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THE ARCHER



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CARS & COURIERS

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Library lovers flood the library for a read-in. Photo Mike Coles

Surgery photo

All patients who use the soon-to-close GP surgery on the High Road are invited to take part in a group photo at the practice on Friday 27 March at 1pm. The photo will mark the passing of the surgery and its role as a social hub.

Meditation

The EFAB Meditation group meets on Monday mornings from 9.30am to 10.30am to meditate together and share experiences.

They have now moved the sessions to the upstairs hall at East Finchley Library. Contact laura@createyouridealfuture.com or call 07976 511506 if you want to go along.

Mass read-in shows how much library is loved

By Daphne Chamberlain

Our threatened library was packed with supporters last month for a Saturday afternoon read-in, organised by the East Finchley Library Users Group (EFLUG). "What a fantastic turn-out!" said the group's Polly Napper.

Library manager Sim Branaghan was also really impressed, but had a clear message for us all. "If you care about your library, turn up and use it. The only people who can save the libraries are you. Use

it or lose it."

Polly followed this up later by urging us all to rediscover borrowing. You may love your library, and use it for reference or other facilities, but if you haven't used your card for

three years your membership will lapse, and you will not be included in Barnet's count of branch members. She said, "If, like me, your home is overflowing with books you've read but have no space to store, think before buying that book online. Why not borrow it instead, and thus support and even contribute to a resource available to the whole community."

On Tuesday 3 March, Barnet was due to hold its crucially important budget meeting for the coming financial year. Because of the wonderful response to the 38 Degrees petition to save our libraries (over 8,000 signatures at the time of writing, in mid-February,) lead petitioner Alasdair Hill will have five minutes to ask the Council to reconsider its plans.

The public consultation into the council's library plans closed on 22 February and the latest news we have is that Barnet's final proposals will not be announced before June.

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

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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EF Advice Service 020 8444 6265
Gingerbread 020 8445 4227
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Help the Aged 0808 800 6565

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

Cavendish House Dental Surgery, East End Road, N2
Rendering of front elevation.
6 Durham Road, N2

Continued use as two self-contained flats at first and second-floor levels.

121 East End Road, N2
Alterations to shop front to facilitate new access entrance to flat above.

234 East End Road, N2
Roof extension, involving side/rear wraparound dormer and three roof lights to front, to facilitate loft conversion.

54 Hamilton Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

104 B Hertford Road, N2
First floor rear extension. Roof extension involving hip and gable, new dormer and two front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion.

111 High Road, N2
Alterations to rear extractor fan and flue.

125 High Road, N2
Change of use from Class A (retail) to Class A3 (restaurant/cafe).

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

Amendments to planning permission of June 2014, stipulating written prior approval to any excavation or construction.

28 Manor Park Road, N2
Rear dormer and two front roof lights, to facilitate hip to gable loft conversion.

Flat 11, Netherwood, High Road, N2

Single-storey rear outbuilding.
Oak Lodge School, Heath View, N2

Demolition of caretaker's bungalow. New part-single / part-two storey stand-alone teaching block to accommodate 35 additional students. Re-configuration of school to improve facilities, increase car-parking, and add associated landscaping.

47 Summerlee Avenue, N2
Roof extension, including one rear dormer and three front

roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion. Single-storey rear extension. Front porch.

59 Summerlee Avenue, N2
Single-storey outbuilding.

Haringey Council

122 Creighton Avenue, N2
Basement extension. Ground-floor patio extension. New lower ground floor patio. New external stairs.

81 Fordington Road N6
Loft conversion.

40 Fortis Green, N2
Glazed rear extension.

9 Fortis Green Avenue, N2
Extension and alteration of basement.

34 Twyford Avenue, N2
Single-storey extension, reaching 4.5 m beyond rear wall. Maximum height and maximum eaves height 3m.

40 Twyford Avenue, N2
Loft conversion, with rear dormer. Single-storey rear extension. Two-storey side extension.

11 Southern Road, N2
Small balcony terrace to side/rear first floor, enlarging existing opening for access. 1.8 m high permanent screen at flank.

Rise in keyless car theft

By Janet Maitland

Police are advising you to "protect your vehicle like you would your own home" following an 8% rise in car theft in London over the last year. The increase is thought to be down to thieves using more sophisticated methods to steal keyless or remotely controlled vehicles.

There were 6,000 keyless car thefts across London last year, making up 26% of all vehicle theft. In Barnet, 261 cars were stolen this way.

Sabotaging the signal

Keyless vehicle theft can involve simply towing the vehicle away or thieves can smash the driver's side window to break in and then hot-wire the car.

But many thieves now use a device which blocks the radio signals when the car owner uses their electronic key to lock their car. This means the driver has not in fact locked the doors. Once inside, thieves plug a device into the on-board diagnostic port (OBD) which allows them to download the vehicle's electronic information onto a blank key. Because the

key is compatible with the car, they can just drive away. The whole process takes just a few seconds.

Police advice

Police advise you to park your vehicle in a well-lit area, a garage, a staffed car park or an area covered by CCTV. You should also use a steering wheel or gear stick lock. In addition, you should consider getting an OBD lock professionally fitted and buying a tracking device to increase the chances of your vehicle being traced if it is stolen. For further advice go to www.met.police.uk/keylessvehicletheft

Silver service

Community group EFAB's Silver Service will see cafés and restaurants offering £5 set meal deals to customers over 60 years of age, accompanied by a guest or carer, on Tuesday lunchtimes.

The idea is to help older people who might like to eat out more and socialise, and to encourage business on what is traditionally one of the quietest days for restaurants. Restaurants already confirmed to take part include Barracuda, Big Chef, Costi's, New Local Café and Seasons, and EFAB are encouraging more to get involved.

To take part, diners simply need to turn up on a Tuesday at the times advertised by each restaurant in their windows.

If you run a restaurant or café in East Finchley and would like to take part in this scheme (for free), call Lisa on 07909 998453 or email us@efab.org.uk

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Worries over school expansion

By Nick Young

Barnet Council has approved plans to expand Oak Lodge School, off East End Road, despite opposition from local residents.

Located on Hampstead Heights, Oak Lodge is a special needs school maintained by the London Borough of Barnet that currently has 165 students aged 11-19 with a range of learning difficulties.

As previously reported in *THE ARCHER*, the plans for its expansion include a new block and are intended to provide for an additional 35 places.

Objections to plans

Opposition has come from residents of Hampstead Heights, Heath View and Maya Road, whose views are represented by the Heath Heights Action Group (HHAG). Members of HHAG have been keen to stress that they are very supportive of Oak Lodge School and the work it does, but they have concerns over the expansion plans in their current form.

They expect a heavy impact on local residents' amenity levels and increase traffic, as the only way to access the school is via Hampstead Heights, which affects people living on all three streets mentioned above. They also claim the expansion will affect the character of the surrounding area, its trees and biodiversity.

Speaking at the Council's

Planning Committee meeting on 28 January, HHAG representatives Alan Judes and Mary Hogben, and East Finchley's Councillor Arjun Mittra, outlined the impact that the plans would have. "The school and the community," said Mr Judes, "deserve better plans".

Despite residents' objections, the plans were approved by the Committee, with seven votes in favour, two against and two abstentions.

