

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Let's make East Finchley plastic-free!

East Finchley could spearhead the battle to halt the terrible damage we are doing to our planet by becoming the first community in London where people can shop without using throwaway plastics.

That's the call-to-arms from Huntingdon Road resident Ann Inglis who believes we could become the capital's go-to destination for responsible food shoppers... if everyone plays a small part in making it happen.

Shops in the High Road and East End Road, and everywhere else in N2, would be awarded a quality mark for eliminating plastics like bags and food wrapping, which cannot be recycled and end up in landfill or clogging up our seas and natural places.

dam in February and Ann believes East Finchley would get even more if all its shops did the same.

But she knows the idea won't get off the ground unless every one of us changes the way we shop. She said: "As consumers we cannot duck our responsibility. Groceries transported in small quantities seem to be always packaged in single-use plastic. It is what supermarkets think we want. We do not."

"We are in the driving seat and we can change the way groceries are sold by the way we change our buying habits. On a day-by-day basis we can monitor the number of single-use plastics we buy and reduce the number relentlessly."

Alternative packaging

Some High Road shops like Tony's Continental, A Scott & Son fishmongers and Amici delicatessen already use paper to package their goods but Ann urges us to take the next step by always shopping with re-usable bags, asking traders to avoid throwaway plastic and taking our own refillable mugs when we are buying a coffee.

Ann added: "This would be a world based on much more personal service. Is using scoops to place loose rice granules into paper bags that you then decant into glass jars in the kitchen impossible? How about similarly decanting spices? Shopping could become a pleasure again."

Read Ann's letter to *The Archer* on page 11 and tell us what you think about East Finchley going plastic-free. Email us: the-archer@lineone.net or write to *The Archer*, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.



Plastic reduction campaigner Ann Inglis. Photo Mike Coles

Support from N2United

Her idea has already got the backing of East Finchley's trade and business network N2United. Chairman Nick Allan said: "This initiative is exactly the kind of thing N2United is keen to support to help unite our local businesses and the community. We have invited Ann to our next meeting to help us look at how we can implement this terrific idea."

A world-first supermarket aisle free of any plastics attracted huge media attention when it was opened in Amster-



Joanna catches up with an old friend

Joanna Lumley found time for a sit down with her old pal Spike Milligan on a busy visit to Stephens House and Gardens in her new role as patron of The Finchley Society.

The actor and presenter laughed as she looked into the eyes of the late comedian

on the bench statue created in his memory by sculptor John Somerville. It was the first time she had seen the bench after being unable to attend its unveiling in 2014.

Joanna spoke at the memorial service for Spike after his death in 2002 and subsequently got to know The Finchley Society during the 10-year campaign to raise funds for the statue.

Co-op Food has designs on Budgens

Co-op Food appears to be preparing to take over the Budgens store in the High Road. The company has submitted a planning application to install its signage along the front of the premises in Viceroy Parade.

However, it seems any bid is in its very early stages. Budgens owner Shalil Bhattessa told *The Archer* he has no plans to move out and even hinted that he was working on a store re-fit for early next year.

"I have heard the rumours and I want to quash them," said Mr Bhattessa. "I can categorically state that I have no plans to move out or to sell the site to the Co-op."

He acknowledged that as a property owner he gets unsolicited offers from various companies but said so far the Co-op had not approached him. Budgens has been on the same site in East Finchley for almost 50 years.

Co-op Food told us they were unable to comment at this stage.

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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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August: 13 July

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Councils**Barnet**

Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000

Council Tax 020 8359 2608

Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600

Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700

Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500

Employment Service 020 8258 3900

Haringey Council 020 8489 0000**Leisure**

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121

East Finchley Library 020 8359 3815

Gt North Leisure Park 0870 240 6020

Muswell Hill Everyman 0871 9069060

Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789

Tourist Info Service 0870 128 8080

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Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500

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St Luke's 020 8219 1800

Whittington 020 7272 3070

OAP's Advice

Age UK Barnet 020 8203 5040

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Age UK (general advice line)

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Double murder trial re-opens

The trial has re-started of Obina Ezeoke, of no fixed address, accused of double murder over the deaths of 21 year-old psychology student Bervil Kalikaka-Ekofo, 21, and mother-of-nine Annie Besala Ekofo, 53, in East Finchley in September 2016.

Ezeoke, of no fixed address, allegedly entered through the unlocked door of Mrs Besala Ekofo's flat in Elmshurst Crescent, N2, and shot the pair.

Ezeoke was back in court at the Old Bailey in April. His

original trial was halted a year ago when the judge in the case, Judge Stephen Kramer QC, was taken ill with a bad back after almost a month of hearing evidence.

The case continues.

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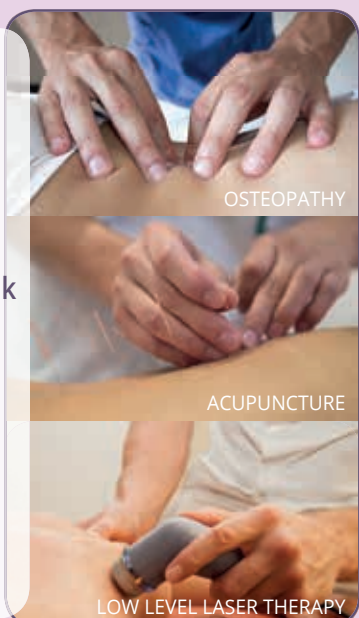
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Welcome to Probus!

Convivial Probus Lunch Club with talks for semi- or fully-retired PROfessional & BUSIness men and women on third Wednesday each month at Stephens House East End Road N3. Next meeting 16 May:

Lord Collins of Mapesbury, in conversation withProbus President Henry Ebner, discusses his work as a Judge of the High Court of Appeal and life in the House of Lords.
Details from Eric (8449 0566).

Pavilion in the park still in limbo

By Diana Cormack

With the ever deteriorating state of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood causing local concern, it seems that the long-running saga surrounding this building is set to continue.

The Archer's regular requests to Barnet Council for updates on progress invariably result in a reply regarding on-going meetings between them and the lessee.

In the latest, received on 13 April, a council spokesman said: "The negotiations and meetings are progressing positively and we aim to reach a final resolution in the coming weeks."

Readers may remember sudden action being taken to board up and fence off the building immediately before the East Finchley Community Festival two years ago. Since then there has been no outward sign of activity.

Can we hope for a decision finally to be taken about its fate before this year's East Finchley festival on Sunday 24 June?



The pavilion, after it was made safe two years ago.

Dirty streets

East Finchley resident David Attfield has started a petition calling on Barnet Council to keep the borough's streets clean.

He claims Barnet's pavements and verges are in a terrible state, bins are often overflowing and the street scene generally is neglected. Sign his 'Dirty

Streets of Barnet' petition online here by Sunday 20 May to give it a chance of being discussed by Barnet Council: <https://bit.ly/2KldLFR>.

