

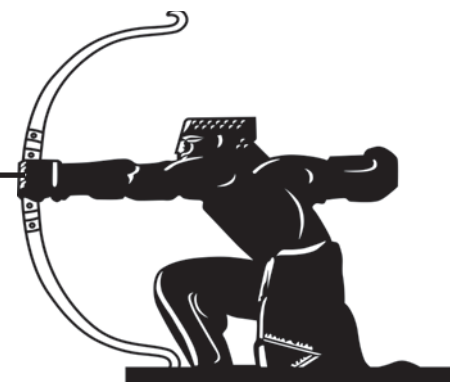


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ISSN 1361-3952
20p
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The Archer

Local News is our Aim



February 2020 No. 310

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Cash shortfall at Phoenix Cinema is getting bigger

By John Lawrence

The Phoenix Cinema is urging film lovers to visit more often after reporting its biggest ever loss and admitting that its financial crisis is getting worse rather than better.

Trustees at the High Road cinema had hoped they could start to close the cash gap that in 2018 led them to seek a partnership with the Curzon Cinemas chain. That deal was called off at the last minute following strong opposition from Phoenix supporters who wanted the venue to retain its independent charitable status.

However, the latest annual report from the Phoenix reveals that the money it took from ticket sales and charitable trading activities in the year to March 2019 fell significantly compared to the previous year, resulting in a record loss of £78,000.

Some ups, some downs

There have been some positives, such as the £1,000 raised by a raffle in December, and

“If we could have the equivalent of *Little Women* every week, life would be easy but that’s not how cinema is, it’s full of ups and downs,” she said. “Our staff do an excellent job programming high-quality films and we just ask people to come to the Phoenix as often as they can to enjoy the films we have on show.”

Films coming up in February include the Oscar-tipped comedy thriller *Parasite* and a new adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Emma*, starring Anya Taylor-Joy and Miranda Hart.

Opera and theatre please the punters

Other strong performers last year were Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and repeated showings



Financial worries: The Phoenix Cinema

packed houses for the recent run of *Little Women*, but not enough to counteract the negatives. The Phoenix applied for financial support from Barnet Council last year but was turned down, and hotly anticipated blockbuster *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* performed badly over the crucial Christmas period.

Alison Gold, chair of the trustees, admitted the cinema was struggling but said it was still possible to get back to break-even with some good luck and regular support from local film-goers.

of Phoebe Waller-Bridge’s one-woman show *Fleabag*. By contrast, the *Downton Abbey* movie failed to draw the crowds. Streamed operas and National Theatre shows remained popular as did the Saturday morning Kids’ Club.

Alison Gold said staff and trustees continued to explore all avenues to keep the Phoenix running independently and had not discussed reopening the Curzon deal. However, Curzon Cinemas said at the time that they would be open to talking to the Phoenix again if they were approached.



Float on: The Fixation Theatre youngsters alongside their carnival vehicle in central London.

Happy moment on carnival parade

Youngsters from Fixation Theatre Company dressed in a riotous rainbow of colours to represent Barnet in the Lord Mayor of London’s New Year’s Day Parade.

The theme of their float was ‘Live Your Best Life’, focusing on the importance of good mental health, and they danced to Pharrell Williams’s hit *Happy* as they paraded past thousands of spectators along the central London route. Barnet’s float won fifth place overall, earning £6,000 for charity. Fixation offers a range of performing arts classes in East Finchley for young people aged three to 18. Find out more at www.fixationtheatre.com

In this issue

Flats on tube car park.... p2
Festival funder last chance... p3
Spate of burglaries..... p4
Crash landing in wood.... p5
TV comedy in Budgens.... p7
Community cookery..... p9
Ricky Savage..... p9
Red carpet premiere.... p10
What’s On..... p10
Your letters..... p11

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Published by

East Finchley Newspapers

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Printed By

Sharman & Co Ltd

Thank you to The Bald Faced Stag and New Local Cafe for providing us with a meeting place.

The Archer team wishes to thank all the generous people who give up their spare time, in all weather, to deliver the paper for us.

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.

Copy deadlines – **March: 14 February; April: 13 March**
May: 10 April

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Towering: An artist's impression of how the Finchley Central development could look.

'Canary Wharf' coming to Finchley Central

By David Melsome

A campaign group called Hands Off Finchley Central has been formed to oppose a major high-rise development that has been proposed for land in and around the area's tube station car park.

The group claims that plans by Transport for London, Barnet Council and construction company Taylor Wimpey for 668 flats, including a 27-storey tower, will overcrowd the area and swamp local facilities like GPs and schools, as well as putting pressure on already congested local roads.

It says only 12 parking spaces would be left at the station for tube commuters. Any

development might also set a precedent for TfL building on other car parks elsewhere on the Northern line, including East Finchley's. A development of 350 homes is already planned for land next to High Barnet tube station.

Affordable housing shortage remains

Hands Off Finchley Central spokesman Rob White said

the group was not against the provision of badly-needed new housing but did oppose the nature of these particular plans. "This 'intensification', the sinister phrase used by Barnet, will destroy the heart of Finchley Central, by crashing a kind of pound-shop Canary Wharf into a peaceful and diverse suburb," he said.

The group argues that the flats risk becoming so-called shell investments or buy-to-let fodder that won't solve the shortage of affordable housing. It has launched a website and a petition at www.handsofffinchleycentral.co.uk

Transport for London said three years ago that station car parks represented a "huge opportunity" for new town centre housing. Barnet Council estimates that the Finchley Central development will bring £240 million of investment into the borough and revitalise the town centre.

Green bin charges

Barnet Council has announced that homeowners will have to pay an annual charge of £70 for their green garden waste bin to be collected from April, despite 82% of respondents to its consultation opposing the charge.

The council claims the charge is in line with other neighbouring councils and will enable investment in other environmental services such as street cleaning and upgrading roads and pavements.

Residents who sign up will receive a sticker to display on their garden waste bin to allow collection crews to identify that they have subscribed to the service. The council says information on registering will be available on its website and on leaflets to be delivered to homes.

Honours awarded

East Finchley couple Marianne and Peter Summerfield were appointed MBEs in the New Year's Honours list for their services to Holocaust education and awareness, as was Lillian Levy, from Highgate.

John Hajdu, chairman of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association for the last 17 years, also became a MBE.

