

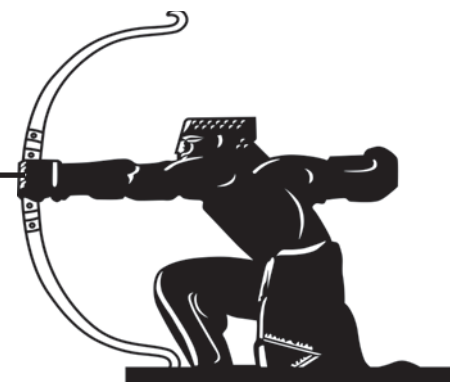


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The Archer

Local News is our Aim



May 2020 No. 313

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

TURN TO PAGE 6 FOR ESSENTIAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON STAYING SAFE AND WELL, AND CARING FOR OTHERS, AS EAST FINCHLEY PULLS TOGETHER IN THE VIRUS LOCKDOWN

Generous donors keep food bank in vital supplies

By Janet Maitland

The people of East Finchley have responded magnificently to an appeal for help from Finchley Foodbank. Neighbours have organised collections and worked together to deliver hundreds of donations directly to the charity that assists families and individuals in desperate need.

“Our supporters have been incredibly generous, whilst having to look after their own families during this crisis,” said Anna Maughan, a member of the food bank’s management committee. She pointed out that the number of people using their services had risen steeply. “In the last four weeks we have had between 10 and 20 new clients every week. We are now supporting around 115 people in total, of which 42 are children. We just

don’t know how long we will need to support the extra clients, so it’s important that donations continue, even when the lockdown finishes.” The food bank has found a very effective way of getting the quantity of food they need is through appeals on street-based WhatsApp groups. Dozens of roads around N2 have organised collections where residents leave items at the home of whoever has volunteered to drop them off.



Loads of help: Steve Carr and Helena Pugh delivering donations to the food bank. Photo Mike Coles

Donations welcome

All non-perishable food items are welcomed, particularly tinned meat products like pies, chilli con carne and corned beef, soups and cooking sauces and UHT milk. Toiletries and bathroom items are also gratefully received.

Donations are received every Friday between 12pm and 3pm at the hall behind St Mary’s Church at 279 High Road, N2. Delivering food there counts as helping vulnerable people and social distancing can be maintained with no difficulty. A driveway to the left of the church leads to a hall where the food bank is based. Here you can unload the car and leave the food with the volunteer team to sort.

The food bank then opens the following day between 12.30pm and 2pm, staffed by up to 30 volunteers, who distribute packages to people in need.

High demand

Finchley Foodbank’s success has come as other similar operations across the UK are closing because the pandemic has led to a decline in volunteers and a shortage of donations. At the same time, there is a rise in demand. In the first six weeks of the virus outbreak 1.5million people had to make a claim for Universal Credit, which requires a five-week wait for the first payment.

Contact the team by ringing 07849 558307 or emailing finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com.

If you search ‘Finchley Foodbank’ on Facebook, you will find a link to make an online donation.

A smart way to queue for this savvy shopper

It’s amazing how quickly we all adapt. This gentleman came prepared for the queue outside Sainsbury’s Local in the High Road by bringing a chair and a newspaper to pass the time in the early spring sunshine. Smart thinking.

Thanks to Archer reader David Noble for the photo.



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If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address.

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

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August 10 July

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Barnet Council 020 8359 2000
Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600
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

Transport

National Rail 0845 7484950
City Airport 020 7646 0088
Heathrow Airport 0844 3351801
National Express 0871 781 8181
TfL 0343 222 1234
Thameslink 0345 026 4700

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Cruse Bereavement Care 0800 8081677
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Lone Parent Centre 020 3828 4834
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National Debt Line 0808 156 7718
NSPCC 0808 8005000
Rape Crisis helpline 0808 802 9999
Refuge Crisis Helpline 0808 2000 247
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RSPCA 0300 1234 999
Samaritans 116 123
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Alcoholics Anonymous 0845 7697555
Barnet MENCAP 020 8203 6688
Cancer Support 020 8202 2211
Carers' Line 0808 808 7777
Drinkline 0800 917 8282

Drugs Helpline 0800 776600
Health Info Service 0800 665544
MIND 020 8343 5700
National Blood Centre 0845 7711 7711

Crime

Emergency 999
Police non-emergency 101
CrimeStoppers 0800 555111
Victim Support 0845 303 0900

Hospitals

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Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500
Oak Lane Clinic 020 8346 9343
Royal Free 020 7794 0500
Whittington 020 7272 3070

OAPs' Advice

Age UK Barnet 020 8203 5040
Independent Age 0800 319 6789
Age UK 0800 169 2081

Murder trial to restart for fifth time

A man is to go on trial for a fifth time accused of the murder of a 53-year-old woman and her nephew in East Finchley in 2016.

Obina Ezeoke is accused of shooting dead Annie Besala Ekofo and 21-year-old Bervil Kalikaka-Ekofo at a flat in Elmhurst Crescent, N2. He denies the charges.

His first trial in 2017 was abandoned after the judge became ill. The juries at two subsequent trials in 2018 and 2019 were unable to reach verdicts.

A fourth trial began in February but was abandoned after jury numbers fell below nine due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last month, Old Bailey judge Mr Justice Davis granted a prosecution request for a fifth trial and it is expected to be held this autumn.

Pick up *The Archer* when you're shopping

Thank you to all the shops around East Finchley who have kindly stocked *The Archer* for people to pick up for free while our regular deliverers are temporarily confined to barracks.



Hot off the press: The Long Lane Supermarket team are among those stocking *The Archer*. Photo Mike Coles.

Traders agreed readily to find space for us and we couldn't be more grateful. Please support all our local stores that are working so hard to keep us supplied with good quality food and other

essentials. If your local shop has run out of copies of *The Archer*, please contact us and we will drop more off. Email us: news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message for free on our phone line 0800 612 0748.

At least someone's getting a haircut!

In preparation for the summer, trees along the High Road in East Finchley were given their regular haircut in early April by a team working for Barnet Council. Pavements and part of the road were temporarily closed off while the pollarding was carried out to control new growth.

Trees on the High Road being trimmed for the summer. Photo Mike Coles



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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet Council

115 Abbots Gardens, N2

First-floor extension on flat roof. Roof height to be raised.

34 Beresford Road, N2

Roof extension: hip to gable, rear L-shaped dormer window with Juliet balcony. Two front roof lights.

130 East End Road, N2

Change of use from coffee shop to beauty salon.

17 Greenhalgh Walk, N2

Replacement of rear patio doors and two side windows. Alterations to front door panels. Deeper terrace in rear garden, with access steps.

148 High Road, N2

Change of use at rear of hairdressers' shop to studio flat.

37 Leopold Road, N2

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

70A Manor Park Road, N2

Single-storey side extension.

Land adjacent to 1-12 Norfolk Close, N2

Submission of details pursuant to planning permission.

5 Oakview Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension, including one roof light. Replacement of first floor casement windows with French doors, to

form two Juliet balconies.

52 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey side extension.

