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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.



Generation game: The mums and daughters at Finchley Cricket Club

Mums and daughters at the crease

For a second year, Finchley Cricket Club is running Club20 evenings that give mums and daughters the opportunity to learn the sport in a fun and friendly atmosphere.

The Club20 format is a quick-fire, no-experience-required form of the game. Last year, 25 mums and older girls who had never played cricket before signed up to play. Plus there's an enthusiastic section for younger girls on Friday nights, with an emphasis on inclusivity and fun. Girls of all abilities including complete beginners are welcome.

Finchley Cricket Club, which plays in East End Road, N3, is one of the oldest clubs in London, established in 1832, and was one of the first to offer cricket to women and girls as well as men and boys. For further details visit www.finchleycricket.co.uk

Watch out! Gangs of thieves on motorbikes are about

People are being warned to protect their mobile phones and other valuables while out walking after a gang of thieves on motorbikes tried to rob a mother just after she had dropped her children off at school.

The woman was walking past East Finchley Library when two young bikers on a scooter or small motorbike mounted the pavement and attempted to snatch her mobile phone out of her hand.

Luckily they only managed to knock the phone out of its case so she didn't lose it but she was left very shaken.

Two bikes involved

Fellow mum Erini Rodis saw the incident and watched as the would-be thieves sped off down Creighton Avenue.

Erini said: "There were two vehicles and both had passengers riding pillion. One mounted the pavement while the other stayed on the road."

There are reports that the motorbike gangs have been seen operating or riding around the King Street area of East Finchley and around the Grange estate.

Another of Erini's friends said that she had been targeted in the same way when she was walking along Dukes Avenue in Muswell Hill.

She said: "I got my phone stolen just like that. Two guys came from behind on a motorbike, climbed the pavement, grabbed my mobile phone out of my hands and drove off. Be extra vigilant, especially women."

Michael Haynes, who works at East Finchley tube station, said he had heard of a group of young men walking in Cherry Tree Wood early in the evening of Saturday 12 March who had been "jumped on" for their phones.

Police advise everyone to keep their mobile phones and valuables secure in a bag or inside pocket at all times. Checking your phone while walking can make you vulnerable to opportunist thieves.

Wi-fi black hole

East Finchley has missed out in a new Barnet Council scheme to bring free wi-fi to the borough's town centres. We're not on the list of 14 areas that now offer 30 minutes of online time.

Barnet Council says the Free-Barnet WiFi scheme is part of its ongoing commitment to support town centres and develop the borough's digital infrastructure.

The selected areas are Golders Green, Temple Fortune, Brent Street, Hendon, Church End, West Finchley, North Finchley, Mill Hill, Edgware, Burnt Oak, Friern Barnet, Oakleigh Road North and Whetstone.

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

Copy deadlines – **May: 15 April, June: 13 May, July: 10 June**

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Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000	Cruse Bereavement Care 0870 167 1677	National Blood Centre 0845 7711 7711
Council Tax 020 8359 2608	Disability Info Service 020 8359 7637	Crime
Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600	EF Advice Service 020 8444 6265	Emergency 999
Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700	Lone Parent Centre 020 7021 4146	Police non-emergency 101
Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500	Missing Persons Helpline 0500 700700	CrimeStoppers 0800 555111
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New song: The year 7 Mandarin choir at the classroom opening ceremony. Photo Mike Coles

Language links with China

Christ's College Finchley has been chosen to become the home of one of 40 Confucius Classrooms in the UK, teaching Mandarin as a foreign language from September.

The project comes out of the school's links with the London School of Economics and the Confucius Institute for Business in London which have already enabled it to offer Mandarin to sixth formers, year sevens and parents.

Headteacher Samson Olu-sanya said the opening of the Confucius Classroom will give all students the chance to learn a new language that will be increasingly important in the modern world, along with a

greater appreciation of Chinese culture.

The school was chosen by Hanban University in China, the Chinese Language Council and the Chinese Embassy in London.

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

75 Bedford Road, N2

Roof extension, with rear dormer and three front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion.

91 Bedford Road, N2

Roof extension, with rear dormer and three front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion.

Chapel Court, N2

Change of use from derelict fire-damaged former communal laundry to building contractor's office and storage compound. Refurbishment of fire-damaged building, and erection of hoarding to form secure compound.

13 Cherry Tree Road, N2

Certificate of lawfulness for roof extension, with rear dormer plus Juliette balcony and three front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion.

Ground Floor, 67 Church Lane, N2

Change of use from financial professional services to residential.

22 Greenhalgh Walk, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Converting garage into habitable room, including single-storey front extension, and raising height of roof. Omission of basement and garage extension from previous plan.

31b Hertford Road, N2

Roof extension with rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion.

38 Huntingdon Road, N2

Fenestration changes to side and rear extensions. Roof extension, with rear dormer and three front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion.

84 Huntingdon Road, N2

Roof extension, with rear dormer and one front roof light, to facilitate loft conversion.

5 Ingram Road, N2

Roof extension, involving rear dormer with Juliette balcony, to facilitate loft conversion.

392 Long Lane, N2

Demolition of existing extensions,

and erection of part single/part two-storey side and rear extension.

3 Lincoln Road, N2

Single-storey side/rear extension.

79 Park Hall Road, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer with Juliette balcony and two front roof lights, to facilitate loft conversion. Second floor extension over existing rear projection.

15A, Sedgemere Avenue, N2

Rear dormer and two front dormers to facilitate loft conversion.

Haringey Council

90 Fortis Green N2

Full planning permission for prefabricated vehicle storage building.

13 Ringwood Avenue N2

Demolition of the existing side and rear dormers. Roof extension consisting of two hip-to-gables and a rear dormer, together with front roof lights.



Sainsbury's Local WILL set up shop

By Nick Allan

Planning consent has now been granted for a Sainsbury's Local to be opened on the High Road at the corner with Leicester Road. No date has been set for its opening but it's expected to start trading in the next few months.

As we first reported last November, the new store will replace Bike & Run at number 134 and the short-lived Mama Jack's burger restaurant at number 132.

Steve McKenzie, of Bike & Run, wanted to make it clear that they'd had no choice about the development. He said: "We only leased our shop and had nothing to do with this decision and will now move all our business into our other shop a few doors down at number 128."

Mixed reactions

At the planning meeting,

where consent was granted, it was reported that many were in favour of a new "high street supermarket" and the benefit of perhaps 20-25 new jobs.

Opinions about the store's impending arrival among correspondents to our letters page have been mixed. Some residents have written to us to say they are concerned about the effect it will have on independent shops in East Finchley. Others say they welcome more competition to long-established stores like Budgens and Iceland.

Community involvement

Sainsbury's told THE ARCHER they understand there may be some concerns but wanted to stress that where they have opened stores, other traders have tended to benefit from the extra shoppers who come to the area.

They said they would seek to fill the job vacancies from the local area, where possible, and they also intended to play an active role in the community, including supporting a nominated local charity every year, as their larger store in Muswell Hill already does.