Planning Applications

Barnet Council**Branksome Court, 158 East End Road, N2**

New hardstanding to front.

52 Deansway, N2

Demolition of single-storey boiler room to rear. Removal of rear windows and door to form bay window extension. Roof extension including rear dormer. Replacement of rear windows with new timber framed glazed door and sidelights. Replacement of timber gate and fence panels. Replacement of UPVC windows with timber-framed window.

13 Elmhurst Avenue, N2

Enlargement of rear dormer window.

21 Elmhurst Avenue, N2

Roof extension, including hip to gable with rear dormer window and three front rooflights.

3 Howard Walk, N2

Single-storey side and rear extensions. Roof extension, involving rear dormer window and one conservation side rooflight.

19 Howard Walk, N2

Single-storey rear extension including garage conversion into habitable room and infill extension to link house. New front porch. Roof extension involving rear dormer window and one side conservation rooflight.

54 Lancaster Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

26 Leopold Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Roof extension, involving hip to gable, rear dormer window and two front rooflights.

294 Long Lane, N2

Part single, part two-storey rear extension.

3, Ludlow Way, N2

Single-storey rear extension

including conversion of existing garage into habitable room and insertion of window to replace garage door.

10 Ludlow Way, N2

Alterations to front and rear paving and access steps. Associated works.

104 Ossulton Way, N2

Single storey rear extension, alterations to side door and window.

Haringey Council**Flat A, 33 Aylmer Parade, N2**

Replacement of single glazed timber frame windows with double glazed UPVC frame windows.

38 Eastern Road, N2

Two-storey rear extension.

12 Fortis Green Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension: depth 5m, maximum height 3m, eaves height 3m.

26 Twyford Avenue, N2

First-floor side extension.



Sainsbury's store stays on the shelf

It's now nearly two years since planning consent was granted to Sainsbury's to open a 'Local' store on the corner of the High Road and Leicester Road, N2, but after all this time there's no sign of the two empty shops there being redeveloped.

We made our regular call to Sainsbury's to find out if anything is happening. What we were told took us no further forward than the last statement from the company. A spokesperson told us: "We're working through our plans and timings so we can deliver our new store. We have had to revisit the works involved, as they are more detailed than we

first thought but we are working through this and hope to be in a position to update the local community in the near future."

The Archer will of course report any new developments as we get them. East Finchley Open artists continue to have permission from Sainsbury's to make use of the vacant premises with a pop-up photo display.



Run for it: Last year's Race the Neighbours gets under way in Cherry Tree Wood

Can East Finchley reclaim the crown?

By Nick Allan

Race the Neighbours is back on Sunday 1 July and this time East Finchley hopes to take back the trophy they lost to Muswell Hill last year.

The route takes runners from Cherry Tree Wood to Alexandra Palace and back and is often described as London's friendliest and most beautiful community 10K race.

Serious and not-so-serious runners compete on behalf of East Finchley or Muswell Hill, and those from further afield can choose which of the friendly rivals they want to run for. If the event sells out as expected, between them the 450 runners on the day will cover three times the distance from Lands End to

John O' Groats!

Local gym MighteeFit will again be hosting the warm-up before the race and are inviting every runner to book in for a free fitness assessment in the weeks afterwards.

Registration is now open, and places will go faster than the downhill section in Ally Pally... just don't think about that uphill bit! So get booking, and win back the Cherry Tree Cup for East Finchley! For more details and registration, visit www.racetheneighbours.com.

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First brick laid at hospice

Families, funders and the local community celebrated the laying of the first brick for Noah's Ark Children's Hospice on its new site in Byng Road, Barnet, on 16 March.

The Ark will be the first children's hospice building in north and central London serving the boroughs of; Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Islington, Haringey and Hertsmere. There are over 1,200 babies and children with life-threatening or life-limiting

conditions in the area.

The new state-of-the-art hospice building will offer a range of children's palliative care services that are not currently available, including sensory, music and wet play rooms, overnight stays to help

manage a child or young person's symptoms and 24-hour end-of-life-care, including specialised care for new-born babies. Find out more and help the cause by donating or volunteering at www.noah-sarkhospice.org.uk.

A dive into data protection

By Nick Allan

N2United, described as 'the fastest growing business network in East Finchley', lived up to that claim when nearly 30 enthusiastic business owners and leaders met for their monthly catch-up at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, on 12 April.

They heard Matt Connolly of Tunedin Technologies tell them more about GDPR, the EU's soon to be implemented General Data Protection Regulation programme. This important subject causes many to glaze over but Matt tackled it with refreshing candour and clarity. In an eloquent 20 minutes he summarised the action required by all those who hold other people's data and the steps required to comply before 25 May.

Local resident, Muriel Bouvier, a cognitive hypnotherapist and longstanding N2United member, then talked about the practicalities she had already applied in her own business,

circulating a valuable advice sheet for members to study at their leisure.

With a specialist speaker on the subject of social Media, the next meeting is on the 10 May.

N2United meets on the second Thursday of each month and the charge for attendance is £10 per meeting. Come along and join us – you will be made most welcome.

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Diana Cormack from The Archer presents a cheque to Lauren Mills at the Barnet Carers Trust. Photo Mike Coles

Archer medallions boost for Barnet Young Carers

The Archer 25th anniversary souvenir medallions, designed by our picture editor Mike Coles, sold well in local businesses over recent months. Thanks to everyone who bought one and thanks also to stockists Aliyah J, Black Gull Bookshop, Budgens, Cherry Tree Gift Shop, Margot's Bakery, Tony's Continental, Ryker Kids and the Phoenix cinema.

Our objective was to raise money to help the work of Barnet Young Carers, who assist young people whose lives are dominated by caring for a sick or disabled parent or family member.

Pictured is our writer Diana Cormack presenting a cheque to Young Carers Support and Outreach Officer Lauren Mills along with her colleague Keely

Dunning and Maivel Rodriguez Lopez, Head of Carer Services.

Maivel sent the following appreciation: "We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the generous donation of £600 that *The Archer* has kindly given to us in order to support our Young Carers Hubs & Activities. These activities happen monthly and they are an important space for young carers to be, learn, develop, have a break and, most importantly, be kids.

"Your donation will help us to continue offering this support to them, which many of them heavily rely on. On behalf of Barnet Carers Centre and the Young Carers team in particular, we thank you for helping us make a difference in children's lives."

There are hundreds of young carers in Barnet known to the support team but sadly many who are not. If you are a young carer or you know of one who may benefit from their help, contact the Young Carers Support and Outreach Team on 020 8432 2092 or email youngcarers@barnetcarers.org. They are based at Barnet Carers Centre, 303 Ballards Lane, North Finchley. For more information visit www.barnetcarers.org.

