



Local News is our Aim

THE ARCHER



December 2015 No. 263 ISSN 1361-3952 20p where sold

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Flats plan for site opposite tube station

By Daphne Chamberlain

A planning application to develop a prominent site opposite East Finchley tube station has been greeted with surprise and consternation by neighbouring residents. The site is currently occupied by GLH, the long-standing minicab and courier firm, whose lease expires in 2017.

Safeland plc, the owner of the site, is proposing to demolish the existing buildings, including GLH House with its

distinctive columned entrance, and replace them with two new residential blocks, provisionally called Cherry Tree House and Cherry Tree Mews.

The site is immediately opposite the entrance to East Finchley station and is sandwiched between the parade of shops that ends with the Dan and DeCarlo coffee shop and Park House, which is used by the Limespring School for primary age pupils with dyslexia and dyspraxia, as well as the Monkey Puzzle day nursery.

THE ARCHER has already received complaints from people in neighbouring roads. They are alarmed about the pressure this would put on existing car owners in an area where parking is a major issue.

One proposed block would provide 11 flats, nine with one bedroom and two with two bedrooms. This block would also have a ground-floor office unit. The second building would contain 13 flats, four one-bedroom, eight two-bedroom, and one three-bedroom.

A communal garden is proposed for each building, but there would only be two additional car spaces available on the site.

Continued on page 2.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Archer team would like to wish all our readers, deliverers and advertisers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Top of the world: Matt on high ground.

From N2 to Inverness

Yomping across a hill top with a heavy pack on his back and a Union flag draped over his shoulder, this is Matt Lewin on his solo trek from East Finchley to Inverness. Find out why he did it in our story on page 4.

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Dangerous 'dare' game at crossing

A reader has told THE ARCHER of a frightening incident which occurred when she was driving down East End Road. As she approached the crossing near the Five Bells, four youths at the 143 bus stop ran out and crouched down on the crossing, forcing her to pull over into the opposite carriageway. Luckily no other traffic was approaching at the time.

"It was obviously some kind of dare game," our reader said, "But what if I had hit them? Who would have got the blame? I was left shaken and shocked by this and would not like it to happen to anyone else."

Because it happened around 4.30pm it was not light enough for her to identify their school uniforms but, at the time of writing, she was contacting local secondary schools to report this dangerous game.

Can you help us deliver?

Our delivery round on the Thomas More Estate has come free and we're looking for one or two volunteers to help us make sure THE ARCHER still reaches readers there.

Can you spare an hour or so each month to deliver the newspaper to people in Clare Close, Dunstan Close, Juliana Close, St Mary's Green, Cecilia Close and Helen Close?

The round could be shared between two volunteers or taken on by one person. Copies of THE ARCHER are brought directly to your door for you to put through letterboxes in your own time.

Please contact us if you can help. Email us at the-archer@lineone.net or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you.

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Copy Editor

John Lawrence

Production Editor

Alison Roberts

Picture Editor

Mike Coles

Editorial Team

Diana Cormack

Daphne Chamberlain

Sub Editors

Ann Bronkhorst

Jeff Robson

Finance & Advertising

John Dearing

Distribution

Toni Morgan

Jane & David Marsh

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Thank you to The Bald Faced Stag for providing us with a meeting place.

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

If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address.

Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

Copy deadlines – **January:** 11 December,
February: 15 January, **March:** 12 February

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Councils

Barnet

Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000
Council Tax 020 8359 2608

Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600
Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700

Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500
Employment Service 020 8258 3900

Haringey Council

Leisure 020 8489 0000

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library 020 8883 2664

Gt North Leisure Park 0870 240 6020
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007

Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Tourist Info Service 0870 128 8080

Warner Cinema Village 020 8446 9933

Transport

BR Enquiries 0845 7484950
City Airport 020 7646 0088

London Transport 020 7222 1234
National Express 08705 808080

Heathrow Airport 0870 000 0123

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Lone Parent Centre 020 7021 4146
Missing Persons Helpline 0500 700700

National Debt Line 0808 808 4000
NSPCC 0800 800500

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Relate 020 8447 8101
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Refuge National Crisis Line 0870 599 5443

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Alcoholics Anonymous 0845 7697555

Barnet MENCAP 020 8203 6688
Cancer Support 020 8202 2211

Carers' Line 0808 808 7777
Drinkline 0800 917 8282

Drugs Helpline 0800 776600

Health Info Service 0800 665544
MIND 020 8343 5700

National Blood Centre 0845 7711 7711

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CrimeStoppers 0800 555111
Victim Support 0845 303 0900

Hospitals

NHS 111
Barnet General 020 8216 4000

Coppetts Wood 020 8883 9792
Edgware General 020 8952 2381

Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500
Oak Lane Clinic 020 8346 9343

Royal Free 020 7794 0500
St Luke's 020 8219 1800

Whittington 020 7272 3070
Western Eye Hospital 020 7886 6666

OAP's Advice

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Independent Age 0800 319 6789
Help the Aged 0808 800 6565

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

8 Brackenbury Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

211 Creighton Avenue, N2
Single-storey rear extension,

with three roof lights and raised roof on existing side extension.

East Finchley Underground Station

Internal alterations to facilitate closure of ticket office.

37 Fairlawn Avenue, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

12-18 High Road, N2
Demolition of existing buildings and construction of two four-storey buildings, providing 24 self-contained flats, and 265 square metres of B1 office at ground level of block A. New internally illuminated digital LED 48 sheet advertising.

89 High Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension. New folding doors at front, and new rear door to replace existing. New refuse storage.

72 Leopold Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

4 Manor Cottages Approach, N2
Single-storey rear extension. Alterations to roof of existing single-storey rear extension

to match pitched roof of the proposed one, including four roof lights, and associated hard and soft landscaping.

49 Manor Park Road, N2
New bin and bike store enclosure at front.

Oak Lodge School, Heath View, N2

Details of drainage conditions for planning permission of 28 January 2015.

Haringey Council

Flat B, 30 Aylmer Road, N2
Replacing metal single-glazed windows with double-glazed uPVC ones.

8 Lynmouth Road, N2
Rear extension. Certificate of Lawfulness for loft conversion with rear dormer extension.

32 Ringwood Avenue, N2
Hip to gable roof extension and rear dormer with front roof lights. Removal of side dormer, and replacing front flat roof with matching hipped roof.

65 Twyford Avenue, N2
One rear and one side roof dormer. One shower window. Two roof lights.

68 Twyford Avenue, N2
Single-storey rear extension. Depth 3.5m, maximum height 3m, eaves height 2.95m.



The site as it could look, top, and as it is now

Free festive parking

Shoppers will be able to take advantage of free parking in East Finchley and other high streets and car parks in Barnet on the three weekends of December before Christmas.