The new store is expected to trade from 7am to 11pm daily and to have a cash machine. A Sainsbury's spokesman said: "Our Locals provide the same quality as our larger supermarkets but on a smaller scale and are designed to cater for local people living and working within walking distance of the shop."

Zak's try-out turns to triumph

When young Muay Thai fighter Zak Chabira was entered into an open European amateur tournament in Lithuania, he was simply expecting to take part. In fact he surprised himself and his coach by taking the gold medal.

Shabba Uddin, head Muay Thai Boxing coach at mixed martial arts club East Finchley Combat Academy, entered Zak into the tournament so that he could gain experience of fighting European fighters on a larger amateur stage.

"Zak was totally unfazed by the occasion and won two fights by head kick stoppages," said Shabba. "He's trained here since we opened four years ago. He also helps teach the younger kids at the club who already look up to him as a role model."

The 15-year-old's father Mohamed and younger brother



Title fight: Zak Chabira is proclaimed the winner

Ayman also train at the club in Church Lane. Mohamed credits Zak's good grades at school to the focus Zak gains from his Muay Thai training and says it helps him stay out of the wrong crowd.

Zak's next fight is on Saturday 28 May at the Watford Coliseum and it's a grudge match against another young fighter from a north London Thai boxing club whom he has beaten once already.



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'Save our library: Young readers and parents demonstrate at East Finchley. Photo Mike Coles

Young readers in character for protest

World Book Day couldn't have been more appropriate for a demonstration against proposed cuts to the service at East Finchley Library. After school on Thursday 3 March, children dressed as characters from books voiced their protest, supported by adults and the hooting of passing cars on the High Road.

The decision on the future of Barnet's libraries, including proposed reductions in staffing and opening hours, was expected to be taken by Barnet Council at a meeting on Monday 4 April.

The Save Barnet Libraries Group has been advised by lawyers that if the council votes through its cuts without addressing alleged flaws in their second public consultation they will be open to legal challenge.

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On the run: Lizzie Cockle

Help for those who help others

Lizzie Cockle has two very good reasons for running the London Marathon and she would love your support. She'll be making her way around the 26.2 mile course on 24 April in order to raise funds for Cruse Bereavement Care, which offers free support to over 100,000 young people and adults each year when someone they love dies.

Lizzie sadly lost her mother when she was four, and then her father when she was 13, both to cancer. She says Cruse's wonderful volunteers offered her invaluable support during her childhood and teenage years, when she struggled to come to terms with these losses.

Lizzie, who lives in Fairlawn Avenue, is hoping to raise over £500 for the charity in order

to help Cruse to continue their services and support others in need.

If you would like to sponsor her Marathon run, visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/LizzieCockle>. And if you see her running through East Finchley with her trusty black and white Spaniel-cross dog Molly by her side, give her a wave!

This is the biggest challenge of my life

By Sarah Shooter

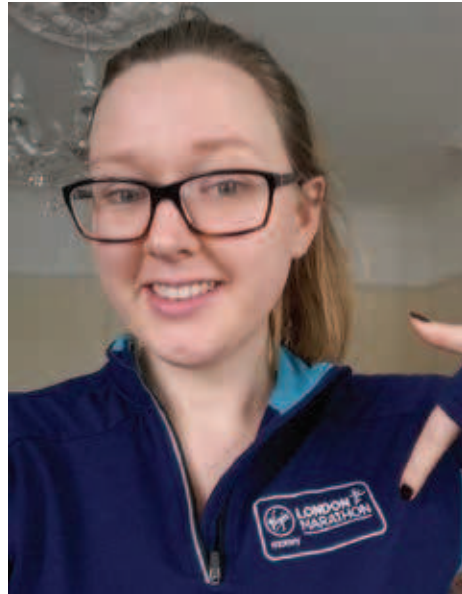
Around six months ago, I made two big changes: I moved to East Finchley, and I began training for the biggest challenge of my life, the London Marathon on 24 April. I began as a complete novice, huffing and sweating my way from Cherry Tree Wood to Muswell Hill and back, questioning my sanity and lamenting my blistered feet.

I was encouraged to go further by the wonderful places to run around my new home: the Parkland Walk with its panoramic view to the city, Alexandra Palace, Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood. I've gawped at the beautiful mansions of The Bishops Avenue, which I've now been up and down more times than I'd care to count.

Throughout the miserable and dark winter evenings, I've been inspired to keep going by the other runners I meet along the way, clad in luminous Lycra and steely looks of determination.

I'm also inspired to run by the amazing work of Oxfam, the charity I'm fundraising for. Their tireless efforts to end extreme poverty and to improve the lives of those suffering hardship are truly amazing.

From providing emergency disaster relief to promoting women's rights, and combat-



Sarah Shooter

ting climate change, Oxfam carries out essential work on a global scale. Oxfam relies on the generosity of those who can afford to donate. If you can, please donate, and help me to raise £2,000.

For more information, you can visit my Virgin Money Giving page: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/sarahshooter>

The day we were sent down to the cells at the Old Bailey

By Diana Cormack

Those quickest to respond to an invitation to buy tickets were able to join the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Mark Shooter, on a fascinating tour of the Old Bailey in February.

We made our way to the Central Criminal Court through the Lord Mayor's Entrance in Warwick Square to have tea promptly at 4.30pm in the Judges' Dining Room, a place not generally seen by the public.

Of about 36 of us, a third were local mayors with their partners, bearing chunky chains of office. We were seated at a long table stretching almost the length of a panelled room with walls bearing the shields and insignia of former mayors of London.

After an interesting introductory talk by the Recorder of London, Nicholas Hilliard QC, we were taken into Court 1 by our guide Mr Charles Henty, Under-Sheriff and Secondary of London, who possesses a vast and detailed knowledge of the building and all that goes on there.

Safety

After this older courtroom we were shown a modern one complete with the latest electronic necessities. As in all the courts, huge emphasis was put on the safety of witnesses and members of the jury, emphasised by the banning of mobile phones which could quickly identify them to the world outside.

There was nothing very modern about the cells downstairs, which had only the bare necessities. Behind the entrance desk was a blackboard listing prisons in the area, next to which the names of prisoners arriving the following day would be chalked.

In contrast, the baroque-style grand hall which lies directly below the familiar dome is a haven of stained glass, mosaics and statues, rarely open for public viewing but, like all of the Old Bailey, well worth a look.

DARE

The tour was in aid of Cllr Shooter's mayoral charity which goes under the slogan 'DARE'. D: Dignity (Duchene Research Fund); A: Assistance (Chai Cancer Care); R: Respect (Homeless Action Barnet); E: Education (Legadel - helping children achieve). Find out more by web searching or emailing mayor@barnet.gov.uk.

Old Barn: Objections to share of space

By Janet Maitland

What do you think of Barnet Council's plans to demolish the Old Barn on Tarling Road and build a new community centre in its place? So far, 22 people have objected to the scheme which will be decided upon at a planning committee meeting "sometime in the spring".