Commenting on Twitter, Councillor Mittra observed that the residents' group had "secured some important conditions along the way".

When *THE ARCHER* asked Oak Lodge for a comment the school said, given the sensitivity of the building project, it would defer any response until it was certain it was going ahead.

Charity Zumba
A Zumba afternoon is taking place at St Mary's RC Church at 279 High Road, N2, on Saturday 14 March from 3-5pm to support refugees in Syria and Northern Iraq.

Give yourself and your family a good workout. The cost is £5. Under 5s go free.



Screen star: Charlie Lyne is interviewed by Lily Scott. Photo by Maurita Van Droogenbroeck

Teen movie talk

***Beyond Clueless* is billed as the ultimate movie about teen movies. Its 23-year-old director Charlie Lyne was at the Phoenix Cinema recently for a screening and a Q&A session.**

The north Londoner's film combines clips from 200 movies, celebrating coming-of-

age classics of all types, with a narration by Fairuza Balk, herself the star of 1990s teen film *The Craft*.

For the Q&A, he was interviewed by Lily Scott, who is part of a teenage screening

group at the Phoenix. Lily said: "I would like to study film at university, so it was amazing to talk first-hand to someone so young about his film-making. Charlie's film is such a hypnotic and captivating piece."

Call back?

Think twice

By Janet Maitland

If you get a missed call from a number you don't recognise, think twice before calling back. Ofcom is warning consumers about a mobile phone scam that tricks victims into thinking they've received a legitimate missed call and ending up being charged up to £1.50 a minute.

The numbers used start with 070 or 076, selected because they look like ordinary mobile phone numbers but cost considerably more to call. When you ring the number back, the call is immediately dropped or an engaged tone is played. Either way, you are charged.

Some callers have also heard a recorded voice suggesting a bad line, encouraging the caller to ring back and be charged a second time.

If you get a missed call number beginning with 070 or 076, make a note of it and call the premium rate regulator Phonepay Plus on 0800 500 212 to report it.

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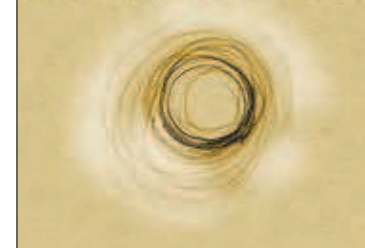


Police attend the accident on East End Road.

Car overturns after hitting lamppost

A car overturned after crashing into a lamppost on East End Road, near the junction with Abbots Gardens, at about 11.40pm on 16 February. The driver, a man in his 30s, was taken by ambulance to Barnet Hospital with leg pain. His injuries are not thought to be life threatening.

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Cash machine thieves target disabled driver

By Janet Maitland

A local resident had £800 stolen from her bank account on 3 February while shopping in Muswell Hill. The victim had parked her car, displaying her disabled sticker, on the Broadway. When she returned at about 10.30am, a man told her he'd seen a traffic warden photographing her car and that she'd have to get a special ticket to avoid being fined.

"He told me it was a new thing," said the victim. He told her to go to the HSBC bank to get a ticket from the ATM. Another man standing by the machine asked her if she was after a disabled ticket and told her to put her card in. She did this, shielding her PIN, but nothing happened. He told her to try again, which she did with the same result.

"Then I pressed cancel, but it wouldn't," said the victim, who immediately went inside the bank to tell them what had happened. When they opened the machine, her card wasn't there. By the time the victim reached her own bank, the NatWest, a few yards away, the thieves had stolen £500 and then another £300.

The first man is described

as about 5ft 8ins, in his 20s, with cropped hair, wearing a grey track suit and with a cockney accent. The other man wore a white track suit and was about 6ft tall with a swarthy complexion and an eastern European accent.

How the scam works

Card trapping works by a device that fits into the card slot of an ATM to retain the card. Pinhole cameras can also be installed to record PIN numbers. As soon as the victim has left the machine, the thieves retrieve the card and use it as quickly as possible.

If your card is not returned from an ATM, police advise you not to leave the machine but to ring your bank to report what has happened.



Tomasz Szakola in Hospitality House's state-of-the-art kitchen. Photo by Neil McNaughton

Scope for jobs and apprenticeships

By Neil McNaughton

The forthcoming doubling in size of Brent Cross shopping centre promises many new opportunities for apprenticeships and employment in Barnet.

Hospitality House in the High Road, N2, has teamed up with shopping centre bosses and Barnet Council to provide the funding and facilities to create bridges for young people into employment and apprenticeships in the retailing industry.

A *Let's Talk Shop* scheme aims to provide well-trained staff and bring employers and potential employees together. Companies such as Fenwicks, John Lewis, Prêt à Manger, EAT and Premier Inn are partners in the scheme.

Year 12 and 13 local pupils may also attend at Hospitality House for Btec courses in retailing and related skills. So far, such schemes have an employment take-up of 80%.

On Monday 9 March, there is an Apprenticeship Hub Day at Hospitality House, next to the tube station, organised by Ken Williams (letstalkshop@hospitalityhouse.co.uk, 020

3074 1200) which is free and open to all local school pupils, students and adults.

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Ethel Mattison, 103

By Daphne Chamberlain

Meet another remarkable lady in our gallery of local centenarians. *THE ARCHER* team are beginning to think that East Finchley should be advertised as the fount of eternal youth!

Ethel Mattison, who lives in Huntingdon Road, was 103 in January. The oldest member of the Labour Party, she was invited to a Women's Dinner in October. Although unable to go, she wrote a message which brought a personal reply from Ed Miliband.

Always involved in the Co-operative Movement and the Women's Movement, she also joined the Townswomen's Guild at the age of 16. This was in Walthamstow, where her mother was also an active member.

Ethel moved to East Finchley in the bitterly cold winter of 1962. She had previously lived in Hampstead, where she worked as a nurse in a clinic.



A youthful looking Ethel Mattison - aged 103. Photo Mike Coles

Appropriately for someone with her interests, former Labour leader Michael Foot lived just across the road, and she often saw him setting out for his walks across the Heath.

Ethel's great loves have always been reading and walking, though unfortunately both are not so easy for her now. She still retains an active interest in life and developments in East

Finchley, though.

Her son lives in Fortis Green and her daughter near Rye, and she has six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

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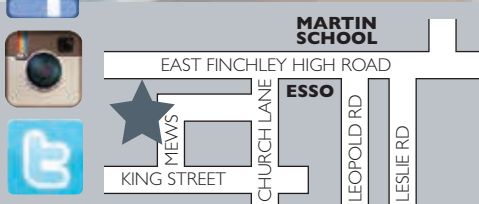


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Old Barn: what about young people?

Maureen Clemetson is worried about the lack of outdoor facilities for children and young people in the council's plans for the Old Barn. Maureen ran the Monday Youth Club at the community centre before it was taken over by a group of 'trustees' in 2010. Here she expresses her concerns:

The focal point of the Old Barn should be children and young people. The piece of land earmarked for the Bravanese building should be turned into a supervised football pitch with high fencing, gated, with a padlock. The little play area at the side of the Old Barn should be refurbished with swings and slides for the younger children so that they can play at any time of the day under supervision. These areas should be for the whole community.

I feel that the young people of East Finchley should be consulted about the Old Barn and taken seriously. For too long they have been pushed to the back and made to feel that they are not part of the community.



