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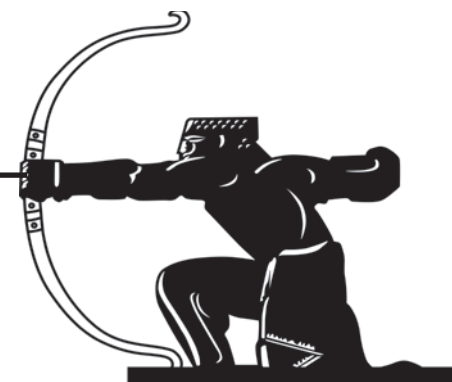
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The Archer

Local News is our Aim



November 2019 No. 307

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Pirates and parasols at All Saints'

An energetic cast from The Merry Opera Company brought an hilariously offbeat version of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance* to the week-long East Finchley Arts Festival at All Saints', Durham Road. Photo by Mike Coles. *An insider's view of the Arts Festival, page 7.*

Willow House residents can't move back in one year on

By Janet Maitland and Ruth Anders

One year after a devastating fire raged through the roof of Willow House on the Grange Estate, *The Archer* can report that none of the 13 families who lost their homes have been able to move back in. Rebuilding work has not yet started and the cause of the fire is still not known.

More than 60 residents were forced to flee the flats just before midnight on Tuesday 6 November last year, many losing everything except the clothes they were wearing. It took 100 firefighters more than two hours to put out the blaze.

Residents who are still living in the undamaged part of the building next to the burnt-out flats told us that no one from Barnet Council had told them anything since the fire, even though they'd been promised information about how it had started and what steps would be taken to ensure it never happened again.

The block of flats, alongside the High Road, N2, is still covered in scaffolding and surrounded by a security fence. Residents say the main front door is broken and they feel intimidated by groups of young men who congregate behind the building smoking cannabis. We contacted Barnet Homes to see what was happening. They said that no one affected by the fire had been able to move back in as "the safety of our residents is our highest priority" and that although there had been "unforeseen delays", work on refurbishing the block will hopefully now start this month and be finished by next March.



The Willow House blaze in 2018. Photo by Ximenita Pachon

A spokesperson from Barnet Homes said: "At the time of the fire, two households were placed in temporary accommodation but all households had moved into more settled accommodation by 3 January. Two of the households affected were Barnet Homes tenants and we were able to help rehouse them within the Barnet area or neighbouring boroughs.

Continued on page 4

Christmas invitation

The Bishop Douglass Christmas party this year will be held on Thursday 5 December, from 5pm prompt until 7pm. All N2 residents who are over 65 are welcome and should book their place without delay.

As usual, they will be welcomed with a glass of sherry by Year 10 students and then enjoy a traditional three-course meal, followed by carol singing and entertainment by pupils and staff. Games of bingo and a gift from Santa Claus will round off the evening.

Transport to the school in Hamilton Road, N2, can be provided for those who need it. To book your place, phone 020 8883 0433 leaving your name and a contact number and someone will get back to you.

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The Archer

PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE

www.the-archer.co.uk Email: the-archer@lineone.net

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [TheArcherN2](#)

Voicemail (messages only) 0800 612 0748 for editorial and general enquiries or 0800 612 4027 for Advertising enquiries only

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Copy Editor

John Lawrence

Production Editor

Alison Roberts

Picture Editor

Mike Coles

Editorial Team

Diana Cormack

Daphne Chamberlain

Sub Editors

Ann Bronkhorst

Jeff Robson

Finance & Advertising

John Dearing

Distribution

Toni Morgan

Jane & David Marsh

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Comments to The Archer may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

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Benefits 0800 882200
Haringey Council 020 8489 0000
Recycling & refuse 020 88857700
Benefits 020 8489 2800

Leisure

Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library 020 8359 3815
Everyman, Muswell Hill 0872 436 9060
Garden Suburb Library 020 8458 3301
Muswell Hill Library 020 8489 8773
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Vue, North Finchley 0345 3084620

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Free samples: Visitors enjoy the tastes of Muswell Hill Traders Week. Photo Mischa Haller.

Traders serve up a taste of shopping locally

Muswell Hill traders got together to run a special week of events designed to show off the attractions of shopping locally. People tried free samples, gathered discount vouchers, and pledged to support traders.

Traders' Week was conceived jointly by Muswell Hill Traders' Association and The Friends of St James Square. The association's Tracey Tommasini said: "In an increasingly online world, it was an opportunity for local businesses to show all of us the benefits of being able to really see what you're buying, to get expert advice and to have an enjoyable outing that only shopping in person affords."

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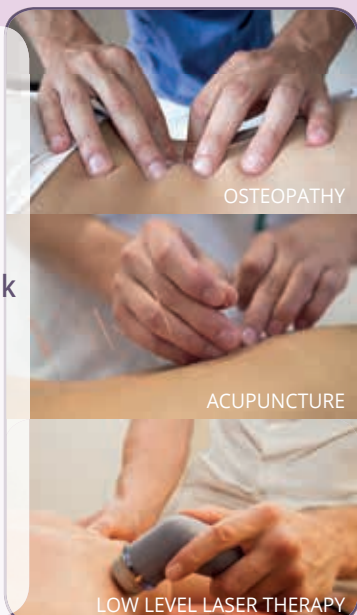
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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet Council

29 Heath View, N2
Ramp access to front of property.
58-60 High Road, N2
Details of conditions re. enclosure/boundary treatment) and refuse/recycling collection, pursuant to planning permission 15/03899/S73.
First Floor Flat, 24 Manor Park Road, N2
Roof extension, including rear dormer window and two front facing roof lights.
32 Pulham Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension: depth 4.5m, eaves height 3m, maximum height 3m.
52 Summerlee Avenue, N2
Single-storey ground floor side extension.

Haringey Council

34 Aylmer Road, N2
Part single, part two-storey rear extension. Two side and two rear dormers.
44 Bancroft Avenue, N2
Metal gates to front drive. Front extension to garage.

Night help for carers

A new service has been set up to provide night-time support for people caring for loved ones. The Night Owl

Secret world of the brain

Age UK Barnet trustee Professor Catherine Loveday, from the University of Westminster, will be giving a free talk on music and memory, explaining what happens in the brain when we listen to music and how it can help people with dementia.

It takes place on Wednesday 20 November at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, at 6.30pm, with a licensed bar available. Tickets are free (donations are welcome) but booking is essential as places are limited. To book call 020 8432 1421 or email wendy.nutman@ageukbarnet.org.uk.

Service from Barnet Carers Centre will be significantly cheaper than the average cost of night care.