Some objections are about traffic congestion, parking problems and noise. Most are about how the building will actually be used. To read residents' comments, go to <https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk/online-applications/> and enter the application code 15/06974/FUL

Space arrangements

At the end of January, the council unexpectedly designated half of the ground floor as a nursery, while remaining committed to leasing half of the building to the Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA) in order to re-provide the facilities lost when their centre on Coppetts Road, N10, was destroyed in a racist arson attack in 2013. That therefore leaves a quarter of the building available for residents who are not nursery users or members

of the SBWA, which is described by one objector as "distinctly unfair".

Barnet Council told *THE ARCHER* that the nursery would benefit the community as it will provide "free early education". It would also make the centre more viable as the rent would "support other activities and the centre's operating costs". The spokesperson emphasised that "the majority of groups expressing an interest in using the centre, including a local nursery and the SBWA, were previously tenants in the Old Barn and provide services for local residents", adding that final decisions on space arrangements will be made after the appointment of a management organisation.

Another issue is whether the building will have any room for a community cafe to be shared by everyone using the centre.

The council said it was preparing detailed internal plans which look at potential uses of facilities such as the downstairs kitchen and the extensive grounds and outdoor space.

How to speak out

Planning Committee meetings are public so anyone can attend. But to speak either for or against the application you must make a formal request, by emailing planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk or by writing to Planning Services, London Borough of Barnet, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP. The council must receive your request by 10am on the third working day prior to the meeting. You can check on dates and agendas by going to <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk> and then Planning Committee.

Decision expected by May on Viceroy Close flats scheme

The timetable for consideration of the planning application that could see the car park behind Budgens and Iceland covered by a new block of flats is becoming clearer.

The public consultation period has expired and Barnet Council is now assessing the scheme. If officers recommend approval, the application will be presented to the area planning committee, which next meets on 10 May.

Objections received

So far, the council has received 33 objections to the plan. All objectors who have requested to speak to the planning committee will be notified of the precise meeting date in due course.

Should officers recommend refusal, however, objectors will be notified of that decision.

As we've reported in our last two issues, developers are seeking to build eight flats adjacent to Viceroy Close. They would sit behind an arched entrance off East End Road, and the existing public car park will be removed, leaving eight spaces left for residents' cars only.

Objectors have stated that the proposed development will seriously impair facilities and access for existing residents in Viceroy Close, reduce the number of parking spaces available for visitors to the High Road and threaten the viability of lorry deliveries to Budgens, Iceland and other stores in Viceroy Parade.



Academy makes its decision about admissions

After a public consultation and many weeks of often acrimonious debate, the Archer Academy has published its decision about how it will handle admissions from September 2017.

The school will guarantee 40 places for four feeder schools in N3 and NW11 that are within 1.5 miles of its gates. Martin Primary and Holy Trinity Primary schools are not named as feeder schools but the academy states it will still take a substantial number of pupils from N2 under its proximity rules.

“Acute problem”

Sanjay Maraj, chair of the Archer Academy Trust, said the founders of the school made a commitment to serve families in N2, N3 and NW11, and the fact that not one child living in N3 or NW11 had been offered a first-round place on the basis of proximity for September 2016 admissions demonstrated the acute nature of the problem.

“However, the Trust feels an equally strong commitment to N2 and was keen to address concerns raised about the proposals disadvantaging parts of our most local community,” he said.

Core schools but not feeders

“There was strong support from the consultation for the feeder school approach and the Trust remains clear about its founding commitment to all three postcodes. The Trust has concluded that it is not necessary to allocate places to a feeder school in N2, because there will continue to be a significant number of students transitioning to the Archer Academy from primary schools in N2 under the distance over-

subscription criterion.

“The Trust is confident that Martin Primary and Holy Trinity will remain core schools for us, as they are both close to our school and within the priority postcodes. Indeed, our modelling shows that Martin Primary will provide us with more students than any other primary school under these new arrangements, once the school reaches steady state.”

He added that modelling indicated around 50 places each year will be allocated on proximity grounds, in addition to sibling places. A requirement will also be added that children who are allocated a feeder school place must live in one of the priority postcodes.

You can read the full decision at www.thearcheracademy.org.uk/Admissions/admissions-policy. See also our Letters to the Editor, page 11.

Bird call

Are you someone who can recognise British woodland birds and are you also a regular visitor to Cherry Tree Wood? If the answer to both questions is yes, the Friends of CTW would be glad of your help to update the conservation plan for the woods.

Throughout April 2016 they are inviting visitors to note the birds they see in the woods and email their lists at the end of the month to brown.kate@btinternet.com.



The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood ready to tackle the litter. Photo Mike Coles

Pickers give park a spring clean

More than 40 volunteers tidied up Cherry Tree Wood as part of the Clean for the Queen campaign, which aims to get local areas looking their best in the year of the Queen’s 90th birthday.

Staff from McDonald’s UK Headquarters in East Finchley joined forces with Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, Barnet Council, and local people for the litter pick on Friday 4 March.

They collected more than 23 bags of litter, including a

car jack and a saucepan. Two dilapidated flower beds were also given a new lease of life with the planting of bulbs just in time for spring.

Iona Neilson, from the McDonald’s sustainability team, said: “We supported Clean for

the Queen because we understand the importance of having clean and welcoming areas to live and work in. It’s amazing what can be achieved when people pull together. To have 40 volunteers clearing up 23 bags of rubbish is a fantastic effort.”

There’s a hole in my road

Winter and early spring have left East Finchley’s roads pockmarked with potholes but there are concerns that Barnet Council is not up to the job of fixing them.

Arjun Mittra has photographed holes in our roads and broken pavements since he became a ward councillor four years ago and now he has presented a report to the council that claims the repairs system isn’t working.

He believes the outsourcing of roads maintenance work to private company Capita has left residents with poor-quality pothole repairs that often don’t last long and need fixing a second time at further expense.

“All they do is rush jobs,” said Cllr Mittra. “They just throw asphalt into the hole and don’t tidy up after themselves, leaving pebbles and debris everywhere that causes further damage.”

He also revealed that information on new potholes submitted by residents to the Fix My Street service is not acted upon as



A hastily filled pothole in Beresford Road. Photo by Arjun Mittra.

Capita is not linked to the reporting service. This in turn means people lose faith in the council, he claimed.

Public money

He is asking for Barnet Council to take Capita to task for their performance on maintenance and to claw back public money where repairs are not carried out properly. “There needs to be a reporting structure so we can keep a tab on the work they’ve done,” he said.

Cllr Mittra’s recommendations were accepted by fellow councillors who have asked officers to investigate the road repairs service in time for an environment committee meeting in July.



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On the street where you live

By Ann Bronkhorst

Normally Bedford Road, East Finchley, receives little media attention, but on Thursday 18 February a film company descended on it from 7am until late that night. The filming of a commercial for sandwich chain Subway centred around one house but inconvenienced many people, as residents' parking on the western half of the street was suspended from the previous afternoon until late on the 18th at short notice.

