



Local News is our Aim

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Legal action as Strawberry Vale residents are left with no gas supply

By Daphne Chamberlain

Long-suffering residents of Strawberry Vale have started legal action against their housing association The Peabody Trust after being left without a gas supply for a month. They are seeking an injunction to have their gas supply restored or to be provided with proof why this cannot be done.

Solicitors representing residents said many had been left without hot water or heating at the coldest time of the year and estimated around 240

households were being forced to use expensive electric cookers instead of their gas ovens.

In January, the British Red Cross set up a temporary emer-



Strawberry Vale residents without gas enjoy their pop-up lunch at The Green Man. Photo Mike Coles

gency service in the Green Man Community Centre to give Strawberry Vale families a hot meal.

Law firm Hodge, Jones and Allen said: "There has been no consultation by the Peabody Trust with residents on the decision to move from gas to electric. Many are on low incomes and must choose between running up unaffordable bills or going without basic cooking facilities.

"We have launched legal proceedings to compel the Peabody Trust to restore the gas supply. At present we have had no meaningful explanation for the Trust's failure to do this and can only assume this is a cost-cutting exercise, aimed at saving the housing association money at the expense of vulnerable residents."

Continued on page 2.

Library news

The first vote by Barnet Council on changes to the borough's library service is expected on Wednesday 23 March, with a decision expected to be referred to Full Council on Monday 4 April. Both meetings will start at 7pm at the Town Hall in Hendon, with protest meetings outside from 6pm.

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

Seven thousand signatures on the latest petition means that library supporters can address the Full Council meeting. Barnet's proposed changes include reductions in library staffing and opening hours.

Homes plan for Esso garage site

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Council has confirmed that there is a plan to build nine homes on the site of the former Esso garage on the corner of Church Lane and the High Road.

However, it is only a plan at this stage. No details of any kind about the development are as yet available. "A pre-application enquiry was made with nine houses provisionally proposed, however, no planning application has been submitted for the site," said a council spokesperson.

Esso informed THE ARCHER

last December that it had got as far as exchanging contracts on the land and expected to complete the sale in the first half of 2016.

We asked Esso whether the land immediately behind the site belonged to them and, if so, whether it was also included in the sale. The land is a narrow strip running behind the back gardens of Leopold Road and Church Lane, separated from the old garage site by a high metal gate that is kept padlocked.

"This land does not belong to Esso," said a spokesperson. It is not known who does own it or whether the prospective buyers of the Esso site are trying to buy it too.

Do any readers know who owns this land?

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In this issue:

- Oak Lodge School shopp2
- Budgens car park plan.....p3
- Stabbing in Cherry Tree Wood.p4
- Archer Academy letters..... p6
- Cookery club.....p10
- Your lettersp11

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

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0870 000 0123	Drugs Helpline		
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Strawberry Vale

Continued from page 1

On 20 January, the National Grid closed down one of the two meters supplying the estate, replacing it two days later. Laurence Williamson, chair of the Strawberry Vale Residents Association, said:

"The Peabody Trust initially claimed that the National Grid supply was unsafe. This was quickly and conclusively disproved". The National Grid have stated that their supply is safe, and a split water pipe in the old one had been lowering pressure.

However, at the time of writing and despite media coverage by LBC and ITV, and a visit from MP Mike Freer, the Peabody Trust has still refused to reconnect the supply.

Instead, residents say that they have been offered supermarket vouchers if they choose to have an electric cooker, and advice on cutting the costs of

using electricity (including night storage heating).

As part of their legal action, residents can sign up for compensation claims on a no win, no fee basis.

The legal hearing was scheduled to take place at the Royal Courts of Justice on Friday 4 March at 2pm.

Peabody said in a statement early in February: "We apologise for the continuing disruption at Strawberry Vale. We have offered to provide and install a choice of cookers/hobs to all affected residents for free.

"Alternatively, if residents would prefer to obtain their own electric cooker we will provide £500 to enable them to do so. In the interim we continue to provide temporary cookers and hotplates.

"Our staff continue to work with the community and volunteers to support residents.

Oak Lodge School opens its own

shop

By Diana Cormack
Oak Lodge is a special school maintained by Barnet Council for young people between the ages of 11 and 19 who have complex learning difficulties and autism. In early February the school opened a shop at 132 East End Road, a few minutes' walk from its site in Heath View.

'The Lodge' is a unique project which offers students meaningful work experience and raises the profile of youngsters with disabilities within the local community. The generosity of an Oak Lodge parent has funded and arranged the entire shop re-fit.

It will be supported by the Oak Lodge Foundation Trust 'Hearts of Oak' while donations

from the Hadley Trust, Jesus Hospital Charity and Finchley Charities have enabled this important project to go ahead.

Acquiring a range of skills
The shop will sell seasonal gifts, cards and stationery and the students will be involved in all aspects of the business including purchasing stock, display, pricing, marketing and accounting as well as the all-important customer service.

Young people from Barnet and Southgate College's Oak Bridge 19 – 35 provision will

also be working at the shop. The aim is to be able to offer appropriate retail qualifications to increase employability significantly and to improve outcomes for the students.

An exciting aspect of the project is that it can use retail space to showcase goods produced in the local community such as artwork, jewellery and crafts. The bigger vision is for local volunteers to work in the shop and increase the opening hours.

At present The Lodge is open from 10am – 2pm on Monday to Friday in term time only. If you are interested in any way, pop into the shop, phone 020 8444 5400 or the school on 020 8444 6711 or email info@oaklodge.barnet.sch.uk



The deputy mayor of Barnet Cllr. Alison Cornelius opens the Oak Lodge School shop on East End Road. Photo Mike Coles

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Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

East Finchley charity The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood will be holding their AGM at 12 noon in the Old White Lion pub on the High Road on Sunday 13 March. Everyone is welcome to attend and discuss Cherry Tree Wood. The group is also looking for people with skills, experience or ideas that could help preserve the woodland and enhance the facilities.



Traffic chaos warning over Budgens car park flats plan

By Lawrence Robinson

The planning application to build over the Budgens car park in Viceroy Close predicted on our front page last month has been submitted to Barnet Council. Details show that developers want to build a part two-storey, part three-storey block of eight flats and a raised landscaped courtyard over part of the car park and the service area where lorries currently deliver to Iceland and Budgens.

Pay and display parking spaces will be removed, with room left for eight vehicles belonging to residents. From East End Road, there will be a tunnel-style entrance underneath the flats into the new parking area.

The existing external staircase for residents of Viceroy Close will be demolished and replaced by an internal stairway and lift shared with the new apartments.

Local reactions
The closing date for public comments was the end of February but the planning application process will continue for some months and the council is still likely to take account of opinions submitted in the coming weeks.

Lisa King, a resident of neighbouring Beresford Road, is opposing the development, saying: "None of the flats will be social housing, all eight are to

the development would create traffic chaos in and around the High Road as the businesses in Viceroy Parade all receive deliveries through the car park.

"It is most likely that delivery vehicles would be forced onto the side roads bringing major traffic upheaval to East Finchley," he said. "It does not seem possible that either Budgens or Iceland in particular could receive deliveries during the construction phase



Close encounters: Joe Craig and Harpo

Things that go bump in the night

By John Lawrence

Joe Craig, author of the Jimmy Coates adventures for nine to 13-year-olds, has set parts of his action thriller series in East Finchley, but he got caught up in his own drama when he was out walking his faithful labrador Harpo late one night.

Joe had been visiting his sister and his family in one of the county roads when he heard muffled screams coming from the back of a small car and became convinced he was facing a dangerous hostage situation.

With Harpo by his side, he crept up to the boot of the hatchback and bravely flung it open.

Harpo piles in too

What he saw next is best described in his own words: "The boot light came on. I was staring into the face of a woman! The woman was naked. On top of the woman was a man. Also naked.