Do you have a story for us?

You can send your stories, letters, and photos by email to the-archer@lineone.net or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE. Tweet us @TheArcherN2 and find us on Facebook. You can also find out more about contributing and advertising at www.the-archer.co.uk



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, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

Youths arrested

A call was received on Tuesday 20 March that five boys, one with a knife, were in the process of trying to rob people near East Finchley tube station. Officers were on scene within 11 minutes and noticed a group, matching the descriptions given, standing at the bus top near Cherry Tree Wood. As police approached two suspects ran off.

One suspect tried to discard a rucksack witnessed by an officer and a large combat knife was found. Two 15-year-old males were arrested on suspicion of robbery and possession of an offensive weapon. The intended victims were two 14-year-olds and one 13-year-old playing basketball in Cherry Tree Wood, being targeted for their mobile phones.

Extra patrols have been made and are continuing in and around the Cherry Tree Wood area at different times of day and evening, on foot and using vehicles, to continue the support of mainly our young people against robbery.

Drugs arrest

Also on Tuesday 20 March, a warrant was executed by local police as part of Operation Sceptre, an ongoing operation to prevent knife crime and associated crime activities. A known person was targeted who was believed to be selling drugs in and around Finchley.

During the warrant we seized a quantity of cannabis and other

items indicating drug supply equipment. We also seized some mace spray, ammunition and a "zombie knife". Intel was received indicating stolen motorbikes were at the address and two mopeds were identified which are believed to be stolen. One suspect was arrested and an investigation is under way into the offences of possession with intent to supply, possession of a firearm, possession of a bladed article, possession of ammunition, and theft of a motor vehicle.

Vehicle crime

We are still seeing an increase in thefts from vehicles. Check out your vehicle for valuables and please, please make sure you lock it, no matter how rushed you are. Most of the thefts in the last month have shown no damage to the vehicle. Two very honest residents admitted to not locking their vehicles; one of them had private CCTV which showed a male trying car doors, opening and entering theirs, taking things from it then trying the next car, which was locked.

Yes, there are such things as signal blockers which thieves can deploy to prevent vehicles from locking. This is why it's so important to physically check your vehicle is actually locked. Blockers are unlikely to have been used in these instances as blockers work for thefts on a close group of vehicles and this has not been the case here.



Hey, honey, good news!

Volunteers at Long Lane Pasture report that honey bees have now returned to the site after some months without the previous population of hives.

Deena, one of the plot holders on the allotments next to the pasture on Long Lane, has moved in her bees from a site about a mile away that was proving difficult to access.

The pasture volunteers say it is good news for the

allotments and surrounding gardens to have a hard working army of tireless pollinators that has arrived right on their doorstep. They ask pasture visitors to avoid disturbing or entering the bee enclosure at any time.

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Sarah finds recipe for hope on the road to recovery

By Lois Lawrence

Sarah Berlingieri was told she had thyroid cancer just before Christmas last year. As a healthy 20-year-old, with no symptoms of disease, she was confused and overwhelmed by the diagnosis. Fortunately this type of cancer has a good prognosis and after an operation and a week in hospital, Sarah was able to return home to Durham Road.

Therapy and fun

But there was still a long period of recovery facing her and Sarah didn't want to sit around doing nothing, so she started up her own food blog and website called The Hopeful Kitchen. "I wanted a project that was something I enjoyed," she says.

Her family have always been passionate about cooking, in particular the Italian recipes of her father Chris, who plays lead guitar in rock and rockabilly band Sound of the Suburb, favourites at the East Finchley Festival.

Having the blog as a project has helped Sarah in many ways; experimenting and trialling recipes has improved her physical health. After her operation and treatments, Sarah often feels

weak and tired but the movement involved in cooking is great therapy just to keep her active.

Her family get to sample her meals and give their opinions and then she posts her final piece online. Sarah's recipes all cater to her vegetarian diet, with many tailored towards her sister who is a vegan.

Back to Brighton

Sarah is currently undertaking a year in industry, interning at Walt Disney, and is looking forward to returning to her third year at the University of Sussex. She expects then to add a 'cooking on a budget' spin to her site. At the moment her parents' well-stocked fridge is at her disposal but when she returns to Brighton she would like her recipes to be

more student-friendly and looks forward to seeing what Aldi has to offer.

In September Sarah will join family and friends to complete the fourth quarter of the Thames Path Challenge to raise money for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity as a thank you for all their support during her treatment. Donations are very welcome at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sarah-berlingieri.

Check out Sarah's meal ideas at www.thehopefulkitchen.uk.wordpress.com and on Instagram @thehopefulkitchen.uk and try this recipe taken directly from her blog.



Lunch is served: Sarah dishes up one of her recipes.

Free Alexander Technique consultation for Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological condition with physical symptoms such as trembling, loss of balance and coordination, and impaired movement as well as feelings of anxiety, depression, pain and insomnia.

A policy statement from Parkinson's UK says: "The only therapy recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Evidence (NICE) is the Alexander Technique to help day-to-day movement for people with Parkinson's."

Although the Alexander Technique cannot reverse the underlying cause, it can greatly help to get the most out of the resources that are still available by teaching, through experience, how to move more effi-

ciently and improve awareness in activity, as well as helping to manage anxiety.

A randomised controlled medical trial has shown that Alexander lessons led to a significantly increased ability to carry out everyday activities compared with usual medical care. The trial also showed that the rate at which symptoms progressed was reduced, as was the rate at which medication needed to be increased.

Local practitioner Adrian Farrell MSTAT regularly works with clients with Parkinson's who find the Alexander Technique really helps them to reduce their tremors, improve balance and coordination, breathing, posture and their confidence. He is offering a free, no-obligation 45 minute consultation. If this interests you, visit www.alexander-technique.london, contact info@alexander-technique.london or call 0780 861 2510 for more information.



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Spaghetti with Cavolo Nero and Spinach Pesto

Cavolo nero is a gorgeous winter vegetable that is becoming a common ingredient in everyday cooking and is often referred to as Italian kale as it originates from Tuscany. High in vitamins and iron, the combination of cavolo nero and spinach provides a healthier and tastier pesto for all to enjoy. Serves 6.

Ingredients:

500g spaghetti (white or brown)
135g cavolo nero
75g spinach
15g basil
1 cup of extra virgin olive oil
4 small cloves of garlic
2 cups of grated vegetarian parmesan cheese
1 tbsp ricotta cheese (and a sprinkle for garnish)
0.5 cup of sun blushed tomatoes for garnish
8 tsp pine nuts (optional)
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp salt



Method:

Boil a pot of water and add the cavolo nero and garlic; cook for 4 minutes. Drain the water and move the cavolo nero and garlic to a food processor. Blend until smooth.