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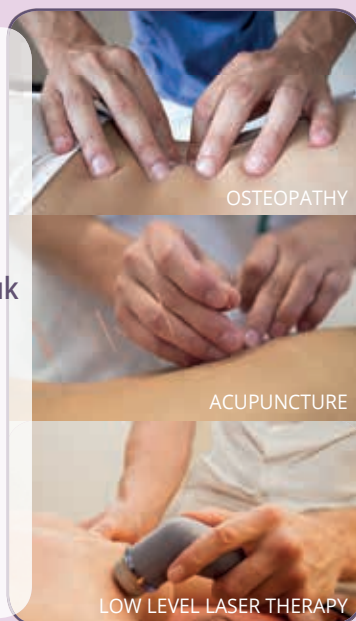
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64 Fortis Green, N2

Existing dormer window to be replaced with doors. Front and rear roof lights.

23 Howard Walk, N2

Modifications to rear parapet

of single-storey link between numbers 21 and 23, including repositioning of door.

410 Long Lane, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer window and two front roof lights.

13 Oakview Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

Haringey Council

16 Fortis Green Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

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Ready to roll: Youngsters Jonty, left, and Jacob enjoying wheelchairs bought with help from my-AFK.

When a wheelchair can make all the difference

Becky Dann, who lives in East Finchley and who had to raise funds to buy her own wheelchair, reports on a charity that helps people in the same situation.

Disability can affect people in different ways, but still, the first word it brings to mind for a lot of people is 'wheelchair'. The word is so common in our lives that the disabled spaces, accessible toilets and even emojis on our phones feature wheelchairs.

Surprisingly, wheelchairs are not always easy to come by for many physically disabled people in the UK. The NHS can no longer be expected to supply one automatically, especially to people with more complex needs.

In the UK, one in four families goes without specialist equipment for their disabled

child either because the NHS cannot provide equipment that meets their needs or because the strict assessment criteria exclude them. For example, disabled people who can walk a few steps independently or who can walk holding onto furniture within the home are not provided with wheelchairs to get out and about.

Wheels for the young

A wheelchair can mean freedom and independence, but for many this basic human right can only be achieved by reliance on charities and the ability to self-fundraise. my AFK is a charity based in Hornsey that helps by making

contributions for people up to the age of 25.

In its 27 years, my AFK has received 2,294 applications from people who were turned away from the NHS wheelchair services. They currently have 22 people on their waiting list, with over £120,000 needed to be able to provide all of those people with their freedom and independence.

You can help towards someone receiving a wheelchair by making a donation. Please visit the donation page at www.my-afk.org/donate or text MYAFK followed by the amount to 70085. Thank you.

Gate dispute puts volunteers at loggerheads

By John Lawrence

Volunteers at Long Lane Pasture are locked in a dispute over access with their neighbours at Pointalls Allotments, which they claim could threaten the future of the established wildlife haven opposite Finchley Fire Station.

Disagreements over the use of a gate connecting the allotments to the pasture arose between the Pointalls management board, who are themselves volunteers, and long-time pasture volunteers Wayne Armsby and his wife Elsie Price, whose Long Lane home backs on to the allotments. These led to the board taking back their allotment plot and terminating the gate licence.



No access to equipment

In turn, this means the pasture team no longer have direct access to the tools and heavy equipment they use to maintain the two-acre site throughout the year. It has always been stored in a workshop behind Wayne and Elsie's house, close to the connecting gate.

Pasture trust chair Donald Lyven and vice chair Harriet Copperman told supporters in a letter that their current lease with Barnet Council does not permit them to build any equip-

ment storage on the pasture site itself. "The future of the Pasture could be in jeopardy if a solution is not found to this dreadful situation," they said.

Volunteer Linda Dolata told *The Archer* that the pasture is the source of several springs and has always had a problem with flooding. "We had this under control by pumping the worst of the water into the sewers but now we no longer have access to the power that we need to work the pump," she said.

Response from Pointalls

Paul Hendrick, chair of the board of directors at Pointalls Allotments, said under their lease with Barnet Council only current ploholders were allowed to have gate licences, which no longer applied to Wayne and Elsie.



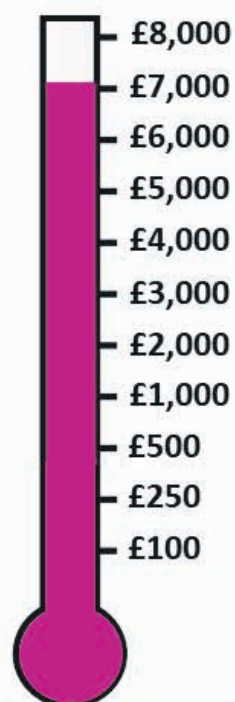
Left and above: Photos of flooding at Long Lane Pasture taken by one of its volunteers.

Last chance for festival fundraiser

East Finchley Festival's crowdfunding campaign will close on 8 February, but the team of volunteer organisers will only receive the pledges if they have reached their funding target.

As *The Archer* went to press, the total sat at just over £7,000, with just over a week to go.

To pledge please go to www.spacehive.com/east-finchley-festival.



PLEDGE HERE

spacehive.com/east-finchley-festival

He said the issue of power for the water pump had not been raised directly with the board and questioned why equipment could not be moved from their workshop to the pasture's main entrance via Long Lane.

He added: "I stress we have no argument with the pasture's trustees. They have written to us with an outline proposal for an alternative arrangement for access. Our response was that we had no objection in principle but we needed to see a detailed proposal which met their needs but at the same time did not compromise our site security and was at no cost to Pointalls. We are awaiting their response."

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In the pink: Shop manager Julie with the visitors. Photo Mike Coles.

Pretty flamingos come in to roost

By Diana Cormack

There is always an impressive window display in the RSPCA charity shop at 160 High Road, especially for special events such as Easter or Hallowe'en. However, at the start of the year people were particularly attracted to it by an unusual donation.

As all charity shop aficionados will admit, you never know what you'll find in such places, but the appearance of two tall pink flamingos certainly caught the eye. What a lot of people

didn't notice was the 'not for sale' sign on one of their feet.

Manager Julie, who is responsible for the displays, couldn't tell *The Archer* where the birds had come from but she did tell us there had been many disappointed would-be purchasers. "We're hoping to hire them out for special events," she said. "If and when this is decided I will put a notice about it in the window."

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Man arrested following ten burglaries in just two weeks

By Janet Maitland

Ten homes in East Finchley were broken into in the middle of December, including three in East End Road and two in Brownsell Road. In every case, the burglars got in by smashing a glass door and then stealing jewellery, cash and luxury goods.