Haringey Council

25 Church Vale, N2

Single-storey rear extension, together with existing raised side flat roof. Four lights on flat roof.

54 Eastern Road, N2

New single-storey rear extension, following demolition of existing ground floor rear extension.

Spring Lane Care Home, 170 Fortis Green, N10

Four-storey and single-storey rear extension, to add 14 additional care home bedrooms, activity lounge and new garden. Amendments to car park.

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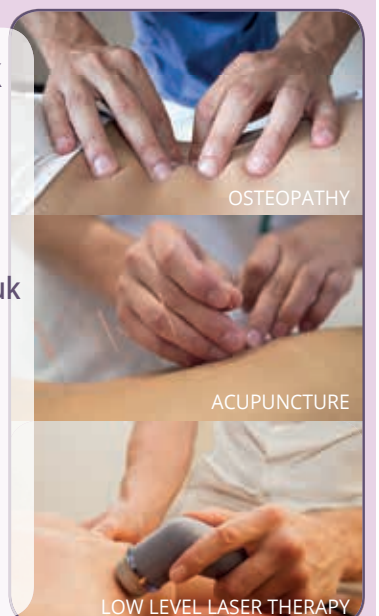
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Stunning! Is this the most beautiful tree in East Finchley?

By David Melsome

This beautiful weeping cherry tree has lifted the spirits of anyone passing the patch of open land at the junction of East End Road and Church Lane, N2, throughout the last two months.

So glorious has the tree's cascading blossom been that one member of the East Finchley community Facebook group couldn't resist posting a number of photos and calling it "my favourite tree in East Finchley". Others agreed and her post attracted dozens of appreciative comments, with many noting how the tree's elegant canopy gives its beauty a different shape from every angle.

Are there any other trees out there who have their own fan club? Please send photos and details to: news@the-archer.co.uk

Progress on plastics brought to a halt

By Ann Inglis

Before the virus, I was loading information from the second round of the No2PlasticsN2 shop survey into our database and the force of legislation was rammed home. Concentrating as we are on shops which are profligate users of single-use plastics we have turned our attention to cafés.

With Spring here and the government ban on shops giving out plastic straws and plastic stirrers, none of the eight cafes on the High Road in East Finchley, two of which are also bakeries, use them anymore.

Until now we have been nudging shops to do the right thing. Many managers tell us that they want the government to legislate so that all shops will work from the same level playing field. Changing the behaviour of consumers, whilst powerful, is an extremely slow process.

MP helps campaign

With the Environment Bill at committee stage in Parliament, the committee was supposed to report back to the house on 5 May. We had successfully campaigned to get our MP Mike Freer to put forward our demand for legislation to ban single use plastic bags and ban schools from selling water in single use plastic bottles. Unfortunately, because Mr Freer is a government whip the rules state that he can't speak for his constituents during debates outside his policy area. However, he promised to go one better and take our demands directly to Rebecca Pow MP, the Minister shepherding the Bill through Parliament.

Parliamentary work suspended

Then enter the virus, and all sittings of the committee were suspended until further notice. We would have been the 75th country in the world to ban single use plastic bags but now that position has been taken by China, long a receiver of our plastic waste. Britain is not a leader in banning plastics... very much a follower.

To find out more about the activities of the plastics campaign group, email No2Plastics@gmail.com, or follow No2PlasticsN2 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Anti-plastics: Ann Inglis

Decision on 10k race will be made soon

By John Lawrence

Organisers of the annual Race the Neighbours event between East Finchley and Muswell Hill say they will make a decision later this month on whether to go ahead as planned in July.

Around 450 runners are due to take part in the 10km race on Sunday 12 July, starting in Cherry Tree Wood and taking a circular route to Alexandra Palace and back.

Most arrangements were in place before the lockdown began so organisers will check with their suppliers and various authorities once a clear end date for social distancing rules has passed or is in sight. They are likely to make a decision by the end of May or the start of June.

"We would like to go ahead, but that will depend entirely on the course of the pandemic over the next few weeks, and we will take our lead from government and health authorities. Our first priority will always be the safety and good health of our runners and wider community," said the team.

If they are not permitted to go ahead, or believe it would not be responsible to do so, then the race will be cancelled rather than postponed and all entrants will receive a full refund.

Festival will not go ahead in June

By John Lawrence

The team running the East Finchley Festival has announced that it will not now go ahead as planned on Sunday 21 June after a decision by Barnet Council.

Uncertainty over the ending of the lockdown and the rules around public gatherings mean the volunteer organisers do not know at this stage whether it will be possible to reschedule the festival for later in the year.

A statement from the festival team said: "It's obviously very disappointing after the fundraising and preparations, but public safety must always come first, and we hope to bring you a fantastic festival when it is safe to do so."

"Thank you for your support and patience during these uncertain times. Stay safe and well, everyone, and we'll see you on the other side."

It will be only the second time in its more-than-40-year history that East Finchley's annual community party has been called off. In 2012 the festival was cancelled altogether when Cherry Tree Wood became waterlogged after weeks of rain in May and early June.

Proms march on

Organisers of the cancelled Proms at St Jude's festival have announced that it will run as normal in 2021 after a series of generous donations secured its financial future.

This year's season in June was called off due to the lockdown but there will still be some performances available to view online. Find out more at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk

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Lifesavers: Volunteer Cledia Mastel is among those preparing food for local people in need.

Hundreds of volunteers help their neighbours through the lockdown

By Janet Maitland

All over East Finchley people are responding to the pandemic by helping their neighbours... people they may have only said hello to before... by going to the supermarket for them. And hundreds are volunteering their services through the support groups that have blossomed across the community.

If you are struggling to cope with food shopping, picking up prescriptions, dog walking, or just plain loneliness, there are people out there who want to help.

"We have 288 volunteers who live in East Finchley," said Sophia Acton, from the Barnet branch of **Mutual Aid**, one of thousands of groups that have grown organically all over the country since just before the lockdown started. "When people us ask for help, we put their postcode on our map to find the volunteers who live closest to them. I'm so thankful to our volunteers who find the time to help us even though many are looking after families and working full time themselves."

Alison Roberts of **East Finchley Covid-19 Support group**, which has nearly 500 volunteers covering the whole of N2 urges anyone who is stuck

at home for whatever reason, whether self-isolating or maybe alone with small children, to contact them for assistance.

"Our volunteers are able to do grocery shopping, walk pets, collect prescriptions or just offer a friendly chat to enable people to keep in touch with the outside world", she said. "We've had some lovely feedback from the people we've helped and hope that lasting friendships have been made along the way."

The **Finchley Covid 19** support group offers shopping services, prescription pick-ups, cooked meals and moral support, and twice a week delivers 60 meals to Homeless Action Barnet. Organiser Pravashini Ramsamy has 170 volunteers covering Finchley and surrounding areas, including East Finchley. "We don't know what the future holds, but what I know is the volunteers have

shown limitless generosity and kindness and my faith has been restored in humanity," she said.

WhatsApp groups are also providing a lifeline for local residents. Ask a neighbour if there is one for your street.

Pings of the group chat fill the silence

By Hamish Hallett

In unusual times, the people of East Finchley have stepped up. Their closeness, togetherness and tight-knit bonds have all been reinforced by the coronavirus crisis.