Maureen Clemetson

I speak from my experience of dealing with young people from the Grange, Strawberry Vale and the surrounding areas. I've been running the Monday Youth Club for the past 10 years and we have been pulled from pillar to post since departing the Old Barn in 2010.

I am in no way against diversity and letting everyone integrate and creating one community, but I am unsure where all this is going.

What are your views about the future of the Old Barn? Email us at the-archer@lineone.net or write to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE

Campaigners and Mobilise staff walk in to reclaim the Old Barn last October. Photo Mike Coles

How will the Old Barn be funded?

By Janet Maitland

As the next chapter in the history of the Old Barn community centre unfolds, *THE ARCHER* asked Lesley Meeks, the council officer responsible for the project, some questions about funding.

THE ARCHER: Is it correct that:

- the council committed £1m to replace the Bravanese centre after it was burnt down in 2013?
- the cost of building the extension for the Bravanese community is estimated at £1.7m, which will be funded by the insurance claim (£600,000, of which £97,000 has already been committed to demolish the Coppetts Road building) and the Forward Capital Plan (£1.1m)?
- the cost of refurbishing the Old Barn building is estimated at £200,000, which the council plans to meet from existing budgets?

Lesley Meeks: The total funding currently allocated to the project [£1.7million] was agreed to re-house the Somali Bravanese community, who previously leased a council-owned building that was destroyed by fire. £97,000 has already been spent on demolishing this building and the council currently proposes to use the remainder of this specifically allocated funding to refurbish the existing Old Barn building and construct an additional structure, in order to provide enough space for both the Somali Bravanese and the local community to utilise the facilities.

If the allocated budget proves insufficient to complete all the work required, the council will consider meeting the short-fall but this will need to be properly justified before any additional funds are provided.

THE ARCHER: If it were decided not to go ahead with building the extension for the Bravanese community, would the refurbishment of the Old Barn still go ahead?

Lesley Meeks: If construction of a new structure on site proves not to be possible, for instance where the ground conditions or environmental conditions preclude it, then an alternative site / existing facility would need to be found for the Bravanese Community. The existing allocated budget would then be used to refurbish or build for the Bravanese in that new location.

Under those circumstances, the future of the Old Barn building would have to be separately reviewed and a decision made in collaboration with the local community as to the best arrangements, both financial and managerial, to deal with the building.

'Two communities could benefit' from Old Barn rebuild

By Janet Maitland

More than 200 people attended a public meeting on 11 February about Barnet Council's plans to refurbish and extend the Old Barn in Tarling Road, N2. The proposals include building a new wing primarily for the local Bravanese community, whose centre on Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, was burnt down in a racist arson attack in June 2013.

"The fire was a vicious attack on a centre used for ten years by people already displaced as refugees," said Councillor Alison Moore to the packed hall in Martin Primary School.

Lesley Meeks, the council official responsible for the Old Barn project, said there were practical difficulties in rebuilding the centre on Coppetts Road, adding: "As many Bravanese live locally, it makes sense to bring the two centres together on the same site."

Concerns and queries

Some residents were frustrated that the council could find money for the extension, but not for local services under threat of closure, such as the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane.

Lesley Meeks replied that some of the money comes from the insurance on the burned-down building; the rest was allocated after the fire and can't be used for anything else. "Without this funding," she said, "we'd have had to make the Old Barn building compliant with Health and Safety standards, but by joining with the Bravanese community,

we've a chance to benefit both communities."

One resident disputed whether the council had the right to build on the land adjacent to the Old Barn, given its history as protected green space. Planning officer Martin Cowell replied: "Things can change, if it's of benefit of the community, and some of the land will still be open space."

The council will submit a planning application shortly, after which there will be a formal planning consultation process.

The Big Local project has £1 million of lottery money to spend on improving the area bounded by Church Lane, the High Road, East End Road and the A406. Chair Pat Murphy and vice chair Dinah Beamish said: "It's clear from the meeting that more consultation on the plans would be valuable. We look forward to meeting with the local Bravanese community to better understand their aspirations for the proposed new build."

Anyone interested in the Old Barn's future should contact oldbarn@mobilise.org

Quick Tips To Speed Up Your Computer

If your computer is a few years old you might be thinking it is already past its sell-by date.

- 1) Reload the operating system from scratch**
Some computers have a recovery partition - CAUTION Make sure you have great backups.
- 2) Increase the RAM.**
This is the usable memory and if you are running with less than 4GB on Windows 7, it will make a big difference for a small cost.
- 3) Upgrade to Solid State Hard Drive (SSD).**
This will make your machine purr and breathe fresh life as a SSD can be 10 times faster to access.

We help local businesses and individuals with their IT, and are based in the heart of Muswell Hill. With over 25 years' experience, we are always looking to help and support the local community.



For more useful advice and information online, read our blog at www.northlondonitsupport.com/blog
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Grace Guia at the Delicia Vintage Market. Photo Mike Coles

A taste of the past

By Diana Cormack

The Delicia café at 4-5 Cheapside, Fortis Green, is serving up more than its usual fare on the last Saturday of every month. From 4pm to 8pm an indoor market takes place, where tables are set with a variety of collectable, interesting and unusual objects.

An intriguing collection of china, glassware and pottery from years ago can be found alongside 1960s handbags, jewellery and fabrics. There are old pictures and posters to be leafed through, while modern hand-made cards created from past and present materials are on offer.

Louise Glass's Naildetail stall had a wide range of accessories for the hands, including an exclusive hand cream. Argentinian weaving artist Dina Resca's work and Gabriella White's handmade eye masks made out of vintage material look interesting.

It's worth a visit if you enjoy

browsing through bric-a-brac or are looking for an unusual present and you can treat yourself to a cake and a drink at the same time! For further details and to enquire about a table or space please contact 07879 816 420 or deliciafortisgreen@gmail.com

Building a dragon with the Baroness

By Ann Bronkhorst

Minister for Transport Baroness Susan Kramer visited Coldfall Wood on 6 February to see some of the work done there in recent years, to meet representatives of groups involved with the wood (now a Local Nature Reserve) and to plant a young oak tree.

Cheerfully braving mud and brambles, Baroness Kramer helped to plant the sapling in the most recently coppiced area of the wood, bordering Creighton Avenue. As most of Coldfall's oaks are roughly of an age, some new tree-planting is part of the management plan for the wood.

Outdoor learning

One encounter demonstrated how a wood on the doorstep can be a source of learning and enrichment. Some year two children from Coldfall Primary School were making dragons, using their surroundings and imaginations. Deputy Head Ewan Marshall explained to Baroness Kramer the ideas behind Forest School education and the benefits to the children. She looked as though she would have liked to join in!

If you too are curious about Forest School Education, Ewan Marshall will be leading a Forest School walk for adults in Coldfall Wood on Saturday 7 March, meeting at 11am at the east gate on Creighton Avenue. For details, visit www.coldfallwoods.co.uk

Unwanted items wanted

The RSPCA plans to open a second outlet in North Finchley, to compliment its East Finchley shop, which has now been trading for over a year.

However they are desperate for donations to stock its shelves, particularly clothes. Drop them in to the High Road shop if you have any.

The charity's animal clinic in Park Road is supported directly by the funds generated by the shop.