Barnet Council is lifting all charges on 5-6, 12-13 and 19-20 December. While we have our own East Finchley Christmas Festival on 5 December, the Ten Grand Arcade in North Finchley is hosting a Christmas market.

Camera found

Reader Chris Tiratsoo writes to tell us that he found a digital camera in the shrubbery in the front garden of his home in Lincoln Road, possibly dumped there by a thief. He is keen to reunite it with its rightful owner.

It's a Sony Cyber-shot 8.1 megapixel with a distinctive strap. There is a memory card inside it but Chris has been unable to check its contents. If you think the camera could be yours, email Chris.ct@jpg.co.uk

Flats plan opposite tube

Continued from page 1

Michael McGrath, a resident of Ingram Road, told us: "Barnet Council would normally require up to 32 additional parking places to be included in a development of this size, yet the developer has proposed only two spaces. There will therefore be an additional 30 cars seeking parking in the streets around the station.

"Even if the future residents of this development are prevented from using the Controlled Parking Zone there will still be a significant impact in the evenings and on Sundays and in those streets that have only a 2-3pm restriction."

We will bring you more details as the application progresses.

See Letters, page 11.

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Police seek man injured in 'shooting'

Armed police sealed off an area close to the Newstead Children's Centre and the Old Barn Community Centre following an alleged shooting.

Officers were called at about 4.30pm on Monday 9 November to Simms Gardens, N2, when residents reported hearing gunshots.

They were unable to find a victim but a member of the public did report seeing a man with a shoulder injury. He was described as black and wearing a dark blue or black puffer jacket and jeans. Police appealed for further information.

One resident, who had arrived home with his one-

year-old son shortly before it happened, told the Ham & High newspaper: "I was cleaning the bathroom when I heard the shootout. At first I thought it was fireworks. I heard one shot first and then two or three quickly afterwards. It was all over in 10 seconds. Before that I'd heard someone screaming."

The Trident and Area Crime Command is investigating and anyone with information is asked to call 101.



Sealed off: Police cordon off Simms Gardens after reports of a shooting. Photo by Kieran Heffernan.

Close to a catastrophe

By Diana Cormack

When black cat Merlin disappeared over the balcony, his owner hoped he would soon return home. However, despite searching the King Street and Red Lion Hill area, it was to be six weeks before they were reunited. Sadly, by then the jet black cat had a damaged jaw which has been wired up by the PDSA. The vet believes that Merlin had been badly beaten or kicked.

The cat's owner Danielle wishes to thank the lady who found Merlin and returned him. This was helped by the fact that he had been microchipped

(though his owner doesn't want herself to be identified more fully). She is delighted to have him back and told *THE ARCHER* how grateful she is to the finder and to neighbours who are bringing in tasty things for Merlin to enjoy while he recovers.



At your service: Annalie works with Michel Roux Jr. Photo courtesy of Channel 4.

Nothing's impossible in the kitchen for Annalie

The pressure of cooking the perfect meal for guests can be tough in the privacy of your own kitchen but it's even more intense when television cameras are following your every move.

Annalie Huberman got a taste for this close-up scrutiny when she starred in Channel 4's recent series *Kitchen Impossible* alongside super chef Michel Roux Jr.

The 23-year-old, who lives in Creighton Avenue, was filmed for eight weeks over the summer as she learned to work in the heat of a professional kitchen, coming to terms with the demands of the hospitality business and then going out for job interviews.

A star with shakshuka

Michel Roux put eight young people with disabilities or different conditions through their paces. Annalie, who has Down's Syndrome, already volunteers as a part-time receptionist at Barnet Mencap and does admin work for the Action 4 Kids charity in Crouch End.

She's a self-confessed diva who would love to become an actress, which could be why she won a place on the programme from more than 500 people who were considered.

When she cooked shakshuka, her speciality Middle

Eastern dish, in front of the cameras she managed to burn it a little because she was using an electric hob rather than the gas she's used to at home but she was still one of the stars of the series.

really improved her housekeeping skills. She's much better at all the chores around the house now."

And the really good news is that as a result of her experience of being in the programme, Annalie has now got her first paid job, working at the Yo Sushi Japanese restaurant in the O2 Centre on Finchley Road.

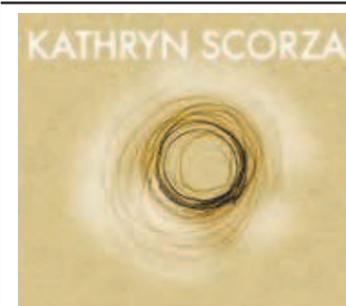


Kitchen star: Annalie Huberman. Photo courtesy of Channel 4

New friends, new job

"I loved it," Annalie told *THE ARCHER*. "The best part was all the new friends I made and getting to do so much cooking."

Her mother Michelle said: "Being on TV didn't faze her. She's always enjoyed going to drama groups. What I noticed was that the whole experience



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Homesick and hot: how I trekked to the Highlands

Matt Lewin, a former Christ's College Finchley pupil who lives in Bedford Road, spent seven weeks in the autumn walking the 1,300km between London and Inverness to raise money for UNICEF and Help for Heroes. Here a footsore Matt, 24, sums up his solo trek.

My charity walk from London to Inverness was definitely the hardest mental and physical challenge I have faced so far in my life, from the heat of the West Country in late September, to the driving wind and rain of the Scottish Highlands in the depths of autumn.

I was very lucky with the weather, only having a handful of wet days, but when you're carrying about 22kg and walking 20-40km a day you can't really call any day easy, even if it is sunny.

I experienced some amazing sights along the way, from wild camping on the banks of Loch Lochy in the Great Glen

to climbing the fells of the Lake District with views as far as the eye can see. It was an incredibly life affirming and exhilarating undertaking but also quite a lonely one at times.

True grit

Whenever the magnitude of the distances I had left to travel or the feeling of homesickness came over me I had to think of why I was putting myself through this and what I wanted to conquer by the end of it, and just keep on walking.

One of my toughest days came in the Lakes when I tried, unsuccessfully, to reach the summit of England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike. Time

and low cloud were against me, which meant a long and slightly difficult alternative descent after a gruelling climb to over 900m.

I don't know if I'd ever do the whole walk again but I'm pretty chuffed that I managed to complete such a major challenge in the time I had planned. I would like to say a huge thank you to friends old and new who I met along the way, and everyone at home for their generosity and support.

You can still boost Matt's fundraising total by going to www.justgiving.com/H4hlondontoinverness or find him on Facebook at London to Inverness on Foot.

Butterflies, spiders and a whole year of the pasture

Long Lane Pasture, the wildlife haven looked after by volunteers, is hunkering down for the winter but still has plenty of stories to tell. Here are some of the highlights from the latest edition of its excellent newsletter, with thanks to editor Donald Lyven.