Homecare assistants will be available to check in on individuals at flexible hourly intervals throughout the night for administering medication and fluids, turning, toileting and any other necessary care.

There are an estimated 40,000 unpaid carers in Barnet, many of whom struggle in isolation. The average cost of overnight care in Barnet is £120, while the Night Owl Service will cost £25 an hour.

Donia Arnall, head of HomeCare at Barnet Carers Centre, said: "This important new affordable service will help to reduce the stress on carers and enable them to get a better night's sleep, confident that their loved ones are receiving the care they need."

The charity, based in North Finchley, has been providing care and support for adult and young carers in Barnet for almost 30 years. Contact the team there on 020 3995 1909; email: admin@barnetcarers.org or visit barnetcarers.org/home-care.

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Brazen thieves snatch car parts in broad daylight

By David Melsome

Motorists in East Finchley and Muswell Hill are reporting a spate of thefts of catalytic converters from their vehicles, many of them in broad daylight. The converters are detached from the exhaust system and sold on for the precious metals they contain.

The Archer has seen multiple social media posts from car owners in both areas warning others that thieves are operating. Several said their converters had been stolen in just minutes from cars parked outside their home in the middle of the afternoon.

where possible, park their vehicle to make access underneath difficult.

Toyota has developed a locking device that makes it harder for thieves to remove the converter and Honda has relocated the converter on recent

One resident of Trinity Avenue, N2, who asked not to be named, told us: "Two weeks ago at 10.30 in the morning I heard a drilling outside my window, looked out and saw a silver saloon car alongside my car, two men in hoodies bending down and one holding a wire cutter. I knew immediately what had happened but it was all so quick I had no time to catch the number plate nor run after them."

The cost of replacing the converter on her Toyota hybrid car is likely to be close to £1,000. She reported the theft to police but believes there is little they can do without supporting evidence.

Theft target

Catalytic converters clean up harmful gases before they leave the exhaust pipe. Thieves are targeting them because they contain valuable metals like palladium and rhodium, which are more valuable than gold. BBC News has reported that for the first six months of 2019, the number of thefts of catalytic converters nationwide jumped to 2,894, compared to 1,674 thefts for all of 2018. Hybrid vehicles are most at risk because their converters are used less heavily and therefore their precious metals are in better condition.

Protection

Police advise vehicle owners to mark their catalytic converter with a serial number to make it distinctive, fit a protective cover over it, install a car alarm and,



Theft target: A typical catalytic converter.

models to make it harder for thieves to reach.

Festive lights switch-on

Christmas starts in East Finchley on Saturday 7 December at 4.30pm. As dusk gathers, the festive lights sprinkled over the High Road's Christmas tree will be switched on to the sound of carols led by the Archer Community Choir and Brookland Junior School Choir.

Carols and mince pies

Everyone is invited to join in the carols and, thanks to the team at Budgens, enjoy mulled wine and mince pies. Put the date in your diary and join the festivities outside the supermarket at 4.30pm.



All creatures great and small: Father Marius, back row, with pets and their owners. Photo Mike Coles

Animal friends among the faithful

By John Lawrence

There was a very different type of congregation at Holy Trinity Church on the first Saturday in October. Dogs and cats occupied the pews to take part in the church's first pet blessing service.

Eight dogs, two puppies and two cats were brought along by their human owners. The cats stayed safely in their travel boxes while some of the dogs were allowed to wander freely.

Aside from a bit of whining in one of the hymns and a brief outburst of barking during prayers, everyone's behaviour was impeccable. One elderly golden retriever struggled gainfully to her feet every time the congregation stood to sing.

Animal tales

Instead of a sermon, owners were invited to tell stories about their pets and how they'd changed their lives. Police dog handler Emma Robling paid a moving tribute to her German Shepherd Zia and the many dangerous situations they'd faced together before she succumbed to cancer.

Cat owner David Broome recalled an encounter with a housebound lady who had two feral cats move uninvited into her home, in return for which they cleared her house and garden of a vermin problem.

RSPCA officer Abi McEwan spoke about an animal fostering



Take a pew: One dog waits to be blessed. Photo Mike Coles.

network she is setting up and dog owner Carmen Stevens made a plea for people not to buy animals from puppy farms, which can often mistreat animals.

New tradition

Father Marius, who led the blessing service, said he hoped it would be the start of a new tradition at the church in Church Lane, N2. Although he has no pets himself, he grew up on his grandparents' farm in Romania with horses, cows and pigs all

around.

"The service has all been about giving thanks for the animals who share our lives," he said. "The stories we have heard today show what a blessing they can be to so many of us."

Hymn choices included *All Creatures of our God and King* and *Think of the World without Animals*. And as people and animals mingled after the service, the pianist rounded it all off nicely by playing *Nellie the Elephant*.

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Waiting for repair: The current state of Willow House. Photo Ruth Anders

Willow House unfit to move back in

Continued from page 1

“The remainder were sub-tenants of leaseholders, many of whom preferred to make their own arrangements rather than use our housing options service. Those who did approach us, we were able to help rehouse them.” Why the delay in refurbishment work? A source drew our attention to a published answer from Barnet Council to questions put

by a local resident back in July. The council said then that it had had to re-tender the refurbishment contract because the bids it had received by May “did not represent value for money”. We reported in January that the cause of the fire may never be known. The Fire Brigade thought it was probably started by an “electrical episode”, but

extensive damage meant that further investigations were unlikely to take place.

However, Barnet Homes have told us that although investigations carried out by the insurers were also inconclusive, further investigations into the cause of the fire will be possible once clearing the debris in the roof gets underway.

Don't fall for the TV licence scam

By Daphne Chamberlain

Age UK has issued a warning about bogus emails pretending to be from TV Licensing which claim you are entitled to a refund for an overpayment or warn that your licence is about to expire. They will then ask you to respond by entering your bank details on a fake website.

Although the emails may use the TV Licensing logo and have other features that make them look authentic, you should never

trust them. Be cautious about any emails from TV Licensing that ask you to update your personal or banking details.

The real TV Licensing organisation will use donotreply@tvlicensing.co.uk (or donotreply@spp.tvlicensing.co.uk) to email you. The scammers cannot send emails using these addresses. Instead, they may come from a personal email account or one which looks unusual.

Be suspicious if the email doesn't use your name or has

an incorrect account number. The scammers may insert an incorrect customer ID in the hope that you will not check that it's wrong.

If you receive one of these emails, don't reply or open any links. Delete it straight away. Report it to Action Fraud or call them on 0300 123 2040. If you provided your bank account details, talk to your bank or building society immediately.