Three-car accident blocks road

By Janet Maitland

A collision involving three cars blocked Durham Road, N2, to traffic for several hours on 2 February.

"We heard an almighty great bang at about 2pm," said a resident who lives nearby. "Two cars had crashed and one had shunted a parked car into a wall. The police didn't arrive until much later. The cars stayed slewed across the junction with Bedford Road, with their miserable cold drivers standing around for hours. Breakdown vehicles removed all three cars during the evening."

A police spokesperson said it was a damage-only collision, with no injuries and no arrests. The road was cleared at approximately 6pm.

Memories of war inspire new novel

By Diana Cormack

Already an accomplished author in the field of government and politics, ARCHER contributor Neil McNaughton has now turned his hand to fiction. Well almost, because much of his first novel *The Turning Wheel* (available on Amazon) is based on fact derived from the wartime memories of his father and grandfather. Neil's family knew there was a suitcase of diaries, letters and memoirs from the two world wars, but did not realise the extent of the collection until they were sorting his late mother's effects.

Convoy heroism

His mother's photo is on the book's front cover: one of the many women who waited for news of their loved ones through those dangerous years. For the latter half of World War 2 her husband Frank served on the *Zamalek*, a convoy rescue ship which picked up more survivors from the North Atlantic than any other. *Zamalek's* history of involvement in some remarkable wartime incidents is reflected in Neil's story of an entirely fictional vessel, the *Aida*. Her crew is loosely based on real people Frank wrote and talked about, with the main character Tom Haldane being based on Frank himself.

Brief encounters

Central to the story is the 'blind date' scheme in Halifax, Nova Scotia, at Christmas 1941, when the town's social committee organised a group of local women to provide sailors with female company and entertainment. The future lives of the four leading characters are shaped by their relationships with the four women they met.

"It's about fate," Neil said. "When you could be facing



Neil McNaughton .
Photo Diana Cormack

death at any moment, how do you live?" Indeed, many did not. This is underlined by the destruction of convoy PQ 17 in Arctic waters and the battle of convoy SC 122, where *Zamalek* took part in rescue operations, and in the extensive rioting and looting which broke out in Halifax at the end of the war. The book brings this to a climax with Tom realising that a pre-war prediction is proving horribly true and that he and his crewmates are merely pawns in a game of chance.

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Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

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



Community Souls are there to help young people

By Diana Cormack

Community Souls works with disadvantaged young people, helping them to improve their lives and communities through positive activities and employment opportunities. It was founded in 2011 by Rickardo Stewart, a young man who was born and brought up on the Grange Estate.

He attended Holy Trinity and Fortismere schools and admits to having had a shaky start and needing help himself. His involvement in local gangs and that way of life was changed by a tragic event which led to him doing what he does today.

A special track record

For the last eight years Rickardo has worked with some of London's most vulnerable young people, with his background providing a unique ability to relate to them and to advise others involved in such work. A trained youth worker and a well-being life coach, Rickardo has extensive experience which includes setting up youth clubs, working with children through Barnet Play Association, designing open access programmes and delivering mentoring programmes in HMP Belmont Prison with the Art Against Knives scheme.

But it all started in East Finchley with Rickardo helping at the Monday Youth Club, then run by Maureen Clemetson and Maureen Antoinette. It still needs a site for its meetings. Rickardo feels there is a lack of youth provision and funding in the borough which is failing youngsters from disadvantaged areas like the Grange and Strawberry Vale.

Business with a difference

He is greatly involved in supporting them, identifying their individual needs and creating positive solutions that will benefit their future and the locality. To this end he set up the Community Souls Cleaning Company, offering young men and women on low income or benefits the opportunity for paid work and the chance to build their self-esteem and confidence, along with one-to-one mentoring. All profit generated is reinvested into the business to support the Community Souls' youth projects.

With this already working in other areas, Rickardo is appealing to local businesses and traders. Visit www.communitysouls.co.uk or call 07581 070 717 to see what East Finchley can do to help this worthwhile cause.

Look to your own

The forthcoming concert by North London Chorus at St. James's Church in Muswell Hill will be a very 'in-house' affair. First of all, it will feature the church's magnificently restored organ in Faure's *Requiem* and Kodaly's *Missa Breve*.

The concert also features the world premiere of a work by the chorus's very own award-winning composer, David



East Finchley library manager Sim Branaghan gives a talk on the history of British film posters.
Photo Mike Coles

Treasures from a lost tradition

By Ann Bronkhorst

Aged 13, Sim Branaghan spent his pocket money on a vintage film poster and was hooked for life. Today, his teenage purchases are collectors' items, beyond most pockets.

Sim has become an expert on the history of British film posters, getting to know several of the great poster designers personally and publishing a generously-illustrated book. His talk on 2 February in East Finchley library, where he is the manager, traced the development of British cinema and the demands of the film business on the artists and

advertising agencies.

Rise and fall of a popular art

Selecting key examples of British film posters from between the world wars, Sim paid tribute to the individual style of each artist. The artists' heyday came in the late 1930s with the growing success of the British film industry, but declined in the 1980s. One reason was the arrival of art and design software. Another was cost: real, painted artwork was more expensive than computer-generated designs.

Stories behind the posters

Artists working for the expanding British film industry had to turn commissions round fast. If enough stills hadn't been supplied family and friends could be roped in: a famous *Dracula* poster shows not Christopher Lee behind the fangs but

the artist himself, Tom Chantrell. His wife posed for his painting of Princess Leia in the famous *Star Wars* poster.

Mike Coles's photograph shows Sim with another poster by Chantrell, for *Carry on Cleo*. Unsurprisingly it was withdrawn after a court case in 1965, as it parodied wickedly the official poster for Fox's *Cleopatra* with Burton and Taylor (an expensive flop).

About the last British film poster in this splendid tradition was painted by Brian Bysouth for a James Bond film, *The Living Daylights*, and like many of the posters shown it drew a murmur of pleased recognition from the library audience. Thanks to Sim Branaghan and the Barnet Library Festival for this fascinating talk. To appreciate the compositions, detail, draughtsmanship and vivid immediacy of all these posters, ask at the library for his book, *British Film Posters*, BFI Publishing.

Friends of The Phoenix can catch a repeat of Sim's talk at the cinema on Sunday, 12 April, 2-3pm.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Final adjustments; CCF students Nikunj Pindoriya and Riku Murai.

Robotics champions gear up for China

Robotics students from Christ's College Finchley are fine-tuning their machines as they get ready to represent the UK at the World Robotics Championship in China.

After competing in Mexico 2012, Holland 2013 and Brazil 2014, the secondary school is now established as fielding one of the top ten teams in the world.

The CCF robot will compete in the 'Rescue' category of the competition which simulates a victim being in need of rescuing. The robot, fully automated, must navigate itself through a challenging environment to find and save the victim.

The competition encourages young students to realise the importance of robots, especially in an area where they are used to save lives. Students will be travelling to China in July.



Top team: The Coldfall Primary gymnasts.

Gym joy

Young gymnasts from Coldfall Primary School did well in the recent Haringey Gymnastics competition.

The year 3 & 4 squad took the silver medal, finishing second overall, and the year 5 & 6 squad finished 5th out of 14 schools. Also in the year 3 & 4 competition, Tilda Marriage-Massey was awarded bronze medal for her performance in the individual girl's medals and Theo Macauley won the gold medal for best individual boy.