Butterfly bonanza

Although the summer wasn't a scorcher, it wasn't too bad either; certainly not the washout of previous years. Nineteen butterfly species were again seen, and although no new ones were sighted we haven't lost any.

The orange tip, brimstone, green-veined white, and painted lady were seen and the grassland species skippers, meadow brown, ringlet and gatekeeper were again in profusion during July and August.

Caught in a web

On the pasture we have seen 20 of the 650 species of spiders recorded in the UK. Seen in August was a white crab spider that sits on flowers and physically catches its prey when it comes within range. It had caught a gatekeeper butterfly, and was enjoying its meal of eating an insect that feeds entirely on nectar. Sweet!

Moorhen mystery

Our resident moorhens raised two broods during the year but sadly we believe none actually survived to adulthood. Of course we could be wrong and the one surviving juvenile we saw may have flown the nest. They are secretive birds and at one time we counted five chicks being fed at various hiding spots in the reeds around the edges of the pond.

Many hands

Once again we were delighted to have the services of a team of young people from the National Citizen Service who visited the pasture in October to carry out some essential tasks. Soil was moved about the site in barrows to fill uneven ground and drainage ditches cleared to ease winter flooding. Brambles were removed, cut grass raked away and compost heaps turned over and tidied up. Many hands do make light



work, and it's amazing what can be achieved in a few hours that would normally take weeks to complete.

Here's to 2016!

As usual, the Pasture Trust is producing a wall hanging calendar for 2016 with photographs of wildlife, views and activities on the pasture over the past year. On sale at £5 they will make excellent Christmas presents. Find out more at www.longlanepasture.org.



One of the stunning views Matt encountered on his journey. Inset: Matt Lewin.

Victory Autos pick-me-up

You may have read about the move of local garage Victory Auto Services from Fortis Green to Muswell Hill (*THE ARCHER*, Nov 2015). They are now in Coniston Road, N10, second turning off Alexandra Park Road when coming from the Colney Hatch Lane end.

Although outside East Finchley now, owners Mark and Wayne have said that any East Finchley customers who have a problem in getting to the new premises can phone them and they will arrange to give them a lift or pick up their car from home. The 102 bus is also very convenient and stops near to the garage. Victory Auto Services is on 020 8883 2242.

Snow guaranteed!

Martin School Christmas Fair takes place on Saturday 12 December from noon to 3pm, promising an exciting afternoon of games and activities, delicious home-made cakes, international food, stalls crammed with gifts and prizes, mulled wine and mince pies. And there will be the magic of Santa's Grotto with guaranteed snow. All are welcome.

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Roberto, the new owner of Barracuda. Photo Mike Coles

New Barracuda boss has plenty on his plate

By Cathy Young

“Before I took over, I came to check it out and I was excited by the outdoor space,” says Roberto Pandya, who has taken over as the new owner of the Barracuda café on the corner of Lincoln Road the High Road.

“I spent two weeks just sitting there and I noticed that 99% of the customers were locals; the same people coming here regularly. A lot of people in East Finchley seem to prefer the local, independent rather than the corporate atmosphere of big chains. I am determined to keep everything the same here; same chef, same menus.”

Persuaded by a work col-

league to quit his job as a group operations manager for a large company and to actually do something he loved doing, Roberto sold his own apartment and invested in the Barracuda.

He is keen to support local businesses, saying: “The Barracuda is part of a strong community and I love it. You don’t get that feeling anywhere else.”

He is continuing the Silver Service initiative where anyone over 60 can bring a guest for lunch on Tuesdays and eat for £5 each. He is also hoping to drum up more enthusiasm for his evening dining. “We are open for evening meals from 6pm to 10pm, Monday to Saturday. It’s a bit quiet now but I’m hoping news will spread beyond the regulars we have at the moment.”

Weapons seized in Grange estate raid

By Jan Lovell, East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team

On Friday 30 October your local officers working alongside a POLSA Police dedicated specialist police search team conducted a sweep of the Grange estate grounds looking for weapons and evidence of drug use/dealing. This was in response to concerns from Grange residents over anti-social behaviour on the estate.

Recovered during the search were items from a theft, two Samurai swords and four large kitchen knives. Following this, the local team will be working in partnership with Barnet Homes, using recent changes to legislation to discourage and prevent behaviour that undermines community safety. If you are experiencing issues now or in future please do not hesitate to contact us.

Theft and burglary prevention

One weekend at the start of November a handbag was snatched from the passenger

seat of a vehicle stopped at the traffic lights on the North Circular Road junction with Squires Lane and Strawberry Vale. Do get in the habit of always locking your car doors.

Thefts from vehicles has increased. In many cases the vehicle was undamaged, so possibly vehicles are being left unlocked or a blocker could have been used. To prevent this, make sure you hear/see your car locking system engage before leaving it.

Many of you will have received either an email or a leaflet through the door for our Locks Clocks and Lights

autumn/winter security promotion. I would like to add to the advice given there to always use the mortice lock on your front doors.

There have been a number of burglaries recently through front doors where only the Yale lock is engaged. A burglar can tell if your mortice lock is engaged just by pushing against the door at the bottom, and Yale locks need minimal force to open. For those of you with UPVC doors remember to use a key to lock your door after pushing the handle up for full security.

New library petition

By Daphne Chamberlain

If you disagree with Barnet Council’s plans for our libraries, there is still time to make your voice heard. A new petition is gathering support fast and reaching 7,000 signatures will mean that it must be presented at a Council meeting in January.

The petition protests about the proposed enormous reduction in space, resources and professional staffing; reliance on volunteers; safety risks, and the inevitable exclusion of unaccompanied under-16s during unstaffed opening hours. These proposals were rejected by the public in the recent consultation.

A paper petition will be available to sign at the East Finchley Christmas Festival on Saturday 5 December. You can also access it online at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-to-volunteer-and-unstaffed-libraries-in-barnet>.

Concert to save the library

By Daphne Chamberlain

Supporters of the library service, here is your chance to be a bit creative in your vocal comments. East Finchley Library Users Group is waiting to hear your library-themed versions of some of our best known carols.

Winning version will be sung at a Libraries Christmas concert at East Finchley Methodist Church, starting 7pm on Saturday 12 December, when all are welcome.

Put your own words to these carols: Oh Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, The Holly and the Ivy, Oh Little Town of Bethlehem, Once in Royal David City, I Saw Three Ships, Gabriel’s Message and We Wish You A Merry Christmas

The London Metropolitan Brass Band, who played on

library protest marches, will be there in support. Tickets are £5 in advance or £8 on the door, available from Martin Primary School office on weekdays between 10am and 3pm, or by email from pollynapper@btinternet.com.