Residents became very concerned as news of the almost daily break-ins circulated on social media. By the end of December it was evident that the burglary rate had not suddenly increased but that the ten burglaries, the total number for the whole month, had been concentrated into just two weeks.

A man was arrested and charged with burglary on 19 December. He was remanded in custody and was due to be tried in the crown court in mid-January after this newspaper went to print.

Ten burglaries in a month is about average for East Finchley. There were 110 reported burglaries in 2019, just over nine a month. This rate is lower than the previous year when there were 150, between 12 and 13 a month.

Guard against burglaries

We asked Jan Lovell from the Safer Neighbourhood Team how to guard against burglaries. Her first tip was to consider fitting an **alarm**, as all the December burglaries were from unalarmed premises.

Use **timer switches** to give the impression that your home is occupied, but of course burglars could just knock to see if anyone answers, so think about fitting an alarm or the newer doorbell phone app monitors, such as Ring or Sky Bell.

Fit a high **gate** to the side of your property. Gates should have good quality locks top and bottom with trellis and Prikka Strip attached. Garden fences should be 1.8 metres high and topped with trellis or a Prikka Strip topping.

Keep wheelie **bins** either chained away from side gates or behind them to prevent burglars using them to climb on.

Wooden front and back doors should be solid timber with 5-lever mortice locks one

third of the way up and an automatic deadlocking rim lock one third of the way down. Wooden door frames and locks can be reinforced with **metal strips** along the jamb and hinge edges respectively, called London and Birmingham bars.

With UPVC doors, just closing the door and pushing the handle up is not secure. Lock

the door with a key when going out. Take **keys** out of all doors and store them out of sight.

Glass panels on doors should be at least 6.4mm thick and either laminated or reinforced with security film. Consider fitting internal grilles on external doors if there is a risk that window releases can be reached via a broken pane of glass.

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.

Door to door

We have received several reports of males allegedly from a Youth Opportunities Project for ex-offenders, selling cleaning items door to door. The males do have an ID tag and may even have a pedlars' licence and may be genuinely from a project or they may not.

At best they will be selling basic items for a much higher price by engaging your sympathy. At worst they are using this front to make money, and can be quite verbally abusive if refused.

Our advice is to not buy any item or service at the door. Check who is at the door via a window. Unknown callers are so much easier to deal with through a closed door or window. A quick smile and "No thank you" and away from the window will see most of them quietly on their way.

'We do not buy at the door' stickers can be bought on line or home-made. If any callers are persistent or abusive call police on 101.

Roofing company

In our January edition we reported that men claiming to have been sent by Barnet Council stole from two residents living in social housing provided by Barnet Homes, quoting Jan Lovell from the Safer Neighbourhood Team who said the men had "offered a fake business card saying G and Sons Roofing".

Following a call from the owner of this company to the Safer Neighbourhood Team, Jan Lovell has asked *The Archer* to clarify that "the company G and Son Roofing is a legitimate north London roofing company" and that "there is no inference that the burglars using a card from this company as a ploy to enter a home last November have any connection whatsoever with G and Son Roofing." We are happy to do so.

Farewell

Yama Yama

Diners will have been sad to see the closure of Japanese restaurant Yama Yama at the end of last year. Run for some years by the irrepressible Lily and Adam, the High Road eatery was closed as a result of redevelopment.

"The owner is gutting the building," explained Adam, "and he told me that if I wanted to continue the business I must pay for the re-fit of the restaurant and kitchen. It just wasn't viable."

A hole to fill

Adam has a second restaurant in Chiswick and so the couple reluctantly decided to leave East Finchley and focus all their time there. That leaves a hole in the High Road for fans of their *yaki gyoza* and *agedashi* tofu. Perhaps readers have recommendations for other Japanese diners within reach of N2?

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It could be a jungle out there!

By Ruth Anders

Wolves in the back garden? Not exactly, but *Archer* readers will know of the growing awareness of the importance of nature in maintaining our mental health and wellbeing, particularly significant in urban environments.

East Finchley resident and architect Sian Moxon, a passionate campaigner, demonstrated to me recently some effective ways of making gardens more wildlife friendly to benefit us and the creatures who

of MxN Architecture, won a 2016 competition to "Imagine London as a National Park City". She has since set up the website www.rewildmystreet.org, which is full of valuable rewilding tips. The site is

pond, different sized water baths for bees and larger creatures, bird feeders, bug hotels and a shed with a green roof. And that's without mentioning all the flowers, shrubs and trees she has specifically planted and nurtured with wildlife in mind.

All or some of these features can be replicated by anyone with a garden, balcony or even a window box, and Sian's website contains details of DIY activities and products we can all buy.

Added value

"Everyone is entitled to contact with nature," says Sian. "We can improve our quality of life and urban environment by doing more for biodiversity. People don't understand the value their gardens can have."

At a time of gloomy warnings about climate change, I came away inspired to do more to help make something similar of my own garden and am now on the trail of fox 'teethers'. However small your outside space, you too can make a difference. For monthly tips and loads of ideas sign up to Sian's website www.rewildmystreet.org



Nature in the city: An image from Sian's rewilding website.

share our city spaces. While some East Finchley homeowners are busy concreting their front gardens to accommodate more cars, Sian, like many others, is keen to counteract the trend.

She and her husband Jon,

funded by the Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design, where Sian is a senior lecturer.

Rich with ideas

Her tiny front and back gardens boast a mini meadow, nesting boxes, water butt, a

Highest point in the history of East Finchley... ever!

By Mike Coles

Construction work continues on the new 13-storey tower block in Prospect Ring, N2, and our investigations lead us to declare that the crane doing the heavy lifting work is setting a record for being the tallest single structure ever in East Finchley.

Nick Gardner, site manager for Hill Construction, told us that his team are using a luffing crane, whose highest point when its jib is at rest overnight and at weekends is 276ft, or 84m, above ground level.

We're saying that's an East Finchley record, until someone tells us otherwise. The closest contender we can think of is the spire of the former Congre-



Tall story: The Prospect Ring crane. Photo Mike Coles.

gational Church, which until 1965 stood on the High Road site now occupied by Budgens and Iceland, and which reached 130ft.

The Prospect Ring crane, supplied by Spanish company JASO, has an arm that can be raised, lowered and rotated to move objects around in a relatively confined space. It was chosen in preference to the more traditional hammerhead crane with a movable dolly on a horizontal arm, because that would have been restricted by the two existing tower blocks and would have overhung the adjacent Tube line.