Guidelines

Barnet is one of several London boroughs working with Reel Film Locations, a company which acts as an interface between film companies and potential indoor and outdoor locations; it provides clear guidelines for street filming.

No permission is needed from anyone to film in streets as they are public highways. Disabled and loading bays are never suspended but residents' parking bays can be suspended; the film company pays the local authority to cover the costs of signage and administration.

Timely and careful

"Parking suspensions are done in a timely and careful way," said a representative of Reel Film Locations; and indeed this is what *should* happen. Film companies should notify residents by letter and the local authority should put up notices in the street, in both cases at least five days before the event. Bedford Road residents received no letter-drops, however, and street signs (Barnet's responsibility) appeared only one day before filming.

Under the Freedom of Infor-



'Disruption: Camera crews in Bedford Road. Photo James Stroud

mation Act Emma Stroud, of Bedford Road, asked Barnet about the amount of money the council was paid and what it was for. Barnet did not provide the total amount but replied that each suspended residential parking space is charged to the filming company at £20 per day. In addition, there is an administration fee of £130 per application covering "one or multiple bay suspensions" and "ensuring that the correct signage is in place": the latter clearly not done in this case.

Where next?

On the website reelfilmlocations.com there are lists of guidelines for film companies and local authorities, and photos of potential locations. Other possible sites for filming locally include Martin Primary School and Cherry Tree Wood Park (sic). If a film crew turns

up there or in your street, let's hope the correct procedures will have been followed.

A new charter for our woodlands

By Luz Mosquera, Woodland Trust volunteer

The Woodland Trust, with over 40 other cross-sector organisations, is promoting a new charter called The Charter for Trees, Woods and People, with the goal of protecting the vulnerable and depleting forestry of the UK from many threats.

Trees and forests have always played a vital role in our history and culture, a fact recognised by the 1217 Charter of the Forest, signed by Henry III. It helped guarantee access to Britain's royal parks and forests to its citizens, whose livelihoods depended on their accessibility.

Its 2016 successor seeks to follow the same spirit by reflecting the still vital importance of trees and woodlands to individuals and to society as a whole.

Connection

But why do we need it? Well, our increasingly indoor lives mean our connection to Britain's woodlands and trees is growing weaker. Public and political apathy towards woodland conservation is growing as a result, and at a time when the country's natural forestry is facing increasing and

unprecedented levels of threat: urban development, pests and diseases, climate change.

Despite these changes, many of us who live in vast urban areas like London still value the pockets of woodland we have left. Local green areas such as Highgate Woods and Cherry Tree Wood provide visitors with places to appreciate nature and enjoy themselves. They are places where children can play, owners can walk their dogs and people can relax and take in the sun during the warmer seasons.

The charter will be rooted in significant personal memories of trees and woodlands from people from all walks of life, to demonstrate their significance. The Trust invites all readers to send in their personal memories and stories online at treecharter.uk/share-your-story.

Lucky Luca lands on her four paws

By Sheila Armstrong

It's a long way from a dog pound outside Dublin to East Finchley but that is the journey that Luca, a handsome white Springer cross, took just over a year ago. First-time dog owners Jackie and Mike Randall are thrilled with Luca and she is thrilled with them.

It is a very good match. She is a happy, friendly dog who has adapted well to her new life, enjoying her walks in Cherry Tree Wood and on the Heath. Jackie describes her as a gift and fun to be with.

Jackie and Mike spent a long time chatting to dog owners, researching both suitable breeds and dog rescue organisations before they were ready to take on a dog. In the process they discovered Enfield Dog Rescue and met Mary Scully who has been rehoming dogs for over 35 years.

A great lover of dogs, Mary has 14 of her own. She brought Luca over here from Ireland just before Christmas 2014, and within a week of meeting Mary the Randalls had their dog.

Luca had some basic training



Luca with Jackie Randall. Photo Mike Coles

before the Randalls got her and they have taught her quite a lot more. Plans for the future include more walks, and her quiet but friendly personality suggests the possibility of a career for Luca

as a Pet Pal visitor in hospitals.

Rescued dogs often make excellent pets. Contact www.enfielddogrescue.org, email enquiries@enfielddogrescue.org, or phone 020 8482 9372.

Vet vacancy

The Finchley branch of the RSPCA is looking for someone with a love of animals to take the part-time role of veterinary animal welfare assistant.

The job includes managing the reception of the charity's Finchley clinic two evenings per week, and admin duties for a couple of mornings or afternoons a week.

The pay rate for the role is £8.65 - £10.00 per hour including London weighting. Apply to Monica Liljeroth/Emma Prosser by emailing: rspcafinchley@gmail.com or phoning 07557 959690. Closing date for applications is Monday 25 April.

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



Strawberry Vale gas supply: a hard won victory

By Daphne Chamberlain

Strawberry Vale residents have won back their gas supply. The Peabody Trust, which owns the estate, had been refusing to switch the gas back on since 22 January, even though a faulty meter had been repaired and certified safe by the National Grid. They had been due to meet a legal challenge in court from the residents on 4 March, but have now started re-installation.

Missing safety procedures

The legal challenge was not only because the gas had not been re-installed, but also because Peabody Trust had given no satisfactory reason for keeping it turned off. However, it is now appears that the Trust has never operated legally required safety procedures set out in the Gas Safety (Manage-

ment) Regulations 1996.

These detailed requirements cover safe delivery to consumers, dealing with supply emergencies, gas escapes, incidents and gas composition. Failure to comply can result in an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment.

Months of gas connections ahead

Peabody Trust, which owns and manages more than 27,000 homes, stated: "To the best of our knowledge the estate has never had this documentation in place at any point in its history. We are now working to restore the gas supply for cooking as our preferred option for the estate.

"This will mean putting in place a comprehensive set of additional procedures in order to meet all of the requirements. We expect to connect around 25 homes each

week. As there are 267 homes on the estate, this will take around 10-12 weeks to complete."

Compensation

Hodge Jones and Allen, the legal firm representing the residents, are continuing to look at compensation claims, which will be considered individually and heard in court at a future date.

Laurence Williamson, Chair of the Residents Association, said: "We're happy that the Trust has finally come to their senses, but there are serious questions to be raised about their ability to carry out their duties as landlords, given that our properties were being supplied with gas without the correct safety procedures in place. "It is not over until the last house is connected, of course, but right now it feels a considerable and hard won victory."



Memory Lane: The Confections on stage

Bitter sweet swan song for the Confections

For 28 years, members of the Confections singing group have given public concerts and toured day centres and residential homes with their rousing repertoire of music hall numbers and Broadway classics.

But now the small band of singers and musicians has reached the end of the road after founder Ruby Sasin announced that this month's concert at St Mary's Catholic Church, East Finchley, would be their last.

"I'll be sorry to stop but I'm past my sell-by date now," said Ruby, sadly. "It's a lot of work keeping the group going, rehearsing once a week and finding new routines and costumes. I've loved every minute but it's time to call it a day."

Old favourites

The Confections had 12 members at their peak, and more recently have been touring with four women, two men and a flautist. They could perform two or three concert visits a day at residential homes, always in full costume, and made a point of staging a fundraising concert for St Mary's twice a year.