Money will go towards a legal campaign to save the library service. Having read all the Council documents, three local lawyers have advised EFLUG that it is worth going ahead with this. For more information, contact Polly at the above address, or join the EFLUG Facebook group.

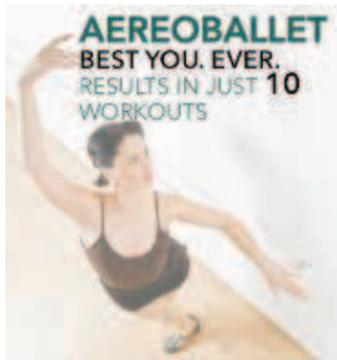
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Things can only get better

Two years ago, East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) was launched with the aim of tackling loneliness and isolation in the community. Since then the organisation has flourished although many of us may not be aware of how much it does.

In EFAB's first full year, up to 2,000 East Finchley residents took part in well over 4,000 hours' worth of projects, equivalent to 589 days of companionship. This was possible thanks to volunteers giving up hours of their time to run projects and local venues donating meeting spaces free of charge.

As EFAB looks ahead to 2016, we asked its co-ordinator Lisa Smith for her highlights from the last year and where she hopes the organisation will go next.

THE ARCHER: What achievements is EFAB proudest of in 2015?

Lisa Smith: It has really been a year of growth for EFAB, with new project groups like Computers and a Cuppa at Homefield Gardens, Cooking Skills sharing, Mindfulness Meditation sessions, Talkie Walkies walking group, and the Personal Shopper service with Advocacy in Barnet all taking off. We are much better known in the community, supporting around 20 activities.

Who runs EFAB and how do you decide what activities to offer?

EFAB is all about partnership working. We support the local community to develop their ideas for the groups and activities they would like, and then help to make them happen.

Ok, so as an example, what would people learn at a Computers and a Cuppa session?

Our Computers and a Cuppa sessions are there to show people that they don't need to be afraid of modern technology and that anyone can get online

and use the internet. Many learners come in not knowing what it's all for. Our community friends help them to set up an email address and show them how to send photos and Skype



The cooks prepare for action. Photo Mike Coles

with family who live away, how to use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, how to shop and bank safely online, or just troubleshoot issues that they may have on their machine. The sessions are really sociable, informal and fun.

What kind of support is EFAB getting from traders and businesses in East Finchley?

Many organisations in East Finchley support us by lending their venue space or by helping us spread the word as 'Street Champions'. We leave our newsletters in many different business premises. The Finchley Youth Theatre and the Phoenix Cinema have helped us by hosting our Pop Up info shops where we can meet new people, and the Phoenix is also working with us on free screenings for older people and those with dementia. We also have the Silver Service £5 meal deal scheme being offered in eight different restaurants and cafes in the area, and would like more to join in and offer the deal to over 60s on a Tuesday.

Many of EFAB's groups

are aimed at wellbeing among older people. Are there activities for younger age groups?

Actually all of EFAB's projects are open to all age groups and we tend to have a good mix

of younger and older adults at most of them, with a teenager recently attending our meditation sessions and people from their 30s through to 80s at our coffee morning on Mondays. We want to help people engage with their community and reduce isolation and loneliness, problems which can be prevalent as people get older but are not limited to this age group.



Tea and computers at Homefield Gardens. Photo Mike Coles

What would you say to someone who may be a bit nervous about coming along and joining in a group?

All of our groups are friendly and welcoming, and the people there will be pleased to meet you! Many people coming along for the first time are slightly nervous about joining in with a new group, and some have shared with us how hard it was for them to take that first step and get in touch. But then they report feeling welcome and pleased they came, and that they now know how much there is going on in East Finchley.

What are the toughest challenges you face in organising groups or activities?

We have a very limited budget, so often rely on the kindness of the community in order to make things happen. Also we obviously need people to give their time to get involved and set up project groups and share their skills. This takes a certain type of person, who is happy to commit their energy to the project and be open to discussion about how it is going.

We have been extremely lucky to have many local people already engaged, and we are always happy to meet more!

What do you hope EFAB will do in 2016?

We hope to continue to grow, so that we really can try to reach those isolated people in the community. New projects that we've been working on include a dance group and a 'Spring in your Step' group where older people walk with children and their parents, maybe as part of a walking bus to school. We're also looking at expanding the successful table tennis group.

How can people get involved?

Everyone is encouraged to get involved by volunteering their time and becoming an EFAB Community Friend, either participating in a group, or helping to lead one. You could be involved in more than one group: learning to cook in our Cooking Skills sessions, then helping others learn IT at Computers and a Cuppa for example. If anyone has an idea for a group or project that is not-for-profit and would benefit the community, we would love to hear from them. Call me on 07909 998453 or email us@

efab.org.uk. You can also check out our new website on www.efab.org.uk

EFAB: what's on and when?

Here's the current list of EFAB community activities in East Finchley; they are open to everyone. Some sessions you can just turn up to, for others you make a booking by calling Lisa Smith on 07909 998453. Volunteer helpers also welcome. Stay up-to-date with the latest information at www.efab.org.uk.

Coffee and Chat: drop in for friendly cuppa and share local info. Mondays 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Clissold Arms, 105 Fortis Green; £1 a head.

Computers and a Cuppa: making computers easy to use. Tuesdays 2pm to 4pm at 4 Homefield Gardens, off East End Road, N2; Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm at Wilmot Close, off Tarling Road, N2; Thursdays 10am to 12pm at Seasons Café, 205 High Road, N2; free.

Cooking Skills: learn to cook healthy recipes on a budget, then share a meal together. Thursday 10 and 17 December from 5pm to 8pm and more dates in January; £5 per session.

Men's Shed: learn and share skills in woodcraft and metalwork. Mondays to Thursdays 10.30am to 3.30pm, Alexandra Rd, N10 2EY; free.

Mindfulness Meditation: relax your body and still your mind. Tuesdays 7.30pm to 9pm at the Archer Academy, Beaumont Close, N2; £4 per session starting 5 January for six week set.

Mums Who Run: get fit with other women at your own pace. Meet Fridays fortnightly at 9.30am in Cherry Tree Wood; free.

Personal Shopper Service: helping those less able to go out. Volunteer to help someone shop or book to get help with your shopping.

Table tennis club: fitness and fun. Tuesdays 2.30pm to 4pm at Shree Aden Depala Community Centre, Church Lane, N2; free.

Talkie Walkies: exercise and socialize with a 45-minute walk and a cuppa afterwards. Meet Mondays 12pm at the Clissold Arms, 105 Fortis Green; free.

Shared Reading Groups: read aloud or just listen in a friendly group. Fridays 10.30am to 12pm at the Old White Lion pub, High Road, N2; free.

Street Champions: deliver the EFAB monthly newsletter and help spread the word. Volunteers welcome.