Timber: The large tree that came down in the recent winds in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Close call for pavilion in crash landing

A large hornbeam tree crashed to the ground in Cherry Tree Wood on the morning of Thursday 9 January. Despite conditions not being particularly windy, the tree had uprooted itself and lay with its crown blocking the pathway, resting on the railings surrounding the long-derelect park pavilion. Fortunately no one was injured but, with a bit of good luck and the wind in our favour, it could have demolished the pavilion and saved Barnet Council the trouble!

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The Archer relies on volunteer deliverers to reach readers in East Finchley. Can you spare 30-45 minutes once a month to help out? Papers are brought to your door and you can deliver your round at a time to suit you.

We are particularly looking to fill three rounds in Trinity Road, Gurney Drive and Prospect Ring and would also love to hear from drivers who could drop papers to our deliverers. Please leave a message free on 0800 612 0748 or email: news@the-archer.co.uk. Thank you.

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Monumental: Archer writer Ruth Anders at the World Heritage Site in Ethiopia.

History and current affairs

In the 12th century in remote Northern Ethiopia the local ruler King Lalibela sought to recreate Christian Jerusalem. He built 11 churches in two clusters representing heaven and earth with a trench between them representing the River Jordan. The most famous church, and a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the Church of St George.

It was carved downwards into volcanic rock as a monolithic structure and is often referred to as the eighth wonder of the world. The hollowed interior contains a simple shrine to St. George and, behind a curtain (forbidden to view apart from priests) lies a replica of the Ark of the Covenant.

Archer writer Ruth Anders visited the church recently and while resting found it the ideal time to catch up with her favourite local newspaper.

Reflections on a well-known road... but which one?

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local author Iqbal Ahmed has just published his fourth book, described as “a love letter to London”. Do you recognise the London road he is describing in these extracts?

“[At night] it appears to be a ghost road. I look out for potholes when I cycle here in the dark, because the road is strewn with rubbish. The new buildings have tidy pavements, whereas the derelict houses have unkempt front lawns.

“It is a different scene during the day, though. Cars and vans are parked on both sides of the road, belonging to builders working on various sites. You can also see a few large coaches in an unmarked section of the road. The coach drivers park them there while waiting between jobs in town. And occasionally big lorries and caravans belonging to a TV or film company are parked in an adjacent road, since the empty mansions in the area are ideal for location shooting.

“Despite seeing building work going on, I have never seen a parked removal truck hired by someone who is either moving in or moving out. A few smaller houses seem to be lived

in. One afternoon I saw my GP outside one of these houses and she told me that she had been to see a patient in a care home there. I would never have guessed that there could be a care home among the derelict dwellings. You only find rude notices such as ‘KEEP OUT’ tied to the fences of houses around here.

“A new block of flats seems like an oasis in a wasteland because the lights of the flats are actually on.

I have noticed some of the houses being redecorated a few times, but no one ever living in them. There are actually only sixty-odd houses in the entire length... Some of these are in good condition whereas others are boarded up. [One was advertised as] ‘a magnificent freehold’. I think you have to be pretty audacious to describe a dilapidated house as ‘magnificent’ when a client can see plants growing in its cracks and the brickwork turned green



Author: Iqbal Ahmed

by the growth of moss on its exterior.”

The road in question is The Bishops Avenue. Iqbal, born and raised in Kashmir, has lived in London for 24 years, and in East Finchley since 2007. Readers of his previous books will be familiar with his deceptively conversational style and his skill in finding connections between past and present, and different people and places. Iqbal says that his new book, which covers many aspects of London, has more emphasis on his own thoughts.

An Open Book and Empty Cup (ISBN 9781527253216) will be published by Coldstream on 14 January, costing £15, and will be available on Amazon.

East Finchley ward escapes major change in boundaries review

By Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley has emerged almost unchanged from a recent review of local electoral ward boundaries. The only change is that Howard Walk has been moved from East Finchley ward to the Garden Suburb, bringing it into line with its immediate neighbours south of East End Road.

Barnet Council has released details of the proposed new electoral ward boundaries, recommended by the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Boundary Commission's task

The Commission decides how many councillors are needed for each local authority, how many wards there should be, how many councillors should represent each ward, where the boundaries of each ward should be, and what they should be called. It also equalises the number of electors that each councillor represents.

The Commission is conducting a three-year programme of electoral reviews of London boroughs that have not been reviewed in the last five years. When it started work in Barnet in 2018, wards had remained unchanged since 1999.

Fairer representation

Commission Chair Professor Colin Mellors found that the number of electors represented by individual councillors varied considerably, which of course affects the value of votes.

To redress this, after three rounds of consultation, the Commission's final recom-

mendation is that Barnet should continue to be represented by 63 councillors, but that the number of wards should be increased from 21 to 24. There will be 15 three-councillor and nine two-councillor wards. East Finchley retains its three councillors.

Role of Parliament

Professor Mellors thanked people across Barnet who had taken part in the review, saying: “We believe these recommendations deliver electoral fairness for voters as well as reflecting community ties throughout Barnet. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.”

The proposed new arrangements must now be implemented by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force the recommendations – will be laid in Parliament in the coming months.

Full details of the Commission's final recommendations (including maps) can be viewed at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/15057>. Or: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/barnet>.

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Details from Eveleen (8455 6431).



New TV comedy likes to shop local

By John Lawrence

A new TV show set to hit our screens this year follows the comic misadventures of a reporter working for a small newspaper in north London... and plenty of the scenes will look familiar to anyone who lives round our way.

Tim Downie, previously seen in the BBC's *Upstart Crow*, plays neurotic journalist Paul who's always struggling to get his stories into the UK's (fictional) fourth-biggest Jewish publication.

The Jewish Enquirer was filmed in East Finchley, Muswell Hill, Finchley Central and North Finchley, partly because the whole area is close to home for director and writer Gary Sinyor.

Location, location

The six 30-minute episodes feature scenes shot up and down our High Road, including a hilariously misfiring chat-up attempt in the aisles of Budgens, and one scene outside Finchley Fire Station in Long Lane. There's also a moment when Paul has to make a mad dash around local fish and chip shops, where viewers get to see

Toff's in Muswell Hill, Two Brothers in Finchley Central and Mermaid Fish Bar in Long Lane.

Gary said: "Most of the locations we used are places I would visit in my daily life: my florist, my hairdresser and all the shops and streets I know in East Finchley and the area around. We filmed the whole series in five weeks at the end of 2018, usually working quickly with handheld cameras. It was nice to finish each evening and get home quickly."