"They'd put the back seats down and were lying the full length of the car, heads in the boot. What does one say in that situation? I said: 'Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I thought you were trapped. Like a hostage. Because of the screaming and...'"

But before Joe could close

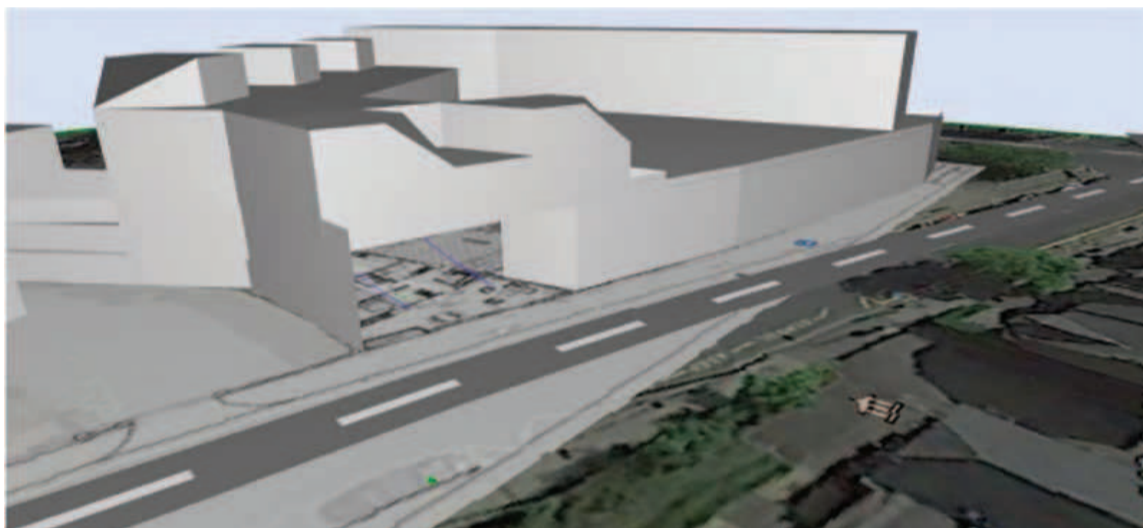
the boot and leave the couple to it Harpo, who is well trained and loves car journeys, leapt up into the car, right next to the couple's faces.

"Obviously I can't undo Harpo's training, so I said, 'Good boy.' Which I think gave the wrong impression. After that I made a swift exit," said Joe.

Ready to rescue

His shaggy dog story was an instant hit on Twitter and was soon picked up by media worldwide, getting coverage in the Telegraph, the Mirror, the Sun, the Huffington Post, Mashable, and newspapers in Germany, Spain, China and India.

"It's been quite a whirlwind," Joe told THE ARCHER. "If I heard screams coming from a car again I'd do exactly the same. I'm not easily embarrassed but I am slightly deluded so I'm convinced that at some point Harpo and I WILL come across a hostage situation and be able to save the day."



Flats plan: A view of how the Viceroy Close development would look taken from the planning application. Existing flats are at the rear. The tunnel entrance is shown off East End Road

be small, expensive, executive flats. We...are dismayed at the thought of more traffic, disruption and congestion right on our doorstep, with fewer spaces to park, losing approximately 20% of all the pay and display spaces offered locally."

Shalil Bhattessa, a spokesman for Budgens, warned that

or post development as even the current car park arrangements are very tight for lorries manoeuvring in the car park."

To view the planning application online go to www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications and enter application reference 16/0487/FUL. Submit your comments by email to planning.consultation@barnet.gov.uk FAO Dominic Deer quoting the same reference. You can also write to Building Control Service, London Borough of Barnet, Barnet House, 1255 High Road, N20 0EJ.

Bye, deer

The small population of deer that used to be one of the attractions for visitors to the grounds of Alexandra Palace have been relocated to a new home.

Vets had found that they were showing signs of stress, possibly due to the size of the enclosure and general noise from the surrounding urban environment. The animals are now roaming free at two large deer parks in rural locations in Devon.



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Mixing it up: Angela Corbo in her kitchen. Photo Mike Coles

Angela preserves that handmade taste

By Seetal Savla

Food has always played a major role in Angela Corbo's life, since her father is a retired professional chef. His culinary influence, combined with annual family trips to southern Italy, left a strong impression on her that would manifest itself years later.

Now the Angela's Handmade business she runs makes chocolates, cakes, jams and preserves that are a little taste of Italy in N2.

She had the idea for the business when she was transferred to Tesco's cake department after six years as a bilingual secretary. Handling thousands of mass-produced Christmas puddings motivated her to set up her own business when she was looking for part-time work after having children.

Angela makes her own puddings at home every year and they taste much better. "I was sure mine would be better than the mass produced ones," she remembers. They certainly seemed to have earned the attention of the upper crust. A few years ago, one of her creations was carried in to Christmas dinner in an episode of *Downton Abbey*.

Italian treats

Over time, the Angela's Handmade range, sold exclusively at W Martyn in Muswell Hill, has expanded to include Italian treats inspired by her heritage, such as panforte, biscotti and ricciarelli. Chocolate bars were later suggested by the store owner when his usual supplier was unexpectedly taken ill, and the Smarties bar is now one of Angela's most popular products.

Demand is high for these delightful desserts, particularly around Christmas and Easter, when the recipes are adapted to showcase festive spices, making them perfect gifts. Her entire range is made from 100% natural ingredients, where possible.

While she currently has no plans to launch a website, hosting workshops to share her top tips could be the next venture.



Shelf life: Chocolate maker Jonathan Reger

Chocolatier who is always in season

By Nick Young

Chocolatier Jonathan Reger has started a business called nosa eSni Chocolate (that's In Season spelt backwards) specialising in fresh, home-made seasonal confections made right here in East Finchley.

"Seasonal chocolates ... that usually means that they're reshaped like Santa Claus," Jonathan told *THE ARCHER*. His, though are not like that: "Because I make fresh chocolates that don't sit on a shelf for six months, I'm able to look at what ingredients are nice at the time."

Jonathan, 30, who lives on the High Road with his wife Jessica and their young family, makes his chocolates either at home or, if there is a bigger batch, in the kitchen of the East Finchley Baptist Church.

Giving it time

He buys Colombian cacao beans, roasts them, removes the husks and grinds the beans for between three and five days to allow the bitter oils from the cacao to evaporate. The resulting cacao butter is then worked on a marble slab to take the heat away and give

the chocolate a smooth texture.

Chocolate-making is a time-consuming process. With chocolate-coated nuts, he says: "You build them up layer by layer. There are about ten layers of chocolate, and each layer takes three minutes, and then they have to sit for 15 minutes, so they do take quite a long time." Fruit-flavoured caramels are made using fresh fruit which has been pureed and sieved.

Originally from the US, Jonathan trained as a chef in Edinburgh and worked as a pastry chef in north London before branching out on his own as a chocolatier.

Plans for Easter include little eggs made with Jonathan's own chocolate. Details can be found on his website www.nosa-esni.com through which deliveries within East Finchley can be arranged at no extra charge.

Teenager stabbed in Cherry Tree Wood

By Janet Maitland

A young man was rushed to a major trauma centre in west London after he was stabbed in Cherry Tree Wood on 29 January.

Police were called to reports of a robbery in the wood and found two young men in their late teens, one of whom had been stabbed in the neck.

The men said they'd been robbed by two others of about the same age, one of whom had pulled a knife. The injured man was treated at the scene by the ambulance crew before being taken to hospital as a priority. He has since been discharged. Anyone with any information is urged to call police on 101, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

PC Kenny from the Safer Neighbourhood Team said: "Events of this nature are uncommon to the area and we do not foresee any reason for an increase. We would reassure the general public that there is no extra risk in using greenspaces or play areas. General police patrols in East Finchley will continue as a normal course of duty. If you wish to talk to me about any issues please ring me on 020 71619 014."