Add the olive oil, spinach, basil, salt and pepper to the mixture and pulse until a paste is formed. Repeat this step with the parmesan, ricotta and only 4tsp pine nuts. Sample your pesto and add any ingredients to taste.

Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil and add your spaghetti. Cook for approximately 10mins; the pasta should be al dente. Meanwhile toast the remaining pine nuts in a dry pan or in the oven until golden brown. This should only take a minute or two so take care the nuts don't burn!

Drain the pasta and add to a bowl of pesto. Sprinkle parmesan and ricotta cheese on top, along with the toasted pine nuts and sun blushed tomatoes, and enjoy!

Plant sales

This month gardeners will be able to take advantage of two plant sales organised by local horticultural societies.

• The Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society will be hosting its popular annual plant sale on Saturday 12 May from 10.30am to 12 noon at Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11.

For sale will be bedding plants, perennials, vegetable plants and herb seedlings for gardens and allotments. Bring your own bags.

• Finchley Horticultural Society is holding a two-day plant sale on Sunday 20 May and again on Sunday 27 May at its allotments in Gordon Road, N3.

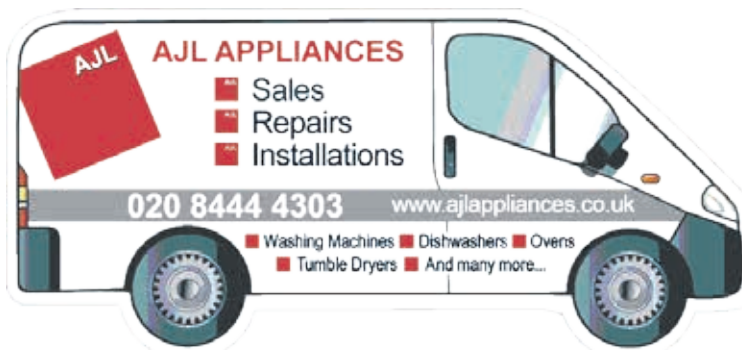
Annuals and perennials, herbs, vegetable plants, and honey from their allotment hives will all be on sale and there will be refreshments served from a new accessible tea hut. Opening times on both days are 10.30am to 1.30pm and entry is free.

Serenades for spring

The next concert by the Finchley Symphony Orchestra teams Beethoven with Dvorak in a programme of spirited music for a spring evening.

Two Dvorak serenades will combine Slavic dance rhythms with movements of dreamy relaxation; then Beethoven's first symphony is a cheerful and energetic work.

The concert takes place on Saturday 19 May at 7.30pm at Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12. Tickets are priced £15/£13 (concs), and £6 for under-18s. Save £2 per ticket by booking online at www.finchleysymphony.org/concerts.





Nicky Grace at the Green Shed Photo Ruth Anders

Green Shed is a heavenly haven for vintage fabrics

By Ruth Anders

Walking through the door of Nicky Grace's house in Tetherdown, Muswell Hill, is like walking into summer. Pastel colours, flowers, fruit and brightly coloured swatches of vintage fabric overwhelm the visitor, and any grey skies are left firmly outside.

With a varied career history from floristry to registered childcare, and a proud part-Dutch heritage, Nicky has developed a passion for vintage fabric, gathered from countries like France, Belgium, Australia and India. Walls, shelves, windowsills and tabletops explode with colourful samples from the 1930s and 1940s.

And now that two of her children have left home, their rooms too are rainbow repositories for Aladdin's caves of dazzling cloth cuts. Orchids, hyacinths and narcissi vie for space on the kitchen windowsills, demonstrating Nicky's horticultural skills, her keen eye for design and her stitching

expertise. Nicky has sold to Cath Kidston and once had a shop in Crouch End. She is also a member of the East Finchley business network N2United.

Workshops in a fairytale setting

The Green Shed is the jewel in Nicky's crown. The Shed, with its roof of sedums and ferns, is an enchanting apple green chalet a few yards from the back door, filled with paintings, flowers, lights and colour. Running the length of the cabin is a table seating up to 14, from which Nicky facilitates craft workshop parties for children. She also hires the shed out for meetings and adult creative writing workshops. Cosy in winter and cool in summer, it

provides the perfect setting for entertainment and imaginative thinking.

Nicky's bunting, pictures, cushions and collages, all made with her vibrant classic fabrics, adorn every area of the Green Shed and the house. There's a playful circus-like atmosphere throughout and Nicky's bubbly West Highland terrier Maisie, alongside her two tortoises (one emerging from hibernation next to the Aga in the kitchen while I was there), add to the fun.

The photos on Nicky's website demonstrate how much children love the Green Shed's fairy-tale environment, and she plans to expand her activities to include fabric and craft workshops for adults. Visit www.thegreenshed.format.com to discover more.

Take a walk on the wild side

By Thalia Pellegrini

Spring has finally arrived and now is the time to get outside and enjoy nature in all its glory! One local resident keen to celebrate the season is Brian Bennett, a medical herbalist who has lived in East Finchley for about 18 months.

His move to East Finchley was motivated in part by his desire to be closer to nature. He enjoys the proximity N2 offers to green spaces as diverse as the Heath and Long Lane Pasture, both of which he says are, "lovely local places to be with nature".

In Culpeper's footsteps

Trained in Western herbal medicine, Brian works in both the UK and in Ireland, using plants and plant

material to create medicines to help prevent or treat various illnesses. Brian believes: "We have a traditional heritage of Western herbal medicine which is for everyone to use." He offers one-to-one consultations in his clinic in Islington.

The beginnings of Western herbal medicine can be traced back to ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations. In the UK, botanist and herbalist Nicholas Culpeper was key in bringing herbal medicine to the masses by translating the definitive text at the time from Latin into English. His *Pharmacopeia* was published in 1649.

Learn about local herbs

Fast forward through the centuries and some herbal remedies are now familiar and



Herbalist Brian Bennett Photo Mike Coles

long-established—peppermint, fennel or cardamom for digestive upsets for example – but there are many more. Nettles for example, considered a weed by many, offer nutritive qualities when made into a tea or a soup, though Brian is keen to stress that you need to be able to correctly identify plants before consuming them and, of course, "get permission from land owners before picking!"

For those interested in finding out more about the wild herbs in our local area, Brian is offering hour-long guided walks between now and the end of August. A nominal fee of £5 can be redeemed against a Western herbal medicine consultation with Brian. If you'd like to know more, call Brian on 07403 037341 or visit: bwholistic.weebly.com.

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Round of applause: James Patterson entertains drinkers at the Bald Faced Stag. Photo Mike Coles

Mic opens for big birthday bash

There was a party atmosphere for the first birthday celebrations of the open mic music sessions that take place on Thursday evenings at the Bald Faced Stag pub in the High Road. Favourites Michelle O'Grady, Jimmy Johnson, Steven Suppe, Amy Taylor and James Patterson took their turn to entertain the pub's customers, and there was cake!