If you're still unsure, you can contact TV Licensing directly using the phone number that is on the official TV Licensing website or your last paper bill. If you still feel concerned, you can speak to someone at Age UK. Call their free advice line on 0800 678 1602 (8am to 7pm).

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

Drug arrests

Two males were arrested on the Grange Estate, N2, one for possession of cannabis, the other for possession with intent to supply. Both have been bailed pending charging. Two other youths were given cannabis warnings on Market Place, N2.

Safer Neighbourhood survey

Thank you to those who replied to the survey sent out. We have sifted the responses and will consider actions on the issues pertaining to the Safer Neighbourhood Team. Many others such as street lighting and other highway issues we passed over to our ward councillors to pursue. Please know that the survey answers are anonymous, so we cannot reply to you individually.

The next survey will be January 2020, but if you wish to discuss any concerns with the team you are welcome to contact us by email or phone any time.

Recent scams

September has seen a number of popular scams repeating: scam phone calls allegedly from HMRC offering tax refunds, males posing as police officers saying they have found cloned bank cards belonging to you and that money is being removed from your account.

There are also several roofing people in the area; some are genuine, some may not be, it's difficult to tell until it's too late. Often these people are well prepared and can be very charming. We recommend not to buy any product or service from the door or over the phone and never to give out any personal information.

I am pleased to say very few of our residents have succumbed to the patter of these con people. This is due to the great community spirit East Finchley has, looking out for neighbours and passing helpful info and warning to our most vulnerable residents, the elderly and disabled.

Burglary

As the days get shorter burglaries increase. If you do not have a house alarm, please do consider having one installed. Alarms are an extremely effective piece of equipment in preventing burglary or at worst case minimising the amount of time a burglar spends in your home.

Memory Walk thank you

Archer deliverer John Michaeloudis has thanked everyone who supported him when he took part in a Memory Walk to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society. John, of Lynmouth Road, N2, collected 122 cheques from friends, family and a door-to-door collection around East Finchley, raising a grand total of £2,325.

He completed the 10km walk at Queen Elizabeth Park, Stratford, on the last weekend in September in torrential rain. In fact he got so wet his Freedom Pass was badly damaged and he couldn't use it to travel home.

John laughed: “Sometimes you walk in the sun, sometimes you run in the rain. I got soaked but it was for the best

possible cause. I just want to thank everyone in the local community for their kindness in helping me raise money for research into Alzheimer's. A lot of people sponsored me and their generosity kept me going on the day.”



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A family day out at the Fun Palace

By John Lawrence



Beauty bar: Nail painting with Art Against Knives. Photo Mike Coles.



Feeding time: The Appreciating Animals farmyard. Photo Mike Coles.

Chicks and ducks and geese had to scurry when hundreds of visitors turned up to enjoy the Fun Palace hosted by Grange Big Local at the new Barnwood green space and community centre in Tarling Road, N2.

The farmyard birds, including a free range turkey, were joined by rabbits, hamsters and a whole family of goats as part of the Appreciating Animals petting farm set up in the wood, and they captivated children and parents all afternoon.

This was another chance for East Finchley residents to explore Barnwood, their newest green space. As we reported last month, the wood now has charitable status along with a board of trustees, and hopes to open on a regular basis soon.

Inside the community centre

And just next door, the Fun Palace on Sunday 6 October gave them their first chance to see inside the new Tarling Road Community Centre, completed a year ago but still waiting to be

fully opened to public use.

Visitors to the centre could try calligraphy, arts and crafts, and test their culinary skills with help from the BreadnButter social enterprise group. Art Against Knives hosted a nail bar, Barnet TV ran a video workshop and The Flower Bank led flower arranging classes, all to the accompaniment of live music.

The centre's kitchen was open serving hot drinks and pizza, and there were information stalls manned by Fixation Theatre Company, the RAF Museum in Hendon and parking

problem expert Mr Mustard.

Attracting a lot of attention was the Grange Big Local's own stall asking residents for their ideas on improving life in the area of East Finchley that is centred on the Grange Estate. Among the ideas posted up were: "We need a youth club", "Something for kids to do", "Enforce the speed limit in Church Lane", "Get the council to empty the litter bins", "Build a playground outside Willow House", "Safe parking for bikes" and "Bring back the clothing recycling banks".

The community centre itself is a smart new building with a spacious entrance hall and atrium. Inside there is a good range of rooms, large and small, spread over two floors, that could be used for functions, classes and regular groups. There is a kitchen and serving hatch near the front entrance, and toilets on both floors. Outside there are two table tennis tables, neat lawns and plenty of parking.

As we reported last month, the building is being opened for select occasions but it cannot open full-time until the management group City YMCA settles terms with Barnet Council. No date has been set for when this might happen.

Time is short for library survey

Campaigners in the Save Barnet Libraries group are drawing attention to an online survey which is seeking users' views on the library service and the significant changes it has undergone over the last few years.

The deadline for the survey, being carried out by an independent organisation called Activist Group, is Thursday 7 November so time is short to take part. Find it here: ow.ly/TO0H50wMSpa.

Save Barnet Libraries says the survey will inform the long-awaited review they fought for, about the impact of staff cuts and timetable changes, "which continue to lock out the majority of school-aged children and anyone who feels vulnerable in an enclosed public space with

no staff, little help & locked toilets".

The group says publicity for the survey has been scarce and is encouraging as many people as possible to take part and register their comments. Views will be fed into a report that recommends adaptations and improvements to be presented to Barnet Council on 20 November.

Lest we forget...

By Diana Cormack

With the traditional parades and services that take place in the UK this month on Remembrance Sunday, it may come as a surprise to some that we lack a specific memorial to the thousands who lost their lives during a time vital to securing freedom in Western Europe.

The Americans have one at Omaha Beach; the Canadians have one at Juno Beach but it has taken Britain 75 years to decide to dedicate a single memorial recording the names of those who fell in the D-Day landings of June 1944 and the subsequent Battle of Normandy.

A site at Ver-sur-Mer overlooking Gold Beach where our forces landed and near to the remains of the wartime Mulberry harbour is where

it is to be constructed. Liam O'Connor, who created the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, is the lead consultant and British artist David Williams-Ellis is designing the D-Day sculpture on which more than 22,500 names will be seen. Core completion is scheduled for summer 2020.

The purpose is to create a place where present day visitors and future generations can appreciate the significance of what happened there. Partially financed by the British government, support is being sought from trusts, foundations and individuals. For further information on this and progress of the scheme visit www.normandymemorialtrust.org.



