



Biographer Flora Fraser. Photo Elena Seibert.

The tumultuous story of Nelson's 'Beloved Emma'

Flora Fraser belongs to a distinguished literary family and in common with her mother, writer and historian Lady Antonia Fraser, she is the author of several acclaimed historical biographies. Flora will be speaking about the life of Emma Hamilton in her illustrated lunchtime talk to the Northern Heights Probus Club on Wednesday 15 November at Stephens House and Gardens, East End Road, N3.

In her biography of Emma Hamilton, Flora Fraser depicts Emma Hamilton (1765-1815) as a woman ahead of her time: a woman whose energy, purpose and sexuality drove her along relentlessly throughout her tumultuous life.

Emma was the daughter of a blacksmith whose rise to fame and fortune initially seemed unstoppable. Her journey from Liverpool to London, and life as an artist's model, propelled her into a fortuitous marriage and glittering success as the wife of HM Ambassador to Naples. But it was in Naples that she began her legendary romance with already-married Admiral Lord Nelson, and their intense, doomed affair became the scandal of the age.

The event costs £15, including a two-course lunch and coffee, and all are welcome. Full details from Eric Dalton on 020 8449 0566.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column. Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Poor condition of bridge is a hazard

By Gill Steiner

Every time you are travelling by car and you hear a familiar thud underneath, does it register that you've hit a pothole? When driving we look for hazards and swerve to avoid them and our attention to the road ahead is distracted.

It's clear to me that no one is taking good care of the vital A1000 High Road bridge over the North Circular Road. Some tarmac has been used to fill up one hole recently. That is good, but the edge does not bond with the edge of the hole and it is at a different level and does not look well compacted.

It will be pounded by buses, lorries and thousands of cars. The winter weather will also take its toll. A workman was sent to make this repair (maybe in response to a complaint from the public) but he hasn't addressed the other longstanding problems.

Vehicle tyres hit two sets of metal expansion bars across the bridge where the metal edges are clearly exposed. Likewise the metal drains present dangerously prominent metal edges to bicycles and vehicle tyres. The adjacent gap between drain and road is so wide in one place a cyclist could easily topple over.



Danger to people and vehicles

The hazards, pictured above, not only endanger travellers but also affect your car or two wheeled vehicle; a significant proportion of MOT failures occur due to suspension problems and worn and damaged tyres.

There is an online system for reporting pothole damage and problems like leaks. Perhaps we are more likely to report them if they are 'in our street' but what about the bridge damage and the long gaps that are opening up in the tarmac further down the High Road? We need to complain to Barnet Council about the state of this vital A road and bridge.

Advent fair

St Mary's Church at 279 High Road, N2, invites everyone to their Advent Fair on Saturday 25 November from 12 noon to 3pm.

Meet Santa in his grotto and enjoy kids' activities, mulled wine, hot lunch, cakes, exciting tombolas, manicures, books, jewellery and arts and crafts. No entrance fee.

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Letters



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long-term, and about easy access to postal services for all members of the public.

Yours faithfully,
Ruth Brown
Park Hall Road, N2.

Bee was a mimic

Dear Editor,

The 'bee' photographed by Louisa Green in October's Archer is in fact a hornet-mimic hoverfly called *Volucella zonaria*. They are enormous, but totally harmless, and are presumably ignored by many predators because they look like hornets.

We are seeing many more of them in the UK probably due to rising temperatures caused by climate change. They help to pollinate many flowers. It was an excellent photo, and a great find! I was amazed the first time that I saw one.

Yours faithfully,
Vivienne Palmer, aka Bug-woman,
Address supplied.

Editor's note: Thanks to Vivienne and to Linda Dolata, Sarah Holford, Sarah Cawkwell and Jon King who all wrote to give us the same identification.

Post Office problems

Dear Editor,

Far from an improvement (Letters, *The Archer*, October 2017), UOE has worsened access to postal services. Our Crown Post Office was spacious and step-free. At UOE, the elderly like my mother with heart problems, and those with buggies, find the lift and the steps a nuisance.

I've had to queue just as much in UOE, but it's a cramped, windowless space with a low ceiling. The staff are less knowledgeable. One recently insisted a letter to Russia was priced in the 'World' category, even when I told them it was 'Europe'. When I checked online at home, I could see I'd been overcharged.