Young people's centre: a place to relax and socialise, run by young people. Day and venue to be confirmed. Over 18s needed to assist in leading the group. Can you help?

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Who should manage the Old Barn when it is rebuilt?

By Janet Maitland

Do you think the Old Barn should be managed by local people? Local resident Will Hudson, one of the founder members of the Old Barn Action Group, which campaigned for years to bring the centre back into community use, wants to set up a new organisation made up of local people to take on the centre's main lease.

Strong views

There was a passionate debate about how the Old Barn should be run at an open meeting at the Green Man on 27 October. The main issue was the council's plan to lease half of the new building to the Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA), in order to replace the facilities they lost when their centre on Coppetts Road was destroyed in a racist arson attack in 2013.

A resident from Sylvester Road said such segregation was racist and would lead to isolation. Councillor Barry Rawlings said that rebuilding the SBWA centre would be even more isolating, whereas "barriers can be broken down in a shared building".

A resident from the Grange said: "We've got gangsters living here. We need a place where we can all come together." A SBWA representative said all their activities will be "open for everyone, not just for the SBWA". Another resident said public money should not be spent on Islamic studies. Another SBWA representative said their school curriculum included science, maths and language lessons, not just religious instruction.

Taking on the lease

Will Hudson said the new centre couldn't be built without the money allocated by the council after the arson attack and that local people won't lose any space as it will be twice the size of the existing building, adding: "We've got these contentious issues because there's a void where there should be an organisation representing local people."

John Hooton from Barnet Council, who chaired the meeting, said there will be a thorough vetting process to select the organisation to manage the centre because of the significant liabilities involved. He suggested that if a group of local people wanted to take on the lease they should first work alongside the appointed head lessee. Helen Drake from the Big Local said that they'd asked the National Lottery for guidance on the management of community centres which they would give to the council.

"It's clear there are concerns about how the building will work," said Pat Murphy, chair of the Grange Big Local project. "We look forward to helping explore these with everyone involved."

Women's Equality Party launches in Haringey and Barnet

By Deborah Granville

The Women's Equality Party, which was launched earlier this year by the presenter and comedian Sandi Toksvig and the journalist Catherine Meyer, has opened a branch in Haringey and Barnet.

The branch held its inaugural open meeting in mid-September at the Our Lady Of Muswell Tennis Club in Rhodes Avenue, and since then has been active in the community.

Members enjoyed a special screening of the film *Suffragette* at the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley and held a meeting in the newly refurbished Oscar's terrace at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green.

Aims and objectives

The party's objectives are that women should be treated equally in all aspects of life, including work, pay, parenting, education and representation in the media, and it campaigns for an end to violence against women.

It is a non-partisan party, which means it welcomes women and men from all political persuasions who share these objectives, and it aims to deliver them by standing at elections and securing significant votes, showing the established parties that these issues matter.

Led by Finchley resident Sophie Walker, a journalist, runner and autism campaigner, the Women's Equality Party now has 65 branches throughout the UK.

To find out more ...

The Haringey and Barnet branch, chaired by Muswell Hill resident Lucy Baxter of Mandrake Films, was formed in the summer, and is now looking to recruit new members. If you would like to find out more about the party, or to join, email



Shoulder to shoulder: Amanda Shribman, left, with broadcaster and journalist Corinne Sweet before the showing at the Phoenix.

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local branch's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/WEPHaringeyandBarnet.

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What lies beneath

By Ann Bronkhorst

Steady drizzle, a thick layer of leaves underfoot, below that a thin layer of soil and below that, London clay. And to be sure it's London clay you can squeeze, roll or even taste it. The 20 or so people who were learning about the geology of London, and of Coldfall Wood especially, didn't taste the clay but we certainly gained some knowledge.

This geology walk, led by Diana Clements of the Natural History Museum, was a first for the Friends of Coldfall Wood. The weather on 14 November could have been kinder but few were deterred.

Diana provided informative hand-outs and had a seemingly inexhaustible supply of fossils and stones to pass round. She found flints in the stream bed, washed northwards millennia ago, and showed us how the massive root balls of fallen trees can reveal the geological past.

We grappled with some awe-inspiring facts and figures,

such as the 40 million year hiatus between certain layers and deposits. Around 450,000 years ago the site of Coldfall Wood was at the southern edge of a vast glacier, the Anglian ice sheet. The Thames has followed at least two different routes before finding its present course.

Most of us had little specialised knowledge of geology but Diana was able to stretch our imaginations to glimpse the big picture while revealing the small clues to the past all around us, in soil, pebbles, watercourses and trees: a fascinating experience.



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YOUNG ARCHER



Big and bigger draw

Big Draw Week was certainly a big event at the Archer Academy as the school invited professional artists and designers from organisations such as Microsoft, the Saatchi Gallery and the Design Museum to come and take over their art and design & technology lessons.

Students took part in workshops on logo design, Manga, perspex portraits, design thinking and product disassembly, as well as creating a 5m long abstract painting installation and using a 3D printer to design and print their own architectural model town. The event was supported by local car hire and courier company GLH.

Call for community reporters

A community reporters scheme run by a Barnet-based charity gives young people aged 16-25 the opportunity to train and report on stories that are important to them and their peers.

Nutmeg offers training that is accredited by the National Institute of Community Reporters. It has just received £6,300 from Barnet Council and additional funding from the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation.

Youngsters are encouraged to distribute their stories on blogs, social media and other digital outlets. Nutmeg says it promotes self-reliance in the young people, and builds cohesive and prosperous com-

munities. Find out more at www.nutmegcommunity.org.

Phoebe McHale, Youth Participation Officer at Nutmeg Community, said: "We're really looking forward to seeing an increased youth voice as a result of this project, which will not only benefit the young participants, but the community as a whole. We're also excited to see the inspiring stories that the participants come up with."

Songs for the refugees

When Year 6 pupil Maya Wiseman decided she wanted to do something to help Syrian refugees, the whole of Martin Primary School got behind her.

The first step was Maya and her friends in the singing club choosing a song called 'I'll Be Your Refuge', which they practised hard.

Then all children across the school got involved by paying at least £1 to sing other tracks called 'Waving to our Friends', 'Hello Everyone' and 'I'm Gonna Be Your Friend' in special assemblies. The total raised was close to £500.

Music teacher Natalie Grant brought in a recording company

(www.myschooled.co.uk) and now the children's voices can be heard on a CD which was going on sale at the East Finchley Christmas Festival as we went to press and will also be available through the school office.

Ethnic minority achievement teacher Julie Taylor said: "It's been a fantastic project and we've had lots of support from parents. The children have loved being a part of something that will bring a little help to refugee families."



Sing-along: The Martin Primary pupils and teachers who started the singing project.

Autumn

Thank you to Lila D, aged nine, for sending us this poem.