The Stag Sessions are run by local singer and performer Shereen Roushbaiani who says they are a perfect platform for people to showcase their talents. Shereen's next projects include a BBC appearance later this month and a theatre project over the summer. Find out more @ Stag_Sessions and www.sherenroushbaiani.co.uk.

Young film-makers make their mark at Cannes

By Ruth Anders

The Cannes Film Festival is beckoning 25 year-old Jacob Scipio, and not for the first time. Jacob is a writer, film-maker, voice-over artist and actor (making his debut at nine months old in the Screen One series *Bambino Mio*). His lively enthusiasm is infectious. This charismatic young East Finchley resident is without doubt someone to watch.

Jacob and his brother Taylor made *Cowboys & Angels*, which they successfully entered for Cannes in 2016, making Jacob no stranger to France's Côte d'Azur.

Surprise, rebellion and humour

The brothers continue to be passionate film-makers and their latest offering, a 'short' made through their company CPO Productions, will be shown at Cannes in mid-May. *The Writers Group* features eight professional actors, and focuses on "a group of tortured souls refusing to toe the line".

Jacob himself plays a skinhead, which is testament to his acting skills. Chatting to him over coffee it's hard to believe he's anything other than a well-centred and overwhelmingly cheerful young man. The film is "funny and surprising", says Jacob, and was entirely funded by Jacob and Taylor themselves.

Youth theatre is vital

Its location was the Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road. "FYT couldn't have been more helpful," Jacob tells me. "We shot the film over a weekend; they opened early for us and stayed open late."

When I press him further about Finchley Youth Theatre and its uncertain future (*The Archer*, March 2018), his enthusiasm turns to fervour. His experience of FYT has

Filming *The Writers Group* at Finchley Youth Theatre

been tremendously positive and he thinks it would be shameful for the community to lose it.

From his own experience, he knows the importance of such facilities for young people. He cited the amount of knife crime reported recently, and is convinced that services like FYT play a critical role in tackling youth problems at their root, providing a lifeline for young people.

"They help to change youth culture and guide the young

towards an alternative lifestyle," says Jacob. "Stop and Search is too late. We must tackle the problems before they arise."

Jacob is a great role model for the young. And we look forward to catching up with him again after Cannes.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Sacred texts: Ruth Jampel, left, with some of the academy students.

Faith and hope

Young people explored the bridges between the faiths when Muswell Hill Synagogue opened its doors to students from the Archer Academy in East Finchley.

Ruth Jampel, of local teaching company Judaism for Schools, led the sessions for Year Eight pupils to further their knowledge of Sacred Texts.

The students had the opportunity to explore the synagogue itself, handle artefacts linked to the construction and care of the Torah, and learn how to scribe

in Hebrew using ink and feather quills.

Ruth said many Muslim students made the link between the shared beliefs and approaches of Islam and Judaism and some of the school's Jewish students were proud to lead the scribing session themselves, sharing their knowledge and under-

standing of Hebrew.

Judaism for Schools visits primary and secondary schools in and around London, delivering hands-on engaging workshops on a range of topics linked to Judaism and Jewish history. The sessions focus on what all faiths share and reinforce the value of tolerance of the beliefs of others.

Cash help for youth projects

Eight projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of children and young people across Barnet have been given an £85,000 funding boost.

Among the eight organisations awarded funding are Barnet Carers Centre awarded £17,300 for their young carers' hubs, Community Focus awarded £17,500 for art projects, Resources for Autism awarded £12,800 and Grief Encounters awarded £6,000 for remembrance workshops to support bereaved children and young people.

The other four were Jami, Harts Theatre and Mill Hill East Church awarded £13,700 for their One Barnet, Many

Voices Project, Suberbos awarded £6,000 for its football project, Head Held High, Rainbow Head and RAF Museum awarded £5,000 for their Stop & Laugh Project, and Strength in Horses Equine Therapy awarded £5,900.

The Space2Grow awards came from the Young Barnet Foundation in partnership with the Joint Commissioning Unit of Barnet CCG and Barnet Council, having been selected from 24 project applications.

Janet Matthewson, CEO of the Young Barnet Foundation said: "The Space2Grow CYP fund is a great way of getting funding to local grass root organisations enabling them to be the difference in the lives of our children, young people and families."

Voices Project, Suberbos awarded £6,000 for its football project, Head Held High, Rainbow Head and RAF Museum awarded £5,000 for their Stop & Laugh Project, and Strength in Horses Equine Therapy awarded £5,900.

The Space2Grow awards



Strength in Horses: one of the projects receiving funding

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Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
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<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

Candid canines

Dog owners may want to make sure their daily walks take in the Phoenix Cinema during June when there will be an exhibition of canine shots by local photographer Michael Duke.

'A Dog's Life' features dogs in different situations, some funny, some poignant, often captured on the spur of the moment by Michael. He told us: "I got the idea for this exhibition when a driver parked his van outside my office, got out to nip into the bakery and his dog moved over to the driver's seat. I saw the humour of this and entitled the image 'Where did he hide the keys?'"

"Since then I have seen dogs in different situations, captured the scene on my camera and titled each image with what I reckon the dog concerned might be thinking. After trying out a few images

in photo club competitions and Facebook postings, I became encouraged enough to make a themed exhibition out of it."

Find out more at www.mjduke.co.uk.



"Where did he hide the keys?" by Michael Duke.



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Get yer kilt off for charity

Cyclist Robbie Allon will have a serious purpose in mind when he climbs onto the saddle to ride from Berlin to London next month, but he's come up with a delightfully daft way of boosting his fundraising before he sets off.

Robbie, a 28-year-old junior doctor, will be joining World Jewish Relief's six-day sponsored ride tracing the 600-mile route and marking the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport, the rescue operation of children from Nazi Germany.

And to make sure he hits his £2,000 fundraising target, Robbie has promised to remove one item of clothing for every £200 donated and keep his supporters updated with new photos on Facebook and Instagram (@thecyclingscotsman).

Canny laddie

Robbie, a Scot by birth who now lives in Etchingham Park Road, N3, said: "I may not have the sculpted body of a Greek god, so I'm aware it may not be the best incentive, but it's definitely helped to grab people's attention."

"The original idea was for me to begin the photo series in full cycling gear and take off layers of that but I am a proud Scotsman who wears my kilt on any possible occasion so it seemed only right that some

good old Black Watch tartan made an appearance.

"Regular photoshoots have been taking place in Victoria Park, which has got me some very odd looks, although as we get to the later stages I am slightly concerned about being arrested for public indecency."

World Jewish Relief works to improve conditions for thousands of Jewish people in Eastern Europe and for people outside the Jewish community, including Syrian refugees who have been resettled in the UK.



