

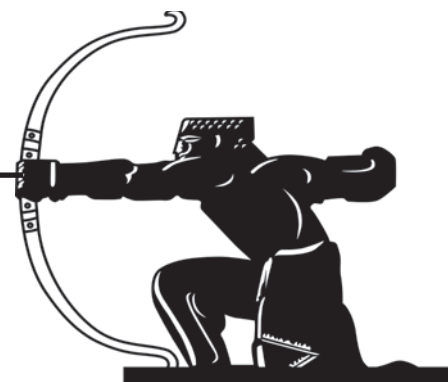


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# The Archer

Local News is our Aim



March 2021 No. 323

**A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.**

## Festival is cancelled for second year

By John Lawrence

**East Finchley's massively popular mid-summer festival, which usually brings thousands of people flocking to Cherry Tree Wood in June, has been called off for the second year in a row.**

The team of volunteers behind the festival said they had come to the decision "with regret", having been forced to cancel last year's event too as the pandemic took hold.

Early conversations had taken place last year about whether it was feasible to go ahead in June 2021, but the long lockdown over the winter and the emergence of the new strain of the virus were knockbacks.

festival team was celebrating after months of hard work and generous donations from the public helped them reach their £8,000 fundraising target for staging last year's event. Just days later, the nationwide lockdown was imposed, and East Finchley's Festival became one of thousands of summer gatherings to be scrapped.

This will be the first time in the festival's almost 50-year



Highlight of the summer: East Finchley Festival

### Timing and health risks

The festival takes several months to organise and, as the East Finchley Festival CIC team reached the end of January, with Barnet Council still not in a position to make a decision about booking Cherry Tree Wood in time to allow them to plan the event properly, they decided to call it off before starting to incur any expenses

Organiser Mike Hughes said: "We cannot in good conscience risk the health of our friends, neighbours, supporters and wider community. Whilst it provides no comfort, we note that we are not alone in postponing events planned for summer 2021."

### Twice bitten

Twelve months ago, the

history that it has not taken place two years running. Before 2020, the last time it had been cancelled was in the Olympic year of 2012, when a wet May and June left the field in Cherry Tree Wood saturated with water.

### Scooter time!!!!

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Just a prank: John Cormack kayaking on the lake in Cherry Tree Wood. Photos Roger Chapman



## Whatever floats your boat

By Diana Cormack

**The flooding in Cherry Tree Wood this year must rank amongst the worst in living memory. With the grassland becoming a haven for flocks of seagulls and the saturated woodland dotted with soggy pools, the sunny, hot months of 2020 seem a long way off.**

In those days people poured into the park to practise their favourite activities: ballet, boxing, juggling, yoga and even tightrope walking. Now after a wet winter one man has proved that East Finchley folk are nothing if not adaptable.

One Sunday afternoon at the end of January, keen kayaker John Cormack (no relation), of Leicester Road, N2, took to the extensive flood water and attempted a few circuits, much to the amusement of passers-by.

John, his wife and family have been kayakers for many years, travelling all over the world on exciting expeditions. A favourite memory is kayaking down the Thames, enjoying the fantastic sights on either side.

Now, having to stay closer to home, the temporary lake in Cherry Tree Wood was too good a chance to miss. John told *The Archer* he is a member

of The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood and had discussed the kayaking with Roger Chapman, chair of The Friends, who took photos of the prank.

Former teacher John also speaks enthusiastically of The Phoenix Canoe Club at Welsh Harp (more prosaically known as Brent Reservoir), which runs a variety of courses for youngsters and adults. Find out more at [www.phoenixcanoeclub.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcanoeclub.co.uk)

### Got the T-shirt?

And in no time, John's escapade had inspired a new line of merchandise in the online store at [ILoveN2.co.uk](http://ILoveN2.co.uk). Local designer Mike Hughes



has created some brilliant T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, cooking aprons and mugs, all bearing the logo of the fictional Cherry Tree Wood Kayaking Club. Shop now for yourself or a loved one!

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## The Archer

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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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Benefits 0800 882200  
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### Leisure

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Everyman, Muswell Hill 0872 436 9060  
Garden Suburb Library 020 8458 3301  
Muswell Hill Library 020 8489 8773  
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789  
Vue, North Finchley 0345 3084620

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Independent Age 0800 319 6789  
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The new tower block at Prospect Ring Photo Mike Coles

## Wraps come off new tower block

By Janet Maitland

After two years under wraps, the new tower block in Prospect Ring has at last emerged from behind its scaffolding. The smart brick building will house almost 200 people in 50 flats. Most of the flats have two bedrooms and are intended for four people. Five of the flats are designed for wheelchair users. All of them are for affordable rent only.

We asked Barnet Homes what the lettings policy will be. They told us: "We will give priority to tenants already living on the estate who have an established housing need (because their current property is not suitable) and are in band one or two of our banding scheme. Properties will then be allocated using Barnet Council's allocations policy for those in housing need."

### Local concerns

Eighty-eight people objected to the new tower,

fearing it would have a detrimental impact on light, views, privacy, local services and traffic. There were also concerns about parking because just 24 spaces will be provided for the new development. Density levels were also an issue as the number of habitable rooms was 16% higher than the limit recommended in the London Plan.

Residents on the estate appreciated the need for more housing, but wanted a five-storey building, rather than one that is two storeys higher than the existing tower blocks. Planning permission was

given in June 2018. Approval was influenced partly by the pressing need for more affordable homes in the borough, and partly by the existing two tower blocks, on either side of the new block. The council officer's report said that the third tower would "complement the scale of existing buildings and create some variation in the skyline".

### On target

The contractors are currently on target to finish the building by September this year despite the additional pressures caused by Covid-compliant working restrictions.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet Council

#### 62 Abbots Gardens, N2

Demolition of overhanging eaves. New flat roof to rear extension.

#### 42 Baronsmere Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and two front rooflights. Attic conversion into habitable space, involving rear and side roof windows.

#### 9 Bedford Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front rooflights.

#### 14 Bedford Road, N2

Part single, part two-storey rear extension. Roof extension involving hip to gable and rear dormer window. Solar panels on roof.

#### 32 Bedford Road

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front rooflights. Replacement of existing side door with window.

#### 72 Brackenbury Road, N2

Roof extension above existing outrigger, including rear dormer and two flat rooflights. Single-storey rear extension; depth 3.16m, eaves height 2.84m, maximum height 3.56m.

#### 91 Durham Road N2

Single-storey side and rear extension. Associated rooflights.

#### 139 Elmshurst Crescent, N2

Single-storey rear extension. New front porch.

#### 84 Hertford Road, N2

Single-storey side and rear extension. Lawful Development Certificate for roof extension, including L-shaped rear dormer window and two front rooflights.

#### 63 Huntingdon Road, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer window, and outrigger roof with three front rooflights.

#### 19 Ingram Road, N2

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

#### 39 Lincoln Road, N2

Single-storey rear and side extension.

#### 80-83 Long Lane, N2

Listed Building Consent for Demolition.

#### 56 Park Hall Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension; depth 6m, eaves height 3m, maximum height 3m.

#### 21 Sylvester Road, N2

Single-storey side and rear extension.

Roof extension involving two rear dormer windows and three front rooflights.

#### 51 Sylvester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension; depth 4.5m, eaves height 3m, maximum height 3m.