I condense the days.
I take the varnish off the bottle green leaves,
So that creatures and children can jump for joy.
I pluck the fiery autumn leaves off trees
Until the fir tree stands tall and proud,
Majestically holding on to his evergreen spikes.
I reverse the clock's flimsy hand
And unwrap summer's scarf of warmth.
Spring's leaping baby deer
Turn in to adults galloping away in fear.
But winter's blanket is yet to come,
So for now, my vibrant rainbow of leaves
Whirl to the ground in all their glory.
I am Autumn.

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Viola Slodzinska (right) in her kitchen with a friend.
Photo Mike Coles

International flavour in a Polish deli

By Nick Young

Polish food is becoming more popular in Britain, and East Finchley's very own Polish delicatessen Bulka z Maslem has been doing its best to showcase food from that country.

The revamped store at 36 High Road, which came under new management in July, continues to sell Polish cuisine that is home-cooked by Viola Slodzinska.

Viola, of Durham Road, moved to London from New York three years ago and has been cooking food on a daily basis for Bulka z Maslem ever since.

A widening customer base

When she started, most of the clientele was Polish but this has gradually changed. "As well as Polish customers we have Hungarians, Slovaks and more and more British clients," Viola told THE ARCHER.

Her pierogi (traditional Polish dumplings) have even been recommended by Barbara Gallani, the director of Food Safety and Science at the UK Food and

Drink Federation and the author of *Dumplings: A World History*.

"I only found out when I took some food to the shop and an English lady told me where she had heard of them," Viola said.

As her client base has increased, Viola has found her dishes taking on a more international flavour. "Some British customers prefer my pierogi with grilled chicken, prosciutto and Parmesan cheese. But Polish people... they're more into the traditional ones." The most traditional are called ruske, "but they have nothing to do with Russian pierogi," she added.

Special event

Viola will be hosting an all-day event at Bulka z Maslem from 8 am to 7 pm on Friday 11 December, when her food – pancakes, soups and dips as well as pierogi – will be available for breakfast, lunch and dinner. "Come and taste," said Viola. "You'll find that Polish dishes prepared according to traditional recipes don't need to be heavy or greasy."

Esso filling station is flattened

This was the scene in mid-November as a demolition team ripped apart the former Esso garage on the corner of Church Lane and the High Road. Huge shards of twisted metal were brought down by the digger's arm as the forecourt and shop were cleared over the course of a few days.

Filling in the giant fuel tanks that lie below the forecourt is likely to be a longer job. The demolition and clean-up are preparing the site for its next incarnation. New flats would seem to be the most likely future use but no planning application has yet been submitted so all options are still open.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

All praise to St Delia

It's that time of year again, the turkey's voted and the new X Factor winner is trussed up and ready for the oven. Twitter is trending with the news that the first Nigella of the season has been spotted and drunken selfies have started including tinsel. Yes, folks, in these weird times some things never change and the Feast of St. Delia is one of them.

As all traditionalists know, the Feast of St Delia starts on the third of November and ends on 26 January in recognition of the original and iconic BBC TV series in 1978. However in this age of austerity the season has been shortened. Now it runs from the switching on of Regent Street lights in mid-November to the start of the Harrods sale on Boxing Day. Still, six weeks of conspicuous over-cooking is enough to set anyone up for the next great bake off.

But this not just the season to worship at the shrine of St Delia of Norwich; those people who believe in lesser saints can still celebrate in their own unique way. Followers of the Jedi religion are already recharging their light sabres as they prepare for the cinematic seventh coming of the force in the knowledge that in a galaxy far, far away someone is trying to stuff an oversized turkey in an undersized oven without making the jump into hyperspace.

Of course there are other seasonal traditions that true believers embrace at the end of the year and none is as imprinted in our DNA as sun worship, something normally done on a beach in Florida. But for the true believer there is nothing like standing naked waiting for the sun to rise at the solstice. This is not recommended at Stonehenge on 21 December, but it is a tradition on the other side of the world. Down in the land of the waltzing wallaby they call it the Christmas Beach Barbie, which probably says something more profound about Australia than anything else.



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10 pm 'Midnight' Mass

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

10 am Family Mass

12 noon Mass partly in Latin

Saturday 26th December

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6.30 pm Vigil Mass

Sunday 27th December

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- **Ladies Keep Fit Class** for over 50s. Tues 10.30-11.30am at Tetherdown Hall. Sheila 8444 0084.
- **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 Classes** Tue 9.30, Fri 9.15 & Sun 11am. www.pilatesineastfinchley.co.uk. Michelle 07767 804 564
- **Tai Chi & Qigong** in N2, Weds 1pm. James 8883 3308/07836 710281 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 www.stretchingpeople.co.uk.
- **Women's kick boxing**, Thursdays 9.30am, East Finchley Combat Academy, Church Lane, N2. Contact 07956 340540.

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- **East Finchley Writers Group**, Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Ralph 8444 5903.
- **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.
- **Muswell Hill after school ukulele club**, Wednesdays 4.15-5.15pm, ages 6-10. Contact Margie 07909 439513.
- **Traditional tunes @ TOC Highgate Hill**, join in playing by ear - 1st & 3rd Tues monthly from 8.30pm. Free. 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
- **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.
- **Muslim Ladies Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds, Ann Owen Ctr., Oak La. Call 8432 1415 to book.
- **Bridge Club**, every Saturday 1.30-4pm, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. Contact Ray Tiano 07944 562180.
- **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tues 1-3 pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Anita 8886 6140.

New front man for Phoenix

The Phoenix Cinema Trust has announced the appointment of James Kessler QC, barrister, as its new chairman. He has been a trustee of the cinema for six years and takes over from Stephen Barr, who has held the post since 2008.

After saving the cinema from the threat of demolition in 1985 the Phoenix Cinema Trust has run it as a charitable organization: a "cinema for the community" in East Finchley and across north London. The cinema has several noteworthy patrons including Benedict Cumberbatch, Mark Kermode and Maureen Lipman.

James Kessler comments: "The cinema plays an important role in the North London community, offering education and entertainment to individuals, schools and other organizations and this is something that will be an even greater focus during my tenure."

"For over a century, film

lovers have been able to visit the cinema and thanks to the work of the Trust it's still as vibrant now as it was then. The cinema provides a connection to our shared past as well as an opportunity to promote the arts within the community today. I've long felt it to be the jewel of East Finchley."

Dating back to 1910, the Phoenix Cinema is one of the last remaining purpose-built cinemas of its era. Known for its 1910 original barrel ceiling and 1938 art deco panelling, in 2000 the cinema was listed by English Heritage in recognition of its historic and architectural significance.



Story time: Louise Bland at a summer festival.