The first half of their show was packed with slightly naughty songs and singalongs from the music hall days followed by favourites from the likes of Gershwin, Sondheim and Rogers and Hart for the second half.

"I've got so many happy memories," said Ruby. "We turned up at an old folks' home for an 8pm concert and they'd forgotten we were coming. They had to get everyone out of their beds to come and watch us. Even the canary had a cover over its cage when we got there.

"And there have been moving moments too. Once I was singing the old song Alice Blue Gown from the musical Irene and a lady in the front row started singing along with me. Afterwards, the matron of the home told me the lady had been there three years and never spoken before that night. That really hit me."

Final performance

Ruby, who has three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, tried to find a successor to carry on the Confections but without any luck. So be sure to catch them for the last time when they perform at St Mary's Church, High Road, N2, on Saturday 16 April at 7.30pm. Tickets priced £8 and £7 are available on the door or in advance from 020 8440 2817.

Walking group seeks special status

East Finchley's Talkie Walkies group is hoping to achieve Walks for Health status, putting it in line for advertising and support from the national organisation at walking-forhealth.org.uk

Members meet every Monday at midday at the Clissold Arms on Fortis Green and go for a walk together in a local green space, giving everyone some fresh air, company and a chance to discover parts of the local area they may not know.

The group is currently recruiting new members and new lead-

ers to help strengthen the team. Anyone can join, and being a group leader simply means being at an agreed meeting point and having a route in mind. People do not have to commit to every week.

If you'd like to join the Talkie Walkies, contact Lisa Smith at EFAB on 020 3778 0228 or email us@efab.org.uk.

Spurs score for hospice

By Diana Cormack

A two-year partnership between north London's only children's hospice and Tottenham Hotspurs Football Club kicked off on 3 March with the home derby against Arsenal, when the team wore special edition match shirts to be signed and auctioned to raise funds for the charity.

The club aims to raise awareness of the work of Noah's Ark and to drive the recruitment of volunteers via high profile events and the support of first team players. Visit www.ForPreciousMoments.com for further information about their activities.

Noah's Ark also hopes to raise £3.3million for its Building the Ark Appeal, to fund construction of the children's hospice facility for families and children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. To donate or for more information visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk



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YOUNG ARCHER

We're on the map!

Geography students from Christ's College Finchley ventured out into the urban wilds of the High Road as part of their year of fieldwork. They plotted routes, looked for the impact of immigration and urban growth as well as taking part in a challenge by spotting specific places and labelling them on an OS map of East Finchley. Their fieldwork observations were supported by Geographical Information Systems back in the classroom.

Christ's College Finchley has just been awarded the prestigious Secondary Geography Quality Mark by the Geographical Association for the year 2015-2016. The badge recognizes excellence, good learning and creative teaching.



Taking bearings: Christ's College pupils in the High Road



Smart moves: The Coldfall Chess Under-9s.

Chess teams make their moves

The Under-9 and the Under-11 chess teams at Coldfall Primary School have both qualified for the semi-finals of the National Primary Schools' Chess Championships to be held at Pontins Camber Sands in East Sussex in May.

The teams won through qualifying rounds at The Hall School in Hampstead at the end of February, the Under-9s

coming fifth and the Under-11s coming third.

Team member Frankie Badacsonyi, aged nine, said: "I think everyone did really well and they should be proud of themselves. Our best round was the second round. In the last round we were under pressure and we had to win all our games to qualify. I cannot wait to go to Pontins and hopefully we can move on to the finals."

Head teacher Evelyn Davis said: "We are so proud of each and every member of the chess teams and the whole school is backing them for the national finals this summer."

The Under-9 team is Max Bird (captain), Max Pollack, Harry Collins, Archie Mullen, Sammy Bird and Joe Balint Kurti. The Under-11 team is Lucas Mottram (captain), Max Sprung, Zaki Bawany, Daniel Shapiro, Frankie Badacsonyi and Arthur Baker.

Drama queens (and kings) take the crown

Young actors from the Archer Academy won first prize at the Welwyn Youth Drama Festival with their performance of the ancient Greek drama Medea. Here Rio J, who played Medea, takes us backstage.

Medea is a classic Greek tragedy, involving lust, loss, death, betrayal, fear and heartbreak. It was quite an ambitious piece to give to 11-14 year olds but once we got to know each other and the play, we felt confident and prepared.

The first few weeks of rehearsals were a struggle, I'd have to admit. As it was Greek theatre there was a big focus on the chorus. Every time a teacher poked their head in they had a look of pure astonishment on their face.

It was rough at first, not everyone realised how much they were going to have to do to make

this piece work. Of course it was worth it, the outcome was beyond phenomenal. At the end of it we all were looking at drama from a completely different angle.

No turning back

On the day of the competition, I'd never seen energy bouncing off Archer students like that before. When we got there, we had a spacing run and then made sure the costumes were on right with the appropriate accessories. After that we tried to calm down a bit.

Before we knew it, we were being rushed onto the stage and

hushed as we stood behind the curtains. We listened to a brief introduction and waited for the curtains to rise, because we knew the minute they did, there would be no turning back. As I caught my first glimpse of the audience, I clicked into role and dropped to the floor.

Our teachers Miss Randall, Miss Rodford and Mr Dean stretched the whole cast and were as stressed and nervous as the rest of us. I'm proud to say that my school won the Welwyn Youth Drama Festival and I cannot wait for next year's competition.



Greek tragedy: The cast of Medea

Register to vote

Eligible residents have until Monday 18 April to register to vote in the elections for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly that take place on Thursday 5 May.

Changes to the voter registration system brought in by the government last year mean that new potential voters are now personally responsible for registering themselves because the previous "head of household" registration system has been abolished.

If you are a young person aged 16 or 17 you can already register to vote and if you turn 18 on or before May 5 you will be able to vote on election day, so long as you have registered by 18 April.

Registering is a five-minute online process at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or you can contact Barnet's Electoral Registration team by phone on 020 8359 5577 or by email at: ero@barnet.gov.uk.

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Ready to lend: Toy library helpers Elaine Phillips and Ewa Golota

Time to play

High-quality educational and fun toys are available for parents and children to take home from the Finchley Community Toy Library.



High in the Peruvian Andes the latest on the library protests courtesy of The Archer. Photo Ian Cormack

Never mind the view

Readers may remember our photo of writer Janet Maitland reading *THE ARCHER* underneath the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro in October 2015.

Well, we've been back to South America, this time in the suitcase of Diana Cormack. She made sure that news of the fight to save East Finchley Library reached the World Heritage Centre of Machu Picchu in the High Andes in Peru.

It works just like a book library. Children can choose toys by well-known brands including VTech, Little Tykes, Play Toys and GALT and keep them for two weeks for a small donation of about 50p.

The library is free to join and all families are welcome. You can find it in Newstead Children's Centre, Tarling Road, N2, on Monday morning from 9am until 10.30am during term time.