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App-y neighbours find perfect way to keep in touch

By David Gritten

You may be looking for a reliable cleaner. Or someone in your street has left their car lights on and you'd like to alert them. Perhaps one of your neighbours could recommend a piano teacher?

More and more people are finding solutions to problems like these via What'sApp, the free messaging app that people can access on their mobile phones.

And in several N2 streets, including Sedgemere Avenue, Manor Park Road, Deansway and Hertford Road, residents have formed What'sApp groups specifically to keep in touch with their neighbours.

Catherine Godward and two friends founded the What's App group on Manor Park Road some three years ago: "The original aim was to organise a street party and it grew from that," she recalls. Before long, residents began asking for recommendations about tradespeople, or using the group as a 'freecycle' to facilitate giving things away.

The residents have organised sponsored walks, the planting of a Christmas tree, and sometimes they even alert each other when the moon looks particularly spectacular. "None of this would have happened without a medium to communicate in our busy lives," notes Catherine. "As soon as someone new comes to live in the road, they are invited into the group. We all get something out of it. It's a helpful resource."

On Hertford Road, the What'sApp organiser Amelia Lasserson was herself a Manor Park Road resident: "I got the idea from there," Amelia admits. "To be honest, I was looking for a babysitter for my children, so it wasn't entirely selfless. We posted leaflets through everyone's door asking who wanted to join a What's App Group, and did anyone have teenage children or anyone else who might like to babysit? A few people got back to me and then the word spread."

Indeed it did. Here are a few of the topics and questions raised by her neighbours via WhatsApp:

- Can anyone recommend a good locksmith?
- Foxes: troublesome pests, or beautiful creatures to leave food out for?
- Anyone want to buy a balance bike?
- We love getting bats in our garden at dusk
- There's a car in the street with a window left open...
- A suspicious moped rider was seen walking down a resident's side entrance...

"A group like this can do so many things," says Amelia. "It's hugely useful. The by-product is that it does eventually create a real sense of community and people helping and asking things of each other.. We'd all be a bit 'closed doors' otherwise."

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Convivial Lunch Club

The North London Probus Club welcomes retired and semi-retired PROfessional & BUSiness men and women on the third Wednesday each month for lunch and a talk at Stephens House East End Road N3 3QE. Next meeting 20 November: Howard Jones, Lecturer and tour guide at Kenwood House, illustrates his talk Art and Celebrity in Georgian London with paintings from the Iveagh Bequest of actresses, courtesans, mistresses and other celebrated ladies.

Details from Eveleen (8455 6431).

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Gone batty: Roger Chapman and Michelle Collins in Cherry Tree Wood.

Bird and bat box building in the wood

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood held a very successful bird and bat box making day on Sunday 22 September. New patron Michelle Collins joined chairman Roger Chapman as he prepared the wooden kits.

Children and adult visitors listened carefully about the differences between bird and bat boxes, and how to approach putting them together. Everyone then proceeded cautiously with hammers and nails. Great fun was had by all and altogether ten boxes were made. Look out for them in the wood.

Welcome, Michelle

The Friends are delighted to announce that television actress and presenter Michelle, a local resident, has agreed to become their new Patron. Her support is greatly appreciated.

Pavilion building to be demolished

The Friends have been updated by the council that demolition of the pavilion

building has been delayed by surveys. This has included establishing that there are no bats present. The pavilion is now due for demolition before the end of the financial year.

Bug, bird and mammal surveys

The Friends are still looking for volunteers with a knowledge or specialism in insect, bird and mammal surveys. Please do get touch if you think you can help.

Green spaces

As reported previously in *The Archer*, the Friends has helped introduce a new Green Spaces Network across Barnet. A second successful meeting was held with Matthew Gunyon, Head of Green Spaces, on 1 October. Many

issues across the borough were discussed, which will be followed up at the next meeting scheduled in January.

Forthcoming events

On Saturday 26 October anyone can drop in to help with a litter-pick at 10.30am. Alternatively there is a guided history walk through the wood at 2pm. From November the Friends plan to have litter-picks on the second Sunday of every month at 2pm. All equipment will be provided. An AGM will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th January 2020, venue to be confirmed.

Get in touch

Email the Friends at friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com. Membership is free.

An archer from classical times

Artist Trevor Mill was inspired by his regular journey to his Friday night art class from East Finchley tube station to start a painting of an archer.

Instead of reproducing Eric Aumonier's famous tube station statue, however, Trevor went down a classical line to create a portrait of the mythical hunter Orion shooting his bow in the night sky with his dogs Canis Major and Minor beside him.

Trevor, of Fordington Road, N6, painted it over eight sessions, including two working directly from a live model. He said: "I've always liked the Archie sculpture and when I saw the pose of the model at art class, who was originally holding sticks, I thought I could make a homage to this piece of early 20th century modernism by making him into an archer. A study of the stars, mythology and archery then followed and the painting flowed on from there." Trevor has been attending life drawing classes at the Mary Ward Centre in Queen Square, WC1, for five years. He usually sells his work but is

thinking of donating this particular painting for free to go on show at the tube station itself.



Archer undressed: Trevor Mill's painting of Orion, inspired by East Finchley tube station's Archie statue.

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(Minister: John Lowrie)

Visitors always welcome



An insider's view of East Finchley Arts Festival

By Geoffrey Hanson, Festival Director

Would the re-tiling of All Saints' church roof be finished in time for the Arts Festival was the question that we juggled with when planning this year's programme. We even tried to take out an insurance policy to protect things, but without success. Yet with sponsorship and advertisers secured, it was a case of gritting our teeth and hoping for the best.

What if it rained for a long period and the work was held up? Yet the weather was kind and the main body of the roof work was finished by the end of August, even allowing for the theft of lead early in the summer. The scaffolding was down and the car park back in use in time for the festival's opening day in September.

We opened with Merry Opera's *The Pirates of Penzance*, which was played with panache, and some fine singing to a full house. There were other good attendances during the week; the Finchley Children's Music Group and the Chelys Consort of Viols with Dame Emma Kirkby, both garnered large audiences.

Mike Freer MP, and the lady Mayor of Barnet visited Pauline Treen's Art Exhibition, which, as usual, raised money for The Harington Scheme and Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, as did the bucket collections at each event.

Carolyn Pickles presented *Travels Around Cranford* to an appreciative audience, and on Tuesday evening, the wettest night of the week, Trinity Laban gave an intriguing evening of dance to a small but enthused audience. I was a little disappointed at the small attendance for this performance since it was the first year we have had

dance represented. No doubt the weather played its part, but this talented group will be invited again.