#### 1 Thomas More Way, N2

Conversion into eight self-contained flats. Includes demolition of existing second floor and construction of infill storey. Associated amenity space, refuse storage, cycle parking and off-street parking. Alterations to fenestration to all elevations.

### Haringey Council

#### 27 Aylmer Road N2

Two-storey, detached house with basement with lightwells, following demolition of existing house.

#### 9 Beech Drive N2

Part-single, part-two storey full-width rear extension. Rear roof dormer extension. Part-single, part-two storey side extension, forward of existing side garage. Front, rear and side roof lights. Replacement and alterations to windows.

#### 16 Southern Road N2

Rear dormer roof extension.

## Surge testing begins

As we went to press on this edition, residents in part of East Finchley were being asked to use Covid home-testing kits after the South African mutation was identified in one household in the area.

Barnet Council, working with NHS Test and Trace, was delivering and collecting the PCR tests door-to-door. Anyone over 16 was urged to use one, even if they were not showing symptoms. Residents were advised that testing staff were carrying Barnet Council ID and had no need to enter individual homes.

There is currently no evidence to suggest this mutation

is more serious than others or that it spreads more easily. Positive tests will be sequenced to identify any further spread of the mutation.

Cllr Daniel Thomas, the Leader of Barnet Council, said: "One case of the South African variant of Covid-19 was detected in East Finchley. There is no evidence at present that they have passed the infection further."

## East Finchley Baptist Church

### Sunday Morning Worship 10.30 am

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, please visit our website to see whether we are meeting online or in person at the church.

For more information please contact the Church Office  
Email: [office@eastfinchleybc.org.uk](mailto:office@eastfinchleybc.org.uk)  
[www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk](http://www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk)





# Green spaces marked down as “low value”

By John Lawrence

Three green spaces in East Finchley, including a children's playground, have been listed as “low value” by Barnet Council and are being considered as possible sites for installing renewable energy facilities.

The three locations are the Market Place Play Area and adjoining green space, close to Holy Trinity Primary School, the undulating area of green land off Oak Lane, close to the Grange Estate, and the small square park in Manor Park Road, close to the junction with Hamilton Road.

They all appear on a map drawn up by Barnet Council designating a total of 45 parks and green spaces across the borough as “low quality or low value”.

An environmental business plan from the council proposes that some of the sites could be suitable for siting “renewable energy solutions such as batteries at substations and solar farms.”

Barnet Council says initial investment is required to undertake a review of all the spaces and a full planning assessment. Details of the type of solar power installations or how much space they would take up are not given.

The business plan says it is anticipated that any proposal will support the council in the development of a sustainability strategy, producing a range of environmental benefits, before adding: “The opportunity may impact on access to parks and open space sites which are deemed low quality / low value.”

## Lifelines in lockdown

Any loss of playgrounds or precious green space in East Finchley is almost certain to be met with strong opposition from residents, particularly after these sites have proved to be lifelines for leisure and relaxation during lockdown.

Councillor Arjun Mittra said he and his fellow East Finchley councillors were deeply concerned about the council's plan for open spaces.

“They deny they are planning anything, but there is still a line in their medium-term financial strategy to make £75,000 from this,” he told The Archer.

# Milkman Mick keeps Kate happy

TV presenter Kate Garraway was left red-faced in front of millions of viewers after trying to explain how her East Finchley milkman kept her happy by offering her extras.

Kate was talking to fellow Good Morning Britain host Ben Shephard about kindnesses during the pandemic and mentioned how milkman Mick Fuller had been amazing.

Kate, who lives in Creighton Avenue, N10, said: “He has absolutely just kept me going. He'll leave me a little note saying ‘Do you need anything extra other than the milk?’” Ben burst out laughing and so did Kate when she realised what she'd said.



Spilt milk: Kate Garraway.  
Photo Wikipedia

When Ben asked: “Are you still answering the door in your dressing gown and fluffy slippers?” Kate answered: “And a shower cap... Mick, thank you. Shall we move on as I've got myself in trouble.”

For a while after the show on Friday 12 February, milkman Mick was trending on Twitter. He posted to his followers: “Going that extra mile to serve my customers.”



Extras: Milkman Mick Fuller



Fork handles: Brothers Rob, left, and Oliver Seger with the cutlery they've invented.

# Floating cutlery idea could take off

By John Lawrence

The humble knives, forks and spoons we use every day have looked essentially the same for hundreds of years but now two East Finchley brothers are seeking to change their design forever.

Rob and Oliver Seger have invented the world's first levitating cutlery set, designed with hygiene in mind to prevent the transfer of germs from work surfaces and tables.

Rob came up with the idea for their Floatware range as the pandemic unfolded, inspired by his travels in Asia, where chopsticks are often held off the table by a small rest.

He said: “It occurred to me that local custom was more hygienic than the cutlery we use back home, because you would rest utensils on supports to prevent the tips touching the table surface; so when the global pandemic struck and everyone became more conscious of cleanliness I developed the idea.”

Each stainless steel knife, fork and spoon is manufactured with its own built-in rest so that



Floating: A redesigned handle allows the cutlery to stand above the table surface

the head floats 6mm above the surface.

The brothers hope their cutlery will come into common usage in cafés and restaurants, as well as being useful at home for anyone with food allergies or generally hygiene-conscious people.

Rob, who has an engineering degree, and Oliver, who studied

business and economics, both went to Mill Hill School and have moved back to their family home in Abbots Gardens, N2, from where they hope to get their business off the ground.

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New business: (left to right) Marian Fixler, Fiona Hurlock and Julian Ormerod at the Japanese Acupuncture Clinic. Photo Mike Coles

## Acupuncture clinic gets hands-on

By Ruth Anders

A new business in Bedford Mews, N2, is aiming to raise the profile of Japanese acupuncture, which is often less well known than traditional Chinese medicine.

Japanese Acupuncture Clinic Finchley is the brainchild of Fiona Hurlock, who previously worked at Utopia in Leicester Road, and her business colleague Marian Fixler.

East Finchley born and bred Julian Ormerod complements their work by offering an integrated therapy combining his extensive experience as a chiropractor with sports massage, yoga and Pilates. While Julian has trained in India, Fiona and Marian have both studied in Japan.

Historically the profession of the blind, Japanese acupuncture is much more hands-on than traditional Chinese medicine and the needling techniques are gentler as the needles are extremely fine.

The guide tube, now used by acupuncturists worldwide, was invented by a blind Japanese practitioner to assist with needle insertion. Japanese Acupuncture Finchley also offers moxibustion (a warming herb placed on or near the skin) and cupping.

Fiona told *The Archer*: "Covid has changed the nature of our work and having highly skilled services available locally to support home working is vitally important. Acupuncture works to fine-tune the way the body relates to itself and its environment, enabling it to work at its optimum level, resulting in recovery from disease and symptoms. "This medicine is non-specialist so it can be used to treat a variety of medical conditions from pain to fertility, and from depression to respiratory illnesses including post viral fatigue syndrome (long Covid)."

Between them, the three partners have accrued 85 years of experience. They aim to work in partnership with each of their clients, enabling them to stay healthy and enjoy life. Fiona added: "We each have our areas of special interest: while we both work with fertility and pregnancy, Marian enjoys treating babies and children, and I like working with mental health."

To find out more, visit [www.japaneseacupunctureclinicfinchley.com](http://www.japaneseacupunctureclinicfinchley.com)

## 50 rough sleepers moved into long-term housing

By Janet Maitland

Have you wondered if the rough sleepers who were helped off the streets at the start of the pandemic are back in doorways?