PARENT & BABY/CHILD ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ **Dads' Club:** Get-togethers for dads looking after young children in East Finchley. Adam 07957 441435.
- ⊙ **Musical Tots:** Wednesdays 11am at the Old White Lion and Fridays 11am at The Five Bells N2. Katemusicaltots on facebook.
- ⊙ **Parent & Toddler Group,** Green Man Centre, Sajni 83593460/Julia 84442276
- ⊙ **Phoenix Cinema activities,** Bringing up babyscreenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from boxoffice on 02084446789.
- ⊙ **Stepping Stones,** music and play for 0-3s. Tues 10am, East Finchley Baptist Church. Liz 07836 284538.
- ⊙ **Teddy Bears' Music,** singing for 0-3s in Holy Trinity Church, N2; Thurs 9.45am & 10.45am. Camilla 07900 988149.

Towering performance

By Jessica Ebner-Statt

Ever since the start of the school year, three teams from The Henrietta Barnett School have been working hard to prepare robots for the Vex IQ Robotics Competition.

After frenzied last-minute preparations, they made their way to Highgate School for a regional competition. The task for their robots was to bring blocks across the playing field before stacking them in towers.

Although one of the school's teams crashed out early due to a faulty axle, the other two teams were left competing for a place in the national finals. In the end, by the narrowest of margins, these teams were ranked 1st and 3rd! Not only did one team qualify for the Nationals, they also won the Excellence Award, taking them through to the Internationals in Kentucky, USA.

But now they need your help! To represent Great Britain in America, they need money.



On their way: The robotics team from Henrietta Barnett.

Any donations - big or small - would be greatly appreciated. They are also looking for sponsors, so please contact aduffey@hbschool.org.uk if you think you can help.

Hospice building

The first phase towards building a children's hospice in north London has begun. At the end of January work started on the construction of a state-of-the-art environmental centre on the site of the old Barnet Countryside Centre, Byng Road, EN5. This was a condition of the 125 year lease with the borough and has been facilitated by a generous donation from the Hadley Trust.

Completion is forecast for July 2015, after which the second phase of building the hospice facility should begin. The build will be managed by Paragon Building Consultancy with construction work by Maurice Williams Construction Ltd. Both companies have significantly reduced the costs normally associated with this type of project.

Although the capital required for phase one has been raised, much more is needed for phase two. To raise the remaining funds a public appeal towards the end of the year is being planned. Visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk for further details.

Acclaimed author entertains

Anne Fine, author of Madame Doubtfire and Flour Babies, visited the Archer Academy on 5 February and told year seven and eight pupils about her writing.

Year seven students Michael and Caitlin said: "For an extremely enjoyable hour, the students heard about the basis of writing books and the inspirations behind some of Anne Fine's best novels, as well as a few hilarious memoirs along the way. All presented in a fantastically witty and funny way."

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Hands-on: Helena Kyriakides

The yummy life in Italy

Helena Kyriakides moved to Bologna in Italy 14 years ago but still counts East Finchley as home. Here she recalls how her childhood experiences led her to a high-powered career combination of food, wine and supercars.

When I was young, I often used to sit in the kitchen with my Greek Cypriot grandmother in Leicester Road where she used to make wonderful, typical Greek foods like Moussaka, roast lamb and stuffed vine leaves. When she lacked an ingredient, which was the case quite frequently, she used to send me to 'the Greek shop' in the High Road.

And often we had a family walk on Hampstead Heath followed by tea on Hampstead High Street. Every Sunday over there at about four o'clock, a bright yellow Lamborghini Countach would rev up its engine and speed off. I couldn't wait to hear the engine and see the car every week.

A taste for good things

This true story actually

landed me a job organising events for Lamborghini some 20 years later! I now have my own specialised agency that organises food, wine and supercar experiences in Emilia Romagna. Find out more at www.yummy-italy.com.

In Italy I have become an official balsamic vinegar and Parmesan cheese taster and am currently working towards a professional sommelier qualification.

So, as you can see, it all fits into place – with a glass of wine in hand, of course. My mother's from Germany, my father from Cyprus, so I'm of mixed blood and a typical Londoner. And although I've been in Bologna for the last 14 years, when I say "I'm going home" I actually do mean going back to East Finchley.

Sadness and laughter at theatre fundraiser

By Diana Cormack

A fundraising event on behalf of the Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre was held at 142 High Road on 24 January. Described as "an evening of entertainment, offering an insight into the role of women during wartime", the first half consisted of readings from poems, letters and monologues written by women between 1914 and 1918. They were chosen and performed by local actresses Carolyn Pickles, Julia Swift and Hilary Townley. Whilst many of them were incredibly moving, some were instructive and surprisingly, despite the sadness of the theme, there were those which evoked laughter. All reflected the maturity and skill of these experienced performers

After Penelope a triumph

In the second half the younger generation took over, with the Spectra Theatre Company's production of *After Penelope*, a piece devised by six students for their degree performance at the East 15 Acting School. Katerina Allen, Erin Clarke, Megan Lloyd-Jones, Ilaria Rocchi, Deli Segal and East Finchley's own Lucy Butler (daughter of Carolyn Pickles and artist Tark Butler) wove together women's stories from wars across the ages, ranging from the American Civil

War, through Nazi Germany to modern times. Following a successful run at the White Bear Theatre, Kennington, this directing debut for co-writer Colleen Prendergast was a triumph.

The audience couldn't praise it enough. "Outstanding", "Fantastic", "Stunning", "Who'd have thought it would be so good?" were among the comments heard in the packed theatre. At a question and answer session following the performance the audience was relieved to hear that the group hopes to tour with the production, particularly taking it into schools and colleges.

The Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre is a charity which supports and aids young people at the centre where activities such as dance, drama, film, music and circus skills are offered to young people, including those with learning or physical difficulties. For more information visit www.fofyt.co.uk

Get your antiques valued

On Sunday 8 March Bonningtons Auctioneers will be at Stephens House, 17 East End Road, N3 3QE, for a valuation event organised by Finchley WI.

From 10.30am to 2.30pm your items can be valued at a cost of £10 per person (you can bring more than one item but no furniture).

Homemade cakes, crafts and a tombola will be available. Proceeds will support local charities, including Cherry Lodge Cancer Care, Finchley Food Bank and Stephens House. For further information email: alcocks@btinternet.com or telephone: 020 8343 4563.

Risk IT for a biscuit

By Stepan Stepanenko

Local volunteer group EFAB is organising weekly IT courses in locations around East Finchley and is looking for new participants and volunteers. The IT and Biscuits sessions have proved to be particularly popular, their aim being to let volunteers share their knowledge of computers and the internet with others.

The sessions try to dispel myths of fragility and danger that often deter users, especially the elderly, from giving computers a go. Among many highlights so far was the creation of a Facebook account for a resident in his 90s, which allowed him to contact his university friends from India.

Rewarding for the volunteers and the participants, sessions include complete beginners, as well as proficient users who want to improve their computer skills. From turning on a computer, browsing the internet, shopping online, writing documents, emailing, to calling family, these sessions aim to address any query.

They are held at three locations: Homefield Gardens on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wilmot Close on Wednesdays from 2-4pm and East Finchley Library on Thursdays from 10am to noon.