Both of the chamber music groups gave, to my mind, excellent performances and Simon Purdy and his friends gave an afternoon concert brimming with young talent. The final evening of the festival was given over to Paprika, a Balkan band. This was a concert full of melody and rhythm, which coaxed many of the large audience to their feet, to join in uninhibited dancing.

Was the festival a success? Undoubtedly!

Birthday concert

The London Mozart Players and London Ripieno Singers will join forces for a concert on Wednesday 11 December at All Saints' in Durham Road, N2.

The programme of music by Elgar, Mozart and Vaughan Williams will also include two works by East Finchley Arts Festival director Geoffrey Hanson, whose 80th birthday the concert marks. Tickets are available online at www.ticket-source.co.uk/efinchleyarts and locally from Black Gull Books, 121 High Road, N2.



First-class festival: (top) The Merry Opera Company, Finchley Children's Music Group; (centre) Pauline Treen with Mike Freer MP, conductor Grace Rossiter, Harmoniemusik wind ensemble, Dame Emma Kirkby with Chelys Consort of Viols, the visit of the Mayor; (bottom) *Travels Around Cranford*, Trinity Laban Dance, Carolyn Pickles, Paprika. Photos Mike Coles and Louise Goody.

Academy seeks new governors

The Archer Academy in East Finchley is inviting applications for the role of community governor to join their board and help deliver the strategic direction of the school.

The Archer Academy has a strong commitment to equality and inclusion, and the board is keen to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the school and the local community in which it serves. They are particularly keen to hear from candidates who have experience in finance, the charity sector, working with young people and pastoral and wellbeing roles.

New chair of governors David Adams, said: "Being a governor is an immensely satisfying experience, offering a great opportunity

to get stuck in and give something back to the wider community.

"You don't need to have governance or professional experience; all you need is an interest in shaping the future of education for young people in the community and a willingness to roll your sleeves up and get involved. I'd be happy to have a chat to answer any questions and help someone decide whether it might be for them."

If you would like more information, visit thearcheracademy.org.uk/governor

recruitment or call 020 8099 1627 for an informal discussion. To apply, send a letter expressing your interest to dadams@thearcheracademy.org.uk by Friday 22 November.

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Fallen hero: The memorial to John Henry Parr in Lodge Lane, N12. Photo John Lawrence.

Silhouette honours first soldier killed

A life-sized silhouette in tribute to the first soldier to die in the First World War is now standing on permanent duty in Lodge Lane, North Finchley. The memorial to John Henry Parr has been placed in the road where he once lived and was donated to the Barnet War Memorials Association by John Seigal.

Private Parr was just 17 in August 1914 when his 4th Middlesex Regiment was mobilised as part of the British Expeditionary Force, the first to cross the Channel to France. He is thought to have been shot while out on patrol two or three weeks later, the first recorded British death of the war.

Bedtime reading

When Phyllis McGovern went on holiday to Turkey in September she made sure she took a copy of the paper she helps to deliver back home in East Finchley. Her daughter Jacqueline took this photo of Phyllis reading *The Archer* by moonlight on the terrace of their apartment in Calis, on the country's south-western coast. Email us your photos of *The Archer* on holiday to: the-archer@lineone.net



Could this be highwayman Dick Turpin's other oak?

By Linda Dolata

Oak Lane in East Finchley, on the left side of the High Road as you head towards the North Circular, is named after a huge ancient oak tree that stood there until 1952.

It was known as 'Turpin's Oak' as in its time it would have been one of the trees on Finchley Common, where highwaymen lurked, ready to waylay and rob travellers on the Great North Road, now the High Road.

Whether Dick Turpin himself actually hid by it or not, it was certainly alive in his day. It is said that when it was cut down, lead bullets were found in the trunk.

Hidden in a hedge

This summer I noticed an interesting hedge alongside the North Circular not far away, just as it crosses Long Lane. The hedge has a good range of species: blackthorn, hawthorn, bramble, dog rose, hazel, elder, field maple and a lot of elm, suggesting it is of a good age.

The hedge can be accessed from Font Hills and was obviously left to act as a noise filter between the dwellings and the North Circular. When I took a closer look I discovered a fantastic pollarded veteran oak tree.

Detective-work

It is almost five metres in girth, suggesting that as a pollard (a tree trimmed from the top, which extends its life) it is probably well over 300 or even 400 years old. It is not really visible unless you look for it, but I think it is the largest tree girthwise in East Finchley and a contender for the oldest too!

It is also very close to the historic site of Turpin's oak and must have been contemporary with it... a worthy replacement. Possibly it was a boundary tree from the edge of the original Finchley Common, or even a timber tree, pollarded high (to deter grazing animals) in the original pre-enclosure hedge which has grown away from it, and towards the sun over the years.



Roots in history: This veteran oak could date back to the days of highwayman Dick Turpin. Photo Linda Dolata.

Veteran survivors

I'd love to know more and would like to embark upon a local register of significant native trees which have survived from our historic woods. For example, the coppiced hornbeams in Cherry Tree Wood and Coldfall Wood qualify. If readers know of any others, maybe they could let me know by emailing lindadolata@talktalk.net



Ready to ride: The Big Yellow trio get in some training, with colleague Lanzi Simwizye on the bike.

Storage staff cycle for 11 hours

Staff from the Big Yellow storage depot in East Finchley jumped into the saddle to raise hundreds of pounds for charity. Tina Miles, Genevieve Ferrer, Zoltan Papp cycled 150 miles in 11 hours in aid of The Big Yellow Foundation, which supports six organisations helping vulnerable people, including ex-offenders, people with disabilities, ex-service personnel and refugees across the UK.

The team smashed their original £500 target and ended up raising just short of £1,300. Donations are still welcome at uk.virginmoneygiving.com (search 'Tina Miles').

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Enlightenment at the Jamatkhana

By Daphne Chamberlain

The North London Jamatkhana is the elegant white building set in a beautiful small garden in East End Road, opposite the former Bobath Centre. Why it is not immediately recognisable as an Islamic centre was explained last month at an open afternoon for older people.

We were told that there are many 'islams' (with a small i), as many as there are Muslims. The Shia Ismaili faith began in Arabia, but is now global. Believers follow the guidance of the Aga Khan, a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, who said that in every era one of his descendants will be a guide or messenger. The message will be for all humanity, but must be interpreted locally.

One of the focuses of the present Aga Khan is architecture. He counselled against installing domes or minarets in the main Ismaili centre in Kensington, which can be visited on annual Open House weekends. Instead, it has a world-famous roof garden. It is an example of how Ismailis avoid imposing themselves on an environment. Their maxim in all things is to take from tradition, not replicate it. "Otherwise, we would be fixed in time."