Since the Everyone In scheme was announced by Louise Casey MP a year ago, the Rough Sleepers Project at Barnet Homes has helped 50 of Barnet's 268 rough sleepers in temporary accommodation to move into long-term housing.

The Rough Sleepers Project was set up in 2019 with funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. A hostel in Friern Barnet has been converted into a Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub using some of the project's £700,000 funding for 2020/21, allocated before the pandemic. It will accommodate 17 people for up to six weeks and will open soon.

In addition to Everyone In, the safety and protection of rough sleepers during the pandemic has triggered several additional funding initiatives from central government. This has helped the Rough Sleepers Project to employ two extra workers to support people in longer term accommodation to ensure they don't return to the streets, as well as paying for the costs of the extra temporary accommodation the

project has had to find.

The project will also buy 15 homes, using its £2 million allocation from the £150 million released by government last year, and will help rough sleepers to register with a GP so they can be vaccinated.

Gareth Davies, head of the National Audit Office, said: "For the first time, the scale of the rough sleeping population has been made clear and it far exceeds the government's estimates."

## Shops warning

Thirteen businesses have added their names to a letter written to *The Archer* to say their livelihoods are being put in jeopardy by the introduction of cycle lanes along the High Road.

The shops and businesses that have co-signed the letter all operate south of the junction with Fortis Green, where the new cycle lane has completely removed parking spaces from outside their premises.

Turn to page 11 to read the letter in full.

## Man jailed for series of child abuse offences

An East Finchley man who committed multiple child abuse offences over a 20-year period has been jailed for 17 years.

Adam Justice-Mills, 61, appeared for sentencing at Wood Green Crown Court on Tuesday 2 February after pleading guilty to 78 counts of child sexual offences in Barnet and Haringey between 2000 and 2020.

This included incidents of rape, attempted rape and other sexual offences relating to two female victims who were known to Justice-Mills and were children at the time of the offences. He also admitted to possessing or making indecent images of children.

Justice-Mills will spend a further year on licence, and will be placed on the Sexual Offenders' Register for life.

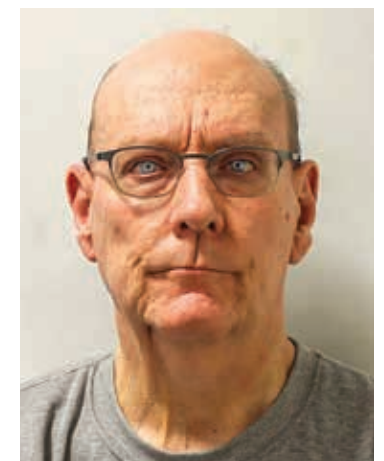
The court heard how Justice-Mills' offending came to light when police received information which expressed concern for the risk he posed to children. It was later established that

Justice-Mills had made admissions to abuse carried out over a long period of time.

Police arrested him in January 2020 and he pleaded guilty to all counts. A search of Justice-Mills' address following his arrest revealed a sophisticated computer set-up with an array of external hard drives. Forensic interrogation of the devices seized revealed in excess of 170,000 illegal images of children, including those of the most serious category.

### Police statement

Detective Constable Virginia Condren, the investigating officer from the Met's North Area Public Protection Unit, said: "Justice-Mills is a dangerous, predatory paedophile who has preyed on our most vulnerable members of society for his own sexual gratification. It is of great reassurance that he will serve a lengthy sentence as punishment for his offending. For the victims there is no length of sentence that will undo the trauma or replace the innocence he has taken."



Jailed: Adam Justice-Mills

### Reporting child abuse

If you have been a victim of abuse or you have information about an offender, contact police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. There are specially trained officers who will listen and investigate where needed. Alternatively call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or report online. You can also report abuse and get support from the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

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Sudden death: George Smith

# The hidden heart condition that killed my son

In our January edition, we reported on the sudden death of George Smith, a team member at Hair 202 in the High Road, N2, at the age of just 24. Here his mother Angela Bosompem-Twum makes an important plea.

**Few can comprehend the colossal trauma of losing an apparently young, fit and healthy loved one without warning. But tragically, this is the nightmare bolt from the blue that struck us on Sunday 6 December, when my dearest son George died as a result of a hidden heart condition.**

George was probably the healthiest person I know but now my two daughters have lost their only brother. He was just 24 when we came home on that fateful Sunday and found him lying dead on his bedroom floor. We initially presumed he had suffered a fall or had an accident.

George was a healthy child growing up and never seemed to be ill. He was lively, inquisitive and full of life. George went to Muswell Hill Primary school and later to Fortismere. He made many friends and he loved all of them.

After school, George started

hairdressing and was doing well; it was something he had always wanted to do from a child.

George had an undetected heart condition but none of us had any idea as he was fit, slim and strong physically, so we had no reason to think anything was wrong.

Six weeks after he died, the longest six weeks in our lives, we learned that George had died of sudden cardiac death. We are currently receiving support from the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY). All of us are going to undergo testing to make sure no inherited

heart conditions run in the family and we now want to help raise awareness of underlying heart conditions in George's name. We'd encourage young people to take advantage of heart screenings that are run by CRY for 14 to 35-year-olds. It's so important, as a lot of people only get it done once they've lost somebody, because they didn't know about it beforehand. We know now that if George had had it done, there might have been a different outcome.

Find out more at [www.c-r-y.org.uk](http://www.c-r-y.org.uk) or call the charity on 01737 363222.

## Thoughtless dumping causes station book stall to close

By Daphne Chamberlain

Thoughtless behaviour by a tiny minority of people has threatened the future of the book exchange at East Finchley station, which until now has always functioned brilliantly and proved very popular. Some users have called it a lifeline in recent times, and similar bookstands are a valued feature of other Underground stations. Recently, however, the area around it became a dumping ground, and last month it was closed.

Last month, however, the area around it became a dumping ground, and users were dismayed to see the facility removed from the station entirely for nearly three weeks.

Local resident Lynn Winton, who started the book exchange three years ago, told *The Archer* that at some time between two of her daily visits it had been left in a terrible state.

She said: "Piles of books had been left there, despite there being clearly no room for them. Also a deckchair! For the station superintendent it was the last straw, as the week before other idiots had left bags of old clothes and goodness knows what else. It only takes one or two of these people to ruin it for everyone. Probably as a result of charity shops being closed, people are just looking to selfishly dump stuff wherever they can."

Lynn immediately wrote to the station superintendent, asking for the exchange to be reinstated when non-essential shops were reopened. Then, unexpectedly, almost three weeks later, the original book stall reappeared overnight, this time neatly stocked and with the area around it kept clear to allow for proper social distancing.

Station staff did not give an explanation directly to Lynn but they clearly considered it was safe to reinstate the exchange. It will be important now for anyone who uses and values the book stall to keep it tidy or



Disappearing act: The bookstall vanished for some weeks

station staff may be forced to reconsider and remove it again.

## Fun, friendship and everyday adventure

224 North London Air Scouts Group, based in Sheldon Avenue, is for children from 6-14 years and is looking for more adult helpers, writes Derek Chambers.

Does scouting match up to the headline above and what do our young people think of their volunteers? "It's good to get badges for music, dancing and story-writing," says Anna. "And I love the Scout Pantomime each year. The Laser tag night was great. And the silent disco on the Heath!"