And it's been made much easier to keep in touch by mobile phone group apps like WhatsApp. The Beech Drive chat group is just one example of dozens around N2 and it has contributed to people's lives in so many positive ways over the last few weeks.

Beech Drive neighbours have organised donations to the Royal Free Hospital and to the Finchley food bank. Contributions include non-perishable items and offering a baked cake to the hospital workers.

It didn't stop there. Many of the residents have provided help to those stuck in quarantine by collecting vital medicines and keeping an eye on households that may already be prone to loneliness. There are people who are by themselves or cannot reach their loved ones for long periods.

Sharing of information has soared. From links to food companies who deliver essential items, suggestions of plumbers, sharing news of

Lockdown advice for the elderly from Age UK

By Daphne Chamberlain

Age UK say they will be monitoring any changes in care for older people following the recent Coronavirus Act. The Act allows local authorities to prioritise care needs, in order to ensure that the most urgent and serious are met.

This may mean changes to care provision and/or delay in some assessments. However, local authorities must still do as much as they can to carry out their duty to meet care needs.

Age UK say that the Government has already listened to their concerns by introducing six-monthly reviews to the new rules.

Keeping in touch

Anyone worried can ask for advice on 0800 169 6565, but be warned that this line is always busy. Age UK are aware of this, and ask you to keep trying. The line is open 8am to 7pm.

If your main problem is isolation, they recommend the Silver Line on 0800 470 8090 for "a cheerful chat, day or night".

Meanwhile, the advice for families, friends and local contacts includes finding time for that cheerful chat. Make a check-up call friendly as well as practical.

There is also advice on the Age UK website about introducing older people to technology, including a guide to video calling.

Obviously, that will not be possible or feasible in many cases, but don't forget a good old-fashioned letter, home-made cards, postcards and small gifts.

Campaigns

Regarding the friend in the corner of the living room: no action needs to be taken on television licences until August. This follows an Age UK campaign.

There is another petition, one for care to be free, fair, and available to everyone when they need it. This gathered over 100,000 signatures, but is not being presented until the present crisis is over.

For more information, please see www.ageuk.org.uk/campaigns or @ageukcampaigns on Twitter.

First line of defence

Plastics firm Talbot Designs, in Long Lane, N3, has been racing to meet demand for its clear counter-top screens that can be installed to help protect shop workers who are serving customers.

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Email: efcovid@gmail.com

Helpline: 0843 886 5900

Finchley Covid 19 (Finchley and surrounding areas)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/657957791673470

Email: finchleycovid@yahoo.com

Helpline: 07951 044 702

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To volunteer: signup.mutualaid.co.uk

Answerphone: 020 31 377 488

Email: admin@mutualaid.co.uk



Back in business: Michael and Chris stand ready to serve at Tony's. Photo Mike Coles

Sigh of relief as Tony's starts trading again

By David Gritten

It's been a tough time for Tony's Continental, the family-run greengrocers' on the High Road. Various factors forced its closure in the first two weeks of April while its owners Chris Athanasiou and Michael Paphitis re-grouped and devised new business strategies for this year of coronavirus.

Their shop has now re-opened, to the relief of its fiercely loyal local customers, and both men are looking to the future with cautious optimism. "We were burned out," Michael says now of the recent closure. "We couldn't hack it anymore." Chris agrees: "It just wasn't sustainable."

Early reactions

Several factors were involved. "Once the virus started kicking off, people started panicking," Michael recalls. "Suddenly the small local shop was the 'in' thing, because we'd started social distancing, allowing only three

customers in at any one time."

So Tony's had more customers than they could handle, at a time when, as Chris says, "supplies suddenly became difficult. We don't have that huge network of suppliers that the supermarkets have, so we were limited in terms of what we could buy in."

Supply problems

At the same time, there was 'panic buying' at the markets, where food supplies were suddenly not coming in from Italy, Spain and Holland, because staff were self-isolating. The big chains bulk-bought everything they could, leaving less for independent traders like Tony's to buy.

"Suddenly we didn't have enough flour, eggs, beans, loaves or pasta," said Chris. "That was difficult for local people. And it's the locals who are in here, day in and day out,

who we want to help look after. Being part of this community [Chris's father Tony originally opened the store in 1971] means we want to look after them. To us, they come first."

That everyday chat

This is more than just business-speak. Chris and Michael are cheerfully sociable to locals who visit Tony's, and invariably chat to them. "That way," Chris says, "we know who they are and what they'd like. We put a lot of hard work into it. Our research comes through everyday chatting to people. We don't do pie charts or graphs; it's just through conversations."

He is cautiously positive about the future: "This was one of many hurdles. There'll be lots more twists and turns to come. But we have to be positive and help each other. We take every day as it comes."

Bravo for the man on the bike

By Daphne Chamberlain

Even in our strange new world, the Budgens delivery man on a bike with a trailer is still worth a second glance. The man himself, Keir Patterson, told us that several of his customers have likened him to Granville in the old television show *Open All Hours*.

Keir and his colleagues have certainly been working all hours to keep many of us supplied. When *The Archer* caught up with him after Easter, he had just had his first days off "for a good long while". He is actually the admin manager at Budgens, but when store manager Paul Gardner came up with the idea of delivering, he was happy to take it on.

Along came a spider

"It's my own bike, and I cycle in every day from Notting Hill," said Keir. "Getting it all done is hard work. I feel like the spider in the centre of the web, but it's not just me. It's all of us. Things are so hectic that I do worry in case people can't get through on the phone or details get lost. If you can't get through first time, please try again."

As well as the dozens of

phone requests, there are over 30 online deliveries a day. "It's getting the stuff off the shelves that takes a lot of time."

Delivery plans

Keir's trailer can take 100 kilos, which corresponds to three or four smaller deliveries or one very large one. It's weight that counts of course, and tinned goods make up a good proportion of sales.

At the time of writing there were plans to take on a trainee to help, and Paul Gardner and an assistant also deliver from a conventional van.

Budgens had actually started a delivery service before the Covid19 crisis, but it was in its very early stages, with just a few customers. Keir thinks that deliveries will continue after the crisis. "It's very worthwhile," he told us. "I do get a sense of fulfilment."



Door-to-door: Keir sets off on another delivery

Café reopens

After closing in the early part of the lockdown, the team at Coffee Bank in the High Road, N2, have reopened for business. Customers can now buy takeaways and pick up orders from the counter every day from 9am to 3pm.

Recycling restored

Recycling collections in East Finchley have been restored to weekly after going fortnightly for a short period.

Barnet Council found that it had enough staff operating on the collection lorries to keep the normal timetable.

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www.kathrynskorza.co.uk



Essential advice and information

All the information and advice on these pages is correct at the time of going to press. If there is anything you think we should be sharing with the community across East Finchley, please get in touch. You can email us: news@the-archer.co.uk; telephone for free and leave a message on **0800 612 0748** or write to **The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE**.

Useful contacts

N2United

Up-to-date advice and links to useful local resources are available online at n2united.co.uk/covid19.