Undressed for success: Robbie Allon removes another item of clothing ahead of his bike ride.



That's sandy... a copy of The Archer!

Well, what else do you do when you're trekking through empty miles of the Sahara desert on the back of a camel? Peruse *The Archer* for all the news from home, of course. Poppy Walker and her boyfriend Matt made sure they had their copy on a recent trip to Morocco. Poppy, of Durham Road, N2, said: "We spent the night in a Berber camp, trekking back out to the 'normal' world again at sunrise the following morning. The desert was absolutely beautiful and very surreal, with very fine red sand and enormous hill-sized dunes. Matt's camel is one of those behind us. Matt became very fond of him and named him Eric."

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RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

'Welcome to the weird world of the Windsors

Back when girls were girls and princes were princes, girls wanted to marry a prince and princes wanted to marry almost anything in a skirt. Then came the movies and girls wanted to be film stars. Which was pretty cool until Grace Kelly went the whole way, becoming a film star and then marrying a prince. So what if Monaco wasn't somewhere everyone had heard of... it worked for her.

And now it's Meghan's turn to try on the cut glass slipper and join the royals, only the weird Windsors make Monte Carlo seem normal.

The only way to explain the Windsors to anyone with a vague grasp on reality is to forget *The Crown* on Netflix and think of a cross between *The Sopranos* and *Arrested Development*. Top of the pile is a 92-year-old grandmother with a liking for horse racing, pastel colours and corgis. Nothing too weird there, but her husband, the 20-times winner of the Rudest Man on Earth prize, is another matter. OK, so Philip's decided to retire, either because he's run out of people to be rude to or because he knows he can't match Donald Trump.

And now we come to the future father-in-law. He Who Talks to Plants is a man who has ensured that being Prince of Wales is a source of endless amusement. They say this is a man who takes his own mattress, toilet seat and food with him when he goes visiting friends. He is frustrated that his mother is still around and that means he can't be king. And he's afraid of clingfilm.

Are there any humans in the castle? Well, maybe, Baldilocks seems almost sentient and his wife, Kate, seems vaguely intelligent. And what about the one Meghan's marrying? Well, Gingerbuns is probably the only one of the whole bunch the rest of humanity wouldn't mind having a drink with. As long as no one mentions that day he wore a Nazi outfit to a party. Ah well, you can't have everything, can you?

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Call Vivien 8883 8190
- **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 0433.
- **Outdoor Fit Camp** Lyttelton Playing Fields, N2, 6.30pm Wed and 9.30am Sat. Call Martin on 07809 593952.
- **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 12pm, 1pm, 6pm & 7pm. 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 beginners' course** at Yogalogy, High Road, N2. Contact 020 70187377 or info@yogalogy.co.uk
- **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

- **The Archer Community Choir**, Tuesdays 7-9pm, The Archer Academy, Eagans Close, N2. Email: archercommunitychoir@gmail.com.
- **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.
- **'Calm & Sing' workshops**. Contact Angie on missangiea@yahoo.co.uk
- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **Creative Writing** at Friern Barnet Community Library. Every Saturday, 12pm, 07488 230580.
- **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.
- **Rock 'n Roll dance lessons**, 8pm every Weds at the Constitutional Club, The Walks. Drop-in. Call Kav 07721 489489.
- **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**, Thursday & Saturday afternoons, Age UK, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. Contact Ray Tiano 07944 562180.



Robert Peston.

Photo by Alan Davidson



Simon Jenkins



Nicholas Hytner.

Photo Johan Persson

Words and walks at the Proms

The centrepiece of the Proms at St Jude's festival in Hampstead Garden Suburb from 23 June to 1 July is always the music (see *The Archer*, April 2018) but it also runs a very popular literary festival on its first weekend.

ITV pundit Robert Peston will discuss his new book as will former National Theatre director Nick Hytner and columnist Simon Jenkins. Other big names appearing include stand-up

comedian Viv Groskop, Tony Blair's speechwriter Philip Collins and famous grammarian Lynne Truss.

When the LitFest is finished, the Proms has a programme of

nine Heritage Walks through the area, led by expert guides, including Kenwood, Hampstead Heath and Belsize Park. Find the full Proms programme at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk.

Jive and swing

Singer and teacher Angie A is hosting a jump jive night as part of the North Finchley Festival on Sunday 20 May featuring her own band playing jive and swing music from the 1940s and 1950s. The event is an off-shoot of her regular Keep Calm and Sing workshops held every fortnight at Trinity Church.

Angie will be hosting the dance event at the Bohemia in North Finchley and hopes to promote her favourite charity Wheelchairs For Ukraine. To find out more and book tickets for £5 go to her website www.angie-a.co.uk.

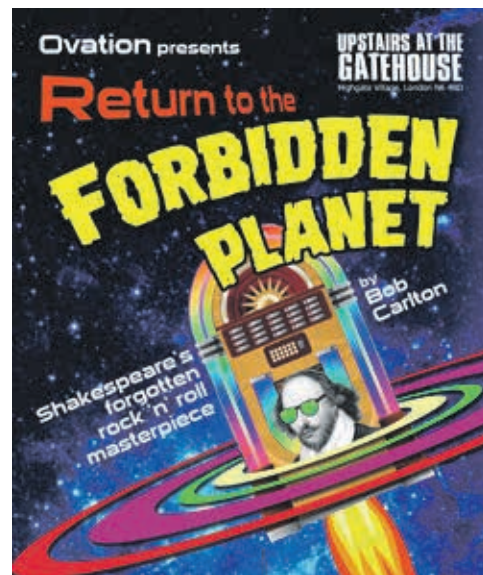
Forbidden Planet

Winner of the 1990 Olivier Award for Best New Musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet* will be on stage Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate Village, N6, from 12 May to 17 June.

Loosely based on the 1950s sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet*, which itself was based on *The Tempest*, it is a riotous mix of Shakespeare, B-movie science fiction and some of the biggest pop hits from the fifties and sixties.

Songs featuring in the show include *Great Balls of Fire*, *Good Vibrations*, *Teenager in Love*, *The*

Young Ones and *The Monster Mash*. More information and



bookings at www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com.

Rossini at All Saints

Review by Ken Carter

At All Saints' Church in Durham Road, N2, at the end of March, the London Ripieno Singers gave a rousing performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, written for the consecration of a private chapel of a wealthy friend.

This concert was organised and conducted by East Finchley Arts Festival director Geoffrey Hanson in aid of the All Saints Roof Appeal, raising £1,000 to that end, thanks to a large audience attending.

This "poor little mass" was the first music Rossini had composed for 30 years. Written for modest resources, it is nevertheless forward-pushing and exuberant. Together, the choir including soloists, with Sandra Smith on piano and Jon Dods on organ, made a joyous noise in jubilant celebration. This really was a most happy occasion, glowing from the choir's experienced togetherness.