Knowing you, knowing me

We never see the newspaper office itself in the series but every episode ends with Paul frantically checking its online edition to see how his stories have done, usually poorly. Tim Downie said the comedy is universal: "It's about everyday



Smooth operators: Josh Howie, left, and Tim Downie, right, try to make a friend outside Budgens

struggles, everyone's problems. It shows Jewish people are just like everyone else."

The Jewish Enquirer, which also stars Lucy Montgomery and Josh Howie, premiered at a special screening at the JW3 Centre in Finchley Road, NW3, and is expected to find a home on Amazon or Netflix this year.

Milkmen look to the future after disruption

By Ann Bronkhorst

In December we reported the difficulties facing our local independent milkmen. Have they saved their rounds and are customers still cheering them on? We asked one of them, Mike Fuller, for an update.

It's not been plain sailing. After their issues with supply company Milk & More, the milkmen found another dairy but after several weeks the arrangement had become unsatisfactory. One problem was its location in east London: some of the men were travelling many miles each day. Now a nearer dairy has welcomed them, along with ten more independent milkmen whose contracts with Milk & More have just ended.

There is a vehicle problem, however. Eventually each milk-

man will need to own, not hire or borrow, their own milk van. They face daily charges when the Ultra-Low Emission Zone arrives inside the North Circular in 16 months or steep costs now for buying or converting a chassis cab van.

So this winter was difficult and the worries aren't over yet, but they have managed to maintain regular deliveries and to increase the range of goods on sale. Regular customers support them and new customers are joining: new decade, new hope.

Anyone for cricket?

Highgate Cricket Club is looking for new cricketers of all ages and abilities to join its winter training programme, led by award-winning coaches.

Johan de Silva, Director of Junior Cricket, said the club had grown considerably in recent years thanks to its development work in schools and the local

community. More than 220 players took part in its All Stars cricket programmes last year.

New and experienced cricketers are welcome to join the club's winter training on Monday nights from 6pm to 10pm and on Sundays from 10am to 3pm at Christ's College Finchley, East End Road, N2, throughout the spring term. For more information contact Johan on 07481 622 191 or email: Johan.De-Silva@marsh.com.



On the job: Paul, played by Tim Downie, is given his next reporting assignment outside Finchley Fire Station in Long Lane.

Changes to our email addresses

The Archer has two new email addresses. If you have a news story, photos or interview ideas for us, email news@the-archer.co.uk. We're always pleased to hear about anything that's going on in and around East Finchley, whether it's big news or just a small snippet.

If you'd like to advertise in the pages of *The Archer*, reaching readers in almost 10,000 homes and businesses in N2, please email advertising@the-archer.co.uk. You can find details of our rates and specifications in the advertising section of our website at www.the-archer.co.uk



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Running repairs: Isaac Rudden tweaks the car's electronic system on site in Australia. Photo Owen Foo.



No fuel required: The solar-powered car designed by Isaac Rudden and his Durham University teammates sets out on the road in Adelaide. Photo Owen Foo

Engineering student Isaac Rudden is a driving force behind a futuristic project to design and build an energy-efficient car that runs entirely off the power of the sun.

Isaac, who previously studied at Christ's College Finchley, off East End Road, N2, was part of the Durham University Electric Motorsport team that travelled to the World Solar Challenge in Adelaide, Australia, late last year

to compete against teams from 23 other countries.

Their single-seat, carbon fibre car, called Ortus, was driven more than 2,800km across the Outback, reaching a top speed of 67mph, without the need for any fossil fuels. Isaac was responsible for the electrical system, including the motor. The vehicle weighed just 178 kg and cruised on the highway using less power than a hairdryer. Its shape made

it so aerodynamic that its total drag was comparable to just the wing mirrors on a regular car.

Daytime temperatures during the event exceeded 40C in the shade, with temperatures in the car hot enough to melt plastic components. Isaac and his team returned to the UK with hopes to enter the European Solar Challenge later this year, gain new sponsors, and improve Ortus even more.

How the teddy bear came into our lives

By Diana Cormack

Cuddly toys are a popular Valentine's Day present, particularly in the form of a teddy bear which, a national newspaper recently revealed, is the bedtime companion to one in three people. These bears first appeared early in the 20th century in Germany and the USA, which is where they got the name 'Teddy'.

My husband and I were reminded of this last year on our 2,000 mile road trip through the states of the Deep South. On Route 61 along the flooded Mississippi Delta we found ourselves bound for Onward, billed as 'home of the teddy bear'. This turned out to be a deserted house and store at an isolated junction on the Blues Highway. Deserted because we later discovered the storeowner had angered local farmers and residents with his views about installing pumps to deal with their local floods and they had retaliated by boycotting the business.

In the surrounding garden stood a face-in-the-hole board bearing the sun bleached painting of a hunting scene. This featured the beginning of the teddy bear tale.

Sportsmanship

The story goes that in 1902 US President Theodore Roosevelt, a keen big game hunter, had been unsuccessful whilst hunting in the area. Wish-

ing to please him, the accompanying party captured a bear and presented it to him tied to a tree. But the president declared this to be unsporting and refused to shoot the injured animal. Word of his 'kindness' spread to the capital (he had apparently given orders for the bear to be shot to end its misery).

Teddy-mania

It was the story of him refusing to kill the bear which later appeared along with cartoons that depicted a cuter creature than the original. Roosevelt gave his permission for the subsequent stuffed toys to be named Teddies after him and these were followed by stories and books. Then, in 1907, came the ever popular song *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*.

Had this event not happened, the world might have missed out on ursine favourites such as Winnie the Pooh, Paddington Bear and Rupert, not to mention the favourite furry friend at millions of people's bedsides.



Where it started: Diana in Onward. Photo Ian Cormack.

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Filomena, centre, with some of the community cooks at St Mary's Parish Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Food and friends in the kitchen

Cooking and eating food can be a great sharing experience which is why social enterprise Bread N Butter have been running free community cooking sessions for the last few months.

People come together once a week at St Mary's Parish Centre in the High Road, N2, to try different recipes and then enjoy the results, and take them home to their families.

Filomena Komodromou, one of the directors at Bread n Butter, said: "Our ultimate aim was to create community cohesion. Food connects us, brings people together, unites us and crosses boundaries, whatever your culture, background, race or religion. We all have stories, traditions, habits and routines centred around food."

