Milligan quiz night**. Tickets £5, with nibbles provided. For details of venue, and to book, please contact Derek or Barbara Warren on 020 8346 5258.



Artist Elliott shows off his work. Photo by Benjamin Wilson.

Strength through art

Eye-catching art works created by adults with autism are making their mark. The artists all belong to a group called ARTS, which stands for Autism Requires True Strength.

The project, which covers photography, painting and other art forms, is funded through the Barnet Council Supporting Independence Fund and aims to build confidence and creativity.

Seven of the group's artists who met only in January have put together a major collaborative art piece to be shown in libraries around Barnet. Their textile wall-hanging will be unveiled to the public at a special event in Community Focus at artsdepot on 20 April from 6pm - 10pm. Everyone is welcome to come along, share the nibbles and listen to some live music.



A different kind of therapy: Caitlin Smail, seated, and her business partner Melanie Stevenson. Photo by Fred Sansom.

Art as therapy

By Linda Sansom

Graphic designer Cate Smail has been an artist all her life but had never heard of art therapy. Then a personal crisis led her to using it herself, and now she hopes to make its benefits more widely known.

With artist and business partner Melanie Stevenson she has started ArtTherapy4All to promote its benefits. At her home in Fortis Green Cate explained how it happened.

Show and tell

"I was working as a graphic designer. Then about five years ago I was going through a really bad time, a difficult divorce and selling the house, when a friend introduced me to art therapy," she said.

"I've never really got on with counselling as I find it hard to talk about myself, but with art therapy I was able to express myself through my artwork, and it enabled me to show the therapist how I was feeling, as well as being a vehicle for self-exploration.

"It's non-verbal although you do talk to the therapist. You often don't know what you're going to paint until you start. Then something develops, you and the art therapist talk about it and it helps you to understand what is going on."

Art therapy has in fact been

around for some time, after it was used to help shell-shocked soldiers during the war, and then established in former mental hospitals.

Spreading the word

Together with Muswell Hill business partner and co-therapist Melanie Stevenson she set up the Art Therapy Agency to help create jobs for art therapists. The idea behind ArtTherapy4All is to provide subsidised art therapy for those who otherwise would be unable to afford it, and also to spread the word about the therapeutic benefits.

Cate and Melanie have already held sessions for teachers at inset days, and will be running other workshops, including one on May 4. Their first exhibition, Art and Healing, shows in the gallery at University College Hospital from April 18 to June 5, with another venue at Archway, and Cate has been inundated with hundreds of entries, each of which tells a different, often very moving story.

For more information go to www.arttherapy4All.co.uk.



Letters to the editor...

Academy plan is good news

Dear Editor,

I was a little disappointed to read your article on the sale of Stanley Road playing field to the Archer Academy as you seem to imply that this may not be a positive development for the local community.

I have lived in East Finchley for ten years and the topic of Stanley Road and its use by the community appears to have been going on for at least that long. I support the protection of open land and investment in facilities for the community, but given the unmet demand for local school places for East Finchley children and the lack of public or private money to invest in things like community playing fields which I wouldn't foresee changing in the near future, I can only see the positives in this outcome for Stanley Road for East Finchley.

Even before it has opened, the Archer Academy feels like a big success story for East Finchley and it would be good to see it represented more positively in your paper.

Yours faithfully,
Alison Gold,
Huntingdon Road, N2.

Stanley Field concerns will be resolved

Dear Editor,

We are writing regarding your front page article in the March edition on the Stanley Road Field issue. We would like to inform your readers that we believe the Archer Academy will provide the best long-term future for the field. The Academy has the ability to bring in the necessary funding to refurbish the site and provide high quality sports and ancillary facilities. They will also ensure the upkeep and availability of the field, and are in the process of writing a covenant or deed of dedication to guarantee public access in the coming years. Whilst it would be improper for us to comment on specific building plans, as they will be the subject of a future planning application, we are committed to working with residents and the school to ensure that any local concerns can be resolved. The group behind the Archer Academy are local residents and are as keen to secure the future of Stanley Road Playing Field as anyone else; in fact that is why they are making the bid. We are working with them to ensure that local residents and children can continue to access the field and benefit from the new sports facilities now and in the future.