More information can be found on www.efab.org.uk or by calling Lisa on 07909 998453.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

A real kitchen sink drama

Exam season is almost upon us. And soon there will be an even wider range of GCSEs to choose from. Plump for the combined food and drama course, for instance, and not only can you dress up and throw a tantrum, you can really become a knife-wielding drama queen.

According to rumour, the new course will teach your average bored teenager how to joint a sheep, gut a chicken and make gravy and custard, probably at the same time. The aspiring actor will then be able to dress up as something from Shakespeare and recite the soliloquy from Hamlet as they fillet a halibut.

Qualified with an A grade at GCSE they'll know how to make omelettes, toss pancakes and make pastry to such a high level that they'll be able to produce a feast fit for Falstaff. In the real world none of this will matter, because the cooking course you really need before you leave home has got nothing to do with gutting or filleting or garlic or jus.

What you really need before you depart for university or throw yourself at the mercy of your slum landlord is simple. To survive on your own you need a microwave, a supermarket and the phone number of the local pizza shop.

Who needs Henry V's speech about this blessed land or the ability to wear tights and stand beneath a balcony sighing up at Juliet when you can just shove a deep frozen horsemeat lasagne in a microwave, open a bottle of wine and pretend you know Jamie Oliver? Trust me, I'm a professional.

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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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- **Art Classes**. Call Henry on 8888 5133.
- **A-Chord**, friendly choir, all genres, open to all. Thursdays 8pm at NNLS, East End Rd. Laura 07732 120464.
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- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **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.
- **Gospel choir**, St Mary's, 279 High Road, N2, Thursdays 7-8pm, all welcome. Contact Sandra 07866 479913.
- **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 music at TOC**, Highgate Hill, on 1st & 3rd Tues each month 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.
- **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- **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.
- **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390

March at the Phoenix

By Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, Phoenix Cinema executive director

March at the Phoenix takes our audiences far and wide, forward and back, offering a month of thought-provoking experiences.

Sunday 8 March offers two films bound to keep conversations going long after the credits end. **Black Power Mix Tape** was made from rare footage of urban unrest in the US in the 1960s and 70s with music and commentary by significant artists. And to mark International Women's Day, we're showing **Difret**, the story of a 14-year-old girl facing a forced marriage.

We welcome international party maestro DJ Dan who hosts our Phoenix Nights event at 11.30 pm on Friday 6 March. Dan introduces cult favourite **Pulp Fiction**.

Phoenix Film Salons move to Wednesday nights. Come and share your views on 11 March

with the **Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel** and on the 18th with **Still Alice**. Film Salon tickets include free coffee or tea.

Our very popular cinema tours take place on Sunday 22 March, at 11.30 am, 12.15pm and 1pm. They're only £2 or free if staying to see the archival film: an enchanting look at London's transportation over the last century with Film Historian Ian Christie as our host.

On Sunday 29 March at 2pm we host an event to mark what would have been the 90th birthday of a British political icon. **Tony Benn: Will and Testament** will be followed by a conversation with the Guardian's Owen Jones, CND's Kate Hudson, and other guests.

Book early to avoid disappointment at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or call 020 8444 6789.



Blooming: Get your garden tips.

Gardening tips

Are you aged 50 or over and enjoy gardening? Age UK Barnet has applied successfully to the National Lottery for an Awards for All grant to run a new gardening project.

Participants can learn and enjoy seasonal gardening and garden crafts. Preparing bird food, willow weaving, potting up herbs, vegetables and other plants in containers and window boxes, as well as flower arranging are among the activities that will be on offer at the weekly sessions.

The classes cost £3 per session and run every Thursday from

2pm to 4pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2.

Age UK Barnet is also looking for volunteers interested in gardening to help assist with this project.

For more information or to register as a participant or volunteer contact Amanda Radonich at Age UK Barnet on 020 8432 1415 or email amanda.radonich@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Memorable music-making

Review by Ken Carter.

Haydn Chamber Orchestra played at St. Michael's Church in Highgate in early February in aid of the Harington Scheme and the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.

First came Mozart: the Overture to *The Magic Flute*. The delivery was sprightly and sparky, with a delicious, taut vitality.

Beethoven's first Piano Concerto sparkled. It gained from the chamber-sized orchestra: close to what Beethoven was writing for, surely.

The biggest plus, however, was the close rapport between soloist Charles Owen and

conductor Robin O'Neill. The result? A distinguished performance that deserved recording.

The Schubert pieces (from *Rosamunde* and the Unfinished Symphony) were a showcase for the HCO to display its versatility and musical skill, ranging from the light touch of the *Rosamunde* entr'acte to the rock-like declarations and steps into the fearful unknown of the 8th Symphony.

An evening with Esther



North London Hospice invites you to join its supporters for An Audience with Dame Esther Rantzen at 7pm on Sunday 12 April. Dame Esther, who is a patron of the hospice, will talk about her early career and will focus on her work with the two helplines she founded: Childline and Silverline.

The venue is the Queen Elizabeth Boys' School, Queens Road, Barnet EN5 4DQ. Tickets are £20 each, which includes refreshments. For tickets and information, contact Anne on 020 8905 5249 or philip.samworth@homecall.co.uk or Vivienne on 020 8203 5131 or viviennebentley@hotmail.com

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

Saturday 7 March

- **Forest School walk in Coldfall Wood**. Meet 11.0am, east gate, Creighton Avenue. Details: www.coldfallwoods.co.uk

Monday 9 March

- **Apprenticeship Hub Day** at Hospitality House, next to East Finchley tube station, 10am-3pm. Pupils, students and residents welcome to a free open day on retail apprenticeship opportunities. Presentations by John Lewis, O2, Prêt à Manger, Banana Republic.

Friday 13 March

- **Eating for Energy with Stephanie from Nourish to Flourish**: talk for mums at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, 2-3pm. £7 in advance or £9 on the door. Tickets and info: www.facebook.com/sortingself or email sortingself@gmail.com

Saturday 14 March

- **North London Sinfonia performs Sibelius, Brahms, Strauss and Gade** at the United Reformed Church, N13, 7.30pm. Tickets £10 and £5 concessions, available on the door.
- **Battle of Barnet: guided walk** around the Wars of the Roses battle site (1471) with City of London guide Paul Baker. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road, 2.30pm. £9, £4 under 12s. Contact Paul on 020 8440 6805 or www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net
- **Charity Zumba Afternoon** at St Mary's R.C. Church, 279 High Road, N2, 3-5pm, supporting refugees in Syria and Northern Iraq. Exercise in disguise with Latin and World rhythms guaranteed to give you a good workout. Cost: £5+ donations. Bring the family, under-5s free.

Friday 20 March

- **Fitting in Fitness** with Jane from JCW Fitness: talk for mums at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, 2-3pm. £7 in advance or £9 on the door. Tickets and info: www.facebook.com/sortingself or email sortingself@gmail.com
- **Barnet Ghosts: guided walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker. Special spring equinox tour of High Barnet and Monken Hadley, second most haunted village in

England. Meet at High Barnet tube station, 7.30pm. £9, £4 under 12s. Contact Paul on 020 8440 6805 or www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net

Friday 20 March to Sunday 22 March

- **The Edible Garden Show** at Ally Pally, dedicated to growing-your-own; launch of 'Love the Plot You've Got' campaign and featuring allotments, beekeeping, hen welfare and school food matters. Visit www.alexandrapalace.com for details.