The sessions have been funded by the Grange Big Local project in response to demand for opportunities for lone residents to make new friends and for local communities to integrate with each other.

"We believe our Community Cooking Together sessions address all these issues and bring people together whilst learning new cooking skills," said Filomena.

Zero waste

The sessions also tackle the important issue of food waste which has a huge impact on the environment. Each week attendees are offered food donated by The Felix Project, a surplus food redistribution charity based in Enfield.

At the end of the session attendees are able to take fresh fruit and vegetables and cup-

board staples home with them along with any leftovers from the cooking sessions.

Sessions are free to local residents to attend and take place every Friday from 11am-1pm at St Mary's Parish Centre, East Finchley, N2 8HG. To book your place email: filomena@breadnbutter.org.uk. For more information visit www.Breadn-Butter.org.uk



No such thing as too many cooks. Photo Mike Coles

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Chocolates and roses

Just when your credit card has got used to being maxed out over Christmas along comes the next way of separating you from reality. Yes, it's that time of year again, when the look of delight on the face of a child opening presents is replaced by the look of disappointment on the florist's face when you only buy six red roses.

No one's too sure who St Valentine was, there's a load of options amongst the early martyrs. Was he a Turkish bishop or a priest in Rome or a Christian flower seller who gave 12 roses to a Vestal Virgin martyred by being smothered in rose petals?

And why February 14th? Well, let's start by blaming the French. It was Charles V who named it as the day of love in a charter in 1400, and the first Valentine's poetry was written by a Frenchman. OK, a Frenchman locked up the Tower of London, but a Frenchman just the same. But it wasn't until the 19th century that things got really crazy.

First there was 'The Young Man's Valentine Writer', or guide to stalking as we'd now call it. Then, in 1851 there was the arrival of the penny post so the sender paid the postage and finally Esther Howland started churning out pre-printed cards in 1867. From there it was only a short step to Cadbury's coming up with heart-shaped chocolates. And since then it hasn't stopped.

In amongst the endless romantic trash on Classic FM, special menus in restaurants you'd normally avoid and re-reruns of *When Harry Met Meghan* we spend a medium-sized fortune. In the USA they send 200million cards. The average American spends the best part of \$150 'celebrating'.

Here we're just as bad and send 25million of the things. Guess how much that all costs by the time you've chucked in the champagne, chocolates, flowers and special dinner at Chez Boris? Well, I'll tell you, it's about 2billion quid all told. So this year, do something different, donate it to a better cause. Just think what the NHS could do with that sort of extra cash.



Prize winners: from left, Maxine Allon, Neil Boast and Anna Paganini in the Phoenix foyer. Photo Mike Coles.

Free seats at Phoenix

Three film fans will be able to keep up with all the latest movie releases after winning prizes in the annual Phoenix Cinema raffle, held at the end of last year.

Neil Boast won two free tickets a week for a year and said: "I bought raffle tickets to support the cinema. I'm very happy I won." Maxine Allon won free tickets for six months and Anna Paganini won free tickets for three months.

Maxine said: "The Phoenix is such a wonderful, beautiful cinema", and Anna said she was "delighted to win". The raffle raised more than £1,000 to go towards the costs of running the cinema, which is a charitable trust.

Trading group for new parents

By Hande Kiamil

I hate putting things in the bin and it is particularly upsetting when usable things end up in landfill whilst new versions are being produced and sold.

So I have long been a user of the 'shpock' app, which matches buyers and sellers by location. However, I find that things take a while to sell. I used not to mind that, but in May I had a baby, and what he needs and enjoys changes on a weekly basis. I wanted a way to buy and sell quickly and locally.

A friend told me about a very successful buy and

sell WhatsApp group started by a Haringey mum. Taking inspiration from this, I have just launched an N2 group for babies', toddlers' and young children's items.

Any N2 expectant parents or parents of young children who would like to join can email their name and number to n2parents-buyandsell@gmail.com and I will add them to the group.



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- **Yoga, breathing & relaxation**. Weekly drop-in classes - N3, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 07956 375607.
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- **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
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- **'Calm & Sing' workshops**. Contact Angie on missangiea@yahoo.co.uk
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- **Creative Writing** at Friern Barnet Community Library. Every Saturday, 12pm, 07488 230580.
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- **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.

Clubs & Social

- **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9 pm, Green Man Centre. Contact: Jan 8815 5452
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- **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** friendsofcherrytreewood.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.

Red carpet premiere for new director

The Everyman cinema in Muswell Hill was the venue for a red carpet premiere to launch the new movie by local director Cush Berlyn. *Trust* is set in London's underworld and asks its audience to question who they can really trust.

Cush, who grew up in East Finchley and went to school in Friern Barnet, gathered a team of fellow creatives and friends to work alongside him on the project, including assistant director and cast member Bobby Gordon, who has appeared in *Hollyoaks*, and music composer and pianist Jessica Sawers-Warren, a friend since they were three.

West Ham footballer Ryan Fredericks, actor Jovian Wade, international model Aneesa Sharif and musician Aggro Santos were among those who walked up the red carpet to enjoy the film's premiere in December. Cush described the whole event as "incredible". *Trust* is available to view on Amazon Prime Video Direct.



Best friends: Left to right, Emilija Trajkovic as Becky Thatcher, Jonah Maddocks as Tom Sawyer and Maya Woolf as Huckleberry Finn.

Tom Sawyer is back on his adventures

This February half-term, Garden Suburb Theatre is bringing a musical production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* to the King Alfred Phoenix Theatre in Golders Green.

In 1840s' Missouri, teenage Tom Sawyer cheekily wends his way through life falling in love, constantly outsmarting everyone, avoiding work at all costs and finally catching a real murderous villain, all with the help of Huckleberry Finn, Becky Thatcher and his other friends, and the love and support of his Aunt Polly.

The show is on at the King Alfred Phoenix Theatre, North End Road, NW11, from Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 February at 7.30pm, with weekend shows at 11.30am and 3pm. Tickets are £14/£12, and a family ticket £42. To book, go to www.ticketsource.co.uk/gardensuburbtheatre

What's On...

E-mail your listings to: news@the-archer.co.uk

Mondays in February

- Games Group for the over 55s: friendly people and choice of board and card games; The Bohemia, 762-764 High Road, North Finchley, N12 9QH; every Monday 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Wednesday 12 February

- Sleeping and Dreaming; Professor Catherine Loveday explores sleep, what it is, why we need it and how to do it better; Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, 6.30pm. Tickets free but booking essential as places are limited. Email Wendy at wendy.nutman@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 020 8432 1421.

