



## SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: [EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk), or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

### The future of the East Finchley base

Many of you have remarked upon the news that the Safer Neighbourhood base in the High Road will be closing. May I point out that the document also said that it will not close until an alternative local team base is found, and that could take some time. This could be space within a partnership building such as a hospital, school, library, fire station, ambulance base, town hall, college, community centre etc.

All three teams here (East & West Finchley & Finchley Church End) will be housed together so the small teams do not become isolated. Our new home could be anywhere within the Finchley area, so all of us will still be close to our wards.

### Vehicle crime

We are still experiencing high thefts of vehicles. Do visually and physically check your vehicle is locked. Consider at least looking at different types

of steering wheel locks; our vehicle crime Unit advises that they do make a considerable difference. Remove anything of value from your car.

### Crackdown on moped-enabled crime

In December three people connected to moped-enabled crime were arrested following early morning raids at addresses in south London by officers from the Met and City of London Police.

This policing activity is part of Operation Winter Nights, the Met's seasonal crackdown on crime and anti-social behaviour during the winter period.

The use of mopeds, often stolen, in the course of criminal offences is a common tactic used by thieves and organised criminal networks in London and offences range from commercial burglaries to personal robberies; some of the offences have been violent in nature.

## On the wings of a winter walk

Anyone who follows the fascinating Bugwoman blog will know she is a great fan of cemeteries. Here she describes a walk in East Finchley Cemetery, off East End Road, ideal as a short perambulation for those wishing to get out of the house in these winter months. Follow more of her nature notes at [bugwomanlondon.com](http://bugwomanlondon.com).

Dear readers, my heart is already given to St Pancras and Islington Cemetery with its Victorian trees, tumbledown tombs and colony of feral foxes, but I occasionally like to walk in East Finchley Cemetery. This is a much more manicured, controlled space, but it has some spectacular specimen trees, and is a haven for birds.

I spend a lot of time listening as I walk. I find it helps me to tune in to what's going on. There are lots of conifers: cypresses and spruces, pines and fir trees. They vibrate with the twitterings of small birds. I see goldcrests and long-tailed tits, and hear the scolding of blue tits. None of them stays long enough for me to get a photo, but it's enough to know that they're there, working their way through the needles.

There's the sing-song squawking of ring-necked parakeets, the cackling of magpies, the cawing of ever-present crows. The goldfinches sound like little bells. There's a flight of finches at the top of one of the big, bare trees, but they're too far away for me to see what they are.



Still as a statue: This squirrel wasn't going anywhere

bird calls. I sit on one of the benches and wait to see what will happen. Nothing does, except that I notice how the golden of the leaves on some silver birch is offset by the darkness of the firs behind it, and how the yellow foliage on the topiary box bushes make them look as if they're touched by sunshine.

When I am walking, I often think that something will happen, and then I'll know that

tion, and permission, a sense of closure. But what will it be this time?

I take a little path along the very edge of the cemetery and, as I meander along, I have a feeling of being watched. Who, or what, is it? And there, perched stock-still on one of the gravestones is a squirrel. I laugh out loud, because he looks so much like a glove puppet. And there he sits, unmoving, as I walk along the path and then away. While every other squirrel scurries away at my approach, this one seems to believe that if he sits still, I won't see him. As he looks plump and confident, it seems to be a strategy that's served him well.

Once I've laughed with delight, I know that my job here is done. I'm surfeited with wonders and can head for home. As I cross the road outside the cemetery I see a 143 bus in the distance and head towards the bus stop at a brisk but sensible trot – I still have my camera round my neck and so I don't want to do anything foolish like fall flat on my face. Just as I reach the stop the bus pulls away, and I plump down onto a seat, defeated.

An elderly man passes me a few minutes later, and smiles. "Next time," he says, "you'll have to fly."



High haven: Greenfinches perch at the top of one of the cemetery's trees.

When I get home, I see from my photos that they are most probably greenfinches. These birds were hit very hard by a parasitic disease (Trichomonosis) a few years ago, and the British Trust for Ornithology noted a decrease of 40% in the number of gardens visited by the birds. So, it's cause for celebration if they're recovering. Fingers crossed.

### Freedom of the air

There's a theme of wings in the cemetery. Secretly, I always wished that I could fly, and our myths and legends are full of humans who took to the air, from Icarus to the angels. We seem to want the freedom of the air, and perhaps also a release from our heavy, earthbound bodies.

I find the garden of remembrance, where the sound of running water is added to the

it's time to go home. There's often a moment when I think 'Aha, this what I was meant to see/hear/smell'. I am, I suppose, waiting for a sense of comple-

## Support for the athletes of today and tomorrow

Applications close soon for athletes to win awards from a charitable social enterprise operated by the UK's largest leisure operator GLL, known as the 'Better' brand.

The GLL Sport Foundation programme provides athletes with support to aid their sports performance, including training memberships, access to physio and injury rehab support and financial awards up to the value of £1,250.

It is directly aligned to the National Governing Body of Sport and has partnerships with SportsAid and the Mary Peters Trust to ensure awards

are provided to the right athletes at the right time.

Athletes, many of whom receive no other funding support, seek awards to transition from national to international level or to achieve their own athletic milestones. To find out more visit [www.gllsportfoundation.org](http://www.gllsportfoundation.org). The deadline for this year's round of applications is Tuesday 20 February.



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