Saturday 21 March

- **North London Chorus sing Faure's Requiem** plus works by Kodaly and David Loxley Blount, St James Church, Muswell Hill, 7.30pm. Tickets £10-20 available online at <https://northlondonchorus.org/tickets>, St James Church bookshop and Les Aldrich Music Shop, Fortis Green, Muswell Hill.
- **Fortismere Community Orchestra performs Strauss, Rachmaninoff and Dvorak**, St Andrew's Church, Alexandra Park Road, Muswell Hill, N10 3DD, 7.30pm. Tickets available on the door.
- **Finchley Choral Society sing works by Vaughan Williams and Holst**, St Pancras Church, Euston Road, NW1 2BA, 7.30pm. Tickets £15 (£7 students and £1 under-16s) from 020 7263 3358 or Les Aldrich Music Shop, Fortis Green, Muswell Hill.

Sunday 22 March

- **Big Fun Walk** in aid of North London Hospice. Set off from East Finchley tube station from 9.30am. Register at www.bigfunwalk.co.uk

Sunday 29 March

- **Sunday concert: The Alauda Quartet**, Lauderdale House, Highgate, 11.30am, £7 (£5 concs, £1 children). An international ensemble sharing a passion for chamber music and for exploring the repertoire of the string quartet. www.lauderdalehouse.co.uk

Sunday 5 April

- **Easter Egg decorating, treasure hunt and The Great Egg Roll** at Lauderdale House, Highgate, 11am. £7 per child. All children must be accompanied by an adult. www.lauderdalehouse.co.uk

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Visitors always welcome



Letters to the Editor

There must be a better way

Dear Editor,

I expect you have already received numerous letters on the subject of proposed cuts to library services; I know from talking to my friends and neighbours that many of us feel very strongly about this. I am fully aware of the difficulties that councils face in trying to stretch their reduced budgets across different types of provision. Making these decisions cannot be an easy task, but it is so short-sighted to propose cuts to library services. With enough determination, and commitment from the council and the local community working together, there must be a better solution. In an era where local people want to prevent the loss of communal identity, services should in fact be expanding. Libraries can and do provide essential benefit to a community, not only in terms of access to books, but also of group activities, reading to children, toy library facilities, and many more.

There are even more ways that libraries could be used to help foster communal identity and provide a focus for otherwise isolated individuals: these services should be an essential part of David Cameron's famous (but now seldom mentioned) 'big society'.

Yours faithfully,
Hazel Mason,
Address supplied.

Paradise lost

Dear Editor,

On page 4 of January's *ARCHER* two people have made the bizarre suggestion that the library be relocated to the old Post Office, although one did say: "...the old Post Office may be too large for the library". I hope this was meant tongue-in-cheek, but I fear not.

The usable space in the old Post Office is less than 20% of that in the existing wonderful, purpose-built building, and would be completely inadequate. Our library is ideally sited in the middle of the borough, next to Martin Primary School, with comparatively easy parking, whereas the old Post Office has none of these advantages.

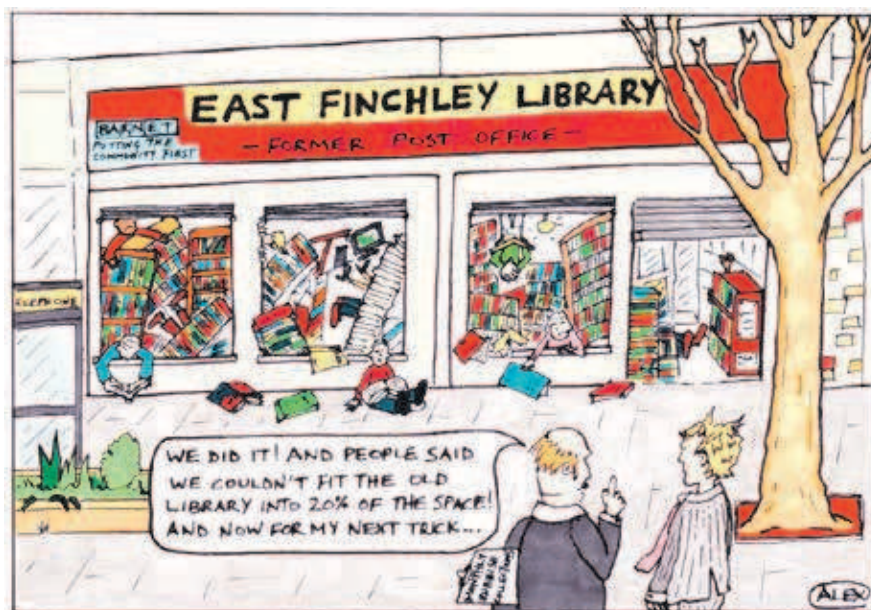
TS Eliot wrote that: "The very existence of libraries affords the best evidence that we may yet have hope for the future of man". Another writer said: "I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library". Our library is a kind of Paradise - only a barbarian would disagree. Or our council, which amounts to the same thing.

Yours faithfully,
Peter Cox
Hertford Road, N2.

More than just a book lending service

Dear Editor,

I am writing about Barnet Council's proposal to make cuts to its libraries across the borough. As an East Finchley resident, I am extremely concerned about the three options on offer in the consultation. None of them is acceptable. I understand that the council has a shrinking financial envelope that could well worsen after the latest local authority funding grant settlement from central government. But what is on offer



is not the right way forward. The council must seek the views of Barnet residents, young and old, about what they want from the library service and where they want it. After all, the long term trend demonstrated in usage figures is an increase in members. It also needs to consider the recommendations in the recently published Independent Library Report for England before making any decision. The library service can be different things to different people but fundamentally it is about promoting the wellbeing of all in the community. I do not accept the suggestion in the consultation that, if there are no cuts to the library, cuts will have to be made to other parts of the themed budget with which libraries have been grouped. That is simply too short-sighted, for reduced library provision can only increase demand on other parts of that budget and possibly on adult social services budgets as well. In the case of East Finchley, whilst all of the council's options offer us some kind of 'library provision', a small room without professional library staff does not a library make. Users are not just taking out books. Young and old find it a safe haven for research and support. I have heard young people say how they do their homework there every day when there is no room to do it at home. Teenagers have said they could not have passed GCSEs without revising in the quiet of the library. And school children are taken there because there is no school library. I have completed the consultation online and trust the council will consider the views of respondents to the consultation who decline, like myself, to choose any of the three terrible options. The community feel very strongly indeed.

Yours faithfully,
Vanessa Carpenter
Baronsmere Road, N2.

Make short-term savings

Dear Editor,

The reason stated for the threatened closure of our library is to help to plug a hole in Barnet's finances during the next four or five years. But it is highly unlikely that the hoped-for rental or sale of the building could be achieved during that period, if at all, given its listed status.

Barnet Council says that the financial problem is caused by further reductions in government

spending. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently announced that the country's deficit had already been halved, and that the budget will be in surplus within about three years.

The sensible policy is therefore to adjust the way the library is run on a temporary basis, so as to achieve short-term savings, while keeping it in existence and ready for full operation as soon as financial circumstances improve.

Once the library has gone, it has gone.