All shops eventually close down. Then East Finchley will lose our Post Office completely, just like we've lost all our banks. Those who support the closure of Post Offices need to think more

Fabulous festival

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate the organisers of the East Finchley Arts Festival which brought music for young and old to All Saints' Church. I was able to attend two concerts and can only say that I am very much looking forward to next year's festival. The programme was varied, the quality invariably high, and the staff, foremost among them Ali McKee, did their very best to make it work. Well done! And please, keep on doing it and let everyone know if you need helpers for next time.

Yours faithfully,
Dorothea McEwan,
Address supplied.

Stairlifts at the tube

Dear Editor,

It was no surprise to hear that it was considered too difficult and expensive to install lift shafts for wheelchair-users East Finchley station (*The Archer*, October 2017). Perhaps a more practical solution would be wheelchair-carrying stairlifts.

In theory at least, rack-and-pinion gear could be attached to the banisters to carry the stair lifts between the platforms and ticket hall level. Assistance could be given, if necessary, by station staff for people using them, though the stairways are wide with easily enough space for people to use the stairs while the lifts are in use, with warning lights and/or beeps.

The only obstacle to this plan at the moment is the metal lattice gates that are shut across the landings halfway up the stairways when the tube is closed after-hours. Maybe the gates could be relocated to the bottom of the stairways where they would not block the new lifts? I feel this is a scheme worth considering.

Yours faithfully,
Jake Eiseman-Renyard,
Address supplied.

East Finchley Baptist Church

Just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2

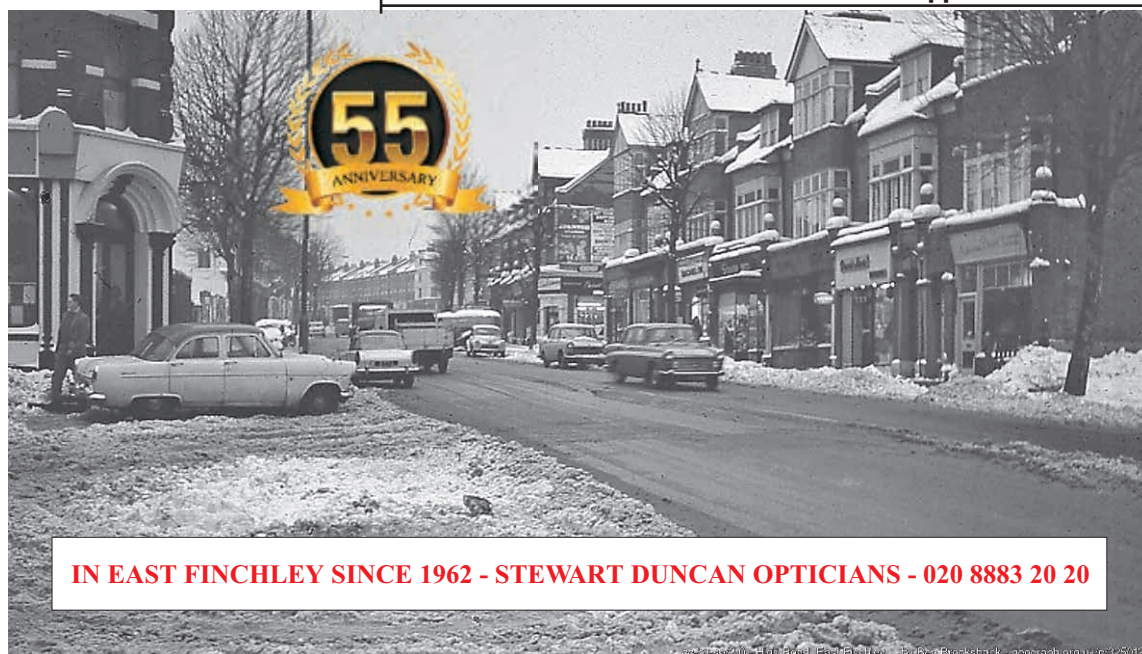
Sunday Mornings at 10.30 am

Crèche and Sunday School during service
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For more information please contact the Church Office

Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)
www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk

Visitors always welcome



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