"We did fitness on the Heath!" Dan exclaims. "And Dad helped us with orienteering in the woods. The doctor teaching us first aid was good. We've made bird boxes, bug hotels and small engineering projects. And learnt about aeroplanes and Morse code." Normally the scouts would run around a lot but they've had to adapt to

lockdown Zoom meetings. "Scouting at home has been good," says Daniel. "The session when we met the group in Trinidad and Tobago was really interesting." Anna adds: "My mum likes using the home help badge as a way to get the vacuuming done! I really enjoyed that camping at home night where we had the image of a campfire on the TV and ate sausages we'd helped to cook, sitting on the floor."

Whether you want to recapture the joy of your youth, are an ex-RAF or Air Cadet or you're looking for useful experience for your CV, why not get in touch and see what Scouting can do for you as an adult volunteer. Email Del, the deputy group scout leader at [enquiries@224northlondonscouts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@224northlondonscouts.org.uk) or visit [www.224northlondonscouts.org.uk](http://www.224northlondonscouts.org.uk).

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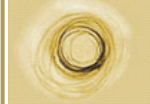
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### Martin Primary School Co-Opted Governor vacancies

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Team work: left to right, Maria, Bilal, Riad and Sofiane at La Gourmandise. Photo Mike Coles

## Brothers transform butcher's into baker's

By David Gritten

These are trying times for N2 shops and businesses. Some have closed down, and many of those remaining are feeling the pinch.

But the recent opening of one new business has proved cause for cheer and has clearly put a spring in the step of several High Road shoppers.

A patisserie named La Gourmandise, occupying what was formerly the butcher's shop Boucherie Moderne, has proved an instant hit, attracting rave reviews on social media.

### Changing the plan

The two brothers, Riad and Sofiane Achour, who also ran the Boucherie, simply transformed their business plan. "We decided to convert," says Riad.

"We wanted to create somewhere that was a Continental-style bakery, a coffee shop and also a patisserie. We do quality foods and we've worked hard to expand our range."

Their ambitious plan

for the business has taken a long time even to get to this stage, with the pandemic making life more difficult. Riad recalls: "We had nine months of basically doing nothing. In the end, we had to make a difficult decision: to open up during lockdown and just do takeaway. So we can't let customers come in and sit down to eat yet."

### Pleasing the customers

Yet this long wait may prove useful for whetting customers' appetites, judging by the online enthusiasm of those who have dropped by. "It felt like being in Paris," one of them enthused. Others have raved about the "gorgeous" coffee, "amazing" baguettes, sourdough bread, carrot cake and chocolate caramel tart.

The brothers, originally from Algeria, moved to France and then to the UK. Riad is a hugely experienced chef; during a spell in New York he studied under Marco Pierre White and in London he had a senior role at Sophie's Steakhouse.

"We love what we do," he says. "It's a family business and it's been 26 years. Now we've taken a risk. It's a big challenge to open when it's so risky, but what can we do? Now we can't wait for customers to be able to come in for crepes and breakfast – and see what food of ours they like the most."

FOLLOW US!



@THEARCHERN2

## Health club to the Manor re-born

By Diana Cormack

Last March, before the first lockdown was announced, the Manor Health and Leisure Club at 140 Fortis Green suddenly closed. This led to comments on social media from disgruntled members complaining about the lack of communication in addition to their disappointment at being unable to exercise.

Subsequently notices appeared on the front door, followed by an explanation online, stating that the closure was due to work being undertaken by outside contractors which was out of the club's control (page 5, *The Archer*, April 2020).

Recently plans to build flats on the site surfaced, then disappeared. Now it seems that the club is to come under new management. At the time of writing a message on their website states:

"The club will shortly have a new owner which is a very positive move for the club and

the community. The new owner will look after all existing and new member requirements. We would like to thank all our members for your support and loyalty over this difficult time."

In reply to their enquiries some members have been told of plans for renovation to take place during lockdown which include improvements to the décor, equipment and showers. With it still being closed and the phone unanswered at present, *The Archer* hopes to bring you more information as and when the club can provide it.



Under new management: The Manor Health Club

## N2United: The importance of a strong community

By Ruth Anders

Zoom has proved a very effective medium via which N2United has held spirited monthly get-togethers and February's meeting was no exception. Familiar faces were joined by new ones, all passionate about identifying ways in which businesses, organisations and individuals can come together to make East Finchley the best possible place to live and work.

Roger Chapman, representing The Finchley Charities, stressed the importance of local discussion and consultation of the type facilitated by N2United.

Those attending heard from Giuseppe Sollo about East Finchley Neighbourhood Support's fast expanding Food Project, which distributes free food from the foyer of the Phoenix Cinema every Tuesday morning.

The meeting noted the move of a popular florist from its Fortis Green premises and the closure of the Polish grocer near the Phoenix. However, business updates also included the very positive activity of many other shops. The arrival of the new Gourmandise patisserie on the High Road was also welcomed.

Visit [N2United.co.uk](http://N2United.co.uk) to find

out more and share your suggestions and ideas. Or join the next meeting on Thursday 11 March. N2United would love to hear from you.

## Helping hand

Disability charity MyAFK, based in Crouch End, has been awarded £100,000 by the Barclays 100x100 UK Covid-19 Community Relief Fund to support its work with disabled young people and their families through the pandemic. AFK, formerly Action for Kids, is using the funding to move its education and employability programmes online.



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# Bike riders ramp up damage to Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

Digging your garden or allotment is great outdoor exercise, but it's not a good idea to dig up soil in a protected ancient wood to build ramps for bike riders. Coldfall Wood, where people have made a heavy impact in various ways over the last year, has seen more ramp-building recently and the Friends of Coldfall Wood and Haringey, the wood's owners, say it's not acceptable.

Back in August, ramps appeared in different parts of the wood. Sometimes branches were pulled out from dead-hedges, good species habitats made by the Trust for Conservation Volunteers for their woodland work. Often soil was excavated quite deeply, exposing tree roots, and was even gouged out from the mediaeval earthwork along the western side.

In another part of the wood several long ramps were constructed by adults using power tools and digging openly, on an unstable slope near a gas pipe and below an oak that shed a massive branch days later. Asked to stop, those men refused. Some parents on social media claimed their children needed to cycle just like this, and in this particular wood.

## Playground or protected space

Haringey Council put up notices making it clear that

damaging the trees, plants or surfaces of Coldfall Wood is an offence and advised reporting it to the police. Most were pulled down. Local police did make occasional patrols and individual Friends and Haringey Parks employees spoke to children and parents, to small effect. Through the winter, arguments continued about the rights and wrongs of ramp-building but the cold wet weather was a natural deterrent.

In early February, however, a dog walker came across a man systematically removing the council's warning notices and saying he wanted his children to build and use bike ramps. Nature reserve? Ancient wood? Not interested.

## Ray of hope

It's rumoured that Haringey Council might consider creating a biking area for children on a patch of land near Shepherd's Hill. If so, would this solve the problem? A dedicated place for adventurous bike riding sounds great but would take some time to set up. The parents who allow their children to misuse Coldfall Wood now, ignoring requests, explanations and warnings, will probably continue until a tree collapses or a prosecution occurs.

## Improve your improv

A theatre company is running free online improv workshops in East Finchley to help people meet others and build their confidence. Funded by Grange Big Local's Community Grants Programme, the workshops will be run by Akana Theatre, a small group of actors and improvisers.