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Questions over policing as crime rates rise

By Janet Maitland

Nearly 100 people attended a public meeting with Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe at Christ's College Finchley, East End Road, on 1 February.

Facts and figures

The commissioner said that crime had increased in London by 4.3% in 2015 compared with 2014. However, Barnet crime went up by 6.4%.

Furthermore, violence with injury was up by 7% in Barnet (London up 6%), theft from a person up 16% (London up 9%) and criminal damage up 8% (London up 6%). Even when London saw a reduction for some crimes, Barnet levels increased. Robberies were up 11% (London down 4%) theft from cars up 6% (London down 4%) and residential burglaries up by 4% (London down 9%).

dential burglaries increased by nearly 16%, up from 38 to 44.

Neighbourhood policing

When asked if the reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) over the last few years had had an impact on burglary and violent crime, the commissioner said there was no evidence of a connection. "If there was, it would be evident across London. However, we are not in a good place at the moment. But I think there's a reason to be hopeful about neighbourhood policing when the new borough arrangements are sorted out over the next few weeks," he said.

Sir Bernard was referring to the possible merging of Borough Command Units (BCUs), which he first mooted last October as a likely consequence of impending government cuts. This is still on the table although the government cuts were not made.

Warning on cuts

However, Andrew Dismore, London Assembly member for Barnet and Camden, told THE ARCHER that George Osborne's announcement last December that the police cuts were stopped was misleading. "The Met still has to make £400 million of cuts over the next four years," he said. "This is bound to affect local policing, but Sir Bernard has yet to spell out how these cuts will be made. It is almost certain that Barnet police will soon be merged with Harrow and Brent to save money."

A police spokesperson informed THE ARCHER that the Met 'won't be making any decisions until the new Mayor takes office'.



Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, speaking at Christ's College. Photo Mike Coles

Questions about burglary rates dominated the meeting. "We need to put the 4% increase into perspective," said Sir Bernard. "It's 116 additional burglaries, just over two a week." He confirmed that the clear-up rate for burglary was 3%, adding that nationally it's "less than two digits".

There were 98 residential burglaries in East Finchley in 2015 and 112 in 2014, a decrease of 12.5%. Non-resi-



Closing in: The formation is almost complete as the last few wingsuiters fly into their slot at the back. Photo by Dan Dupuis.

Skydivers fall into place

When we last reported on skydiver Brian Cumming (THE ARCHER, October 2015) he was on the point of travelling to the States to attempt to break two world records in the skies above California.

Well, the news is that Brian and his fellow skydivers absolutely smashed them both. In the first, after many failed jumps, they managed to pull 202 people together in a massive formation as they plummeted earthwards. The previous record was 136.

Then after a 10-day gap Brian was part of a 61-strong team which effectively set the wingsuit formation record, using their 'flying squirrel' style suits that gave them much more control over their speed and direction. The previous record in this type of dive was set aside because the rules of the jump have since been tightened.

Back to earth

Brian, 38, a former resident of Deanery Close, N2, now living in Regents Park Road, N3, said the whole trip was a "very emotional" experience, coming as it did just two years after he underwent major organ surgery.

"It was a huge relief to achieve both records," he said. "We had a goal and committed a lot to it, travelling all that way. It

was tough but it all clicked into place. The wingsuit record is a new discipline and I'm sure the record will grow very quickly in the future."

Brian's back on terra firma

but he doesn't stay there for long. He is qualified as an instructor in the UK and US and runs his own skydiving school. Find out more at www.askmeaboutskydiving.com.



Thin air: Wingsuiters exit from the skyvan. Photo by Dan Dupuis

Meditation - is it for you?

Retired dental surgeon and local resident Eddy Levin leads mindfulness sessions through EFAB after studying many meditation systems for the past 50 years.

Eddy says: "Many people today feel stressed, harassed, agitated, overworked, or that they are underachieving. Meditation can benefit people suffer-

ing from these modern lifestyle problems.

"I know many people feel unsure about whether meditation is for them, wondering

if it is something which only hippies or spiritual searchers can get into. It is not, it is great for everyone. I would say to people who are unsure, come along, try it out."

Eddy's classes run at the Archer Academy, Eagans Close, N2, on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 - 9pm. The next set of six sessions starts on Tuesday 5 April; the last class is on 10 May. Each session costs £4 to cover room hire, materials and refreshments. Contact Lisa on 07909 998453 or email us@efab.org.uk.

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Academy admissions: leaflet campaign and your letters

By Neil McNaughton

The public consultation over the Archer Academy's new proposals for its admission policy closed at the end of January but the debate continues to rage. This month we print another page of letters from parents whose children are directly affected by the issue.

During January, opponents of the plan to name five feeder primaries to the oversubscribed free school and to exclude neighbouring Holy Trinity Primary from that feeder list distributed leaflets along the High Road.

Headed *N2 Children Need Your Help*, the leaflet questioned the Academy Trust's assertion that the new admissions rules were fair and in accordance with the school's original remit.



Protesting parents hand out leaflets in the High Road. Photo Mike Coles

The Academy has stated that its list of feeder primaries matches its principles as a non-denominational community secondary school. Holy Trinity is a selective Church of England school.

Some question whether the Academy has underestimated the number of places which will be taken up by siblings of existing pupils. The more places taken up by such siblings, say some parents, the fewer the number of

places that will be available on the basis of proximity.

Parents from NW11 and N3, however, argue that the Academy was never set up for N2 children alone, but for all three postcodes which are all suffering from a shortage of secondary places and therefore need a share of feeder places.

The final decision of the Academy's trustees on the admissions rules is now awaited.

than the very biased selection you have chosen to print.

Yours faithfully

Tessa Hackworth, By email.
Editor's note: THE ARCHER did not make a selection of letters. We printed all the letters that arrived with us before our publication deadline, as we did the previous month when the two letters printed both opposed the admissions proposals.

Inaccurate assumptions

Dear Editor,

The Archer Academy's assertion there will still be up to a quarter of places left for local N2 children after the changes is optimistic. Every secondary school for miles has sibling figures between third to half total places. Should they risk such controversial policy changes going ahead on inaccurate assumptions?

Four out of five of the proposed feeder schools are oversubscribed, excluding local families from non-denominational primary places. Local families missing out on these primary places will be disadvantaged a second time in the admissions system through no fault of their own.

No one, including Holy Trinity parents, at the public meeting asked for feeder places. We ALL overwhelmingly agreed they are too DIVISIVE.

Yours faithfully,
Non-faith Holy Trinity parent.

Negative consequences
Dear Editor

The Archer Academy was set up by local parents who wanted to ensure that local children would have places at a local secondary school. The school has its roots in the community and strives to be inclusive.

Faith schools are inherently exclusive and divisive, and undermine community cohesion. It is hypocritical of parents who have chosen to send their children to faith schools – schools that specifically select on the basis of ethos and belief rather than 'locality' or distance from the school – to then object to another school doing *exactly the same thing*. Evidently they want to change the rules to whatever is most advantageous to them.

Secular schools benefit from the diversity that makes Finchley a special place to grow up, and build bridges and understanding between families and communities.

Faith schools, by contrast, segregate children on the basis of their parents' background and beliefs, with only negative consequences for our society as a whole. The sooner that state funding for faith schools is ended, the better for everyone.

I for one am delighted to see a school like the Archer Academy recognising this, and I very much hope that they are able to put these new admissions arrangements in place despite the concerted effort on the part of some parents to undermine them.

Yours faithfully
Jessica Mordsley,
Squires Lane, N3.