Senior citizens help and advice

Age UK Barnet 020 8203 5040 or info@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Hospitals

NHS 111

Barnet General 020 8216 4000
Edgware General 020 8952 2381
Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500

Royal Free 020 7794 0500

Whittington 020 7272 3070

Please note: paediatric A&E is only available at Royal Free and Whittington hospitals.

Help groups

Volunteer groups

East Finchley has its own Covid 19 Volunteer Response Group, with about 500 volunteers ready to help people in need.

They are able to assist with shopping, picking up prescriptions from pharmacies, dog walking and phone or calls to people who are lonely.

You can contact them on 0843 886 5900, email efcovid@gmail.com or join www.facebook.com/groups/EastFinchleyCOVID19.

There is also help available via mutualaid.co.uk, where you can search for your nearest volunteer groups.

Age UK

Age UK Barnet is working to help all older people who are in need. They aim to help with delivering cooked meals, admin tasks such as setting up prescriptions that can be delivered to the door, fitting light bulbs, regular chats over the phone to beat isolation, and activity packs including magazines, puzzle books and craft supplies.

Get in touch if you or anyone you know is self-isolating and might need some help. Email

info@ageukbarnet.org.uk or phone 020 8203 5040.

Appeals

Age UK Barnet is appealing for donations of tins, rice, pasta and other non-perishable items to help vulnerable elderly people who are unable to leave their homes. They can be dropped at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT, between 10am and 4pm from Monday to Friday.

Finchley Foodbank is appealing for donations of tins, packets, biscuits, soups and any packaged food to help individuals and families on low or zero incomes. Soap, shower gel and bathroom items are also welcome. They can be dropped directly to the Foodbank in the church hall behind St Mary's at 279 High Road, N2 8HG, on Fridays from 12pm to 3pm.

Shopping

Most of our local food stores and newsagents are remaining open. Please shop with them to keep them in business. Here are some special notices:

Budgens has offered help with shopping to anyone aged over 65 or in an at-risk group. Anyone in those categories who has to self-isolate will be able to order by phone or email and the store will do its best to deliver up to any value and free of charge. Details available from cashiers in store, email budgenseastfinchley@gmail.com or phone 020 8883 9670. Free delivery is available to anybody within one mile of the store via Appy Shop.

Dan & DeCarlo is operating as a food store offering everyday essentials, some of which will be stocked and some available for pre-order. Check their website for details: dananddecarlo.co.uk

Iceland is reserving 9am to 11am every Wednesday morning for anyone of pension age or in a vulnerable group to do their shopping.

Margot Bakery, East End Road, N2, is taking orders for bread to be collected from its doorway counter, and other items may be available in the shop. Details at margotbakery.co.uk.

Tony's Continental, High Road, N2, is trading as normal but has adjusted its opening hours to give staff a break and to restock. Check in store for details.

UOE (Post Office) will remain open throughout the crisis.

Services that will continue to be available include cash, energy top-ups, banking and regular mail services. Opening times are subject to change. Please check in store.



Rainbows to be treasured

Children have been busy drawing and painting hundreds of rainbows and displaying them in their front windows for others to spot when they are out taking exercise.

The Rainbow Trail has become a phenomenon in villages, towns and cities around the world during the pandemic. Thanks to *Archer* photographer Mike Coles for collecting this colourful montage from around East Finchley, including some heartfelt messages to everyone working in the NHS.

Customers are asked to queue at least 2m apart outside the store to avoid having too many people inside.

Restaurants and cafes

Restaurants, cafés and pubs are closed to diners but some are still offering takeaway services at their premises, along with home delivery via apps like JustEat, Deliveroo and Uber Eats. Please support our local food and drink providers whenever you can.

This is not a complete list. Check your favourite restaurant for details. All information correct at time of going to press. Let us know if there are any services we can add to this list by emailing: news@the-archer.co.uk
Amici Delicatessen, 78 High Road, N2: Takeaway deli food and grocery items available in store.
Bangkok Lounge, 138 High Road, N2: Takeaway and delivery service available www.bangkok-lounge-finchley.co.uk

Campbell & Syme, 9 Fortis Green, N2: Order freshly roasted coffee, and teas and chocolates for delivery in East Finchley via www.campbellandsyme.co.uk

Coffee Bank, 85 High Road, N2: Open every day from 9am to 3pm for takeaways and collections. You can pre-order by calling the café on 07514 114374; www.coffee-bank.co.uk.

Indian Rasoi, Denmark Terrace, Fortis Green, N2: Takeaway and delivery available: www.india-rasoi.co.uk, 020 883 9093.
In-Out Pizza, 205 High Road,

N2: Takeaway available and delivery via JustEat. Telephone: 020 8442 0999

Majjo's, 1 Fortis Green, N2: Phone orders and phone payments only on 020 8883 4357, for collection only. Closed Mondays.

New Local Café, 42 High Road, N2: Takeaway service available, and deliveries via Uber Eats or www.new-local-cafe.business.site

Poseidon Fish Restaurant, 102 High Road, N2: Takeaway available and delivery service via Deliveroo and JustEat.

Shahi Pakwaan, 25 Aylmer Parade, N2: Takeaway and delivery. www.shahipakwaan.co.uk, 020 8341 1111.

Yasar Halim Patisserie, 125 High Road, N2: Takeaway only from the counter.

Food ideas

East Finchley resident Allison Goodings has a collection of more than 250 cookbooks and has catalogued recipes so it is easy for her to find something with a limited list of ingredients. Allison is offering free help to anyone looking to cook something using what they have at home. She is able to offer advice on dishes that keep well, things to freeze and simple recipe ideas to get you through a couple of weeks at home. Get in touch with her via email at: WhatCanICook-WithThis@gmail.com

Getting out

Cherry Tree Wood, Highgate Woods, Queens Wood, Coldfall Woods, Muswell Hill Playing Fields, Coppetts Wood, Big Wood, Lyttelton Playing Fields, Hampstead Heath, the Heath extension and Waterlow Park are all open as normal and are ideal places for daily exercise, though all their cafes, playgrounds are toilets are closed.

East Finchley's two cemeteries on the High Road and East End Road are open again and are spacious and peaceful places to take a walk.

Parkland Walk stretching down the former railway track from Highgate to Finsbury Park also provides a pleasant stroll or run. Long Lane Pasture nature reserve, opposite the fire station in Long Lane, will be open from around 10am to dusk every day.

Alexandra Park is open although several areas, including the boating lake, have been closed off. Stephens House and Gardens in Finchley is closed to the public.

Please remember to keep your distance from other people who are out and about. Gatherings are not permitted.