Yours faithfully,
Arjun Mittra, Alison Moore,
Colin Rogers,
East Finchley Ward councillors.

We should celebrate Academy plans

Dear Editor

We greatly value *THE ARCHER*. We think it is a good local newspaper and are delighted that it is celebrating 20 years of reporting local issues in a balanced and thoughtful way.

We were, however, disappointed to read the lead article in this month's *ARCHER* (March 2013) regarding the sale of Stanley Field to the Archer Academy. We thought that the tone of the piece was rather disingenuous and feel that it could serve to stir up unnecessary negative feeling and angst.

As the Governing Body of a local Primary School, we are delighted to see the successful culmination of a great deal of hard work and dedication which will benefit not only our local children but also our local community. We wish the Archer Academy every success with its new site and look forward to being able to access the facilities on Stanley Fields which have just been given a new lease of life and a secure future far away from the grip of housing development.

It is disappointing that this article should be published at a time when parents and carers and their children are finding out the results of their applications to secondary schools. At best, it is a stressful and emotional time. An article which casts any doubt over the future of their school premises is irresponsible and potentially damaging to the huge amount of work which has been achieved.

We would like to know who the "many people" are who are asking questions? We note that the group who are "asking questions" and registering concern are the 'supporters of Stanley Fields' and not the 'friends of Stanley Fields'. We feel that the article should have made it clear that they are not the same group – the Friends of Stanley Fields being broadly supportive of this proposal.

Following the meeting called by the Supporters of Stanley Field on the 12 March, we sincerely hope that *THE ARCHER* will now readily acknowledge that in fact the "many people" asking questions have turned out to be one person, and that the 'Supporters' of Stanley Field is, in fact, one supporter.

The future of this valuable space in our community has long been uncertain. The fact that many of our children have been forced to accept secondary schools which were not their choice has been an issue for a very long time. Both issues are now well on their way to being resolved thanks to the dedication of people in our community. Let us all, including 'THE ARCHER', rejoice in this fact.

Yours faithfully,
Catrin Dillon,
Chair of Governors, Martin Primary School, on behalf of the Governing Body.

Stanley Field support

Dear Editor

I attended the Supporters of Stanley Field meeting on 13 March, as advertised in last month's front page article in *THE ARCHER*. Far from there being "many people in this community" concerned about the sale of the Stanley Field site to the Archer Academy, there was overwhelming support from the original "Friends of Stanley Field".

Indeed the view of the meeting was that the sale of the site would be a way of safeguarding it from over-development and securing it for community sports use, a great step forward after ten years or so of campaigning by local residents. With the sale including a deed of dedication that protects the future use of the site, insisted upon by The Archer Academy team and Sport EF, with both groups having the "good of the community" at their core, everyone was very happy with the successful outcome for the East Finchley community as a whole.

Yours faithfully,
Helen Drake,
Creighton Avenue, N2.

Stanley Field alarm

Dear Editor,

I was really disappointed by your article in the March issue about the Archer Academy's purchase of Stanley Road. Alarmed by it I attended a meeting of the group that the article endorsed which turned out to be a single individual with no support from the local community.

Stanley Fields area is indeed a precious resource for the community, but at the moment, it is a derelict site with no use to anyone. A week or so before your March issue the Archer Academy has already announced ambitious plans to transform it into state-of-art sports facilities (not to mention a much-needed local secondary school) to be available for use to the whole community.

I could not believe that you have ignored most of the information supplied and available on the subject, and printed an article full of speculation and misinformation, making a wonderful local initiative look suspicious and underhand.

We should be celebrating this development, and helping it in any way we can, constructive criticism included, but not be criticising and condemning it based on speculation and without checking the facts.

Yours faithfully,
Drazen Coric,
Manor Park Road, N2.