There will be three different 12-week courses for teens, young adults, and adults. You don't need any previous experience in improv, comedy, or theatre at all, just an openness to learn, play and be yourself. Sign up for any of the courses using these links: Improv for Teens (12-16 years old), every Monday from 5pm-6pm until 24 May, <https://bit.ly/3jxRl6u>

Improv for Young Adults (17-21 years old), every Sunday from 4pm-5pm until 23 May, <https://bit.ly/3p1iBLx>

Improv for Adults (aged 22+), every Sunday from 5.30pm-6.30pm until 23 May, <https://bit.ly/37bGKev>



Jeepers peepers: Objects around East Finchley came to life with two staring eyes.

## Look into our eyes

A pillar box with personality and a bench that looks back at you! Anyone out for a lockdown walk one day last month may have spotted these googly eyes after they suddenly appeared on objects all over East Finchley. "They cheered me up on a grey February day," said reader Samo, who sent us the photos. We don't know for sure who put them there but our best guess is Karen Landi, known as @pebblefairy on Instagram, who has form for this kind of fun.

## The great outdoors classroom

The Archer Academy is looking for people to help them develop a community garden and outdoor classroom on their site in Eagans Close, N2.

The school has secured funding for this project from the Grange Big Local project through its Community Grants programme.

It says being outdoors has numerous mental health benefits and will support wellbeing for all. The garden will provide a space for students to develop new skills and for the community as a whole to enjoy.

There are plans to install bug hotels, bird boxes, a chicken run, planting, seating areas and



space for school dog Rufus to have a run around.

The Archer Academy is looking for green fingered volunteers

and people with carpentry skills. If you are keen to get involved please register your interest by emailing: [volunteer@thearcher-academy.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@thearcher-academy.org.uk). You can follow the progress of the outdoor classroom on the school's Facebook and Instagram accounts.

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## Grants still up for grabs

Applications are still open for Grange Big Local's Covid Recovery Grants, which offer up to £500 to residents to help them and their families recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Funds can be used for training to get into work, buying laptops and tech for home schooling, getting school uniforms or clothes for work, transport costs, job licence fees or driving lessons.

Grants are open to anyone living in the Big Local's area bounded by the Church Lane, the High Road, the North Cir-

cular and East End Road, N2. This is a rolling funding pot, with applications effectively considered on a first come first served basis, until the allocated funding runs out.

Find information and a link to the application form at [www.grangebiglocal.org/gbl-covid-grants](http://www.grangebiglocal.org/gbl-covid-grants) or email [info@grangebiglocal.org](mailto:info@grangebiglocal.org)

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Reflected glory: Sunset over Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Jackie Briggs



Frozen solid: The lake outside Stephens House was a disc of ice in the cold spell. Photo Ivor Gaber

## Welcome to the Lake District... in the heart of north London!

By David Melsome

**Endless weeks of wet weather over the winter have left our parks brimful of surface water, turning grass areas and lawns into no-go areas. At the same time the sudden appearance of mini-lakes has**

**added a new touch of natural beauty.**

The notoriously low-lying field in the centre of Cherry Tree Wood, which is prone to flooding at the best of times and was used historically for watercress beds, has had water lying on it all year so far.

### Wetlands

Our front page photo shows local kayaker John Cormack making the most of the new facility and the striking photo here sent in by reader Jackie Briggs captures the lake reflecting a beautiful winter sunset.

Meanwhile in Stephens House and Gardens, off East End Road, Finchley, the large lawn area popular as a spot for summer picnics was flooded too. Ducks happily moved in to occupy the new pond until one of the cold snaps came along and turned it into a vast

disc of ice, as the photo sent in by reader Ivor Gaber shows.

What both parks need now, and the same goes for anyone with a soaked back garden, is a warm and pleasant early spring to give them a chance to dry out and allow the grass to recover.

## Gifts that come with the personal touch

**A designer has started her own business offering personalised decorations that customers can hang around their homes or give as special presents.**

Mischa Spiegel started making her designs as a thank you to her carers after spending a long period in hospital before the pandemic struck. She has complex medical conditions which means she needs to use a wheelchair full time and return to hospital periodically. Mischa said: "The first designs

caught people's attention. More and more were interested in purchasing so, taking into consideration the fact that I wanted to give a portion to charity, specifically charities that support disabled people with mobility equipment, I decided to continue. "I love personalised gifts, and realised that others do too. It's something I can do from home and I love designing, making and seeing the end result. It's difficult being disabled and with chronic pain but I can lose myself in creating beautiful gifts for people." Customers are offered a one-to-one consultation and all Mischa's designs are made to order. You can see a sample of her work online at [mischalaurendesigns.bigcartel.com](http://mischalaurendesigns.bigcartel.com) and also on Instagram and Facebook @mischalaurendesigns



New business: Mischa Spiegel



Crafty creation: One of Mischa's designs

## A mural inspired by nature

**Local resident and artist Rebecca Miller is leading a free, nature-focused community art project for young people that aims to create an East Finchley trees mural.**

The two-month project will get young people involved in weekly, online art workshops and in-person sketching surveys of the trees and nature in their patch of N2 before painting a public mural for the whole community to enjoy at a site to be confirmed.

Rebecca said she wants to encourage others to explore our area and make the most of the rich pool of inspiration that can be found on our doorstep.

The workshops, funded by Grange Big Local's Community Grants Programme, will take place on Saturday mornings at 11am, starting on Saturday 6 March. Sign up by contacting Rebecca at [beccalizmiller@gmail.com](mailto:beccalizmiller@gmail.com).



Free yoga: Sunnah Rose leading one of her classes early last year

## Free yoga classes starting soon

**Barnet-based yoga teacher Sunnah Rose has been awarded a Grange Big Local grant to offer gentle yoga for health and wellbeing in East Finchley. These classes will be completely free and are geared towards residents who haven't been able to access traditional yoga sessions before, due to financial or other constraints.**

Residents living in the Grange Big Local area bordered by Church Lane, the High Road, the North Circular and East End Road will get first priority for sign-ups but, if there is space, then others from the N2 area will be welcome to take part, with all participants required to sign up and commit

to a three-week run of sessions.

Classes will be held in person at Tarling Road Community Centre in April, with Covid safety and social distancing practices in place. Times and days will be confirmed. To register your interest, please email [sunnahrose@hotmail.com](mailto:sunnahrose@hotmail.com).



### St Mary's Catholic Church

279 High Road, East Finchley

St Mary's Church is open for Mass.