What's changed?

Dear Editor

You should be aware that from the beginning of Archer Academy campaign Holy Trinity was named both as a partner school and as one of the intended feeder schools. This was publicly stated by Avis Johns, a founder of the Archer Academy, at the early campaign meetings and also in the media.

You should ask yourself if it was ok then when they needed our support why is it now not in line with their ethos. What has changed apart from the Archer Academy ethos?

The key issue here is that the Archer Academy is now being selective in that it will not accept a religious school as a feeder school.

Yours faithfully,
Father of three, N2.

Deeply upsetting

Dear Editor,

Most parents of N2 have never asked for feeder places. Feeder schools are wrong and they are divisive.

In a letter last month the Chair of the Governing Body at Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools unfairly questioned Holy Trinity parents' commitment to the Academy saying only six of their children went there in the second year's intake.

This is not comparable. We are a tiny one-form school with just 30 children per year. Hampstead Garden Suburb is a three-form school with 90 children per year.

This whole consultation has been deeply upsetting for our community and I urge the governors to rethink.

Yours faithfully,
Lucy Kavanagh,
Richmond Road, N2.

Flawed system

Dear Editor,

It is irrelevant what the criteria is; faith, ability or ethos. As long as the Archer Academy have a criteria for selecting feeder schools they are a selective school. They gained funding for a non-selective school. The documents submitted to the Department of Education by the Archer Academy are littered with the close relationship that they will have with Holy Trinity. The Archer Academy have shown their neighbour the utmost disrespect. As well as to the community who they promised "a local school for local children". The fact that they can do this just proves the whole school system in this country is flawed. Every school should be non-selective, non-dominational and every child should go to their local school.

Yours faithfully,
An N2 resident.

No guarantees

Dear Editor,

No one is asking for an East Finchley exclusive school. However, it makes no sense to prioritise children up to 1.5 miles from the Archer Academy over children who could walk to school.

A number of letters in your February 2016 edition suggest that there are reserved geographical places in the new policy. There are none. The only guaranteed places are for feeder school.

Yours faithfully,
An East Finchley parent.

Letters special

For space reasons, we have abridged all letters

Misleading claim

Dear Editor,

We received two leaflets through our door raising the prospect of 'N2 children' being disadvantaged when applying for a place at the Archer Academy. Having looked into the issue myself, they were making a rather misleading claim.

N2 children won't be disadvantaged, children from Holy Trinity school will, which is indeed unfortunate. However, a quick look at the Holy Trinity school website will tell you all you need to know about how restrictive its own admissions policy is, drawn on the basis of attendance at Holy Trinity or All Saints churches and residence in N2.

I live in N2, and only a few

streets away from N3 but I don't see N3 people as living 'over the border' or being less deserving of a school place. Neither do I define the boundaries of a community on the basis of which sorting office handles its mail. In fact, there are parts of NW11 and N3 that are closer to the Archer Academy than some of the outer extremes of the N2 postcode area.

It's a shame that any state school should seek to narrow their entry requirements, either on the basis of faith or ethos, but I can't see that Holy Trinity parents have got much of a case when their own school already has such narrowly defined entry criteria.

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied.

No good reason

Dear Editor,

If one accepts the intention to spread the Archer Academy's intake across the three priority postcode areas, this proposal still reduces the opportunities to attend for children living in N2, near the Archer Academy, who listed the proposed N2 feeder schools as first choices but did not obtain places at them.

No good reason is given for deciding on feeder schools as a fair method of spreading the intake across the postcodes. One alternative would be to split the places allocated to the feeder areas across the three postcodes and then apply normal acceptance criteria to these groups.

What is the justification for the child's choice of school at the age of 10 depending so heavily on decisions made at the age of four? The idea that children ought to go to the kind of school they have already gone to is damaging to social integration.

Yours faithfully,
Gerard Kingdon,
Sedgemere Avenue, N2.

Biased selection

Dear Editor,

I read your letters special on the Archer Academy admissions meeting with interest. I wondered why, if you are trying to give as wide a cross section of views as possible, five out of the nine letters you printed were from Brooklands or NW11 parents. And seven out of the nine letters were in support of the new admissions proposals.

That level of support is most certainly not in my opinion representative of the views expressed at the meeting. If the argument is that all three postcodes should be represented at the school, then why not print an equal number of letters from each postcode, rather

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Rebuilt community centre may house another nursery

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Council has unexpectedly proposed that almost half of the ground floor of the planned new community centre on Tarling Road should be designated as a nursery.

Plans for a new two-storey community 'hub' on the site of the Old Barn were submitted last November after months of often heated consultation. Twenty one people have objected to the scheme. Local residents had expected a final decision in January, but instead received a letter notifying them of the plan for the nursery and asking for comments by February 12th. A final decision will now be made "sometime in the spring".

Traffic concerns

Several residents have objected to the nursery, asking why one is needed when there already is a nursery opposite the Old Barn. "The entrance to Fallows Close is already congested enough from the users of the Newstead nursery," said one resident. "To expect the already busy narrow residential streets round the centre to take further traffic is unbelievable."

Council's case

Why the change of plan? A council spokesman said a nursery was in keeping with the former use of the Old Barn centre as a nursery. "We're responding to a local needs analysis and a shortfall of child-care places in the local area," he said. "We intend to engage with groups, including nursery providers, which provide clear demonstrable community benefit. A former charitable nursery

tenant of the Old Barn is currently working alongside the council to participate in a business case exercise to assist with developing this methodology."

The council informed *THE ARCHER* that adding a nursery had no implications for its intention to lease half the new building to the Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA) in order to replace the facilities they lost when their centre on Coppetts Road was destroyed in a racist arson attack in 2013, other than making the centre "a more viable prospect overall".

However, the nursery plan means that the council have had to move the plant room into space provisionally offered to the SBWA. "This has reduced the space on offer to them," said a council spokesperson.

Other ideas

Julia Hines, Grange Big Local Partnership Board member, said that local people they'd consulted wanted useable space in the area for young people, including teenagers. "We also see a need for flexible spaces for people of all backgrounds to meet informally, for example in an on-site cafe, for information and advice and for supporting local enterprise and employment," she said.

We asked Newstead nursery if they would like to comment, but they declined.



Race the Neighbours: last year's start.

Starting gun fired on race return

By John Lawrence

The successful Race the Neighbours event, staged for the first time last June on a route between Cherry Tree Wood and Muswell Hill, is coming back in 2016, with even more places for runners.

Last year 250 amateur athletes of all ages took part in the 10k run. This year race organisers are aiming to create spaces for up to 330 participants and they've set the date as Sunday 10 July.

Supporting charity is the prime aim of the event and money raised this time will help the nationally known Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy on East End Road. In return, the charity will be providing volun-

teer marshals on the day to steer runners along the course.

Greg Swimer and Avi Freeman, two of the race organisers, said: "This year we're planning to open up the field just a little but we're very keen not to lose the small and intimate race that everybody loved last year."

Friendly rivalry

As before, the same friendly rivalry is back with runners signing up to race for East Finchley

or Muswell Hill. N2 won the Cherry Tree Cup in 2015, but N10 participants will be determined to restore their neighbourhood pride in 2016.

And the same route will be used, taking in Parkland Walk, Alexandra Palace, Highgate Wood and starting and finishing in Cherry Tree Wood. Entries will open on Monday 18 April. To join the mailing list email racetheneighbours@gmail.com

Actor saddles up again

By Nick Allan

A 630-mile cycle ride in July from London to Geneva in Switzerland is the latest undertaking for a local actor in his endeavours to raise more money for Action Medical Research. Peter Noble, of Brackbury Road, N2, is determined to complete the gruelling long distance ride in memory of his daughter Michaela, who was born prematurely in 1999 and died just after her second birthday.