Help needed

Do you have a few hours to spare on Monday mornings? The organisers of the toy library are looking for volunteers to help out with taking donations, sorting toys and generally helping parents choose toys in a fun and chatty atmosphere.

Finchley Community Toy Library is run by Barnet Lone Parent Centre, a registered charity that supports lone parents in the borough. Their main office is at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, N2. If you would like to know more about their work call 020 7021 4146.

London honours a remarkable man

By Ann Bronkhorst

At the end of January three elderly South African men were honoured by David Cameron and received the Freedom of the City of London. They are the three survivors of the 1963/64 Rivonia trial. The youngest, 82-year-old Denis Goldberg, lived in East Finchley for many years and may still be remembered locally.

When Nelson Mandela faced trial for plotting the overthrow of the South African government and its system of 'apartheid' six other men were accused too. All were jailed but, being white, Goldberg was not sent to the notorious Robben Island.

On his release after 22 years in prison he went into exile, joining his family who had escaped when he had been arrested. They lived in a house in Huntingdon

Road where his wife Esme later took in paying guests.

Many South African political exiles and activists were, or had been, living in north London: people like Joe Slovo and Ruth First in Camden Town, Ronnie Kasrils in Golders Green, Oliver Tambo in Muswell Hill. The African National Congress, today the ruling party in South Africa, had a London office where Goldberg worked for a while.

His wife died in 2000 and two years later he returned to South Africa. By the mid-90s he had become involved in several non-political African development charities. Affable, shrewd and a good communicator, Goldberg has travelled widely to promote them and to explain South Africa's needs, post-apartheid. His Facebook page shows his public profile including these recent honours.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Honestly, young people today

These are weird times as today's youth is turning its back on the things that made life worthwhile to embrace designer cupcakes and jogging. The shock has yet to sink in, but across the country the should-be-out-to-lunch generation is literally going out to lunch in a designer pulled pork or sushi bar sort of way.

Forget drinking each other under the table, apparently today's youth prefers a kale smoothie to a lunchtime pint, and that is not anything I can understand.

This trend towards a non-drinking, drug-free, pop-up juice bar world is proof that we are getting more like the buttock-clenchingly neat and polite Europeans. According to some latest survey we are no longer ASBO central. What has gone so horribly wrong?

Once upon a time you went to university for the sex and drugs and rock'n'roll. Getting a degree was a by-product, the life and lifestyle was what mattered. You'd move to a far off town and get far out of your mind and really experience the mind-expanding joys of higher education. And it was all free and came with beer money, or 'student grant' as your parents called it.

Now you go to the one at the bottom of the road, live at home with your parents and think of the debt waiting for you. And because you're living at home with your parents you have to live by their rules and be nice and normal, never crawl home smashed and never drag home someone you know you'll not want to introduce to your dad at breakfast. The worst bit is that you can bet your life that your dad never had that problem.

But, wait, all is not lost. Through my half open window I can hear the sound of feedback and the scream of an electric guitar. It's a sound that tells me all I need to know. Someone out there is dreaming of forming a band and disturbing the neighbours. And that's the way it should be.

Film club gets advice from an expert

By Floyd Singh Power

At Christ's College Finchley, after lessons are over, there is a film club on Tuesdays every week. This was started this year and fast became the highlight of my weeks. The idea of the club is to expose the members to films that they wouldn't usually see, films like *Nosferatu*, *Duck Soup* and *Rashomon*.

One week we had a visit from screenwriter Annalisa D'Inella. She explained that screenwriters write out stage directions, and more importantly, write *how* stage directions ought to be acted.

D'Inella seemed to be in her element, explaining something she loved to students eager to understand. Every point was made and explained well, taking into account language we might not understand, like 'treatments' and 'exposition'.

Showing not telling

After reading the openings from 'Despicable Me' and 'Breaking Bad' we looked at 'showing not telling'. We were asked to think of a way to show that a person was having an extra-marital affair as subtly as possible. The suggestions included the characters slipping wedding rings on, having a close up of a picture of one of the two with a different woman and so on.

The session ended with D'Inella telling us how we could look further into screenwriting by searching for screenplays easily online. We were told a few pointers on conveying a character's personality. The best way to show a very specific personality to an audience is to give them something they recognise from their own lives.

The lesson ran into break, but against all the laws that govern teenagers in school, not one person went for their belongings.

Gift shop gift

The Cherry Tree Gift Shop in the High Road is celebrating 10 years in East Finchley this month. As a thank you to all its customers, there will be a 15% discount on all purchases made on Friday 15 April.

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- ◉ **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.



David Bowie by Jake Chodosh. See more of his art at www.artismbyjake.com

Bowie Night at the Boogaloo

By Joe Strong

If you happened to be passing The Boogaloo Bar on Archway Road on Thursday 10 March you'd have seen the steamed-up windows and the throng of people outside trying to get into the Bar around 10pm.

Inside, to the sounds of David Bowie, the crowd were dancing, waving, singing and occasionally crying as the songs ranging throughout his career brought back those special memories.

In the 1970s Bowie Nights took place in just about every major city in the country, even Wigan had one. Young people would dress up as one of Bowie's incarnations, maybe the Thin White Duke dancing with Ziggy Stardust or Bowie Girls. It was revolutionary at the time and certainly shook up quite a few parents.

At the Boogaloo I can't say that there was much outrageousness although there were a couple of outstanding outfits that won prizes for the best dressed. What I did witness was a mass of Bowie lovers dancing, singing and generally wondering why we don't do this kind of thing more often.

Thursdays for Monday

This event was a fund raiser for the Monday Youth Club in East Finchley which is going from strength to strength but is desperate for equipment and

resources. The evening raised £350 in total through a raffle of rare Bowie records that were kindly donated to us.

With our proceeds we have bought a brand new PA system for our young singers and rappers and also a pool table, both of which are fantastic attractions for our young people. Next time we are aiming for a table tennis table and a new football strip for our team.

Look out for the Bowie night at the Boogaloo on Thursday 14 April and put on your red shoes and dance the blues. Details from 020 8340 2928.

Towel total

Thank you to the wonderful staff at the Ryker Kids children's store in the High Road for selling the last of THE ARCHER'S tea towels.

Since they first went on sale two years ago they have raised well over £1,000, which we have donated to local youth projects including the Monday Club and a reading project on the Strawberry Vale estate.

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Secrets of the Suburb

Dame Henrietta Barnett had a dream of buying a few hundred acres of land and forming a new residential area in which artisans and intellectuals could live side by side in beautiful surroundings and learn from one another.

It didn't quite work out like that, and you'll find out why on a new guided walk of Hampstead Garden Suburb being led by Paul Baker, a City of London guide who's been specialising in tours of the borough of Barnet for 12 years.

The suburb has been home to countless famous people, including Harold Wilson, Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Ross, Donald Sinden, Hugh Laurie, Martin Bell, Liz Taylor, Rachel Weisz, the former King Constantine of Greece, and Richard and Judy.