Holy Trinity Parish Church 67 Church Lane, N2 0TH

At anxious times we endeavour to be a beacon of faith, hope and love in East Finchley. While public worship is suspended, we continue to earnestly keep you, our community, our nation and the world in our prayers. If you would like to send us prayer requests, please contact us via our website:

www.holytrinityeastfinchley.org.uk

For more information please contact us at:

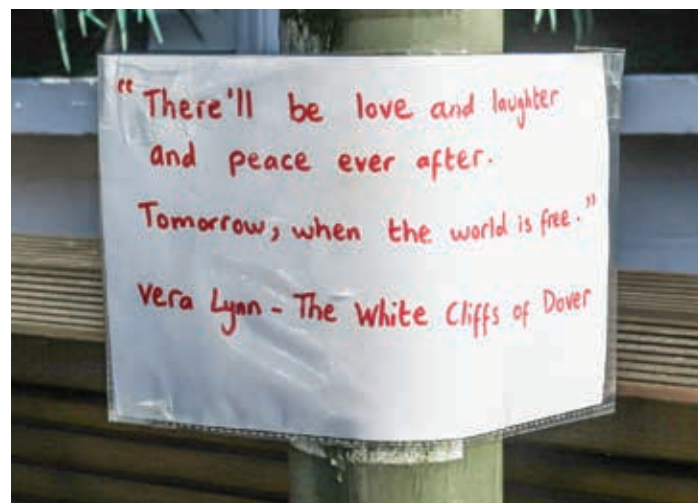
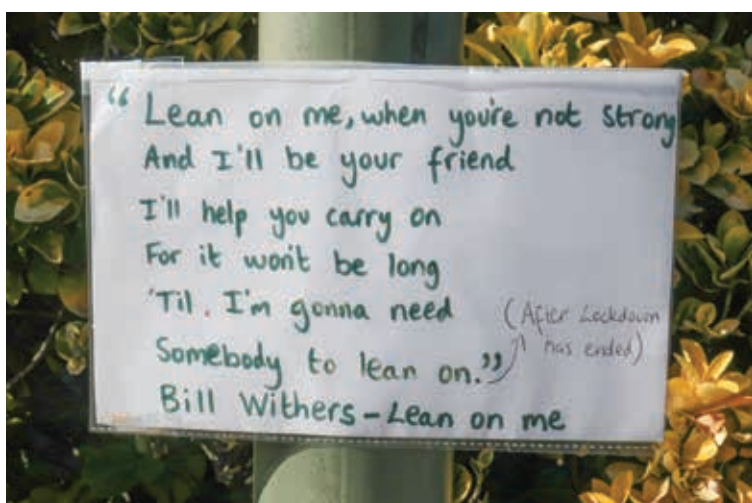
Email: marius.mirt@htef.org.uk

Tel: 202 3565 4430

East Finchley Baptist Church

Due to the Covid-19 virus our face to face services and meetings have been suspended until further notice but please go to our website for details of online services and meetings.

For more information please contact the Church Office
Email: office@eastfinchleybc.org.uk
www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk



Lamppost lyrics are signs of hope in days of darkness

Comforting and inspiring lyrics taken from songs of hope by Bob Marley, Bill Withers and The Beatles have graced lampposts in Kitchener Road during the virus lockdown. The handwritten notes appeared overnight and have been giving a little fillip to anyone passing by.

In a time when we are all counting our blessings, perhaps the most poignant words come from the Bob Thiele and George David Weiss song made famous by Louis Armstrong: "I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom, for me and you. And I think to myself, what a wonderful world."



Special delivery: Staff at North Middlesex Hospital welcome the BuFi supplies with open arms.

Comfort food on the frontline

The owners and staff at BuFi restaurant on the corner of the High Road and Fortis Green made their own contribution to the battle against coronavirus by delivering pizzas and pasta to NHS medical teams at the North Middlesex Hospital.



Fill her up: Pizzas and pasta crowd the boot of a BuFi team member's car.

They loaded up a car boot with fresh pizzas and dozens of dishes in tubs and handed them over at the entrance to the hospital in Edmonton. BuFi's Antonio Razzano said: "It was such a pleasure to do our bit for the heroes working on the frontline."

Charity seeks home

Charity Breaking Barriers is searching for a building in north London that could help it host its vital work supporting refugees to find employment. The unemployment rate for refugees is four times higher than the national average.

Refugees face a number of barriers to finding employment, including large gaps on their CVs due to long asylum processes, lack of understanding of the UK job market, employer perceptions of hiring refugees, and insufficient English language skills.

Breaking Barriers is seeking a space with IT and childcare facilities with good transport links nearby. You can find out more and help by donating here: www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/breakingbarriers

Delicatessen team raises funds for Whittington Hospital

As well as remaining open and giving great service to the public, Amici Delicatessen at 78 High Road has been raising funds for a local hospital. Owner Maurizio Businaro and his staff collected £500 which was donated to the Whittington Hospital. Maurizio told *The Archer* he chose the Whittington because his three children Simona, Lara and Luca were born there and so was his grandson Jackson.



Marco, Larissa, Maurizio at Amici Delicatessen. Photo Mike Coles

Be our eyes and ears

The Archer has been going strong for over 25 years thanks to the loyalty and support of its readers and advertisers, and the volunteers who deliver it to nearly 10,000 premises each month.

Remember, it's your newspaper, and we rely on you to tell us what's going on in and around East Finchley. So if you have a story that you'd like others to know about, please get in touch. You can send your stories, letters, and photos by email

to news@the-archer.co.uk or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

Find us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @TheArcherN2. You can also find out more about contributing and advertising on our website at www.the-archer.co.uk.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Hand-drawn: Some of the cards made by Martin Primary School kids for elderly people in local care homes,

Cards that say so much

Children at Martin Primary School sent out messages of love and hope to the older generations by designing cards and filling them with heartfelt messages. Nalia wrote: "I hope this message will lighten up your heart... You are not alone, you have Martin Primary on your side" and Clara wrote: "Stay Strong, Fit and Happy." The cards were delivered to elderly people in local care homes just before the schools closed down in March.

Goggles and gloves for a good cause

The Archer Academy in East Finchley has donated every single pair of its science goggles and disposable gloves to the NHS frontline to help with the response to Covid-19. This amounted to about 250 pairs in total which were given to local GP surgeries to distribute where needed.



Asterix v Coronavirus

By Daphne Chamberlain

Fans of the French comic book hero Asterix will know that all the Gauls' names ended in -ix and the Romans' in -us. So, remembering that the stories parody current people and events, can you guess the name of a masked charioteer defeated by Asterix and Obelix in one of their more recent stories?

Yes, none other than Coronavirus. We were reminded of this in a recent obituary of Albert Uderzo, who illustrated Rene Goscinny's original Asterix books. They were translated into 111 languages and dialects, and sold around 380 million copies.

Neither Uderzo nor Goscinny, who died many years ago, was involved in the creation of the later books in the series. *Asterix and the Chariot Race*,

which features the character of Coronavirus, was published in 2017, which has given rise to some conspiracy theories, but it's worth recalling that Covid 19 is the latest in a series of coronaviruses.

An interesting thing about Uderzo is that he was born with six fingers on each hand. Even after they were removed, he held a pencil between his third and fourth fingers.

Family project fuels a love of reading

By David Melsome

Martin Primary School has successfully seen its first cohort of children, parents and carers through a six-week course that aims to encourage a life-long love of reading. The East Finchley school was given a grant by the Grange Big Local organization to develop its version of the Early Words Together project, created by the National Literacy Trust and aimed at children in nursery and reception.

Each session introduces a story of the week with a song related to the theme of the book. The whole group shares the story and then parents and children all take part in a creative activity like making treasure chests for a character called Pirate Frank and a telescope for Timothy Pope.