Seasoned campaigner Peter has already raised thousands of pounds for this charity but claims he is not a natural athlete. He told *THE ARCHER*: "I'm not really looking forward to it and it's certainly not for the love of cycling. My daughter spent many months in hospital and underwent bowel operations and a liver transplant, so I was inspired to support Action Medical Research as it is funding studies into premature birth."

Demanding ride

Peter will join 49 other

cyclists who will take six days to achieve this year's challenge which will take in rural Burgundy and climb the tough Col de la Faucille, the 4,341 ft / 1,323m high mountain pass which in the past has featured in the Tour de France.

He has been helped in his quest by local bike shop Bike and Run who helped him select his 'steed' for the venture. So, if you see Peter out on his bike around East Finchley give him a wave or even better, sponsor him at www.action.org.uk/sponsor/waywardmagic.



Ready to ride: Peter Noble. Photo Mike Coles



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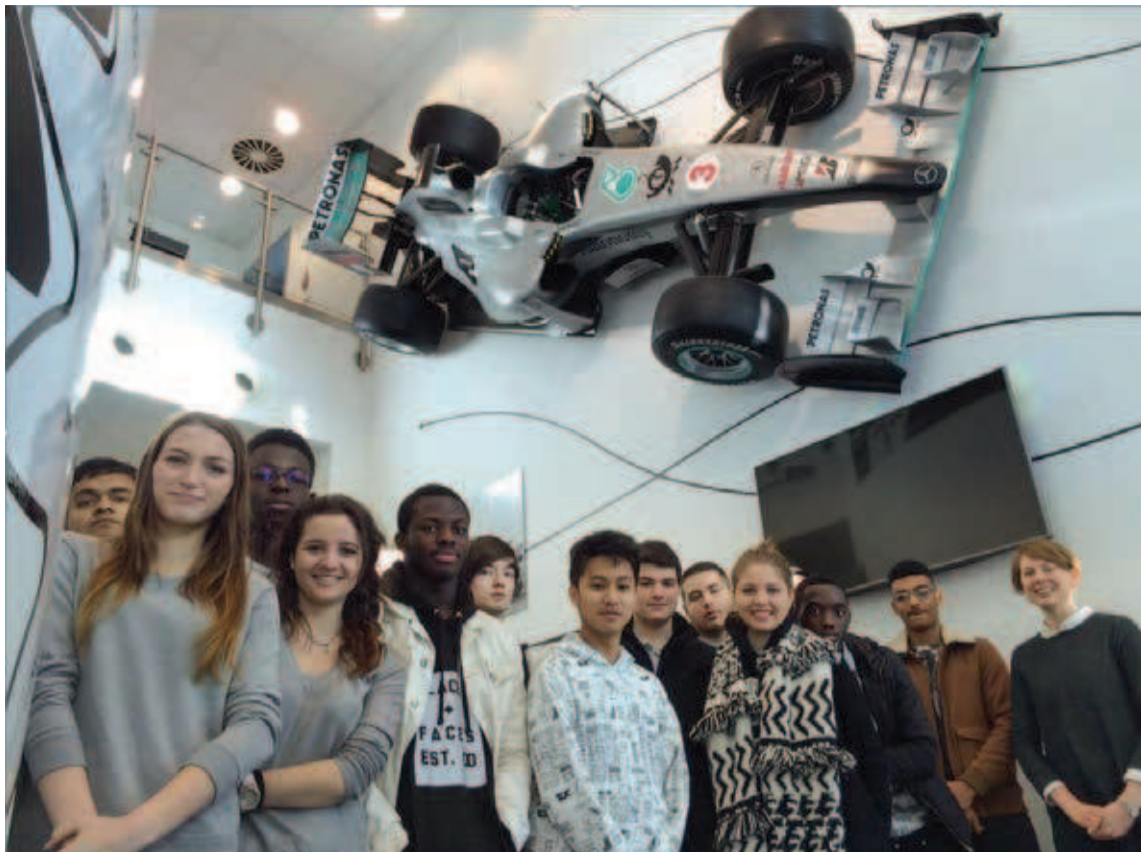
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Race to the top at Bishop Douglass

Hoping to learn exactly what makes Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg drive so fast, Bishop Douglass physics and engineering students enjoyed a day at the Mercedes Formula 1 engine factory in Brixworth, Northamptonshire.

Few people ever see into the secret world of Formula 1 design and testing and students were privileged to see an engine put through its paces under

conditions replicating the Italian Grand Prix. Following this visit, five students have been invited to participate in work experience at the company.



Peter Hale, left, chairman of East Finchley Open artists, presents the cheque to Roger Chapman, second left, chairman of the Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre with Ken Osborne, centre, Catherine Nolan and Marley Seville. Photo Mike Coles

Grand help for youth theatre

Peter Hale, chair of East Finchley Open Artists group was delighted to be able to hand over a cheque for £1,000 to the Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre, the EFOA charity of 2015, to support their work with young people.

The local artists group raised money through the prize draw at their Art Fair last November. East Finchley Open Artists would like to thank all the visitors to the Art Fair who contributed to the draw and raised over £600. EFOA

enhanced this contribution from other events held during the year.

The East Finchley Open Artists are planning another busy year of events so look out for details in future editions of *THE ARCHER*.

Cricket for her indoors

North Middlesex CC Girls were successful in the 2016 Middlesex Indoor Cricket Competitions. North Midd Under-11 Girls won their final against Stoke Newington, and North Midd Under-13 Girls were runners-up in their competition. North Midd Under-13 girls also had four of the top five players in the Most Valued Player table.

The teams will practise on Saturday mornings from 9am to 10.30am at the club's ground in Park Road, N8, starting on 23 April. New members are welcome. Anyone interested should contact nmcc.colts@gmail.com

Library landmark

Four years ago volunteers took over the running of the Garden Suburb Library in The Market Place, NW11, and they recently reached the milestone of signing up their 2,000th member.

The volunteer librarians had been waiting for that 2,000th person for some days and it turned out to be one-year-old booklover Iliya who arrived in his pushchair and was signed up for his own library card by his mother.

"Serving the community of all ages, but particularly encouraging young people to find pleasure in books and reading, was exactly why this community fought so hard to keep the library open in 2012," said spokesperson Marjorie Harris.

Toddler groups meet there for weekly sing-songs, there is a monthly reading group, evening author talks are popular and the organising committee prides itself on providing the public with new books to read nearly every week.

If you need a library on a Tuesday from 10am to 5pm, when East Finchley Library is closed, you can find this neighbouring service down the bottom of Ossulton Way.

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• **Baby & U baby massage.** Contact Ruth at babymassagewithruth@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/babyandubaby-massage

• **Musical Tots:** Wednesdays 11am at the Old White Lion and Fridays 11am at The Five Bells N2. katemusicaltots.com on facebook.

• **Phoenix Cinema activities.** Bringing up babyscreenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from box office on 020 8444 6789.

Crafty Saturdays

By Sheila Armstrong

In a room resplendent in red in readiness for Valentine's Day, local artist Joan Podel ran another of her successful Eco-Art workshops for children under 12 at the Clissold in Fortis Green. There was a small charge for children which went to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

The theme for the morning was Beauty and the Beast and the Disney film of that name was showing to inform and inspire the making of models or paintings. Joan believes in each child developing their art work on their own but is there to advise if needed.

And in the way of the primary aged child no additional help was needed as they all set to at once enthusiastically embracing the old cornflake packets, cardboard cylinders, glue and paint. A great example of recycling. There was some great work done during the session, which could be

seen on the Clissold website a couple of hours later.

Joan is an experienced facilitator of art for kids and has done extensive outreach work at the Park Theatre and in schools in Finsbury Park. Her Saturday sessions are part of a varied programme for young children at the Clissold, including the Kids Movie Club and the Muswell Comics Club.