We were shown slides to illustrate how Jamatkhana

built throughout the world since then all look different, but have each taken and reinterpreted traditional principles to adapt to their surroundings. In fact, the name itself is a blend of Arabic and Persian, meaning 'house of the community' or 'place of gathering'.

The visit was this year's Silver Sunday, when there is a particular welcome for seniors in the general community. It included a lively sing-song, gentle yoga, a tasty meal, delicious home-made cake, and a visit to the prayer-room. Very simple, decorated in geometric patterns, all white except for golden light and flowers at the central window, the prayer-room is beautiful and peaceful.

Popping in to say hello, Cllr Arjun Mittra emphasised the importance of getting to know local people, being able to greet them in the street, especially now that Islamophobic crime was rising so sharply. If you do meet your Ismaili neighbour, try "Good day" as "Ya Ali Madad".



Green gang: The No2Plastics team at the East Finchley Festival back in June.

Can you help in the fight against plastic waste?

By Ruth Anders

Do you have what it takes to join the vibrant leadership team running the local No2Plastics group? One of our number is having to relinquish his duties. David Burgh has been a rock of administrative reliability, and is sad to be leaving the group.

We are also looking for an IT-savvy individual to manage our new website. If you have a little time plus excellent IT or administrative/organisational skills together with a passion for the campaign against single-use plastics in our area, please get in touch.

We'd welcome contact from anyone interested in joining the team by email at no2plastics@gmail.com or ann@xenicollection.com

Campaign goes on

No2Plastics has achieved many local wins already and campaigning continues apace. Contact with local schools is ongoing, and we are busy recruiting new volunteers as Street Champions. Our Facebook and Instagram groups are publishing fascinating articles and initiating vigorous dialogue.

We are now developing discussions with the shops on

the High Road south of Fortis Green while at the same time refreshing some of the signs in the shop windows north of the junction where they have been on display for a while.

We have developed an embryo website which can go live as soon as we have found a website manager, and we had 20 requests to join our Facebook group on one a single day alone in early October.

The last straw

Interestingly, one or two shops in the High Road displaying our signs are still issuing single-use bags and straws. How many people genuinely need a straw? Would they not respond better to a message making it clear that straws are no longer being issued?

The media generally is demonstrating a growing interest in stemming the tide of single-use plastics worldwide. An inspiring

article in *The Guardian* (4 October) about the Ocean Cleanup boom developed by the Dutch is just one example.

No2Plastics is playing its small part in this important work. You can find out more on our Facebook and Instagram pages No2PlasticsN2 and by emailing us at no2plastics@gmail.com. We do hope you will join us.

Sporting best

Garden Suburb Infant School won an award for engaging its young pupils in sport at the 2019 Barnet Partnership for School Sport Awards, held at the artsdepot, North Finchley, in September.

Ariella, a pupil from Akiva School in East End Road, N3, was named female performer of the year.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

This is your life

Christmas is coming, Harrods have switched the lights on, carols are being dragged screaming and kicking out of cold storage and it's time for the latest rock'n'roll autobiographies to hit the shelves. And this year ain't no different because we've got Debbie Harry and Elton John telling the half-truth as they remember it for people who probably weren't there.

The big problem with these books is that there is no point in writing your life story when you've released two singles and a download. There's not much point in doing it at the height of your fame. No, you've got to wait until you've run out of music, could do with the cash and your devoted once teenage fans can afford £25 for a nostalgia trip.

Once you've got the ghost writer, the advance and the time before your next farewell tour you have to decide what kind of autobiography it's going to be. Pete Townsend went the trauma route, telling you just how hard it is to be a genius, Keith Richards gave you the lost decade and Slash decided that the only thing to do was tell you just how demented and crazy Guns N' Roses were at their peak. So, what about this year's crop?

First up there's Debbie Harry's tale of being adopted, growing up, moving to New York, forming a band, becoming a smack addict, getting clean and hoping she'd not been forgotten. It's the perfect book for any man who plastered his teenage bedroom walls with Blondie posters and dreamed of a night of something weird with the woman of his dreams. And, in 1978 London was full of them. I know, I was there, helping sneak her out the back door of the Marquee and into a taxi before she got ripped apart by drooling boys.

But maybe the big one is Elton John's big book of tantrums, sex, drugs and flamboyance. No one can drop as many names as Elton because no one has been around as long and no one else has performed at both Versace's and Diana's funerals.

But do I care? Not really, I'd rather dig out the music than spend £25 on something to leave on the coffee table. Besides, if you really want to know what it was like, one book from the 1970s does tell it straight. So search charity shops or go on line and get Ian Hunter's *Diary of a Roll'n'Roll Star*. The rest is just marketing.

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- **Pilates** with Michele: private and group classes, all levels. Michele 07947 657 441
- **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.
- **Tennis group lessons** for adult beginners and intermediates, weekends, Park Road, N8. Contact Maz on tennisgift@gmail.com.
- **This Mum Runs**: Free social runs in East Finchley and Muswell Hill, Sunday 8am and Wednesday 7.30pm. Contact trishy.dixon@gmail.com.
- **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.

Music, Dance & Creative Arts

- **The Archer Community Choir**, Tuesdays 7-9pm, The Archer Academy, Eagans Close, N2. Email: archercommunitychoir1@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.
- **Jazz Club** at the Bohemia, North Finchley. Call 020 7998 6217 or 07957 347411 for more information
- **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards La. Call 8888 4412.
- **Memory Lane Singing Club** - friendly singing club meets every Friday in Finchley. Call Valerie 8458 4508.
- **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 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** friends-of-cherrytreewood.home.blog 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.



Beauty of Beacons is clear to see

Glass artist Kate Pasvol, a member of East Finchley Open Artists, won a prestigious award at the UK's major exhibition of contemporary glass. Kate was awarded The People's Prize for a stunning piece that blends her craft with her love of the natural landscape.



Popular choice: Kate Pasvol and, top, her award-winning glass work.

Her 'Book of Welsh Walks - The Brecon Beacons' was chosen as their favourite piece by visitors to the British Glass Biennale 2019, held in Stourbridge, West Midlands, the historic centre of British glass during September.

Organisers said of her award: "With strong Welsh roots, Kate beautifully encapsulated this year's theme of 'place making'. Her piece was inspired by personal memories of walking through the rugged and dramatic landscapes of South Wales."

Christmas pop-up shop

For one weekend only a band of local makers and sellers are collaborating to create a den of Christmas curiosities on the High Road in East Finchley.