Teacher Julie Taylor, who led the course with nursery

teacher Sharon Brosnan, said: "This programme is particularly beneficial to children and parents for whom English is an additional language. Attendance was excellent and parents spoke highly of the programme. It has definitely encouraged more reading at home." Martin Primary is hoping to run a second course when normal school times return.



Early readers: Children proudly show the treasure chests they made from the Pirate Frank story.

Stay home and stay fit

Schools may be temporarily closed during the virus lockdown but while their buildings may be shut, PE staff at the Archer Academy in East Finchley are still keeping students active.

Each day a different teacher is posting a fitness exercise and asking students, parents and anyone else who is up for the challenge to give it a go. The Archer Daily Challenge will continue every day while the school community remains at home. Anyone can get involved on Instagram @archeracademy.



Staying active: PE teacher Miss Le gives an online lesson

Ideas for life in lockdown

Have you made anything creative while you're staying at home? Send us photos and details and we'll print the best. Email: news@the-archer.co.uk

Try our 50-word challenge

This challenge is for everyone, young and old.

Can you write a short story in 50 words or less? Impossible, you say. Not quite, but it's not easy. Stay indoors and exercise your brain cells by trying to write your own mini-masterpiece.

Enjoy these examples below, then pen your own 50-word story and email it to us at: news@the-archer.co.uk, or post it to 50-Word Story, The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE, by Friday 15 May. We'll print the best ones we receive in next month's edition.

Forgive me, Father

By Diana Cormack

"You can burn this," ordered Maud, thrusting their daughter's letter towards her husband. Derek continued poking the fire. "But she wrote it to me and I want to see her," he replied. "Over my dead body!" Maud snapped. "That can be arranged," whispered Derek, raising the poker above his head.

Elsewhere in the Universe

By Phin Foster

The stricken spaceship's captain addressed his crew: "Our engines have failed, our shields are down and our oxygen's low. If we don't move, we'll be sucked to our deaths in the nearest sun." The chief engineer radioed in: "All fixed now, sir." "Oh," said the captain. "Carry on, everyone."

A Shark's Tale

By John Boyd

It was a balmy tropics morning. The swimmer rolled onto his stomach, his limbs moving gracefully, powerfully. Thirty feet below the great white shark rolled onto his back. His tail moving gracefully, powerfully. Ascending. As each saw the other, their hearts raced, but only the shark grinned.

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Rough sleepers found homes within a week

By Janet Maitland

It has taken Barnet Council just a week to house almost all of the borough's rough sleepers. This remarkable feat was in response to a government request at the end of March giving councils 48 hours to house everyone sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for people in hostels and night shelters in order to stop the spread of Covid-19.

"These are unusual times, so I'm asking for an unusual effort," said Dame Louise Casey, who leads the government's response to Covid-19 and rough sleeping. "This is a public health emergency."

Studio flats found

A Barnet Homes spokesperson said that, as of 7 April, they had housed 88 rough sleepers. Ten people refused offers of accommodation, but the organisation was continuing to work with them to ensure their health and safety.

The Archer asked where and how people had been housed. The spokesperson told us: "They're in self-contained studio flats in a range of locations in Barnet and neighbouring boroughs, sourced by our temporary accommodation providers who procure properties via private sector landlords. We have not currently placed rough sleepers into social housing, bed and breakfasts or hotels."

Funding and the future

The government request to house rough sleepers was

unfunded, but councils were referred to the allocation of £1.6bn allocated to local authorities to help them respond to Covid-19.

Before the crisis, Barnet Homes was given £637,000 by the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government to help reduce the number of people having to sleep on the streets. They had planned to spend it on refurbishing a hostel in Friern Barnet Road to create a "safe place to stay hub". It is not known if these plans will now change.

"We need to see a package of support so that when the outbreak subsides, people do not return to the streets," said Jon Sparkes, the chief executive of the homeless charity Crisis.

Matthew Downie, the charity's director of policy, added: "We should recognise that it has taken a global pandemic to sort out an absolutely solvable problem; it is possible to get thousands of people off the streets and out of night shelters in the space of a week."

True tales of toilet roll troubles

By Diana Cormack

The recent run on toilet rolls in shops is over, we hope, though it did cause some to think of a replacement for this much-needed cleansing material, evidenced by initial reports of sewage pipes being blocked by kitchen roll, wet wipes and newspaper.

It reminded me of childhood days staying with my grandparents at their remote home in west Wales. Their toilet or 'ty bach' (little house) was situated in a far corner of the back garden and was not a pleasant place to go to at night. Nor in the daytime either, for with no running water any flushing was done by carrying buckets from the water butts to do the job. Instead of toilet paper there were hanging pieces of printed paper, always the *Radio Times*. I've never worked out why.

Nor was there much comfort at home for our nether regions. Hard, non-absorbent paper was the norm, with our mother preferring Bronco or Izal and, even years later when softer paper was readily available, she had one of each on the go. Izal made good tracing paper and I also remember having a note from a friend written on royal toilet paper after she'd attended a Buckingham Palace garden party.

Could class be reflected in the quality of toilet paper, then?



Some time later I decided to investigate this at County Hall, formerly the headquarters of the Greater London Council and Inner London Education Authority. After a request for soft toilet paper in our school's staff toilets was refused because "you ladies will use it to wipe off your makeup" I visited the loos on each floor of the building. I found that the higher you went, the better the quality of paper.

Another eye opener was during a 1970s shortage. I was visiting a French friend who was lodging with a peer of the realm. The walls of his lordship's bathroom were lined from top to bottom with toilet rolls. Come to think of it, that could probably be the case in many homes today!



Moving on: Onur Erden, centre, and family say goodbye to their East Finchley store.

Goodbye to popular corner shop owners after 13 years

The Archer team is sorry to say goodbye to one of the hardworking families whose food store has stayed open since the start of the coronavirus lockdown. Their business, however, is still very much up and running, under new management.

Onur Erden and his family have run the Onur grocery and off licence on the corner of the High Road and Creighton Avenue for 13 years. Their friendliness and well-stocked shelves have made their store a popular place to shop for residents all around and for families on their way home from Martin Primary School.

Onur said their decision to move on had come after many months of planning and they hoped to return to their wider family in Istanbul. He said: "East Finchley has been very kind to us over the years and will always be a special place for me. We didn't get a chance to say goodbye to some of the locals today so I hope this will reach those of you who wonder where we've gone. Stay safe and well."

After just one day's closure the store reopened and is now run by Erkan Soylari, a close friend of Onur's, who told *The Archer*: "We're looking forward to being here." At present he and his family live elsewhere in north London but he is considering moving closer and perhaps living 'above the shop'.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Ferrari farrago

Welcome to the world of burning rubber as Formula One prepares for another season of whining drivers, wailing engines and over-excited commentators. It will be delayed by the pandemic but when it does kick off it will be the 71st time that a team from a small town in Northern Italy, Triesto, wins. The thing is, Ferrari may be the most famous name in motor racing but that doesn't mean they are the best.