Matthew Bernstein, bass, had a voice of rich quality, and Chris Huggon, tenor, sang the *Domine Deus* with firm, lucid purity. Rebecca Hardwick, soprano, sang with accomplishment and a most agreeable mellowness. It was fitting, though, that the *Agnus Dei* should be carried by Marie-Anne Hall, contralto. She brought the performance to its conclusion with quiet, serene exaltation – exactly appropriate for this open, untroubled, basically may one say happy version of the mass. I left the church stronger and refreshed.

Follow us!



@TheArcherN2

What's On...

Sunday 6 May

• **Dawn Chorus at Long Lane Pasture**, Long Lane, opposite fire station. Meet at gazebo 4.45/5am. Come and hear the symphony, help identify the birds and watch the sun and mist rise over pasture and pond.

Saturday 12 May

• Free talk by Barnet Heritage Officer Hugh Petrie on the **Edgware Highgate and London Railway**, which used to run through East Finchley, accompanied by photos from the Alan Lawrence Collection; Finchley Church End Library, 2-4pm. For details and booking email hugh.petrie@barnet.gov.uk or phone him on 020 8359 3961.

• **Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society** annual plant sale, Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11, 10.30am-12noon; discounted annuals, perennials, vegetable and herb seedlings for allotments and garden plots. Bring your own bags.

• **Fortismere Community Choir** and Fortismere Symphony Community Orchestra perform **Haydn's oratorio The**

Seasons, 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Alexandra Park Road, Muswell Hill, N10 2DD. Tickets (£10/£8) on the door or online www.fortismerecentre.co.uk/events/the-seasons.

• **Holy Trinity School's Spring Fair**: plenty of traditional attractions including face painting and hook a duck, as well as a few surprises. Home-cooked food available to buy. Holy Trinity School, Eagans Close, N2 8GA. Open 12 to 3pm. Entrance £1 for adults, free for children.

Sunday 13 May

• **Wild Flower walk, Coldfall Wood**, led by botanist David Bevan. Note start time: 3.0pm., east entrance, Creighton Avenue. Book at info@coldfallwoods.co.uk

• **Free concert by Serafini Baroque Ensemble** at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm; Janet Marsh on baroque flute, Elizabeth Dockrell Tyler on violin, Dinah Beamish on violoncello, Kate Gordon on recorder and Chris Rowland on harpsichord. Free entry; collection in aid of the Enfield Wildlife Rescue and

Ambulance Service. Fully accessible venue.

Monday 14 May

• **Stand-up comedy night** at the Phoenix Cinema raising funds for The Archer Academy secondary school in East Finchley, starring Ian Stone, Jo Caulfield, Hal Cruttenden and Geoff Norcott. Tickets £25 plus booking fee, available at tinyurl.com/archercomedy2018. Doors open at 8.30pm for a 9pm show. Please note the event is for over 18s only.

Saturday 19 May

• **Finchley Symphony Orchestra** presents **Serenades and Symphony for Spring** with music by Dvorak and Beethoven, Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12, at 7.30pm. Tickets £15, concessions £13, under 18s £6. Save £2 per ticket by advance booking online at www.finchleysymphony.org/concerts.

Sunday 20 May and Sunday 27 May

• **Finchley Horticultural Society's annual plant sale**, 10.30am to 1.30pm at its allotments at Gordon Road, N3 1EL. Annuals and perennials, herbs, vegetable plants and local honey

for sale. Refreshments served from new accessible tea hut. Free entry.

Saturday 2 June

• **Invertebrates Walk, Coldfall Wood**, led by bug-expert Edward Milner. Meet 2.0pm, east entrance, Creighton Avenue. Book at info@coldfallwoods.co.uk

• **Remember Disco**, a fun evening to the very best of Motown, Blues and R & B at Waterfall Tennis Club, Pymmes Green Road, New Southgate, N11 1DD from 7.30pm – midnight. Entrance adjacent to 100 Pymmes Green Road. Bar, nibbles, raffle. All proceeds go to the North London Hospice.

Tickets £10 in advance. Call 07506 701130 or email happydays18@icloud.com

Saturday 9 June

Wild Flower and Pollinator Day 10am-12 noon at Long Lane Pasture, opposite fire station, Long Lane, N3; after warm, dry weather the pasture will look its prettiest and wild flowers, grasses and insects will bring the site alive. Booklets and advisors available to identify finds.

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



The original Archer team outside Welch's in 1993. Back row L-R: John Dacam, Pete Maslen, Kevin Finn and Paul Savill. Front row L-R: Malcolm Griffiths, Pat McManus, Ros Walters and Len Willcocks.

Leonard Willcocks, 1927 – 2018

Len Willcocks, one of the original members of the *Archer* team, sadly passed away on 1 April at the age of 90. Len was a prolific contributor to the paper in its early years in the 1990s when, as well as supplying a variety of articles and stories, he was also our crime correspondent. He later took on the role of news editor and was a member of the editorial team until the end of 2000.

Len, who lived in Park Hall Road, N2, regularly attended the *Archer*'s Saturday morning meetings at Maddens, where he was particularly helpful to new writers and adept at supplying suggestions for subjects, gleaned from his knowledge of and involvement in the local community. This also made him the ideal person to report on the area forum meetings.

His familiarity with East Finchley and its history belies the fact that Len was born in Stoke Row, Oxfordshire. He grew up in Muswell Hill but returned to Stoke Road briefly as an evacuee in the Second

World War.

Len worked as an engineer and in 1954 he migrated to Australia under the 'Ten Pound Pom' assisted scheme. After three years he returned to the UK and became an international telephonist for what was then the Post Office, later BT.

A keen runner, Len ran three London marathons and took part in others around the UK and in Dublin.

In 1959 he married Mary Josephine Egan (Josie) at Our Lady of Muswell RC Church. They had three sons, Alan, Terry and Paul. Len converted to Catholicism in 1977 and,

along with his late wife, was an active member of St Mary's RC Church, East Finchley.

He proved a useful link between the church and *The Archer*, particularly after his retirement, when he continued to write on an occasional basis and to provide useful story leads and comments. He also wrote short stories, letters to the editor and Soapbox features whilst continuing to deliver the newspaper for many years.

Fond memories of Len will live on in the locality as will his words, many of which can be found in the archives of *The Archer*.



Message couldn't be clearer

Thanks to the reader in Church Lane who sent us this photo of a new sign on his front door. We appreciate the sentiment. Let's hope it works!



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Letters

Let's go plastic-free

Dear Editor,

We know plastics are killing our planet. Is it possible that we could make East Finchley the first high road in London where people can shop single use plastic free?

In Amsterdam a supermarket has instituted a plastic-free aisle which has been widely celebrated in the media. If we could achieve this we would give our area huge news coverage and I think widely attract shoppers from around London. Could we become the go-to food shopping destination for responsible consumers?