The pop-up Christmas gift market takes place on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 December at the Offshoot Gallery and Studio space, close to the junction with Bedford Road.

Artists and makers with having stalls at the event include Anita Mangan, Matilda Harrison, Chris Stayrou, Brigitte Herod and Intrepid Hound. Gifts on offer will be original artwork, skincare, pet products, jewellery, books, wrapping paper and cards.

What's On...

Saturday 9 November

- **Finchley Chamber Choir** present a programme of ancient and modern British music at 7.30pm in the Trinity Methodist Church in North Finchley, N12 7NN. They will be performing Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor* and Byrd's *Mass for Four Voices* as well as works by Parry and Ferrabosco. Tickets available on the door, or in advance at www.fcchoir.co.uk (£15, £13 concs, £6 under-18s).

Sunday 10 November

- **Free concert** at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue; **North London Voices** with mezzo-soprano Jan Wiener, bassist Bernhard Crede and pianist Andrew Robinson, present 'From Gibbons to Gjeilo', including works by Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Wolf, Vaughan Williams and Cole Porter. Concert at 7.30pm. Free admission with a collection in aid of Noah's Ark Children's Hospice. The venue is fully accessible.

Saturday 16 November

- **Bulb Planting and Tree Caring Day** from 10am to 12noon at **Long Lane Pasture**, opposite the fire station, Long Lane, N3.

Come along and help with weeding and mulching around the pasture's trees and with planting flower bulbs for spring.

- **Ramblers Association walk from East Finchley**, taking a five-mile route starting at the Tube station at 11am and following Mutton Brook and Dollis Brook, finishing near the Friends Meeting House in North Finchley, venue for the association's AGM. Bring a picnic lunch. More details from leader Chris Barker on 020 8347 7684 or 07951 905493.

Wednesday 20 November

- **Free talk on Music and Memory by Professor Catherine Loveday**, a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4's *All in the Mind*, who will explain what happens in the brain when we listen to music and why it can help people with dementia. Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. 6.30pm for 7pm start. Licensed bar available. Tickets are free (donations are welcome) but booking essential as places are limited. To book call 020 8432 1421 or email wendy.nutman@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Saturday 23 November

- **Finchley Symphony Orchestra** under its

Hills of Hampstead are alive with *The Sound of Music*

By Daphne Chamberlain

It's the Hampstead Players again, rehearsing for their annual production at the end of this month.

This year, their choice is *The Sound of Music*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's famous version of the Trapp family saga. Company member Shereen Abdallah, who lives in East Finchley, is ecstatic. "It's my favourite musical, and I'm playing Sister Sophia," she told The Archer.

Hampstead Players perform in Hampstead Parish Church, Church Row, NW3 6UU. Co-director Annie Duarte told us: "Transforming the Grade 1 listed church into an abbey, complete with its Mother Abbess and full complement of nuns, has been a joy."

If you would like to see Shereen in her wimple, the performances are at 7.30pm on Thursday 28, Friday 29 and Saturday 30 November, with a 2.30pm matinee on the Saturday.

Tickets are £12 standard adult, £10 concession, and £8 for a child. You can book online at hampsteadplayers.org.uk, or from the church on 020 7794 5808, or pay at the door. Parking is difficult in the immediate area, but Hampstead Tube station is very close, as are bus routes 46 and 268.



The Hampstead Players in rehearsal for *The Sound of Music*

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

new music director Tom Hammond presents a concert of symphonic music by Dvorak, Franz Berwald and Schumann in the first concert of its season at Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12 7NN, at 7.30pm. Tickets £15, concessions £13, under 18s £6. Save £2 per ticket by advance booking online at www.finchleysymphony.org/concerts

Sunday 24 November

- **Woodland Walk**, discovering trees and other plants and discussing their uses and folklore, **starting at 2pm in Cherry Tree Wood**, opposite East Finchley tube station, and ending at Queen's Wood, next to Highgate tube. Roy Vickery of the South London Botanical Institute will have lots of stories about the common plants which are all too often ignored, and will help you see the 'usual' through new eyes. Suggested donation £10 (concs £8). Everyone welcome.

Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 November

- **Hampstead Players** perform *The Sound of Music* in Hampstead Parish Church, Church Row, NW3 6UU, at 7.30pm with a 2.30pm matinee on the Saturday. Tickets are £12 standard adult, £10 concs, £8

children. Book online at hampsteadplayers.org.uk, from the church on 020 7794 5808, or pay at the door.

Saturday 30 November

- **Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale**, 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, Cranley Gardens, N10 3AH. Information from 020 8368 8180 or 07708 152354; admission 50p; refreshments available.

Saturday 7 December

- **Switch-on of East Finchley's Christmas lights** around the tree outside Budgens, 4.30pm, with carols led by the Archer Community Choir and Brookland Junior School Choir, and free mince pies and mulled wine. Everyone welcome.

- **Martin School Christmas Fair**, Plane Tree Walk, N2, from 12noon to 3pm; enjoy Santa's grotto, delicious cakes, games and treats, something for all the family.

- **Mineral, Gem and Fossil Show** hosted by the Finchley branch of the Amateur Geological Society from 10am to 4pm at Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12 7NN. £2 entrance with under 12s free. Large hall with fossils, jewellery, gems, rocks and mineral stalls, refreshments, tombola and lucky dip.



Fifty-year celebration for stylist to the stars

By Rachel Ellis

Hairdresser David Barron, well known for styling the locks of the rich and famous as well as customers from across much of north London, is celebrating 50 years in business.

After training with Vidal Sassoon, David set up his first salon in north London in 1969, aged just 19, with £300 he had saved from working on cruise ships.

His vision was to revolutionise men's haircutting, developing his own precision cutting method to create longer hairstyles for men, which soon became popular with both men and women.

In 1975, he was invited to



Hot seat: David Barron styles pop star Alvin Stardust's hair in the 1970s.

set up shop on the famous topless beach in St Tropez, cutting the hair of the beautiful and famous people in between dips.

The publicity this generated allowed him to launch Barron on Muswell Hill Broadway, the first unisex salon in north London where you'll still find him today, and the first advanced haircutting training studio.

Other achievements include a number of hairdressing awards, developing his own hair products and having his work featured in the national and international press.

David is also an accomplished photographer and a

retrospective of his work as a hairdresser and photographer over the last half a century is now on show at his salon in Muswell Hill.

But while his celebrity clients may have earned him a high-profile reputation, it's making customers feel good that really matters to him.

He told *The Archer*: "I'm often asked how many and the names of the celebrities whose hair I have cut. My answer is that everyone who sits in my chair is a celebrity, whatever they do. Making someone look good and feel good is the most gratifying gift. That is what makes this job so special."