They may have been around since the whole circus kicked off in 1950, but they have rarely been the super charismatic model of efficiency. A lot of the time they've been hopeless. Some years they have just made up the numbers.

Enzo Ferrari is spoken of in hushed tones as if he was some minor demigod, who created the greatest and best team. He wasn't and he didn't. He flunked his engineering course and spent the First World War shoeing mules. In the 1920s he hung around with racing drivers, becoming almost good at driving himself. For winning one minor race in 1924 Fascist Italy gave him the title of *Commendatore*, a bit like awarding a knighthood for winning the Leyland Paints Cup.

Once he'd stopped driving he managed Alfa Romeo's team and in 1948 set up his own company which he ran like a medieval court complete with backstabbing and petty politics. Yes, he was pretty successful, picking up four championships in the 1950s, but once British companies like Lotus and Cooper got going he couldn't compete.

Apart from John Surtees in 1964 Ferrari did not win a world championship until Niki Lauda arrived in the mid-1970s. From 1979 to 2000 Ferrari often made up the numbers. Usually the problem wasn't the drivers; it was the team, the cars and a big dose of Italian incompetence.

At Red Bull Sebastian Vettel could do no wrong, at Ferrari he can do no right as he heads down that usual route for Ferrari drivers of the career graveyard. And even though they are claimed to be the most Italian of teams, the last time an Italian won the World Championship in a Ferrari was 1953. Somehow it doesn't seem right that they get bunged extra cash for having been around longer than everyone else. It's a bit like chucking extra money at Arsenal for having been in football's top flight since 1918.

Maybe that's why Lewis Hamilton isn't driving for them; maybe he's got more sense and maybe he just likes beating those blood-red cars. And maybe the suspension of motor racing until later in the year will enable Ferrari to get their act together. Just don't count on it.



Mountain river: Maureen and her sister explore the water running down from the Swartburg Pass.



Natural wonder: Maureen Delandro arrives at the Goukamma reserve

A stunning holiday... then one of the last flights home

Maureen Delandro, of Brighton Road, N2, took The Archer with her on a recent trip to South Africa and here she recalls how she managed to return just one step ahead of the coronavirus lockdown.

In March, my sister Kathleen and I visited our other sister Sheila in South Africa. Our first week on arrival was spent in Goukamma, a nature reserve and marine protected area situated on the Cape's Garden Route. This is a coastal dune forest area consisting of dense thickets of milkwood, yellowwood and candlewood trees on either bank of the Goukamma river.

Hiring canoes we journeyed upriver, seeing iridescent kingfishers and swimming in the warm Coca Cola-coloured river. Giant otters, porcupines and vervet monkeys also inhabit this beautiful reserve.

Week two was spent in Prince Albert where my sister lives. We drove through the dramatic Swartburg mountain

pass, the heat increasing as we journeyed inland. Prince Albert is a town famous for its artists, my sister, her husband and son among them.

The coronavirus crept into the area whilst we were there, closing cafés, restaurants and galleries. We managed to catch our flight from Cape Town, with 500+ people on the plane, elbow to elbow, nobody looking up!

Being quarantined on my return to the UK I have not been able to visit Long Lane Pasture at the northern end of East Finchley, where I am a volunteer. I do hear that frogspawn fills the ponds and a lovely variety of birds and butterflies inhabit the blossoming trees. I am looking forward to connecting again with this, our own beautiful local reserve.

Jennifer Bate

11 November 1944 –
25 March 2020

By Geoffrey Hanson, director of the East Finchley Arts Festival

With the passing of Jennifer Bate, the world of music has lost an internationally famous organist and recording artist, who travelled the world giving acclaimed recitals. Equally in demand at home, she performed on several occasions at the BBC Proms, and at a long list of venues across the country.



Organist Jennifer Bate

Seminal in her career was her meeting with the French organist composer Olivier Messiaen, who came to hear her play on the organ at St James's, Muswell Hill, in 1987. Messiaen was so impressed by her playing and her interpretation of his music that a rapport grew up between them. She was to make recordings of his music which have become recognised as authoritative.

Yet her roots were here in North London. Her father Horace Bate was organist at St James's for 54 years, and she continued to live locally throughout her career.

She was active in the com-

munity, heading a fund-raising campaign to restore the Muswell Hill organ, whilst attending All Saints', East Finchley, which she regarded as "my church".

She took part in many East Finchley Arts Festivals at that same venue, opening the first in 1997, and it was typical of her that one of her last recitals should be in aid of All Saints' recent roof appeal.

Her talent and achievements were variously recognised by the award of the OBE, and by France making her Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. The University of Bristol, where she had been a student, awarded

her an honorary Doctorate of Music.

It was late in the 1960s when I first met her, and thereafter our friendship blossomed. As a person and as a musician, it was her integrity that marked her out. Always supportive, she gave of her time and talent to the Arts Festivals on many occasions: events which remain in the memory, always without fee.

She frequently accompanied the annual All Souls' Day performance of the Fauré requiem at All Saints', once hurrying back from abroad to do so. We remember her with affection and gratitude.

Fear, loss and families separated... then joy that it was all over

Celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8 May will be a little muted while the lockdown persists but that doesn't stop the wartime memories being as strong as ever. Here, two Archer readers share theirs.

Vivien Mallindine writes: I went to a convent school in Muswell Hill during the war years and usually cycled. On the 8th May we all decorated our bikes with red, white and blue ribbons to celebrate VE Day. That evening I went up to London with my parents and it was wonderful. I had not seen such crowds before. We stood outside Buckingham Palace and saw the Royal family come out on the balcony. I was a Cadet in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and during the summer holidays we used to spend a fortnight working on a farm in Dorset. We slept in tents which was fun if it did not rain too much. We mainly picked potatoes but also helped with the harvest. For some, whose fathers were away, this was a holiday and something to look forward to away from the bombing. While there we heard about the surrender of Japan and the war was over! The gentleman farmer hired a coach and took us all to Weymouth for the day to celebrate.

Jeanne Wray writes: Being the eldest child I had always felt quite responsible for my younger

sister and baby brother. When war was imminent in 1939 I was eight years old and remember the windows being shuttered and a barrage balloon installed in the playground of our infant school in Crouch End, as well as gas mask practice.

The day before war was declared we children were evacuated with our mothers and teachers to a village in Sandy, Bedfordshire, travelling by train from Hornsey Station. It was quite a frightening experience as we stood in a circle when we arrived and were told to go into a van which I thought was to do with gas. In fact it was to collect 'bully beef' and various rations to give to our hosts where we were to be billeted.

We only stayed for a few months. We didn't eat with our hosts as the wife was not used to children but her husband was very kind and showed us the contents of his market garden with fruit, veg and flowers plus a horse in a stable and chickens. He also had a ferret which was quite frightening but they did not have any children of their own.

We finally returned home but unfortunately the Battle of Britain started soon after so we

had to sleep downstairs in our Nan's flat. The bombers arrived every night at about six o'clock and sirens were blaring. My Mum, sister and baby brother slept downstairs in the cellar wrapped in thermal wadding to avoid chest problems and I slept in a big bed near my Nan and Dad.