Friday 14 February

- The Solarek Piano Trio perform two piano trios side by side, the late-romantic highly expressive Trio in C major op 29 by Croatian composer Dora Pejačević, and Beethoven's celebrated Op. 97 in B-flat major, the 'Archduke' Trio, regarded as the greatest of all piano trio works; 6.30pm, Burgh

House, New End Square, London NW3 1LT. Tickets: £15 (£10 concessions) from www.ticketsource.co.uk/solarek-piano-trio or at door, include free glass of wine or soft drink.

Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 February

- Garden Suburb Theatre's musical production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain's beloved story of cheeky teenager Tom Sawyer and his friends Huckleberry Finn, Becky Thatcher and Aunt Polly; King Alfred Phoenix Theatre, Golders Green, 7.30pm with weekend shows at 11.30am and 3pm. Tickets £14/£12, family ticket £42 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/gardensuburbtheatre.

Saturday 29 February

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



First night: Director Cush Berlyn with lead actors Laura Nicole, left, and Andrea Martinez at the Muswell Hill premiere.

Stairway to heaven

Two works by East Finchley artist Christine Watson have been selected from over 800 entries to appear alongside paintings by some of Britain's leading pastel and dry media artists at The Pastel Society's annual exhibition in central London.

Christine, who lives in Creighton Avenue, was inspired to create them by a recent trip to Chefchaouen in the Rif Mountains of northern Morocco, which is known as the Blue Pearl because at least a third of the town is painted with a stunning array of blues from cobalt to ultramarine.

Visitors to the exhibition at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, SW1, from Wednesday 5 to Sunday 16 February will have the chance to cast their vote for Christine in the society's Visitors' Choice Award. Admission is £5, but free for under 25s, Friends of Mall Galleries and also free for readers mentioning *The Archer* at the gallery desk.



Chefchaouen Steps: One of the works by Christine Watson on show at Mall Galleries.

More details can be found at www.mallgalleries.org.uk

Extinction Rebellion fanned by bush fires

By Daphne Chamberlain

As we all know by now, in the hottest year on record in Australia, thousands of homes have been burned to the ground and the landscape devastated. The tragic loss of life, both human and animal, include many animals on the extinction list.

Over 30 countries joined the #BushfireRebellion, with activists demanding recognition of climate change from the Australian government. Mass demonstrations last month included one in London outside the Australia High Commission, with more actions planned at the time of writing.

Legal victory in the Netherlands

On 20 December, the Dutch Supreme Court upheld two lower court rulings legally

obliging the Dutch government to take action to protect its citizens from climate change. This ruling is the first of its kind.

Mass cycle ride

Extinction Rebellion and Animal Rebellion members are planning to keep cycling all the way to Glasgow, to attend the COP26, the next UN climate change summit in November. Follow @TourDeRebel on Facebook and Instagram to keep track of their progress. For local XR voices, follow @XRBarnet.

Get seen in *The Archer*

Is your club, charity, school or society planning a public event? Tell everyone in East Finchley about it with a free listing in our What's On column. Send brief details by email to news@the-archer.co.uk or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE. You can also reach us on Facebook and Twitter @TheArcherN2. Deadline for submissions is always the middle of the month ahead of the issue in which you'd like your event included. Full details of deadlines at the top of page 2.



First glass: Mel and Helen's new window featuring Archie.
Photo Mel Glass.

Archie moves into new home way out west

Former Fortismere School headteacher Helen Glass and her husband Mel, a cycling instructor, may have moved to Gloucestershire but they haven't left East Finchley behind completely.

After both realising they missed seeing Archie on the skyline every day, Mel designed a reminder of the tube station statue as a present for Helen, as part of some new double

glazing windows supplied by a firm close to their new home, called Corwyn. "Everyone here loves it. And every morning, as before, we walk past the Archer!" said Mel.

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m.
Weekday masses as advertised on the website
(Coffee served after mass on Sunday and Thursday)

Join us on
Sunday 23rd February 2020
at 5.00 p.m.
for the Induction and Collation of
Fr Ian Chandler
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of All Saints'

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a *flourishing* social life.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir.

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<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

For more information: Please email:
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who look forward to welcoming you

Sunday Parish Communion at 10.00 am

Children's Sunday Club ♦ Meet over coffee after church

Fr. Marius Mirt is happy to answer any enquiries:

email: marius.mirt@htef.org.uk tel: 020 3565 4430
www.holytrinityeastfinchley.org.uk

Nuts about nut roast

Anyone inspired by Veganuary to carry on eating meat-free for the rest of the year will enjoy this delicious recipe for Nut Roast, thanks to food writer Felicity Cloake. Vegans can make their own version with substitutes for the butter, cheese and egg. Serves 6.

Ingredients:

2 large parsnips
oil, to grease
1 small savoy cabbage,
4-6 outer leaves only;
150g hazelnuts
40g butter (or vegan alternative)
1 red onion, finely chopped
150g chestnut mushrooms,
finely chopped
100g cooked chestnuts,
roughly chopped
100g Stilton, crumbled (or
vegan-friendly cheese of your
choice)
100g brown breadcrumbs
2 tbsp chopped fresh sage
1 free-range egg, beaten (or
vegan egg alternative).

Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 180C. Peel and quarter parsnips, boil in salted water until tender, drain and mash.

2. Grease a loaf tin approx 20cm x 10cm x 7cm, line with foil, and grease foil generously. Blanch 6 cabbage leaves in boiling, salted water for 2 minutes: ensure you have enough to line tin with overlapping leaves before you tip away water. Plunge leaves into iced water.

3. Toast hazelnuts in a frying pan over high heat until starting to colour, then set aside. Turn heat down to medium, add butter and chopped onion and cook for 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook for another 7 minutes until softened.

4. Roughly chop hazelnuts and place in large bowl with chopped chestnuts, crumbled Stilton, breadcrumbs and sage. Add mashed parsnip, softened onions and mushrooms followed by beaten egg. Season and stir together.

5. Line prepared tin with overlapping cabbage leaves, leaving excess hanging over sides, then spoon in the mixture, pressing down well, and fold any overhanging cabbage leaves back over top. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 45 minutes. (You can keep in the fridge for 24 hours before baking.)

6. Remove foil from top and put loaf back in oven for another 15 minutes, then remove and put large serving plate over top of tin. Holding tin with oven gloves, turn plate over so loaf inverts onto plate. Carefully peel off foil and cut into slices to serve.