The good, the bad and the downright rude

Dear Editor,

One recent Saturday morning, having dropped off some alterations at HR Dry Cleaners in East Finchley, I returned to my car to discover the battery was flat and the car wouldn't start. As I'd left my mobile at home I asked HR Dry Cleaners whether I could use their phone to call the AA.

The girl at the counter was truly sympathetic and understanding and before I could call the AA one of her colleagues asked if the car was manual as he would be happy to push start it. Unfortunately it wasn't, so then the tailor, Sam, suggested the local petrol station may have some jump leads (they'd run out), or the local electricians (they were closed) and he would jump start the car for me.

Unsuccessful, I returned to HR Dry Cleaners to call the AA but they insisted on asking their neighbours if they had jump leads. Finally, the corner shop, Onur Food and Wine, came up trumps and Sam, the tailor, came back triumphant. He pushed my car so as to make space for his car close to mine. I stood in the spot vacated to hold it for him.

While I was awaiting his return a Smart car, emblazoned with the name of a fitness company which I shall not give so as to not compromise their reputation, nipped into the space! Before he'd turned off his engine I explained the situation to him and asked if he'd mind parking on the other side of my car where there was ample space. However, he refused (!) stating the traffic as the cause.

This was a young, fit man who couldn't make a very small gesture. Frankly if he couldn't manage the traffic he shouldn't be driving. He then entered the beauty salon next to the cleaners and spent his time there watching, pointing through the window and generally amusing himself. Meanwhile poor Sam returned,

saw what had happened and had to drive on, park further away, return to my car, push it yet again, go back to collect his car, park it by mine and finally jump start it.

I went into the beauty salon to remonstrate with the young man and show him how some people are so helpful. His response was to say: "You're not my mother." All I can say is thank goodness, as I would have been thoroughly ashamed if I were. It is also incredible that somebody who works in the area would have so little concern about the impression he makes when his company name is there for all to see. I certainly won't be using his service! On the other hand Sam point blank refused any thanks from me and said he couldn't ask it of a client. What a contrast of behaviours.

Yours faithfully,
Debbie Cass,
Holyoake Walk, N2.

On being 20...

Dear Editor,

Kindly oblige by accepting our congratulation to the whole *ARCHER* team on your 20th anniversary. Our heartfelt thanks for your kindness. Words cannot express our thanks for what you do.

Yours faithfully,
Mr and Mrs Patel,
High Road, N2.

Ash trees will recover

Dear Editor,

As the owner of 2.4 acres of ancient woodland in south west Kent, which I manage as a nature reserve, I am obviously making every effort to be informed with regard to *chalara fraxinea*, or ash dieback disease, and thought I might add to Ann Bronkhorst's excellent article (*THE ARCHER*, March 2013).

Obviously the practice of importing trees and tree products with minimal control (and "growing on" British seedlings in Eastern Europe, which allows the trees to be sold as British sourced, yet cuts costs) have been hugely contributory to the spread of this fungus. The fact that the symptoms were thought to be from a similar but less virulent pathogen also meant that the danger was not recognised for months. Not very reassuring!

But that said, the disease is carried on microscopic fungal spores and, sooner or later, would have arrived on the wind anyway. I suspect that, given that the worst infections seem to be in parts of Scandinavia and Poland, these cold east and north-east winds which we've been experiencing will increase the incidence of infection. We shall see.

I recently attended the SYLVA conference at Oxford University, where there was an excellent presentation by Dr David Boshier, a forest geneticist with Earth Trust. He explained that within the gene pool of all ash trees there is resistance to the *chalara*. For example, in Denmark, two to ten per cent of ash trees show good resistance and survive.

This is actually a relatively high incidence, and given the prolific seed production of ash and the high germination rate of those seeds, I would predict that the recovery of the ash, even if it is truly blighted by *chalara*, will occur within our lifetimes. It is very different from

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the elms where most of the trees were propagated from suckers or cuttings, making them clones with the same genetic makeup. The outbreeding ash has a far better potential for recovery in the long term. I certainly hope that I am right.