One night the air raid wardens alerted us that we had had an incendiary bomb on our top floor bedroom. All our belongings were destroyed including dresses that our Mum made for both herself and we children to join the school's dancing and drama classes. From then on and even until the present day I felt a great sadness about all our new interests being bombed out of existence.

After this episode my Dad decided that we ought to move away again from London. We found rented accommodation in a Norfolk village whilst my Dad stayed in London to do firewatching and keep his job in the City. I never forgot, however, the stonework image of the Morse code for V for Victory which was plastered on some walls next to my school in Crouch End and I will remain a patriot all my life.



How to look after your well-being during the pandemic

Local psychotherapist Chai-Yoel Korn provides five steps to help you look after your well-being, based on research by the New Economics Foundation as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing.

Usually we tell clients not to self-isolate as loneliness and isolation can lead to poorer health and emotional well-being. At this time, however, the healthy option is to stay home and isolate. This time allows us to take a breath and develop coping mechanisms to deal with daily life better during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Connect:

- Reach out to your neighbour, family and friends.
- Speak to someone who is single, prioritising the ageing or those who have to self-isolate due to a medical condition.

Be active:

- Exercise for at least 15 – 30 minutes a day. This could be as simple as using two heavy tins from your larder to exercise to tone your arm muscles or choosing to climb the stairs more often.
- If you are privileged to have a garden, walk around it and notice the sky, plants or flowers and the ground. This will help you tune in to your breathing.

Take notice:

- Take a three-minute breathing space, build an awareness of thoughts, feelings and the sensations in your body. Focus attention on your breath and then expand your awareness to your whole body. Once you

have taken the three-minute space turn your attention to your next activity.

Learn:

- Read a new book, do a crossword or learn a new language.
- Set goals for what you would like to achieve when life returns to normal.
- Limit the amount of news you are watching.

Give:

- Be active in your community. Perhaps volunteer as a first responder if you have those skills.
- Write 5 things that you are grateful for at the beginning and end of each day.
- Smile more and remember to laugh at the small simple things in life.

If you need emotional well-being support, there is plenty of information online and my door is always open to offer one-to-one emotional support at this time. Please find me at <https://joelkornpsychotherapy.co.uk>



Yikes! Ghost seen hovering over the High Road

When Archer reader David Holt was walking home after dark last month, he glanced up and saw this ghost-like apparition hovering in one of the large trees along the High Road. By day, it's a plastic sheet that has been trapped in the branches opposite the end of Bedford Road for many months. But by night, with arms spread wide and what looks like a face, it's enough to give anyone the creeps.

Letters



Signs of hope: Elm flowers on Hampstead Heath. Photo Linda Dolata.

Comeback for the elm? Dear Editor,

As most people know, we lost most of our native elms (*Ulmus procera*) to Dutch Elm Disease decades ago, and these beautiful big trees, once so common in our fields, woods and hedgerows were rarely to be seen.

Elms were usually planted as cuttings, as they form suckers easily, and this meant that they tended to be clones, with the same genetic makeup, which is why they were all so susceptible to the disease. The disease attacks mature elms, so the suckers often survive until they develop proper bark as they mature.

There are elm 'shrubs' all over the place, lots on Hampstead Heath for example, but no mature trees as such. This morning I noticed elm flowers for the second time in a couple of days, pictured.

I last noticed these as a child in the 1960s. This means that some of the remnant plants are reaching maturity, even if they are still not spectacular trees. If they are flowering, then presumably they are also producing seed later in the year, and if they are seeding, then there is new genetic information in any subsequent seedlings.

I am happy to be corrected, or to explain the science further if anyone is interested, but I think we are seeing the recovery, albeit slowly, of the English elm.

Linda Dolata
Leopold Road, N2.

Gratitude of fire family Dear Editor,

You reported the fire at our home in Park Hall Road in your last edition. We would first like to offer our thanks to the London Fire Brigade who were magnificent. We are very grateful that they saved many of our possessions and protected our neighbours' properties.

Despite these difficult times our friends and neighbours demonstrated how generous people can be. While trying to observe 'social distancing' our neighbours offered comfort and reassurance, bringing blankets and a much-needed mug of tea while the fire burned.

Friends gave us hot dinners, washed clothes, brought sturdy boxes to move our salvaged belongings, donated clothing for my daughter, lodged our tortoise, and sent us flowers, chocolate, and wine. Most generously, one family even let us use their house overnight.

Many other small kindnesses, despite the difficulties of lockdown, remind us that the community spirit is thriving in East Finchley.

We would like to thank each and every one of you who made such a difficult experience easier to cope with.

We are now settled in our temporary home and looking forward to meeting our new neighbours once lockdown ends.

The Tomlin Family,
Hertford Road, N2.

Distance running

Dear Editor,

Paris only allows jogging before 10am and after 7pm at night "when the streets are generally at their quietest". Exercising between those hours is now forbidden. "Going for a run is good for the health, but not so good for lockdown," Hidalgo told *France Info*.

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

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.

"There are too many people out at the same time and too many joggers at peak times. Nothing is perfect: the aim is to limit risks by limiting overcrowding rather than a general ban."

The rules apply only to people jogging or taking other exercise, not to dog walkers or people taking a short walk with members of their household.

In our area please could joggers and cyclists consider using the empty roads and not narrow park paths and alleys?

Brian Ingram
By email

Three cheers

Dear Editor,

When all around us free newspapers have stopped publishing, three cheers for *The Archer*... now available in local supermarkets.

Barry H White,
Fordington Road, N6.

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



Take joy where we can find it

By Lottie Millett

"We need to live, not merely exist." I found myself typing these words to my mum as she spoke about the mix of guilt and relief she felt for leaving Easter Eggs outside my sister's house. She runs a group at her local chapel, for children in the village where I grew up, and had planned to give these out at their last group before the Easter holidays.

A few days earlier my mum had messaged my sister and me asking for advice on how and if she should distribute them. My sister offered to post on the local Facebook group to let people know where they would be, and also reminding people to obey social distancing rules, and only touch the one they would be taking.

All seemed pretty sensible to me. And yet my mum was left with a sense of guilt that she had made a 'non-essential' journey. I've thought about this instruction, and how the lack of clarity about what precisely qualifies as 'essential' leaves the onus on us to decide.

Trips to get food, medication, to help the vulnerable, to go to work if a keyworker, to exercise. These things are stated as essential. It seems that the (perhaps not so) implicit message is that going out for any other reason means that you are flouting your civic duty, and in so doing endangering not just yourself but everyone else.

What about all the rest of it? Is it not also essential to have means with which you can occupy yourself? Seeds and compost to plant if you're lucky enough to have a garden, those mini eggs to decorate the chocolate nest cakes you make every year, that bottle of cider that tastes sweeter than ever, to drink in the sunshine, maybe even for a moment allowing yourself to believe that things are normal.

I am not encouraging people to irresponsibly disregard the governmental advice we receive. Nor am I wanting to endorse recklessly endangering the shop assistants and delivery drivers, who check out our items and deliver our goods. We must of course do our utmost to protect them, and all of us.

However, in a time when life and death feel ever present, I wonder if we might also pursue joy and life, wherever and however, we can find it.