The next workshop based on the story of Rapunzel is on 12 March. For details of this and Joan's other themed monthly workshops go to www.clissoldarms.co.uk.



'Art on the table: Joan Podel lends a hand. Photo by Mike Coles

Cultural champion

North Finchley's artsdepot won the title of Independent Cultural Venue of the Year in the inaugural Dot London Small Business Awards.

Nominees were narrowed down by a panel of judges that included some of London's most successful businesses, such as restaurant chain Leon, Brompton Bikes and Made.com. The winners of the 12 categories were then decided by public vote.

Tracy Cooper, chief execu-

tive of artsdepot, said: "artsdepot has been on an incredible journey in the past few years, transforming from a venue nearing closure to a buzzing cultural hub enjoyed by all sections of the community. We would like say a huge thank you everyone who voted for us."

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Selling your car could cost more than you think

By Diana Cormack

A few years ago I wrote an article about my daughter receiving a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) despite having parked correctly in a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) with a visitor voucher on display (*THE ARCHER*, August 2009). Being a law-abiding person, she had immediately paid the fine online. However, I wasn't happy with the situation and wanted to know what she had done wrong.

Small print

It transpired that the offence was having a 'For Sale' sign in her car. Barnet Council want to prevent traders, resident or otherwise, from monopolising parking spaces. At the time Barnet said: "We are unaware of any other local authorities which use their powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to combat nuisance for residents of traders using parking places to offer cars for sale."

Whether they are still the only authority to protect its residents in this way I don't know. I do

know now that the conditions of use on the back of our visitor vouchers state at number 5: "It is prohibited to use a vehicle in a parking place in connection with the sale or offering or exposing for sale of goods." This includes the car. Who knew? It just shows that we should always read the small print.

Recently there was a vehicle with a 'For Sale' notice parked in Summerlee Avenue. I called the seller's displayed contact number to warn them of what might happen. Sadly they didn't act fast enough and the follow-

ing day the 'For Sale' signs were accompanied by a PCN. Hopefully they were able to use some other information I had passed on.

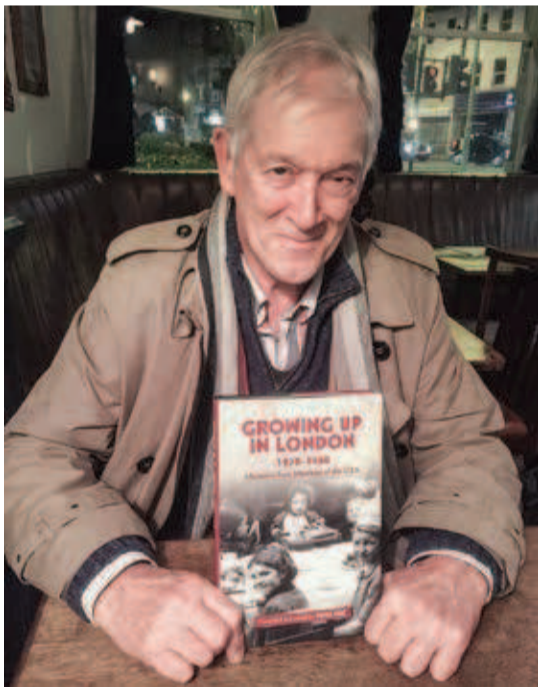
24-hour's notice

Seven years ago the Civil Enforcement Officer was required to place a warning on such cars to give a 24-hour opportunity for the signs to be removed. As the correct procedures had not been followed, Barnet refunded my daughter with the £50 she had paid. At the time of writing *THE ARCHER* was waiting to hear if this ruling still stands.

Everyday experiences that made a generation

By John Lawrence

Scores of books have been written about the seismic social and political changes that battered Britain as the Great Depression in the 1930s was followed by world war in the 1940s and then by a desperate struggle to recover in the 1950s.



Times of change: Peter Cox

But what was everyday life like for the children and young people living through those decades? That's what East Finchley author Peter Cox set out to explore in his new book *Growing Up in London, 1930-1960*.

Using the University of the Third Age network that spans London (and indeed much of the UK), Peter found more than a hundred people born between 1920 and 1939 who were willing to talk about their early lives.

Coping with change

"This was my parents' generation and their stories haven't always been told," says Peter, who was born in 1945. "I was interested in the transitions they had to live through; how they coped with going to school, being evacuated, or with the rationing that continued well into the 1950s."

Many of these young people,

of course, didn't know any other life, so the book is full of humorous insights mixed with the traumatic experiences that were part of everyday existence. Peter puts their memories centre-stage throughout, taking a back seat as narrator and letting their words speak for themselves.

Two of his interviewees live in East Finchley. One recalls his time

"I was a loner. At home I used to retreat to the outside lav so that I could have a bit of my own space and read in peace. My mother told me if I didn't stop reading my eyeballs would fall out."

"We weren't short of food but it was things that would mystify people today, like sugar or mashed potato sandwiches."

"I was never frightened. A few days before, my mother told us there would be a war, and said a siren would sound if we were going to be bombed. I heard a lawnmower in the grounds of Alexandra Palace and thought that was it."

"I vividly remember the day my school friend Willie Mather wasn't at his desk. He'd been killed the night before when a bomb hit his house."

"I delivered evening papers from Brysons. I got 1/9 a week for six evenings, and collected my pay on Saturday morning. I bought the bike for 3/6 from James & Adams in the High Road."

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Out of print

Once upon a time, when everyone over the age of three wore a hat, people read newspapers. Even children had their comics and women had magazines that told them that they could win the man of their dreams with a new set of curtains and a decorative display of cocktail sausages.

Back then newspapers were different. They were big enough to hide a whole family behind. You could even tell what sort of man a man was by the paper he read. The Times meant he ran the country, the Manchester Guardian that he thought he should run the country and the Daily Telegraph that the country had been going to the dogs ever since Queen Victoria died.

But the rot, as far as Fleet Street is concerned, has well and truly set in. When did it start? Was it somewhere between the Lady Chatterley Trial and the Beatles' first LP or when the Times started putting news on its front page? Was it later when mad Murdoch turned the Sun into a tabloid and put bare-breasted women on page three?

Battered by such new-fangled ideas as news on television, newspapers have made valiant attempts to stem the tide. They got smaller, stopped blackening your hands and discovered that things, including the bare-breasted women on page three, look better in colour. There was even an attempt to launch a new, quality, daily paper that answered to no one and was called The Independent. It was even successful and independent for a while.

But no more. Now everything is digital and on your phone. No more can you hide behind acres of newsprint on the 8.17 from Sidcup to Waterloo; instead you can track the delays on your Eyefone and send instatweets. And at the end of this month the Independent will disappear into the digital ether. Not even Clark Kent can save it, not least because he won't be able to find a phone box and that means he can't change into Superman or save the world. So why not buy a paper, it may be your last chance.



Foxes have rush hours too!

Foxes can often be spotted doing their rounds in the hours of darkness but reader Helen Barrett was astonished to see this one slap bang in the middle of morning rush hour outside the tube station.

As she snatched these photos at 8.55am one morning in early February, the animal dodged commuters and ran past the traffic queuing up the High Road. Whatever it managed to scavenge it must have been daylight robbery.

Hard to see a dentist

Research by Healthwatch Barnet has shown that over a third of dentists in Barnet cannot currently offer an NHS appointment to adults and a quarter could not offer an appointment to a child.

In a mystery shopping exercise carried out in December 2015 and January 2016, volunteers from Healthwatch Barnet called all 53 practices who offer NHS dentistry in the borough.