As consumers we cannot duck our responsibility. We are in the driving seat. Groceries transported in small quantities seem to be always packaged in single-use plastic. It is what supermarkets think we want. We do not.

What we should do in East Finchley is award a symbol for prominent display in shops for celebrating their attainment of single-use plastic-free status. The whole High Road could gradually attain total plastic-free status.

Let's start now. Already we have shops that nearly attain the status. They tend to be local fresh food shops buying in bulk and selling on in smaller quantities, for instance Tony's Continental, A. Scott & Son fishmongers and Amici delicatessen.

Patronise your stores and insist on no plastics; it used to be done, why not now? Is using scoops to place loose rice granules into paper bags that you then decant into glass jars in the kitchen impossible? How about similarly decanting spices? Shopping could become a pleasure again.

Time for a coffee? Use only ceramic cups and branded multi-use individual flasks. Don't have the option of using throwaway plastic and cardboard amalgams.

We are in the driving seat and we can change the way groceries are sold by the way we change our buying habits. On a day-by-day basis we can monitor the number of single-use plastics we buy and reduce the number relentlessly.

Yours faithfully,
Ann Inglis,
Huntingdon Road, N2.

Happy memories of Valona House

Dear Editor,

In the March copy of *The Archer*, there was a Soapbox item from Dr Ruth Brown regarding Valona House, opposite the Tube station. It interested me as in 1944, aged 14, I was offered a job as a "trainee" dental chairside nurse there.

My employer was to be a gentleman called Mr Sidney Puckey, who was a dental surgeon living and working in that very house. I worked there for many years until Mr Puckey died of a heart attack, so you see I have happy memories of that fantastic building. I can remember the front door opening to the surgery, waiting room and the workshop where many sets of dentures were

made. Opposite the workshop was a small recovery room where patients waited after extractions and other operations when necessary.

At the end of the hall, a flight of stairs led up to the dentist's wife and daughter's living accommodation. Back and beyond were the original stables and above them dark bedrooms, still with beams in the ceilings - very spooky and I was sure they were haunted, although I never saw a ghost.

These rooms and stables were used by the coaches going through East Finchley to get into London. The horses were fed overnight and the passengers given a good bed for the night to rest their shaken-up bones.

In my time there I remember the well-tended gardens, always a delight to see, even the fish pond which could be seen from the surgery window, with many goldfish swimming happily around. When the courier company GLH took over, the garden disappeared and concrete was put down to make way for the cars that were there for hire. It saddened me to see this change but time goes on and so we had to accept the changes for the flourishing business that GLH brought to our High Road. Although I am now 88 years young, I will always look back to my time there with happy memories and thoughts and hope it will remain in place forever.

Yours faithfully,
Evelyn Bagley,
Church Lane, N2.

Barrier to entry

Dear Editor,

Having read Brian Ingram's letter urging us to make the most of East Finchley library published in your April edition, I decided to do just that this afternoon. I am very conscious about how my library usage has fallen since the new system was introduced and it's quite some time since I last went to borrow a book. Alas, I was thwarted in my intentions by the system. I do have a library card and am a registered user with a PIN number but access was denied. At the third attempt the security guard came out and tried my card himself, to no avail. He advised me to come back when a member of staff was on duty. I duly left fuming. It has made me really appreciate how the children in the article on your front page last month feel when they can't get into this public resource. I am still fuming as I write.

Yours faithfully,
Vanessa Carpenter,
Baronsmere Road, N2.

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page"
The Archer, PO Box 3699,
London N2 2DE or e-mail
the-archer@lineone.net.

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



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The heron perches on the Fortis Green roof.



Chris's photo highlights the heron's elegant form.



On the wing: The heron flies off among the rooftop aerals.

Surprise rooftop rest stop for this bird of the wetlands

Although grey herons are resident in the UK, they are not a frequent sight round our way at any time of year. As a keen wildlife photographer, Chris Matthews, a resident of East Finchley for more than 25 years, has seen many grey herons on safaris in Sub-Saharan Africa but he never expected to see one on

his doorstep. So when Chris was at his desk upstairs in his Fortis Green house it was a great surprise when a huge grey heron landed, suddenly and gracefully, on the flat roof of the dormer opposite.

"Urban and suburban" are included by the RSPB among the natural habitats of grey herons, so it is not completely out of the ordinary. However, the other habitats they list -

woodland, farmland, grassland, marine, intertidal and wetland - are rather different from most of our East Finchley environment. And the grey heron is indeed primarily a bird of wetland areas.

Chris quickly grabbed his phone and took a photo, thinking the heron was going to disappear as quickly as it arrived. He admits the picture does not do justice to the bird's slender

beauty but at least it showed how one member of the species is happy to use the aerials and pipes of our rooftops as a vantage point, perhaps for a well-stocked garden pond.

Luckily, our friendly grey heron decided it was going to

survey the scene for a bit longer, giving Chris time to grab his camera and quickly attach the long lens he uses for his safari photography. Then he was able to get some striking close-up shots of this majestic bird as it took flight in search of its next meal.

A voyage of discovery away from a lost paradise

By Daphne Chamberlain

I've been reading a fascinating book. *Beatrice's Last Smile* is subtitled *A Journey Through Germany*, but it is also a journey through the mind and memories of its author Iqbal Ahmed, who lives in East Finchley.

Iqbal was born in Kashmir, in Srinagar, and was the first person in his family to have a passport. He was still a teenager when he applied for it, with nothing definite in mind but what he describes as "the age-old desire for men and women to cross waters and meet people from other cultures, who speak different languages".

In the course of the book, he introduces us to many friends and acquaintances who have crossed those waters: Iranian, Afghan, German, Kashmiri, Turkish, Nigerian and Polish among them. They are some of the thousands of migrants and refugees living in Germany,

and Iqbal's latest journey there tells us about their struggles and varying successes.

As he finds out more about these people, he also discovers more about the history and traditions of the country. This is a glimpse into what lies behind the well-known tourist spots. Quoting Proust, he realises that "the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

Read this book with a nimble mind! It's not a one-straight-line progression. As a remark, an encounter, a sudden thought reminds him of something or someone else, we follow his



Iqbal Ahmed

memory. Very often, we go back to Srinagar, the paradise of his childhood, lost to political turmoil. Proust again had the words for it: "True paradises are the ones that we have lost."

Germany was the first place Iqbal's passport took him to but he has lived in London since 1994 and in East Finchley since 2007. Though very easy to read, his own words are that history is a warning of where resurgent nationalism can lead us. *Beatrice's Last Smile*, ISBN 978 1 5272 1130 8, is published by Coldstream Publishers.

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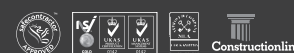
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