On the walk you'll hear about all of them, and get a closer look at some of the area's most impressive houses and green spaces. Meet Paul on Saturday 16 April at 11am outside Golders Green tube station. Adults



Your guide: Paul Baker

pay £9 and children under 12s pay £4. Find out more from Paul on 07506 761294 or visit www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net.



Businesses club together

Local businesses in East Finchley have joined together to form a network to generate revenue and help address the issues that face local businesses.

The support network and social forum for all of the trades in N2, including the High Road and East End Road shops as well as home workers and independents, will provide a chance to meet and to work together constructively, forging closer links with the neighbourhood and reinforcing an already strong local community.

Due to be formally launched at the East Finchley Summer Festival on 19 June, any local businesses not yet involved are encouraged to get in touch via: eastfinchleybusiness@gmail.com.

What's On...

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

Sunday 10 April

- **Free concert** at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm. Viola da Cunha, mezzo soprano, Andrea Whittaker, soprano, Litza Tunnah, violin, and Yuki Osedo, piano, perform works by Schubert, Schumann, R Strauss, Mendelssohn, Humperdink, Offenbach and Rebecca Clarke. Free admission with collection for the North London Hospice. Venue fully accessible.

Thursday 14 April

- **Battle of Barnet: an anniversary guided walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker. Special commemorative walk for this famous battle (14 April, 1471) of the Wars of the Roses. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road, 11am. More details from Paul on 07506 761294 or www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net.

- **David Bowie Night** at the Boogaloo Bar, 312 Archway Road, N6, with DJ Joe Strong, a fundraising event for the Monday Youth Club in East Finchley; 9pm to midnight. Details: 020 8340 2928.

Saturday 16 April

- **Hampstead Garden Suburb: a guided walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker. Find out about a dame's dream and an

earthly paradise. Meet at Golders Green tube station at 11am. More details from Paul on 07506 761294 or www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net.

- **The Confections' final show** at St Mary's Church Hall, 279 High Road, N2, at 7.30pm. After almost 30 years the group is disbanding: enjoy one last evening of music hall and well-loved classic songs, with all proceeds going to St Mary's Church. Tickets priced £8 and £7 (concessions) include refreshments and are available from 020 8440 2817 or at the door on the night.

Thursday 21 April

- **The London Ripieno Singers** in concert at All Saints', Durham Road, N2, at 7.30pm. Performances of *Missa Choralis* by Franz Liszt, *Stabat Mater* by Josef Rheinberger and *Requiem Brevis* by Geoffrey Hanson. Tickets: £12 (concs £10) from Black Gull Books, 121 High Road, N2, Tel: 020 8444 4717, and on the door.

Thursday 21 to Saturday 23 April

- **The Guild Players present Boeing Boeing**, a comedy by Marc Camoletti, at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, N3, each evening at 7.47pm. All tickets £10 from the box office on 020 8346 6337 or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/theguildplayers



Letters to the editor

The good, the bad and the ugly

Dear Editor,

Having arrived accidentally around 1990 I realise that I've ended up living in East Finchley for nearly half my life; the longest I ever lived anywhere before was five years. Inertia and convenience has kept me here but now it's time to downsize, moving only to the other branch of the Northern line and close to the Heath extension, so still within walking distance. Good things about East Finchley I shall come back for include: the wonderful Fuel Lands allotments; Black Gull books; walks on the wild side in Coldfall, Highgate and Queens woods; being able to walk or cycle off-road to Ally Pally or Finsbury Park along the old railway; the cafes therein (shame about the loss of the cafe in Cherry Tree); the fabulous Phoenix cinema; the purpose-built genius Iyengar studio behind the off-licence; the level of community engagement and activity exhibited by THE ARCHER, the community festivals and friendly locals. What I shan't miss will be the whingeing about change and development. Why is new development always met by comments on how much worse traffic and parking will be? Really no-one but the infirm has any excuse to drive or be driven locally to the High Road. The proposed development behind Budgens/Iceland looks interesting and contemporary, if a little over-designed, and will create much needed homes on what is otherwise a really ugly eyesore of a corner site. Bring it on, I say.

And a bit of choice, even if it is from one of the big supermarkets like Sainsbury's, would be welcome. Waitrose would be preferable, as profit goes to all the staff, not shareholders or family owners, but the anti-change brigade shot themselves in the foot fighting that one off. Did no-one see Caffe Nero coming and try to fend that off? As if there weren't enough cafes already, but no butcher, baker or candlestick maker. So farewell, East Finchley, and welcome in the new.

Yours faithfully,
Alexandra Rook,
Park Road, N2.

Lost for words

Dear Editor,

I recently wrote to my MP, Mike Freer, on the subject of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Clauses 13 and 14, which will adversely affect many disabled people, stating I had the lifelong degenerative disease Multiple Sclerosis and that proposed cuts to welfare would impact on people with MS. I enclose the closing paragraph of his reply:

"I hope this has also gone some way to explaining the ways the Government is ensuring the system protects those with the most serious conditions, such as [insert relevant condition], including exempting the Support Group component in ESA and its UC equivalent from the benefits freeze and the Benefit Cap."

When I pointed out that his proof reading left something to be desired, I was told that a standard response can be expected from a standard email.

A busy MP using a template is not unacceptable, but to leave a one-size-fits-all-disability insert blank I do find pretty insulting. It left me feeling [insert relevant expletive] very let down.

Yours faithfully,
Harriet Connides,
Manor Park Road, N2.

Parking pickle

Dear Editor,

I recently received a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for not displaying a valid resident's permit in my car parked outside my own house. This despite the fact that Barnet no longer issues actual permits to display but monitors the system electronically!

I wrote to Barnet who said the PCN was issued erroneously owing to a "technical problem" and the notice was rescinded. However, your readers may be concerned that Barnet has declined to respond to my enquiry as to whether or not they will be issuing reminders to residents to renew their permits.

Beware, as I suspect Barnet will place the onus on residents to ensure their permits are not out of date in an effort to swell income by parking fines.

Yours faithfully,
Malcolm Goldstein,
Address supplied.

Esso site neighbours

Dear Editor,

Regarding access to the site of the former Esso petrol station on the corner of the High Road and Church Lane, when I bought my house in Leopold Road in 2007, I made the effort to find out to whom the strip of land at the back belongs. It is the Junction Road Motor Company and they are based in North Finchley.

As far as I remember they use their land to store vehicles which are waiting for insurance claims to be settled. A few weeks ago I phoned them when the Esso site was razed, and there were no plans to sell.

I suspect a fair number of us would hate to see the site changed. It has recently been tidied up to some extent, and the side entrance is now in more use than previously.

Incidentally, when I first looked into it some years ago, I believe I was told that it was condemned land due to something noxious having been stored there during the war, but I can't substantiate this.

Yours faithfully,
Linda Dolata,
Leopold Road, N2.

Which bus now?

Dear Editor,

What a pity that when the bus shelter near Kokos on the High Road was replaced the Transport for London contractors failed to replace the bus indicator as it was the only indicator with all the East Finchley buses coming through. An indicator really helped in making an informed decision about which bus route to opt for.