Michael Rich, Head of Healthwatch Barnet said: "Local residents had told us that they had experienced difficulties in booking an NHS appointment. This

research seems to show us why." Healthwatch Barnet will be doing further research into the availability of dental appointments across the Borough and would like to hear about your experience. They would also like to hear from dentists with their thoughts on what could be done to solve the problem. Email info@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

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- **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- **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.

Music, Dance & Creative Arts

- **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. www.a-chord.uk
- **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners & improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.
- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **Dance conditioning classes**. New body in 10 lessons. Diana: 07580 041270. www.boldbodies.co.uk.
- **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.



'All aboard: Sophie Ablett, centre, as Bobbie in *The Railway Children*, with Matt Jessup as Peter and Beth Lilly as Phyllis. Photo by Johan Persson

Sophie debuts in children's classic

Sophie Ablett, 22, summons up childlike innocence for her first major theatrical role starring as 11-year-old Bobbie in *The Railway Children* at King's Cross Theatre.

Sophie, of Summerlee Avenue, N2, began rehearsals in January and will be in the show until September. The Olivier Award-winning production of E. Nesbit's novel follows the story of Bobbie, Peter and Phyllis as they start a new life in rural Yorkshire. It famously features a live steam locomotive and a vintage carriage dating from 1896.

"It's so clever the way it's done," says Sophie. "The action takes place along the tracks and we can see the audience on

either side of us all the time. It's very immersive. The three children are first introduced as adults and then we look back at the story through their eyes as children."

Sophie graduated last summer from the University of Oxford after taking a year out to study at École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in France. She has recently finished shooting *Taboo*, a new mini-series for BBC1 starring Tom Hardy.

Singing for the brain at dementia-friendly screenings

By Sheila Armstrong

As we reported briefly in February, the Phoenix Cinema in conjunction with the Barnet branch of the Alzheimer's Society is putting on a series of dementia-friendly screenings at 12 noon on Tuesdays called Cinememories.

They are free, relaxed events with louder sound and only slightly dimmed lighting. Damien Domski from the Alzheimer's Society in Barnet always welcomes the audience and outlines how the session will run.

Music prompts memory

The screenings are split into two with a comfort break and sing-along at half time. This is run as a *Singing for the Brain* session by choirmaster David Timms. Free popcorn and drinks are served.

In early January *Carmen Jones*, an early musical with a cast including Harry Belafonte and Dolores Del Rio based on Bizet's *Carmen* was shown. The dramatic plot and faultless singing played to a good audience of around 40.

This was followed two weeks later by the Beatles 1960s classic *A Hard Day's Night*, a real trip back in time for most of

the audience, made in the early days of Beatlemania, before the screaming got too loud.

All over-60s welcome

Jelena Milosavljevic, education officer for the Phoenix, emphasised that the screenings are not limited to those living with dementia. Anyone over 60 is welcome to attend, as are friends and carers. Barnet's population has the highest percentage of over-60s in London.

There are two more vintage films planned for March: *West Side Story* and *Guys and Dolls*. More details from the Phoenix website www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or phone the box office on 020 8444 6789.

The Cinememories screenings are funded by the historic Mercers' Company. You can also get information from local dementia adviser Dominic on 07889 603708 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk

Cook with the Wooden Spoon and Apron club

EFAB's Wooden Spoon and Apron club is returning on Thursday 7 April for a set of six sessions based around different themes such as Chinese, European, Indian, Jewish, Persian, Thai and Ukrainian cooking, with recipes led by an experienced home cook wanting to share their skills with others.

As well as great food, the main emphasis is on having fun and socialising, with participants cooking tasty meals together in small groups and then eating the meal they have prepared together at the end of the session. Sometimes people even bring a bottle.

The sessions are taking place

on Thursdays from 5-8pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, and £5 per session covers all ingredients, the meal and printed recipes to take away.

Anyone can participate, from beginners to more experienced cooks. To sign up, call Lisa Smith on 07909 998453 or email us@efab.org.uk.



Chop, chop: Izzy and Patricia at a cookery session'

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

Sunday 13 March

• **Battle of Barnet**, a guided walk with City of London guide Paul Baker. Step back in time to 1471 and 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.

• East Finchley charity **The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** will be holding their **AGM** at 12 noon in the Old White Lion pub on the High Road. Everyone is welcome to attend and discuss Cherry Tree Wood. The group is also looking for people with skills, experience or ideas that could help preserve the woodland and enhance the facilities.

• **Free music concert at East Finchley Methodist Church**, High Road, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm. Harpegiola, A Springtime Soiree to Warm Your Heart with Bronwen Harrison (voice) and Sue Rothstein (harp). Songs by Handel, Gilbert and Sullivan, Sondheim and Kern. Free admission with collection in aid of the Red Cross. This venue is fully accessible.

Saturday 19 March

• **Table Top Sale in Christ Church Church Hall** from 10am to 12 noon to raise funds for much needed Church building repairs. Entrance is free and

there will be many items on sale: bric-a-brac, books, toys, homemade cakes and clothes. Refreshments will be available. Christ Church, Stephens Memorial Hall (behind Homebase), 620 High Road, North Finchley, London N12 ONU.

Sunday 20 March

• **The Highgate Opera Circle Annual Concert**, 3pm, Dyne House, Southwood Lane, Highgate, N6 5EE. Future stars from Covent Garden give a fundraising recital of opera arias and ensembles to support the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution. Tickets £25 (students £10) available from HLSI, 11 Southwood Grove, Highgate N6 6BS, and by phone on 020 8340 3343. Further information from opera@hlsi.net.

Sunday 20 March

• **Special Spring Equinox Barnet Ghost Walk** with City of London guide Paul Baker. A spooky tour of High Barnet and Monken Hadley, the second most haunted village in England, 7.30pm. More details from Paul on 07506 761294 or www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net.

Wednesday 13 April

• **Senior Citizens' Tea Dance** at Bishop Douglass School, Hamilton Road, N2. All welcome. Entrance £3. Contact the school on 020 8444 5211.

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Letters to the editor

Welcoming atmosphere
Dear Editor,

Like Caroline and David Broome in the last issue I think that the Oasis restaurant on Church Lane is a welcome addition to the East Finchley community. I particularly wanted to write as I am both a resident of Leopold Road and a parent at Martin School so wanted to correct any impression that those two groups are united in opposition to it.

The restaurant itself is beautifully decorated, has great food and a number of very positive recent online reviews. In the daytime there is minimal, if any, shisha smoking and this is confined to specific areas. It is very hard to see any major impact of this on children at Martin School.

The restaurant is actually family friendly and, as a non-smoking health professional, I have taken my young children there and had them entranced by the owner's parrot and the Aladdin's cave-like atmosphere. I am not unique in this and have seen a number of other families with young children and babies inside.

Certainly, it seems odd that there is significant opposition to Oasis, when there was less to the Alexandra pub, which was far noisier and smokier with its drunk regulars and distinctly unwelcoming atmosphere.

Yours faithfully,
Joshua Stott,
Leopold Road, N2.

We dread this development

Dear Editor,

Following the article in the last Archer I am writing about plans for a block of flats behind Viceroy Parade. This will remove the busy pay & display shoppers' car park. None of the flats will be social housing, all eight are to be small, expensive, executive flats.

We, along with residents of surrounding roads and local shoppers, are dismayed at the thought of more traffic, disruption and congestion right on their doorstep with fewer spaces to park, losing approximately 20% of all the pay and display spaces offered locally. This will severely impact upon residents' parking spaces, particularly those in Beresford Road, Market Place, Kitchener Road and that end of East End Road.

There is no provision for Budgens or Amy's deliveries. These will have to be to the front which will cause major congestion to the already heavily utilised High Road. Only Iceland will have a very narrow delivery space behind its shop.