Yours faithfully,
Leslie Gilbert,
Chandos Road, N2.

There is another way

Dear Editor,

It is with disappointment that I read in *THE ARCHER* that Barnet Council is again reviewing a number of our communities' most valuable assets, our local libraries. The three options it proposes are not appropriate.

I fully understand that Government and local Governments need to address their balance sheets. However, we should avoid doing this in a short-sighted manner. There is little wisdom in whittling away one of the few surviving services that help to make a community a desirable place to live and work.

Libraries provide educational opportunities for local children and social connectivity for mothers/guardians, pensioners, job seekers and a myriad others that benefit from such a service. An open forum to all ages, classes and cultures is what makes our local libraries such an important part of our community fabric.

Lest we forget, East Finchley Library is located in our most significant and possibly the only remaining civic building in East Finchley. Despite being Grade II listed, it has already been demonstrated that the building can adapt and comply to provide a first class library service for the future.

The importance of such a resource was highlighted by Tricia Little (former Head of library services, Barnet) in her letter to the Barnet Press in October where she states that in 2002 Barnet achieved Beacon status for Libraries and was looked at as a model of excellence and hosted visits from librarians across Britain. She refers to the three options in the current consultation/questionnaire as "devastating".

I do not feel the current ques-

tionnaire is proactive as all three options focus on ways to reduce the service to save money. Question 13 is the only time an entrepreneurial spirit and intelligent solutions are hinted at, where options to improve the library services could actually increase revenues, a far better and more positive approach to a financial solution whilst responding to today's milieu. Turn this dire situation into a win-win scenario.

Yours faithfully,
James Elliott,
Baronsmere Road, N2.

Editor's note: This is an edited version of a letter Mr Elliott sent directly to Richard Cornelius, leader of Barnet Council.

Location, location, location

Dear Editor,

The idea of using the old post office as a library is nonsense for four reasons. First, it is far too small to provide space for children, adults, computers and cafe.

Secondly, the library was deliberately built near Martin Primary School so that each class can easily visit the library.

Thirdly, the library is located in the middle of the neighbourhood, being equidistant between the tube station and the North Circular so that no resident has to walk more than 400-600 metres.

Finally, it is a lovely building that is already doing a great job as a library.

Yours faithfully,
Andrew Wilks,
Hertford Road, N2.

Alive and kicking

Dear Editor,

It was sad to see in your January issue people saying they would welcome Waitrose or another major supermarket chain taking over the our vacated Post Office building, especially alongside so much coverage of the public library debate.

Whether they have short memo-

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page"

**The Archer, PO Box 3699,
London N2 2DE or e-mail
the-archer@lineone.net.**

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be printed. Contact details can be withheld on request at publication. We reserve the right to abridge letters for reasons of space.

ries or simply lack awareness, people need reminding of the campaign just a few years ago to stop Waitrose opening a large store in the congested area opposite East Finchley tube station. This went with plans to close the library, by which Waitrose would win planning gain by offering some measly kind of library space on top of its store.

Obviously this spelled doom for our small local independent shops and there was a threat to Martin School playing field if the library was sold off, as well as to Cherry Tree Wood. Local residents rallied around against this in many ways and it was the strongest show of community spirit I have ever seen in all my years in East Finchley. It must not be so casually forgotten. But fortunately some of this spirit looks to be still alive and kicking.

Yours faithfully,
Gayle Goshorn,
Pulham Avenue, N2.

Lost wedding ring

Dear Editor,

I have lost my wedding ring. It slipped off my finger between Leopold Road and Church Lane, N2, in January. I walked up to the corner, crossed over into Leslie Road and walked on the left, and when I got to Church Lane the ring had gone.

I am very annoyed. My darling husband has passed away after 60 years of marriage and now our wedding ring has gone. My daughter and I went looking for it but to no avail.

I'd be so grateful if anyone has found it and is good enough to hand it in.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs A O'Reilly,
Leopold Road, N2.

Editor's note: If you can help, please contact us here at THE ARCHER on the-archer@lineone.net or Freephone 0800 612 0748. Thank you.

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Rosanna Rafel (inset) in the snowy wastes of Sweden and the view from Rosanna's sled.

Arduous and inspiring: my Arctic adventure

By Rosanna Rafel

I have just returned from a 5-day epic adventure in the Swedish Arctic, sledding with a pack of four dogs and surviving in a wilderness lodge. It was for Spinal Research UK, a charity which resonates with me because my mother has undergone her third bout of surgery in the space of three years to correct her spine.

Excited huskies

I set off to Kiruna, Northern Sweden, anticipating the possible minus 20 degrees weather, fully equipped with my base layers and a warm sleeping bag. One thing I realised: wearing four layers including an Arctic suit still doesn't keep you warm if you're standing still for a long period of time in weather that is colder than most freezers!

From the get-go we were challenged; whether it was chopping wood for the fire, feeding and looking after the dogs, or bringing water to the wilderness cabin. Every morning the team were greeted by the howling and barking of the dogs when they knew they were about to go sledding: the cross-bred huskies loved to run.

The worst day

During lunch stops, we often ate in tepees which we could warm up with a fire but no such luck on day two. After a tough day of hills, including falling off the sled on the way down them, we were exposed to the elements, covered in snow and ice with no way of heating up.

I was shivering, questioning why I was there, and moving around to get warm but failing. What got me through was the knowledge that I was aiding research to help people who were physically unable to do what I was doing. I understood that I had to continue and

be grateful for being able to embark on the challenge.

Fast fundraising

I signed up relatively late to the challenge, giving myself only three months to fundraise the required £2,650 needed to send me to Sweden. A pub quiz helped me raise over £400 and a stall at the East Finchley Christmas Fair, selling handmade goods, pulled in

over £350 worth of sponsorship. Before setting off on my sled in Sweden, I had raised almost £3,000, which is equal to 120 hours' worth of medical research.

Rosanna, who lives in Gurney Drive, N2, would still welcome donations for Spinal Research UK. You can donate at <http://virginmoneygiving.com/RosannaRafel>

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New chemist on High Road

By Sheila Armstrong

The Oakdale Pharmacy is under new management. Herman and Simone Benjamin took over the shop, located between Iceland and Budgens, in November. Herman has 20 years' experience in his family's pharmacy in the East End.

The couple told *The Archer* that the Christmas Festival was a good introduction to East Finchley and they had felt welcomed by the local community. They have retained the staff from the old Oakdale Pharmacy and many of the old customers. The shelves are fully stocked again and further improvements to the shop are planned.

Their aim is to have an independently run family pharmacy and to be in touch with the needs of their customers. If you can't find what you need on the shelves do ask and if possible they will order it for you.

They also run a prescription collection service for regular

medication with all the local GPs; they will text you when it arrives in store or it can even be delivered to you if necessary. They can also undertake medication check-ups and reviews. Additionally they have applied to be a Healthy Living Pharmacy, not only giving advice on eating and exercise but testing blood pressure and BMI.

Herman is also specialising in mobility for the elderly and is keen to make everyday living easier for them. He plans to carry a range of aids from wheelchairs to scooters and walking aids. The pharmacy is open from 9am until 6.30pm, and until 5.30pm on Saturdays.



Herman and Simone Benjamin, new owners of the Oakdale Pharmacy. Photo Mike Coles

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