Details of Mass times can be found

on our website at:

[www.stmaryseastfinchley.org](http://www.stmaryseastfinchley.org)

Please join us either in person or online via:

[www.saintmarys.online](http://www.saintmarys.online)

For any other help or information please phone us on 020 88834234 or email [finchleyeast@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:finchleyeast@rcdow.org.uk)

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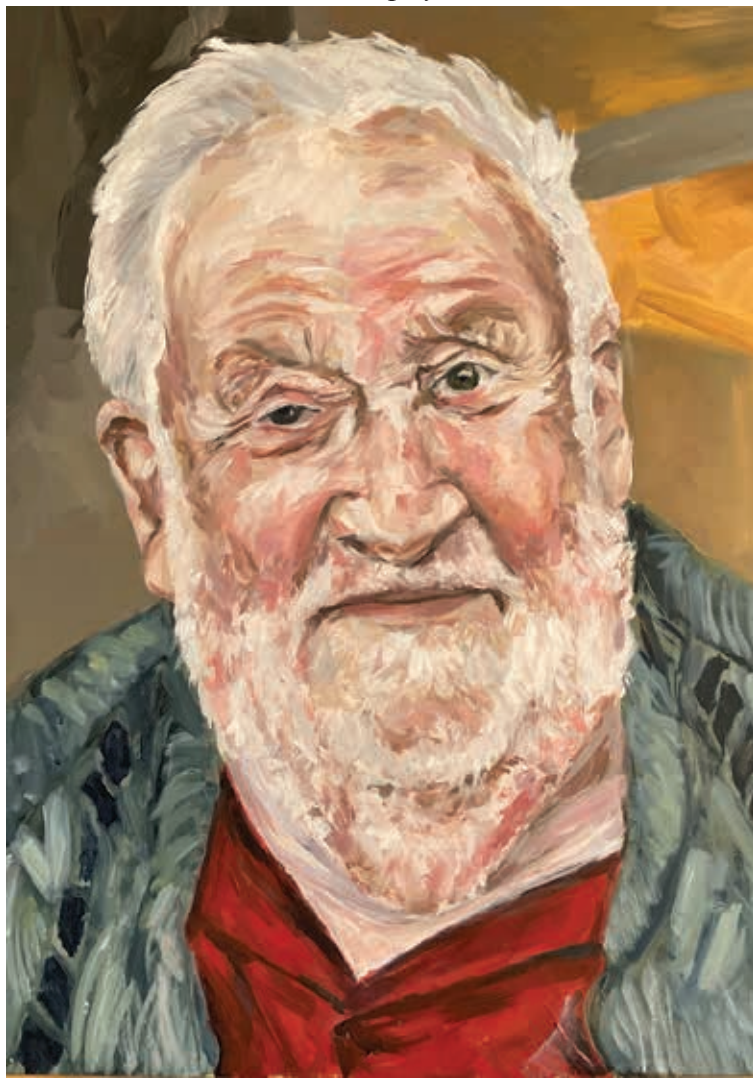
## OBITUARY

**Ken Carter: July 1934 – January 2021**

*Our former Archer team member Ken Carter died in January at the age of 86. Here, his son Dan pays tribute to his dad.*

Ken thrived on people, he made friends easily and inspired so many, which is why he is so fondly remembered. He simply loved life and all it had to offer. He would make his way to the shops and meet all comers with a smile and a chat or philosophical debate. I admired and greatly loved Dad and was always being surprised by complete strangers who would come up and say: "You must be Dan, Ken's son; what a lovely man Ken is." And I can honestly say, from the bottom of my heart, he was. Ken lived most of his life in and around Hampstead, including at his late wife's pet shop Animal Crackers on Fleet Road, NW3, before moving to Golders Green and then East Finchley and spending his last years in Porthleven, Cornwall, enjoying his music and his sea view.

Graduating from Oxford University, Ken chose the path



*Much-loved: Ken Carter, in a portrait by Iris McConnell*

## RICKY SAVAGE ...

*"The voice of social irresponsibility"*

**Diamond dream machine**

Sixty years ago in March 1961, in a cavernous exhibition centre in Geneva, an Italian car maker saw "the most beautiful car ever made". From Enzo Ferrari's point of view, the only thing wrong was that it didn't have his name on it. I guess he wished his company, with all its Italian glamour, had built it, not a bunch of blokes from Coventry. But it took true genius to create that ultimate dream machine: the Jaguar E-Type. This was a car that looked like it could go straight out and win the Le Mans 24 Hours just as easily as it could waft along the roads of the Riviera or blast up the then new-fangled motorways.

Back then when Britain had a motor industry, French cars were funny, German cars were weird and anything Italian was stylishly fragile, so Jaguar built the greatest sports cars. In 1948 they had launched the 120 mile-an-hour XK120. From that they developed the racing C-Type and won Le Mans twice, beating the Ferraris and the Maseratis.

Then engineer William Haynes and designer Malcolm Sayer got really serious with the D-Type. This was a purpose-built racer that dominated the mid to late 1950s, winning another three Le Mans. Not bad for a company from the Midlands. Next up, the E-Type. With a heritage like that, this was going to be serious. This was the road-going equivalent of cars that had won just about everything they entered. This was glamour, but not in a clichéd and cheaply expensive way. This was a 150mph rocket ship that made you look super cool, it was British and it was the best.

Everyone wanted one, from Frank Sinatra to Michael Caine, to every kid with their nose pressed against the toy shop window. And there was another thing about the E-Type: the price. They cost about half what you would have paid for the cheapest Ferrari and were quicker. Jaguar made lots of them; 55,000 between 1961 and 1971 and then, when they dropped in a V12 engine, another 15,000 in the next four years.

In the mid-1970s, you could buy a secondhand one for the price of a Ford Capri. A friend of mine did and he even let me drive it. The Capri might have been the car you always promised yourself, as the advertising went, but the E-Type was the car you dreamt about.

of a guide from an early age and although not a religious man, followed the writings of Lao Tzu. His passion was in drama, classical music, art and literature. He enjoyed a cultured life, writing reviews for the Classical Source website and *The Archer*.

I will never forget the wisdom and guidance Dad gave which is now somewhere within. For a full eulogy and to remember Ken by leaving a personal tribute, long or small, any photos or to support the listed charities instead of sending flowers, please visit <https://kennethcarter.muchloved.com/>

**Fifty years of The Finchley Society**

By Rosemary Coates

In 1970, the threat to demolish a row of Victorian agricultural cottages in Lodge Lane, North Finchley, galvanised a group of local residents led by comedian Spike Milligan, at that time living in Holden Road, and Jean Scott, the then Greater London Council member for Finchley, to fight this proposal.

They were successful and as a result it was decided to set up a group to keep an eye on similar situations in the future. So, with its motto 'Conserve, Enhance, Inform, Educate' Jean Scott formed The Finchley Society on 11 February 1971.

Spike became its President and Jean enlisted the help of Bill Tyler, a local architect, to draw up plans to modernise the cottages, and these still stand today.

As its first Secretary, David Smith worked with Spike and Jean to form the Society. Fifty years on, David, of Abbots Gardens, N2, is the group's President.

**Still campaigning**

From those humble beginnings grew the Society we know today with a membership of just under 400. Over the years it has been involved in campaigns to prevent the demolition of valued buildings.

Today the pressure from developers is even greater and the Society continues to work

to protect, preserve and improve buildings, transport, roads and open spaces in Finchley, Friern Barnet and their environs.

**College farm**

A recent success was in 2019 when the Society submitted a successful bid to Barnet Council to list College Farm, off Regents Park Road, as an 'Asset of Community Value' which gives a certain amount of protection against its loss to developers.

Many plaques have been erected in the area to commemorate famous residents and, of course, the Society commissioned a statue of Spike Milligan in the gardens of Avenue House, which was unveiled in 2014. Its current patron is actress Joanna Lumley.

**Accessible archives**

One of the Society's next projects is to digitise its archives and make them available via the internet. Anyone able to help with this is invited to make contact.

**Countdown to Census 2021**

Census 2021 is taking place on 21 March, as we reported last month, and from the 15th each household will receive a unique PIN so they can complete the census online.

If you are unable or don't want to complete the Census online you can call 0800 141 2021 and order a paper copy or if it is easier it can be completed via the telephone too.