No parking

Dear Editor,

This quagmire of mud, dirty water, steel, concrete and fear-some-looking digging machines, pictured right, used to be the Budgens car park. Now there are no public off-road car parks free or otherwise at all in the centre of East Finchley (the pub car parks are for pub customers only). What a victory for Barnet planners!

**Yours faithfully,
Lawrence Robinson,
Address supplied.**

Madden's meetings

Dear Editor,

Regarding *The Archer* blue plaque unveiling party (*The Archer*, October 2019), it's known that the idea for the newspaper started with a conversation at Welch's (now Madden's) pub in late 1992, so the venue is certainly a fitting place for the fixture!

But I don't think editorial meetings began at the pub until September 1993, six months after the launch of *The Archer*. Prior to this, such meetings were held at the Park Hall Road home address of the original publisher, and later at the (now defunct) Portakabin office on Strawberry Vale estate.

I recall the main motivation for getting Bob Welch to open his pub earlier each Saturday morning for *The Archer* team. It was because summer was over and the Portakabin had no heating. And no alcohol either, but that's by the by.

**Yours faithfully,
Malcolm Griffiths,
Midhurst Avenue, N10.**

Dangerous corner

Dear Editor,

Early in October, the traffic lights outside Domino's Pizza in the High Road, N2, were hit and damaged by a vehicle turning into Fortis Green. In addition, the pavement kerb was damaged.

I hope Barnet Council are aware that this is a very regular occurrence. I've lost count of how often this has happened over the years. Apart from the considerable costs to the taxpayer I am extremely concerned about pedestrian safety at this location.

It's quite alarming when trying to cross the road at this point when large vehicles turn and mount the pavement, which is quite narrow. On many occasions I've seen parents pull their children back to avoid being hit, pedestrians with prams being particularly vulnerable.

This is a very busy pedestrian crossing, surely it's only a matter of time before this adds to the already appalling list of pedestrian accidents in East Finchley.

**Yours faithfully,
David Day,
Brackenbury 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.

Letters



Fun Palace was... fun!

Dear Editor,

My family and I really enjoyed the Fun Palace day organised by Grange Big Local on the first weekend in October. My daughter was particularly taken with the young goats in Barnwood. What a great idea to have animals there for the day. I was most interested to see inside the Tarling Road Community Centre. It's a very smart building, well-designed, and the whole place was alive with activ-

ity. There was a real community buzz as everyone enjoyed some food and some music. Wouldn't it be a great idea to have a Sunday social in the centre, perhaps once a month, for everyone to come along for a few hours to meet neighbours and try different activities? It's such a shame that the centre is not fully open to us local residents yet (*The Archer*, October 2019). The sooner we can get in and start using it the better.

**Yours faithfully,
Marie Chapman,
Sylvester Road, N2.**

A farewell to Father

Terry

By Angela Doherty

St Mary's Catholic Church was packed on Saturday 5 October as we parishioners gathered for a Mass to mark the retirement of our much-loved parish priest Fr Terry Tastard.

The Mass was followed by a celebration in the church hall. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, during which Fr Terry's achievements in the parish were noted and he was presented with gifts.

Fr Terry had been parish priest in St Mary's, High Road, N2, for eight years and brought a wealth of experience to this role. He grew up in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and also lived in Arizona in the USA. He has a number of degrees, including a PhD, so he could use the titles Rev. Dr Terry. Amongst other occupations, he worked as a journalist before becoming a priest.

During his time at St Mary's, Fr Terry oversaw, among other things, the refurbishment of the church hall and the installation

of a new accessibility ramp. These improvements were important to Fr Terry because he always wanted the church to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible.

This extended to the wider community, in the establishment of a food bank which operates every Saturday at St Mary's. Fr Terry was always helpful, sympathetic and wise in his dealings with the people of the parish, often welcoming people in their own language. His quiet presence will indeed be missed but we wish him a long and happy retirement.



Saying goodbye: Father Terry Tastard. Photo John McCrossan.

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Church of England

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The tower crane is erected at Prospect Ring for the new block.
Photo Mike Coles

A towering sight

Work is well under way on the construction of the new 13-storey tower block in Prospect Ring, N2. Hoardings went up on the building site that was once occupied by a row of homes and garages, and in September a huge



High rise: How the finished block in Prospect Ring will look.

tower crane was installed, standing high above the existing 11-storey blocks on either side.

There will be 51 flats in the new development, which is being funded by Barnet Homes. It is taller than the two existing blocks but narrower and therefore has a smaller footprint on the ground. There will be 24 new parking spaces. Construction work is expected to last well into 2020.

Always waiting for the 263 bus

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last month we published a Soapbox from East Finchley resident Anna Lowenstein. It was a cry of frustration from a bus user dependent on the 263. Anna is relatively new to the area, but she was perpetuating a very long-standing grievance that the High Road section of the route is overcrowded and prone to long waits.

She compared the excellent bus services in Muswell Hill with the one inadequate bus along our High Road. One argument is that East Finchley has less need of buses because we have the Tube, but many people living to the north of the area are as far away from the Tube as parts of Muswell Hill are.

Recently, most people agree that the 263 has improved in reliability, but at the same time new developments mean that it is serving more customers. The result is that travelling conditions in the buses are still often described as like being in a cattle truck.

And look at the typical length of the 263 queue outside the Tube station, compared with far fewer people waiting at the other stop, served by three bus routes.

The Archer has been recording complaints and hopes of improvement to the 263 since at least 2002. Fifteen years ago, then Leslie Road resident Hazel Burnett formed the East Finchley Bus Group, which for several years collected statistics, mounted bus watches, suggested shuttle buses and met with Transport for London. Each time, members were told that traffic further down the route was to blame.

In 2005, London Transport Users Committee identified the 263 as a problem route, particularly the 'solo stretch' between East and North Finchley. Recorded average waiting time was twice as long as it should be and, in just over one in 10 journeys surveyed, passengers



The queue for the 263 bus at East Finchley station. Photo Mike Coles

had to stand for all or part of their ride. However, the Committee said that TfL would probably not consider it financially viable to put on another bus.

In 2006, the then Head of Barnet Environmental Services confirmed in writing that a single bus service along the main radial route between East and North Finchley was inadequate. Barnet Council, however,

were accused of favouring other transport over buses.

It's all a far cry from the 1950s and 1960s when bus passengers on the High Road in East Finchley had the choice of three routes to take them directly into central London. These were trimmed back over the years, leaving just the 263 today running as far as Highbury.

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