Yours faithfully,
C. Stevens,
Fairlawn Avenue, N2.

Academy has done its best

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank all at the Archer Academy for consulting the N2, N3 and NW11 community regarding their admissions policy. Although the school was set up to educate the children in these three postcodes, the catchment area has shrunk to such an extent that this year only children in N2 have been offered a first round proximity place. Children from N3 and NW11

have unfortunately missed out. The fact that the Archer Academy is so over-subscribed is a reflection of the great reputation it has established in a very short period of time, as well as the lack of secondary school places in the borough, especially for girls. The Academy cannot single handedly solve the problem for Barnet, but I feel that by changing its admission policy to include the four feeder schools in NW11 and N3 in addition to allocating proximity places, it has done its best to remain true to its original vision of serving the children of NW11 and N3 as well as N2.

Yours faithfully,
Fiona West,
Address supplied.

Elephant in the room

Dear Editor

The Archer Academy Trust has now published the results of its recent admissions consultation and has reached a decision based on the evidence, with a commitment to reviewing the decision on an annual basis. However, it is clear that local parents are feeling extremely anxious about their chances of securing high-quality secondary school places for their children.

The elephant in the room is that we actually have four local schools which are within walking distance if you include Fortismere, but two of these schools are unpopular with local parents and under-subscribed. In this current year 7 (2015-2016) I understand that Bishop Douglass School has 97 vacant places and Christ's College has 79 vacant places, when both schools have capacity for a 180 intake each (larger than the Archer Academy's 150).

In 2010 the governors at Christ's College turned down a request to go co-educational. In 2013 the

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

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school received a disappointing "needs improvement" grading from Ofsted. Parents have voted with their feet and are not choosing Christ's College for their sons. Similarly, Bishop Douglass does not look like it has made much headway in becoming a first-choice school for local Catholic families.

Isn't it time that something was done to hold these two schools to account for this terrible waste of our local resources, particularly at a time when the pressure for school places is becoming even more intense? What action are the governors at these schools taking to improve matters? What action can our local politicians take?

Yours faithfully,
Helen Drake,
Address supplied.

Boxed in

Dear Editor,

During the school drop-off run to my children's school, we have noticed an increasing number of unsightly green telecom boxes on East End Road.

There are now 12 of these carbuncles in a row outside the Five Bells pub. This is in addition to two large and malevolent masts.

Do any readers know if there anything we can do to stop the seemingly inexorable growth of these eyesores and preferably have them relocated?

Yours faithfully,
Stuart Miller,
Address supplied.



Relaxing brew: Coffee and Chat members enjoy catching up

Coffee and Chat session ready to welcome you

EFAB's friendly coffee morning, Coffee and Chat, held at the Clissold Arms in Fortis Green every Monday from 10.30am to 12 noon, is going from strength to strength and helping people feel more connected to the local area.

All are welcome to pop in for a cuppa and a chat, with local information available and a friendly ear to listen and share ideas with. There's just a £1 contribution for refreshments.

EFAB Community Friends volunteer their time to be there every week, with attendees

ranging from their 30s to their 80s. Other social events such as lunches and evenings out are being planned by some members.

If you'd like more details about Coffee and Chat or to find out more about EFAB, call Lisa Smith on 020 3778 0228 or email us@efab.org.uk.



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A new school rises in Cambodia

The tiny school in Tany village in southern Cambodia has three dingy classrooms for 300 children. There just isn't enough room so the youngsters have to attend in shifts.

But things are changing with the help of volunteers from the charity Guy's Trust, set up by East Finchley residents Vicky and Tony Joseph in memory of their son Guy who was killed, aged 25, in a paragliding accident in 2011.

Work, play and achievement

A team of 20 supporters arrived in Tany in late February to start building a new five-classroom block with toilets and a proper playground.

Vicky said: "Most had never worked on a building site before and certainly not in 35-degree heat but after an extraordinary welcome from the entire school lining the path, waving flags and clapping, everyone got stuck in."

They dug, shifted sand and rubble, did metal work, laid bricks, installed sinks, created a vegetable plot and built a play-

ground. In between the labour, they played with the children who were told not to go on to the building site but totally ignored the rules.

By the end of the week the basins were installed and many of the children were mesmerised at seeing running water for the first time. The playground was finished, the swings and climbing ropes erected and new Guy's Trust T-shirts were handed out to everyone.

Tony added: "The team felt a huge sense of achievement and although it was hard work absolutely everyone had an incredible time; some said it had been one of the best weeks of their life!"

Guy's Trust

Guy had spent several weeks travelling around Cambodia during the summer of 2011 and was fascinated by the



Play time: Boys try out the swings in the new playground

country and impressed with the people's warmth and resilience. In Cambodia, although 95% of children are enrolled in school, only 61% complete primary education. There are problems with absent teachers and overcrowded classes. Many parents feel their children's time is better spent working at home or in the

fields to support their family, so the country has the least educated population in the region.

To date Guy's Trust has funded 12 marine conservation internships in Indonesia, built

three schools and a library in Nepal and another school in Cambodia in Guy's memory.

Find out more about the charity's work and get involved at <http://guustrust.org>.

Crucial work of Ebola professor

By Diana Cormack

On 24 February a family of four from Summerlee Gardens made their way to Buckingham Palace where Prince Charles was presenting awards to those nominated in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. One of these was Professor John Edmunds, who was receiving the OBE. The official citation for this was: "For services to infectious disease control particularly the Ebola crisis response in West Africa".

Career supporting public health

Prof Edmunds has lived in the area for more than a decade, starting off in Church Lane. His daughters attend Holy Trinity School. His own schooling began in Wales, where his favourite subjects of biology and maths pointed to his future activities. After studying at Imperial College, London, John worked for the Health Protection Agency (now called Public Health England) and was involved in UK and worldwide studies on pandemic influenza, the human papilloma virus and swine flu.

Now he is Dean of Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and is renowned in the field of disease modelling and analysis. This involves analysing, estimating, evaluating and predicting the spread of diseases. Better understanding of this means that health officials and governments are able to make successful and cost-effective decisions about public health.

Tribute to team

John told *THE ARCHER* that he feels the award is down to his team and is not only for

their work in West Africa. He praised their magnificent

response to the horror of the Ebola crisis which aided crucial decision-making on treating the disease and their assistance with the rapid development of an effective vaccine.

But this is just the most recent on a list of admirable achievements, for his research group has aided understanding and provided life-saving analysis about serious diseases and how they spread in many parts of the world.

We hear little about this vital work, for which thanks and congratulations are due to all concerned. John's OBE underlines this.



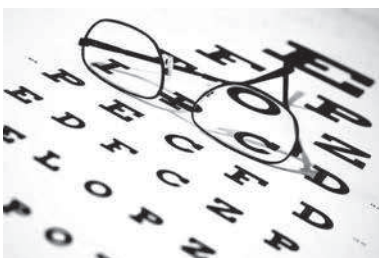
Prof John Edmunds OBE

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