Letters

Box clever

Dear Editor,

In the December edition of *The Archer*, there was an article regarding the making of woven paper boxes with instructions. It inspired us to assemble our own paper box, involving three nations - Scotland, Australia and England (pictured). We had fun, lots of discussion and accomplished our joint mission. Thank you to *The Archer*.

Yours faithfully,
Helen Barry, Agnes and Kate,
Address supplied.



Hold all: Helen's recycled paper basket.

Buses and trains

Dear Editor,

That long bus queue for the 263 at the station pictured in your November edition says it all. People dependent on that bus have my sympathy. It's about time we had a better service up towards North Finchley.

And why hasn't that stop at the station got a bus shelter, when the other stop there has? Also, even though there is only one service from that stop, why is there no indicator of when the next bus is coming? Maybe someone thinks it would be too depressing.

Everyone thinks we have such a good transport service here, but even the Tube station wants looking at. Why can't we have a lift? It's not much good living near the station if you can't get up or down the stairs.

I know you had some letters about this a little while ago, and I really think something should be done about it.

Yours faithfully,
S. Skidmore,
High Road, N2.

Wait at the lights

Dear Editor,

In spite of the recent terrible accidents to pedestrians on East Finchley's roads, people are still persisting in crossing against the traffic lights.

In the last month I have seen two groups of teenage schoolchildren very nearly knocked down when crossing the High Road at the Bald Faced Stag junction on the red light. In neither case was the driver to blame, and the youngsters seemed completely oblivious to the narrowness of their escape.

Can people not realise that their lives and their futures are worth a wait of a couple of minutes at the most?

Yours faithfully,
K. Stevenson,
Address supplied.

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.

Shear effrontery

Dear Editor,

I wonder how many other readers are angry at the lack of care shown by householders who fail to keep the bushes and trees in their gardens under control.

There are parts of East Finchley where the pavements are obstructed by overgrown plants, sometimes spreading as much as half way across the footway.

Not only is your way impeded but pedestrians' clothing could be damaged by these, and there are also many overhanging branches which could damage the eyes of passers-by.

I suggest that people whose gardens border public footways take a look and, if need be, take secateurs to the offending foliage. Otherwise a band of secret shearers might take to the streets!

Yours faithfully,
L.C Ward,
Address supplied.

Send for Greta

Dear Editor,

I wonder how swiftly we can crowdfund for Greta Thunberg to travel to the UK and educate the London Borough of Barnet what climate change is truly about? As most readers are aware, LBB is in significant breach of EU and national minimum standards for recycling.

Specifically they removed the four giant bins outside East Finchley station, followed by many street refuse bins certainly in N2. More recently the green garden bin collection ceased in November, suspended till February.

As an elderly resident unable to heave mega sacks to the Summers Lane Recycling Centre as recommended, I have to resort to disposing of my garden waste in the grey garbage bin to join other landfill.

Whilst appreciating Barnet's cost cutting may placate some residents, they are now suggesting adopting Haringey's previous idea of having an extra paid collection service. Excellent idea if landfill is reduced and 100% service guaranteed.

Clearly mere N2 residents cannot easily influence large complex geopolitical governments but wouldn't it improve this new decade for Barnet to accept their environmental responsibility?

Yours faithfully,
Evan McStreens,
Fortis Green, N2.

Archer online

Did you know you can catch up with past issues of *The Archer* online?

Every edition since the start of 2000 is available on our website www.the-archer.co.uk. The site also gives information on advertising in our pages and how you can contribute to the paper.

Your news

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FEBRUARY 2020

PAGE 12

The Archer

Published by East Finchley Newspapers, P.O. Box 3699, London N2 2DE. www.the-archer.co.uk



Heavy load: Porters are accustomed to carrying all supplies on their heads and backs. Photo Luca Pittalis.



High point: Luca, left, is congratulated on reaching the summit by porter Joseph, who has climbed Kilimanjaro more than 300 times. Photo Luca Pittalis.

Capturing Kilimanjaro before the ice vanishes

Filmmaker Luca Pittalis has produced a new documentary shining a light on global warming in the heart of Africa by investigating the shrinking of the glaciers on the continent's highest mountain Kilimanjaro.



Luca, pictured above, who lives in Bancroft Avenue, N2, was funded by Rotary International to travel to Tanzania with three friends. They climbed the dormant volcano in four and a half days and on the way asked the local porters, the people who know the mountain best, what changes they had noticed to the giant ice sheets.

You can see Luca's film on YouTube by searching 'Kilimanjaro: The White Mountain'. Here Luca himself takes up the story of how it was made.

Attempt on the summit

The more I'd read about Kilimanjaro, the more I realised that it was riddled by the effects of climate change. Its glaciers, which have inhabited its slopes for nearly 12,000 years, are receding faster than ever. When I failed to find any documentaries that even mentioned it, I decided to give it a try.

After four days moving up the lower slopes, we set off at midnight for the attempt on the 19,300ft summit and it was brutal. We had no prior climbing

experience. We trekked seven hours in the dark in -20C. With little time for acclimatisation, we felt the effects of altitude sickness and this made the filming process a real challenge. The locals repeatedly told us to drink water, their 'medicine'.

Guides who know the mountain

It is law in Tanzania that you climb with registered guides and porters. It is important for safety and for their economy. Many of them half run up, carrying 15-20 kg loads on their heads. Our head guide, Eden, told me in an interview that he had summited Kilimanjaro over 200 times. The porters reported 20-metre shifts in the glaciers' positions alongside the trekking paths, which was not just fright-

ening, but also agreed with the scientific literature. They said they had been told that the mountain will be ice-free within the next two decades.

On top of the world

At 7.20am, we reached the summit, or as Eden called it, his 'office', and he produced a football that he had been carrying in his bag the whole time. Kicking a ball around at 5,900 metres with a few football-fanatic Tanzanians is something you don't forget.

It is hard to describe what it's like up there: you are above the clouds and there is no light pollution because the whole area is uninhabited. You could even see Jupiter. I'm sure that it is what our earliest ancestors would have been used to seeing.



'Filming challenge: Mount Kilimanjaro stands proud above the high plains of Tanzania. Photo Luca Pittalis.

On the way home we had a short flight from Arusha to Nairobi. We were the only ones on the flight. When the pilot

announced that we would be "cruising at 18,000ft", the four of us laughed... we had just climbed to 1,000ft higher!

STEWART DUNCAN

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