If we don't raise our voices this will be win, win for the council as they reap huge fees from the development and increased parking fine revenues from local residents and shoppers unable to park.

Construction will be over the summer with huge dust pollution expected and noise as they dig foundations. The construction will further exacerbate congestion at the already busy High Road/East End Road junction.

We urge local residents to comment, ask questions and be vocal.
Yours faithfully,
Lisa King,
Beresford Avenue, N2.

Big brands are already here

Dear Editor,

I note Ms Chinyoka's letter from the previous issue that protests against the opening of a Sainsbury's in the area. She doesn't want the "big brands" in East Finchley and "shudders" to think what would happen to Budgens and Iceland if Sainsbury's arrived.

Please note that Budgens and Iceland's combined turnover runs into the billions. Make no mistake, the "big brands" are already here, they're just not the ones that provide any variety. Both these supermarkets offer comparable, budget options and suffer from a complete lack of high-quality food. I find it baffling that so many residents are happy for these shops to exist yet fight tooth and nail to stop businesses like Waitrose and Sainsbury's from bringing some much-needed variety to the area. I fully support Ms Chinyoka's defence of the "smaller independent shops" but must challenge the assertion that the large-scale supermarket chains which already exist in the area are in need of resident protection and intervention. East Finchley deserves more than a choice between Budgens and Iceland.

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied.

Parking common sense
Dear Editor,

As a retired local government transportation officer, I am astonished and appalled at Barnet Council's attitude to Eva Frost coming by car to visit her sister in Park Hall Road N2, which is in a Controlled Parking Zone (*THE ARCHER*, February 2016).

A Civil Enforcement officer gave her a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) even though both women shouted to him that they were bringing down a visitor's voucher. Barnet rejected her appeal on the grounds that legally "this is an instant contravention and no minimum observation is required before a PCN can be issued."

Whatever happened to common sense or common courtesy? An adjudicator found in Ms Frost's favour, concluding that a motorist is allowed time to obtain and display a visitor parking permit, a conclusion grudgingly accepted by the council.

Sadly, Barnet has a history of rigidity on parking matters, e.g. switching to paying for permitted parking by mobile phone only, even though not every motorist has one.

Park Hall Road is in the CPZ between Fortis Green and Cherry Tree Wood. It is residents only, six days a week, Mon – Sat 10am to 6.30pm. Local people tried to get these onerous restrictions lifted, which affect businesses as well as residents, to no avail.

I myself wrote at least twice to Council Leader Richard Cornelius, asking that the times be changed to one hour a day Mon-Fri, as in the county roads north of Fortis Green, which has deterred all-day parkers without harming local interests. So far, there has been no change.

Yours faithfully,
Eugene Myerson
Address supplied.

Mary Davidson,
1927 – 2016

Mary Davidson was born in Aveton Road, East Finchley, a road that no longer exists due to bomb damage in the Second World War. She went to Holy Trinity School, then situated in East End Road, and her family later moved to the High Road.

Mary, nee Ellen, was sister to three brothers who all served in the war, and remembered her late teens as nights spent in the Anderson shelter with plenty of good times and romance. She worked in the laboratories at Gilbey's Distillery in Camden after the war.

In 1947 Mary married George Louth, who used to frequent The George pub in Market Place. They set up home in Kitchener Road and had seven



'Local girl: Mary Davidson'

children there and another son after moving out to New Barnet.

She later married her former wartime sweet heart William King Davidson, but had to travel all the way to Adelaide in Australia to do this, her first ever time on an aeroplane. Still later in life, Mary moved out of London to live in Frinton-on-Sea.

Her youngest son Mick said his mother always spoke fondly of growing up in East Finchley. Her parents Henry and Emily Ellen had moved into the area at the end of the 19th century.

He said: "I only wish I'd listened more to her tales and her knowledge of history when she was with us. We felt it was fitting to have her funeral at Hendon Cemetery where her parents are both buried and used the local funeral directors Luck & Sons as she spoke of them and they showed me the logs for her parents' funeral. We scattered her ashes where her parents lie."

Parks and recycling

Barnet residents are being encouraged to have their say in two public consultations that will shape the future of some of the most important services in the borough.

The Draft Municipal Recycling and Waste Strategy looks at how the council can manage its waste up to 2030. The Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy addresses how the council will maintain the quality of its green spaces in the years to come.

Both Strategies were agreed at Barnet Council's Environment Committee Meeting on Monday 11 January. Residents can comment and give their views on both, however, in online consultations at www.engage.barnet.gov.uk. The consultations will close 13 March.



Finishing line: Amelia Meldau at the end of a 10K run last year

Amelia takes on the Marathon

It's that time of year again when runners are at the peak of their training for the London Marathon. Amelia Meldau, of Park Hall Road, is one of them and is running the course to raise money for Anti-Slavery International.

The charity was founded in 1839 but Amelia believes the fight against slavery is just as important today; think about child labour, bonded labour, descent-based slavery, trafficking, forced marriage, and slavery in the food chains of what we eat and what we wear.

To support Amelia's Marathon run on 24 April, visit www.justgiving.com/marathonmilly or you can text WHBU61 £5 or WHBU61 £10 to 70070.



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Personal service: Butter measuring at the East Finchley branch of Sainsbury's in 1954. © The Sainsbury Archive, Museum of London Docklands.

Absolute beginners take the pitch by storm

By Alisha Davies

Are you keen to get out in the fresh air, get fit, have a laugh, make new friends and learn new skills, such as back-heeling a ball, kicking with laces, and taking 'proper' throw-ins?



Team talk: The women's football team at Stanley Road

Then come and join us for Women's Football on a Monday night from 8-9pm, rain or shine, on the all-weather pitch alongside the Archer Academy in Eagans Close. Last September, a motley crew of enthusiastic women with little or no previous footy experience got together to set up East Finchley Women's Football. Knowing netball better did result in some hand ball incidents, but on the plus side made for impressive sideline throw-ins!

To be honest, at that early stage we reinforced the stereotype of women playing football, with discussions about the most stylish astro boots, the need for shin pads or not, and lots of "Oops sorry" whenever we tackled anyone.

How times have changed

in just five months. Thanks to our fabulous coach Andy, we have gone from strength to strength with structured lessons, drills, learning new skills and team play, followed by very competitive 30-minute matches. There is always time for a natter too, as we follow training sessions with

a trip to the Bald Faced Stag. New members, experienced or not, receive a warm welcome and encouragement from everyone to get stuck in and play. Come along and give it a go. You have nothing to lose and lots to gain. For more info email eastfinchleywomensfootball@gmail.com

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A little bit of butter for my bread

We wait to see whether Sainsbury's will get permission to open a new Local store on the corner of the High Road and Leicester Road, as first reported in our November 2015 edition.

If it does, those with long memories will know that it won't be the first time the company has traded in N2. Sainsbury's opened a shop at 82 High Road in 1912 and it stayed in business there until 1966.

The store, now occupied by Prickett & Ellis Estate Agents, is close to the junction with Fortis Green and directly opposite the Bald Faced Stag.

Before self-service

Our picture, sourced for us by Sarah Drewery of the Museum of London Docklands, shows two women working there in 1954. In their hair nets and white coats, they are measuring out butter into 1lb blocks.

When the store opened in June 1912 The Finchley

Press described the interior of the branch as follows: "Two long and well laden counters extend the full length of the shop, and in addition to the ordinary stock rooms there are up-to-date cold stores. Peat-smoked bacon is arranged in neat stacks, its very appearance betokening its appetizing character. York, Cumberland and Irish hams are abundantly displayed, in addition to constant supplies of Canterbury lamb and cooked meats."

The East Finchley branch was a counter service branch which meant you had to ask for what you wanted from the shop assistants rather than helping yourself from the shelves. It closed in the mid-1960s as self-service became all the rage.

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