Storytelling tradition alive and well

Black Gull Bookshop is branching out into storytelling for youngsters. Actress, singer and storyteller Louise Bland will be telling two or three tales on Sunday afternoons at the High Road shop.

Using old folk tales, she weaves dramatised action and characters with song and poetry to create a modern twist to old favourites. She likes stories that tell us about our own humanity but also tales that have great characters and are ultimately fun.

Louise said: "The power good storytelling has for people to learn and develop in a positive way is never ending. Children naturally understand what a

story is about and I love that they respond so easily to the form, something we adults could do with re-learning."

The Black Gull sessions are on Sunday 6 and 13 December, both at 2pm for about 45 minutes. Spaces are limited so book your place in advance at black.gull.finchley@gmail.com. Children must be accompanied. Tickets are £3.50 per child.

Charity raises the bar

In September, Advocacy in Barnet became the only Barnet Charity ever to be honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Lizzie Sturm, Advocacy's Chief Executive, said that receiving this fantastic accolade in their 18th year was especially fitting.

Despite being entirely reliant on independent funding, Advocacy in Barnet has become a strong organisation with a diverse and dedicated team of over 60 volunteers and staff delivering a range of projects for their 50 Plus Matters work, which includes services to the most isolated and vulnerable older Barnet residents.

Guests attended the presentation by Mr Martin Russell the Queen's Representative, at Avenue House, Stephens House and Grounds. Anyone who thinks they could benefit from advocacy support, or who would like to train as a volunteer advocate, can contact Advocacy in Barnet on 020 8201 3415. Donations are also very welcome.

Arrr, Jim Lad!

This year the pantomime being staged by The Guild Players will whisk you off to Treasure Island. Written by Mike Sparks, it will be a treat for the whole family.

Performances take place at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, N3, from Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12 December, including a Saturday matinee. Book tickets by phoning 020 8346 6337 or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/theguildplayers.

What's On...

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

Saturday 5 December

• **East Finchley Christmas Festival**, along the High Road from 10am; live entertainment, carols, Father Christmas and live reindeer, mince pie baking competition, stalls and more.

Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12 December

• The Guild Players present their pantomime version of Treasure Island at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, Finchley, N3 1NB; 7.30pm daily, plus Saturday matinee 3pm. Foyer opens 7pm (2.30pm for matinee). May not be suitable for children under five. Book online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/theguildplayers, or on 020 8346 6337.

Until Saturday 12 December

• Exhibition of paintings by Parisian artist

Sassou Pourroy at The Aylmer, Aylmer Parade, N2. Joyful, atmospheric paintings inspired by natural scenes on the continent and in Ireland.

Saturday 12 December

• Martin School Christmas Fair, Plane Tree Walk, 12noon-3.0pm: an exciting afternoon of games and activities plus the magic of Santa's Grotto. All are welcome.

Sunday 13 December

• Open Sunday at Stephens House and Gardens, 17 East End Road, N3 3QE. House open 12 noon to 5pm. Lunch in house, 12 noon to 3pm. Stephens Collection, museum of the famous ink company, open 1pm to 5pm. General gardens open as usual, but Bothy Gardens closed. Tel. 020 8346 7812 or www.stephenshouseandgardens.com

for more information.

Monday 14 to Monday 21 December

• Alexandra Palace Amateur Productions presents Cinderella on Ice, a magical recreation of the classic fairy tale. School shows 14-16 December, public shows 18-21 December. Tickets on sale at www.alexandrapalace.com

Wednesday 16 December to Sunday 31 January

• Upstairs at the Gatehouse Theatre, Highgate, presents Legally Blonde, The Musical, based on the novel by Amanda Brown and the MGM movie. Winner of three Olivier Awards, this is an all-singing, all-dancing romantic comedy. Box office: 020 8340 3488 and www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com



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Meeting of minds for small businesses

A new event has been set up to help leaders of small businesses in north London make contacts and develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Bright Sparks is run by the Small Business Network, which has been established in the area for eight years. Going further than a typical business networking event, the Muswell Hill workshop encourages participants to share their business challenges in small groups, allowing the exchange of advice and knowledge.

Business coach Rebecca Fishman says: "Small businesses have all the challenges of big businesses, but they don't have the same resources and support. At Bright Sparks we use an approach called

Masterminding, whereby business people can get a close understanding of each other's issues and pass on their recommendations and learning."

Bright Sparks is hosted at Zebra Café, in Alexandra Park Road, N10. The event costs £10 for non-members and £7.50 for members of the Small Business Network. For more information, visit bit.ly/bright-sparks-event.

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Letters to the editor

Parking problems ahead

Dear Editor,

A developer, Safeland PLC, has applied for planning permission to build 24 apartments on the site currently occupied by GLH Cars, opposite East Finchley station.

The proposed building looks very unattractive and out of keeping with the area but the main problem is the impact on parking and traffic in local streets.

Barnet Council would normally require up to 32 additional parking places to be included in a development of this size, yet the developer has proposed only two spaces. There could be an additional 32 cars seeking parking in the streets around the station.

No space is provided on the development for turning circles for the two car spaces that are included. Likewise, no space for delivery lorries to park. This raises the prospect of cars reversing onto the High Road and lorries parked on the pedestrian crossing next to the development.

The developer will not be offering any parking for the large number of contractors who will be working onsite during construction.

Even if the future residents of this development are prevented from using the Controlled Parking Zone there will still be a significant impact in the evenings and on Sundays and in those streets that have only a 2-3pm restriction.

Yours faithfully,
Michael McGrath
Ingram Road, N2.

Oppose the library cuts

Dear Editor,

So Barnet Council wish to reduce the number of staffed hours at our local library to just 16 hours a week with, as you report, "staff replaced by CCTV cameras". They also want to halve the size of the library.

If these proposals go through how many people would be happy at entering an unstaffed library? What would be the point if there were no librarians available to answer queries, and do we want to see them lose their jobs?

If this is allowed to happen I suppose that in a year or so's time the council will say that because of the reduced numbers of people using the library, it will be shut completely.

The protests about these cutback plans have obviously been successful or the council would not be forced

into carrying out yet another consultation. I urge everyone who cares about the future of our library to read the proposals which are online at www.barnet.gov.uk or pick up a copy of the document at the library and then object to them most forcefully.

Yours faithfully,
Stephen Barry
Great North Road, N2.

After Paris

Dear Editor

We, the Communities Together Network (CTN) and Barnet Resilience Forum, a group of multi-agency partners representing Barnet's statutory, community and faith organisations, share the international condemnation for the acts of atrocity committed in Paris on Friday 13 November.

We are determined that Barnet will remain a special place where residents get on well together. We are justly proud of our diversity and community cohesion and we are determined that Barnet's diverse cultural communities will continue to live and work peacefully alongside one another. We will stand united in keeping Barnet as a great place to live. We will challenge all forms of religious and racial hatred and intolerant language or behaviour.