Parts of East Finchley had among the lowest response rates in Barnet to the last Census in 2011. Central and local government use the population data gathered through the survey to judge

the delivery of public services and levels of investment for at least a decade, so the Census organisers are urging everyone to take part and ensure the available information is as accurate as possible. Statistics from the Census will be available in approximately a year but all personal details are secure and cannot be shared, by law. For more information visit: [census.gov.uk](http://census.gov.uk).

**Do you, or someone you know need a new home?**



The Finchley Charities have been providing quality sheltered housing in a supportive community environment, across three sites in East Finchley and Finchley Central.

If you have lived in the Borough of Barnet for at least five years of your life, we can provide homes for individuals and couples aged over 55, in need of sheltered housing and able to live independently.

If this sounds like you or someone you know in need of a new home, please contact us on: 020 8346 9464 or email: [info@thefinchleycharities.org](mailto:info@thefinchleycharities.org) to discuss eligibility.

020 8346 9464  
[info@thefinchleycharities.org](mailto:info@thefinchleycharities.org)  
[www.thefinchleycharities.org](http://www.thefinchleycharities.org)

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Medal-holders: Fundraisers at last year's Big Fun Walk

## Choose your route for Big Fun Walk

By David Melsome

The annual sponsored walk from East Finchley to Westminster is North London Hospice's biggest fundraiser of the year, but due to the pandemic, organisers are once again asking supporters to make the event their own in June 2021.

My Big Fun Walk gives everyone the opportunity to walk their own chosen route in their local neighbourhood or, if restrictions allow, follow the traditional 8.5 mile route into the centre of town.

Walkers can take part over the weekend of 19-20 June with family, friends or alone and walk in memory of a loved one or just to support the hospice. Covid-19 continues to have a dramatic impact on the hospice's ability to provide its essential services so fundraising is more important than ever.

"We were bowled over by the generosity of our supporters who took part in My Big Fun Walk 2020," said Robin Langrishe, the hospice's fundraising director. "More than 800 walked for us and raised over £85,000, which gave an enormous boost to our funds. We look forward to many taking part and supporting us again in 2021."

Sign up soon and take advantage of the event's Early Bird Offer. For more information and to register visit [www.bigfunwalk.co.uk](http://www.bigfunwalk.co.uk)



New single: Model Society

## Model release

North London indie rock band Model Society have released their new single on Kitchen Disco Records. Called I Spy, it's a thunderous mix of six-string guitars and drums. Model Society had been hoping to play at the East Finchley Festival until it was cancelled... but they will be back playing live soon. In the meantime find their new single on YouTube.

# A writer's labour of love

By Daphne Chamberlain

"A labour of love" is how local author Iqbal Ahmed describes his new book. *The Art of Hospitality* is dedicated to "all those who work in the hospitality industry and whose lives have been impacted by the pandemic". Iqbal himself was employed for 20 years by a London hotel, but that had to come to an end last October.

He tells us that there are over 700 big hotels in London, but with few staff who were born and brought up in the UK. Employees who worked long hours for low wages now realise that their lives were built on quicksand.

### Loss of work and contacts

Readers of Iqbal's previous widely acclaimed travel books know that he has a large circle of friends and acquaintances around the world, ready with information for his trips abroad. These contacts include people met through his job as a concierge. So his work gave him both source material and money to write.

The pandemic stopped both these benefits. He also lost his usual coffee shop writing



Former hotel worker: Iqbal Ahmed and son

space. The background buzz stimulated him, while family distractions were just too distracting. It's partly thanks to Rachel, a kind East Finchley neighbour who gave him the freedom of her spare room, that we can read this book.

### Good company

It reminds me of a journal or an informal letter. He tells us about places he visits as though we were chatting. In the words of a Booker Prize judge, "I can't think of a modern travel writer who is better company".

This time he writes about Geneva, Zurich, Milan, Venice, Barcelona, Grenada and Paris, but it is also a journey through the author's mind. There are

always memories and comparisons, particularly of his native Kashmir. If you want to know why Kashmir resembles Switzerland, read this book!

He reflects that with more free time he could have been less "touristy" in his travels, but that is the other side of the full-time employment coin.

The Pandemic, Brexit and climate change cast inevitable shadows, but Iqbal always has an apt quotation. As Seneca said, "There are more things likely to frighten us than there are to crush us".

*The Art of Hospitality*, by Iqbal Ahmed, is available from <https://coldstreampublishers.com>

## Proms go marching

**On** Organisers of the annual music and arts festival Proms at St Jude's in Hampstead Garden Suburb have vowed to run the event this summer whatever the ongoing pandemic restrictions might be.

They say the week-long programme of performances from Saturday 26 June to Sunday 4 July will lift spirits and provide much-needed support for their target charities, Toynbee Hall and North London Hospice, as well as work for performers who have been badly affected by lockdown. What form the festival will take is uncertain but, at present, organisers are working on the basis of having seats widely spaced at all venues, and thorough cleaning between each performance. There would be possible online access to events for those who can't or would prefer not to attend in person. The popular Proms walks are expected to go ahead with smaller group numbers to enable social distancing.

As a result of needing to space out the audiences, there will be fewer tickets than usual available for each event but in a few cases there may be more than one performance of the same concert, one in the late afternoon and one in the evening.

Tickets will go on sale in May. Friends' membership schemes give priority access to the limited number of tickets and memberships will be on sale from March.

## Be our eyes and ears

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

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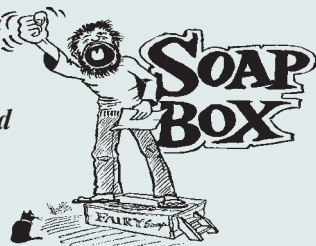
## Green around the gills

By David Melsome

With all our pubs shut for long periods over the last year, it's no wonder there are signs that some of them are gathering moss. So much so at the Old White Lion in the High Road that it might have to consider a change of name. The two statues proudly guarding its front door are normally a dazzling white but they have taken on a distinctly green hue in all the wet weather we've had through the autumn and winter. Fair play to them, they haven't deserted their post. Let's hope our pubs' doors can open again soon... and someone can find a power washer.

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.



## Cycle lane lessons from Amsterdam

By Abigail Brambilla

With a little tweaking the new cycle routes on the High Road could work really well for everybody. After several years of cycling up and down the High Road from East Finchley to North Finchley, along with being a car driver, bus passenger, runner and pedestrian on this route, I have considered the lanes from all angles.

The key thing is each one needs to flow and not stop or start or switch into different lanes. This would also prevent cars needing to sharply change lanes in order to miss the white bollards.

Near the Finchley Leisure Centre a cycle lane is taken around a curved section and forced into the passing traffic. However, with a small ramp the cyclist could continue straight onto the footpath and then back into the cycle lane.

I lived in Amsterdam for a short time and cycled my children several miles each day to school. Cyclists and cars moved around the city in quite a streamlined way. The key thing was very low kerbs that meant, when a cyclist needed to change from the cycle lane to the footpath and back, there were no high kerbs to deter their movement.

The traffic in London does move around a lot faster, but this idea could be incorporated at minimal expense. Every several metres there could be small tarmac humps/ramps along the kerb that could lead a cyclist onto the pavement or back onto the road as an escape route when having to pass a bus or parked car.