Yours faithfully,
**Linda Dolata (volunteer guide
at Kew Gardens)**
Leopold Road, N2

Memories from our pages

Dear Editor,

I often receive *THE ARCHER* via my cousin who lived in East Finchley and is now here in Australia. My family lived in East Finchley, Church End and North Finchley.

It is interesting to read of some of my places mentioned in your pages. At one time, Avenue House, where we played as kids on the swings. Giant strides, and we were convinced we could smell ink from Inky Stephens' house.

On one occasion, Manorside School gave a display of Eurythmics dancing and I recall we were in Greek costume, barefoot and pranced out from behind the trees to Miss Makin's piano.

The Lido was mentioned in one of your issues and I gather it was what we called the Olympic baths. Hot holidays, sport by the pools. First the baby pool, where we young ones were given swimming lessons, and the fountain, sitting on the side enjoying the cool splash.

The 'Rough Lots', as we knew it, was walked every day to and from school in the morning, noon and home time. Blackberry eating in summer, sliding on slippery ice in winter. I read an article in which the London people would make their way to the Common at East Finchley to get away from the plague.

So as you can see, a trip down memory lane from Australia when I receive *THE ARCHER*.

Yours faithfully,
Eileen McKelligel, nee Smith,
Cleveland, Australia.

My feathered visitors

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the report from Nick Young (*THE ARCHER*, March 2013). He may like to know that my garden in Eastern Road is full of siskins and redpolls at the moment. The redpolls arrive usually before Christmas and the siskins usually as soon as there is some very cold weather and have been with me over the winter for the past four years, a delightful addition to the garden as they grow brighter and brighter into their spring colours. They are both due to leave soon as the days grow longer.

Yours faithfully,
Fenella Reed,
Eastern Road, N2.



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Wash day blues... and blessings

By Sheila Armstrong

Are launderettes a dying breed? Well certainly not in East Finchley, as testified by A Heck of a Wash on the High Road, where there is more going on than just socks and soap powder.

Since January, Fortismere School sixth form student Lydia Francis has been working on an in-depth video project at the launderette as part of her A-level in photography.

A real community

Lydia decided to study the launderette in detail because she remembers it so well from her

childhood. "It's always been there and the video shop used to be next door," she told *THE ARCHER*. "What makes a project like this so interesting is talking to people and hearing their stories. You have no idea what will come up."

"When I first went in there I met a film producer, a script



writer and our local road sweepers. Patience and listening skills are needed when you go to photograph in any new place."

She describes the launderette as a community within a community: a social centre used by a great variety of local people. Even tea and biscuits are sometimes on offer there.

As many people will know, Margaret Cartwright does the service washes and extends a warm welcome to one and all. Margaret grew up in East Finchley and still lives here. She remembers the first bananas going on sale after the war and playing in the streets in those relatively traffic-free days.

Inspiration

Lydia uses a Nikon D90, SLR digital camera. The great photographers Henri Cartier

Bresson and Diane Arbus, to name but two, have inspired her, and she admires Louis Theroux for his interviewing skills and genuine interest in those he meets on his TV programme.

She has done another photog-

raphy/video project at Springfield Retirement Home and also one at Mulberry Court retirement flats on the High Road. You can see some of Lydia's diverse work on her website <http://lydiafrancis.weebly.com>



A selection of photos from Lydia Francis's study of A Heck of a Wash launderette.



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New library opening hours

From this month, East Finchley library will be closed on Tuesdays instead of Mondays.

Seen and heard

Sharp eyed people looking for clues in the gripping ITV detective series Broadchurch may well have spotted a familiar face in the town's newspaper office. The editor of the Broadchurch Echo, which is reporting on the mysterious death of a local boy, is played by Carolyn Pickles.

A long term resident of Bedford Road, Carolyn has acted in numerous film, radio, theatre and television productions, being perhaps particularly remembered for her roles in Bluebell and The Bill.