We will continue to work closely together to encourage and maintain the excellent work to promote and maintain our community cohesion in the Borough and promote the peaceful co-existence of the borough's community and faith groups.

Yours faithfully,
The Communities Together Network
Barnet Resilience Forum

Welcome back, Sainsbury's

Dear Editor,

Plus ça change. Those of a certain age with long memories will recall that there was, many years ago, a Sainsbury's shop in East Finchley. It was located at the junction of Fortis Green and the High Road. I've tried to locate an old image but without success so far.

Welcome back, I say. We then won't have to go on tolerating the limited choice of the dreadful Budgens with its dreadful check-out. A new Sainsbury's is likely to increase the footfall of shoppers in East Finchley, its cafes and restaurants and indeed the better local independent food outlets.

The only observation I'd make is about the new store's location. A better position would be the site now vacated by Amy's Hardware and the next door betting shop. Now, betting shops... they are the real blight of the local scene!

Yours faithfully,
Robin Dunn,
Springcroft Avenue, N2.

Sainsbury's is out to win

Dear Editor,

With regards to the application by Sainsbury's to open on the High Road it might be worth noting that when they recently opened in Archway the local long-trading Budgens closed to be replaced by a Tesco, so those seeking competition might well end up with it in a depressing form.

One certainty is that all of the big chain convenience outlets carry a very limited product range and higher prices. Budgens can be pricey but it costs more to carry range - hence why most big chains work to drive it out. The new ownership of the Budgens brand by Booker may bring down prices. Time will tell.

It's hard to understand how Sainsbury's feel their presence will positively increase trade in the area but, that said, existing outlets could do more to sell themselves better.

Budgens may well carry a vast range for its size but it duplicates endlessly and in a highly random fashion around the store. It may have had a revamp a few years back but the dreary frontage and poor attention to keeping the exterior and cluttered interior up to scratch really fail the store.

Most bewildering has been watching all the light tubes in the exterior sign die off in the past year only to finally be replaced, now showing quite clearly that the sign needs a thorough clean.

So if Sainsbury's does land in East Finchley then the only way for local businesses to fight back is to smarten up their act. Finchley Wines, which will be opposite, carries at times the best range of beers for miles but you'd not know it from the exterior appearance.

The new shop sign at Tony's Continental is a good move. They've got the right idea and other shops should take note. Sainsbury's will be out to win on every level.

Yours faithfully,
Almar Hafliadason
Lankaster Gardens, N2.

Yoga for mums-to-be

Here's one of Sunnah Rose's exercises for pregnant women, a seated spinal twist that eases back pain and sciatica as well as massaging the central nervous system and improving digestion.

1. Start either by sitting cross legged on a cushion or by sitting on a chair, feet planted on the ground with your back a little bit away from the upright part of the seat.
2. Place hands on knees and take a few breaths through the nose. As you breathe out imagine that your spine is growing in both directions. Feel your sitting bones spread out and the crown of your head draw up towards the sky.
3. Once your spine has lengthened you can slowly turn to the right. Reach your left hand over to your right thigh and your right hand to the floor or back of the chair behind you. Let your head gently turn keeping your chin in line with your heart.
4. You only need to turn a little to feel the lovely twisting effects in your body. Try to keep releasing tension in your body including shoulders, jaw, brow, and knees and hips.
5. To go further press down through sit bones and lift through head and turn a little deeper.
6. Come back to the centre and connect back to your breath.
7. Repeat in the opposite direction.



Perfect poise: An exercise for expectant mums

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Dance hall days

Bang in the middle of the current series of *Strictly Come Dancing*, *EastEnders* star Kellie Bright and her dance partner Kevin Clifton dropped in to the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, to practise their latest routine in front of day visitors.

Everyone at the Centre enjoyed the visit but it ended up being a tough week for the pair, who on the following Sunday found themselves in the competition's dance-off. Luckily, the judges backed them and they survived to dance on. Thanks to Age UK Barnet for the photo.



Kellie Bright and Kevin Clifton show off their moves at the Ann Owens Centre.



Movie magic: Youngsters get creative ahead of a showing of 'Minions' at the Kids' Club. Photo by Mike Coles

Front row fun at the Phoenix

By Sheila Armstrong

The Phoenix Cinema is keen to encourage young children to enjoy film from an early age at its Kids' Club on Saturday mornings, introducing them to film and cinema-going in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

Starting with an activity session led by experienced facilitators, the Club can accommodate up to 20 children aged five to 10. Please book in advance at the box office 020 8444 6789 or in person.

Activities are craft based and related to the week's film. Children up to 12 can see the film immediately afterwards. Check out more details on the website www.phoenixcinema.co.uk.

And don't forget Toddler Time for ages two to four on Tuesdays with an activity starting at 10.30am followed by a 30-minute film at 11am.

Football between the trenches

By Daphne Chamberlain

So did they or didn't they play football between the trenches on Christmas Day, 1914? Some did, but a soldier from Bowes Park described what happened with his regiment.

In a letter to his parents, Rifleman W. Ridden wrote, "I shall remember this Christmas Day as long as I am spared to live, as the most extraordinary one possible....Stand to arms at 6.30am, when we sang *God Save the King* and *Deutschland uber Alles* in compliment to our enemies. They replied with cheers, etc....We lit nightlights and candles along the top of the trenches, and sang carols.

"The Germans and ourselves then did as we liked, walked about on the top, exchanged cigarettes and grub, shook hands, and some exchanged addresses to

write to each other after the war. They sang German carols, one of which I had heard just 12 months before, played by a German band at Crouch End.

"We helped bury each other's dead in the afternoon, six men and one officer of each side going out to do it....

"I had heaps more grub to eat than it was possible to manage.... Breakfast: cold ham and tongue, bread, jam, hot cafe au lait. Dinner: meat, potatoes, haricots, carrots and onions all together in a tin, with the natural juice (fat and jelly). I soon heated it up and made a good stew. More tongue,

Christmas pudding, dates, figs, muscatels, almonds, chocolates, and many other sweets. To finish up, I had a piece of the wounded cake (a gift from home which had received a bullet when it had been left on the top of the trench).

"By the way, the Germans challenged us to a game of football, which our officers, however, did not see fit to allow. They came from a town which I know is keen on footer."

The whole of this letter is included in *All Over by Christmas* by local author David Berger, published by Chaville Press, ISBN 978-0-956-93449-9.

Boxing scam

A reader has warned us of a scam where teenage boys ring the doorbell and ask for a donation towards equipment for their boxing club.

One boy claimed to represent the Cheshunt ABC Boxing Club, however, the club's manager, Mark Bliss, has stated: "We would never encourage our youngsters to raise funds door to door as this is highly inappropriate."



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