



Helping hand: Laura Roberts delivers laptops to Cathy du Vergier and Tristan Green at Martin Primary.  
Photo Mike Coles

## Laptop scheme helps children learning at home

By David Gritten

**The latest lockdown, with entire families now staying home, has thrown up several unforeseen problems, including the needs of children to do school work effectively.**

With this in mind, East Finchley resident Laura Roberts has set up a scheme called

Laptops For Lockdown, asking local people to donate unwanted laptops and tablets that children could use for their home schooling.

"Some families might have four or five children and only one of two devices to share between them," she observes. "So their education may be suffering at a time when they need it the most."

Laura has contacted Martin School, near her home, and has already started sending devices

there, to pass on to pupils. She is also in touch with the Archer Academy and Bishop Douglass School.

She first heard about problems being faced by homebound children on BBC Radio. "A headteacher was saying she knew of families with four or five children and only one device. All the kids had to share it

and maybe that laptop also had to help a parent work from home.

"I thought, even in my road, I'm sure there are spare laptops knocking about in cupboards or the bottoms of drawers, not being used. It seemed to me it would be good to unite them with children and young people who needed them."

### Tech help needed

Having now identified a

need, Laura also wants to contact locals with some technical knowledge: "Anyone who can fix broken screens, someone who could reset laptops. That would be very helpful."

Laura can be reached at [laptopsforlockdown@gmail.com](mailto:laptopsforlockdown@gmail.com). She also has a website: [laptopsforlockdown.com](http://laptopsforlockdown.com).

## N2United: How to build a place to live and work in

By Charles Haydn

**In the January edition of *The Archer*, N2United, the community and business network for the area, reflected on how the East Finchley community and particularly many of its businesses had come together to provide much needed support during the times of lockdown.**

Their January meeting focused on ideas about how to maintain the positives of this period and make an already strong community better. Guest speaker was Roger Chapman, an influential voice in the community helping to run the East Finchley Festival for more than 35 years until stepping down in 2018 and now a driving force among the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood. He talked about the importance of community planning to help create the best environment to live and work in.

### Looking forward

Underlined by the recent frustration felt by many about the cycle lanes and the lack of consultation before implementation, Roger pointed out that even without Covid-19 and the new way people are working, more people will move into the N2 area given the hundreds of homes under development. Therefore due consideration

should be given to where we want to be in one, five and 10 years' time either from the point of view of an individual, business or organisation.

The meeting also included updates from the Food Project and Tarling Road Community Hub, as well as consideration of existing community ideas like a local loyalty card and a way to improve our daily walks. Businesses will be pleased to hear the popular N2Unique campaign will be extended to include the cafes, restaurants and takeaways currently open.

Full details of the meeting can be found at [n2united.co.uk](http://n2united.co.uk) and the next will be on Thursday 11 February, again open to everyone to help, as Roger suggested, "identify the dots and join them together" underpinned by a collaborative and mutually supportive plan. To share your ideas or to help select the next showcased business, email [change@n2united.co.uk](mailto:change@n2united.co.uk).

## House holds a place in history

By Ivor Gaber

**'A.J.P. Taylor, 1906-1990, Historian and Broadcaster lived here' reads the plaque on the neat semi-detached house on Fordington Road, N6, just adjacent to Cherry Tree Wood.**

Alan Taylor was one of Britain's most famous historians, and indisputably the first-ever 'telly don', a breed now made famous by the likes of Simon Schama, Mary Beard and Lucy Worsley.

Back in the Fifties, in the days of black and white telly, Taylor would just stand in front of the camera and talk for an hour. No pictures, interviews or videos were needed to illustrate his spellbinding talks.

Between 1955 and 1964, Taylor lived in Fordington Road with his second wife Eve, the sister of the Labour politician Anthony Crosland.



Remembered: The house bearing the AJP Taylor plaque, left



And it was in this house that Taylor wrote some of his most

well-known books, including probably his most famous and certainly his most controversial work *The Origins of the Second World War*.

Taylor's life was filled with controversy and contradiction. A left-winger and founder of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he was nevertheless devoted to the right-wing press baron Lord Beaverbrook. He had great spats with many of his contemporaries, most notably

Sir Hugh Trevor Roper, and that was perhaps why Oxford never made the 'telly don' a real don.

But as the blue plaque in Fordington Road reminds us, for all the contradictions Taylor, or AJP as he was known, was a great English radical and historian.

*Are there other blue plaques in the area? Let us know by emailing [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or leaving a message on our Freephone number 0800 612 0748.*

## Cemetery collision

**A vehicle crash caused serious damage to one of the historic stone walls outside the gates of the Islington and St Pancras Cemetery on the High Road, N2, last month. Several blocks of stone were destroyed and vehicle debris was left along the pavement and gutter in the collision, thought to have happened around 6am.**

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