This would mean a shared footpath in parts for pedestrians and cyclists (with pedestrians of course having priority) by putting a narrow blue mark on a third of the footpath to encourage cyclists to stay on their designated part of the pavement. This way, an experienced cyclist could stay on the road and a less experienced cyclist could opt to use parts of the footpath.

Through East Finchley this would work really well because cyclists, if needing to shop on the High Road, could use the footpath easily and cars could still park along the road too. The bollard-marked cycle lanes could be narrowed to half their current width and buses could be kept in the car lane, which would naturally slow down traffic to the 20 mph speed limit. When a bus pulls in, there would still be room for cars to overtake.

Ultimately, we need to meet the needs of all to feel safe in whatever form of transport we choose to use in the future.

## Letters

### Cycle lanes: help us now

Dear Editor,

Now that the cycle lanes in the High Road have been in place for about three months, we have had two businesses close down, and a third one due to close in April. This is as a direct result of the effects of the cycle lane south of Fortis Green.

After initial letters to the Highways Department at Barnet Council and our local councillors, expectation was given that extra parking spaces would be made available to allow for spaces lost to the lane.

However there has been no movement on that front. After another three letters to both the department and the councillors, there have been no replies from either.

We feel that the council does not want to hear our concerns. We have lost all parking spaces on this side of the High Road. There is no parking on the side roads as it is an all-day controlled parking zone on this side of the High Road.

There will be more empty premises if nothing changes. Is this what we want for East Finchley?

These ill-thought-out changes are affecting livelihoods. Please stop playing politics and re-visit this issue urgently. We do not think East Finchley can wait 18 months for a review and see more empty properties.

**Kokos, Josephines, The Exchange, N2 Food Centre, New Local Café, Prime Locations, Everything Electrical, CW Andrew Pharmacy, Cedars Home Care, Cree Godfrey & Wood, Express Mart, Fetch 22, Dan & DeCarlo, High Road, N2.**

### I'm on my bike

Dear Editor,

Last summer I went into Bike and Run on the High Road, intending just to look around. I came out a soon-to-be happy owner of an e-bike. I am now a happy cyclist, for the first time in many years.

I was not alone. Transport for London reported a 49% increase in cycle journeys over the summer. I am sure we all remember seeing whole families safely cycling down empty streets.

People cycle more if they feel safe. Separate cycle lanes, as installed along the High Road, greatly improve that safety. They cannot always be continuous; but don't let the best be the enemy of the good. Moving in and out of cycle lanes is no more difficult than changing road layouts for a driver, and much safer than not having lanes at all.

The lanes are designed to encourage more cycling and active travel, and I am sure that as the weather improves we will see exactly that. I know many people who quietly welcome them, and am encouraged that so few people signed the misleading and inaccurate petition calling for their removal.

If there are problems of congestion, which I have not witnessed, then they can be dealt with by other measures, but not by ripping out a safety scheme which over time will benefit all of us.

**Nick Starling, Durham Road, N2.**

### Make space

Dear Editor,

In your last issue I was very pleased to see the both the letter on the subject of pavement courtesy and your article on dropping dirty face masks. These are such important subjects during the pandemic.

On my walks I often move into people's drives to avoid oncomers filling the pavement. Also, like your previous correspondent I have for some time stuck an arm out to the side, but smiled at those approaching rather than shouting at them. Some smile back and move aside, some even say sorry, but many continue regardless.

Just recently, after a younger couple had passed me without moving, the man turned round and shouted, "You could wear a mask!" He seemed unaware both of courtesy and the fact that masks protect others rather than the user, and anyway really should not be necessary on wide residential pavements. The worst place is East Finchley High Road, where people do keep a 2m distance when queueing for shops, but pass far too near when walking down the road. Throughout the pandemic, joggers on the High Road have passed literally by others' shoulders. Surely there is a case for banning joggers from the High Road itself, which is obviously quite busy, while there are plenty of side roads and parks where there is so much more space for joggers?

**V. Teague Leopold Road, N2.**

### Memories of Valona House

Dear Editor,

I was very sad to see the demolition of Valona House on the front page of *The Archer* (February 2021). I have many fond memories of this building, as at the age of 14 in 1944, I started my working life there as a trainee dental nurse, working with dental surgeon Mr Sidney Puckey.

He lived above the surgery with his wife and daughter, who I believe had her bedroom over the stables at the back of the house. From the dentist's chair one could see the goldfish pond and well-kept colourful garden. Opposite the surgery was the waiting room, and further along the corridor was the workshop, making and repairing dentures.

When the dentist died, I went into school clinic dentistry, and stayed there until I retired after a while. I am now 90 years young (I hope), and I have many happy memories of Valona House. I shall miss it when I go on one of my walks, but life and changes must go on.

**Evelyn J Bagley, Church Lane, N2**

### Not everyone is online

Dear Editor,

The government's assumption that everyone has access to online facilities incites me to fury ('Call to take part in once-a-decade population survey', *The Archer*, February 2021), none the more so than the availability of Covid information and now the Census.

Surely it is essential that the huge number of elderly people (over 75?) should be included in this important

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survey or else a greatly incorrect account of the demographic information of our country will be used for the next decade, thus affecting services for the elderly.

I would urge us all to remember this section of the public and encourage them to request a written census form. Let another decade pass before such assumptions are made.

**Jenny Lumley, Fortis Green Avenue, N2**

### Cleaner air benefits

Dear Editor,

It was good to see coverage in *The Archer* of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) although the article failed to mention that vehicle scrappage grants are available for small businesses, charities and low income and disabled Londoners.

It also didn't mention the benefits that the clean air zone will bring to the poorest families. The British Lung Foundation has found that pregnant women, children, older people and those on the lowest incomes are disproportionately affected by air pollution.

In 2019, 4,000 Londoners died due to the impacts of toxic air. Research by Imperial College has found that the highest number of deaths attributed to poor air quality were recorded in outer London boroughs. This is due to the higher proportion of elderly people in these areas, who are more susceptible to the impacts of air pollution.

Public Health England estimates that the cost of air pollution to the NHS and social care could reach as much as £18.6 billion by 2035 unless significant action is taken.

So, yes, there is a charge for the worst polluting vehicles, but the result will be cleaner air for all with consequent health benefits and cost savings. The expansion of the ULEZ will also start to protect some of the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities.

**Frances Buckingham, Address supplied.**

### Choose your tree carefully

Dear Editor,

I have to take issue with a sentence in February's *Archer* ('Plant a tree in remembrance'), namely "to plant a tree of any size, shape or variety".

PLEASE DO NOT. All trees have specific requirements, which involve researching the species carefully. Does it prefer moist or dry conditions, shade and cool or more light and heat, acid or alkaline soil? How big will it grow, what plants will grow in association with it, is it a native species, and so on?

The call to plant willy-nilly is a ridiculous recipe for disaster. Unsuitable trees will linger and die, or grow too big for the space, or shed limbs dangerously, slippery fruits that smell disgusting, or leaves that don't compost properly etc. If you are thinking of planting a tree, please make sure that you check your facts first.

**Linda Dolata (Official Guide at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew since 2006), Leopold Road, N2.**



## Your news

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## Caroline comes up roses

Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society has elected Caroline Broome, of Church Lane, N2, as its Chairman. Caroline, who was previously Vice-Chair, has left her London County Volunteer role as an Assistant County Organiser for the National Garden Scheme to concentrate on her new post.

The Society would normally have published a full programme and an annual members' handbook in January, but this year decided to wait until actual meetings and visits become possible.



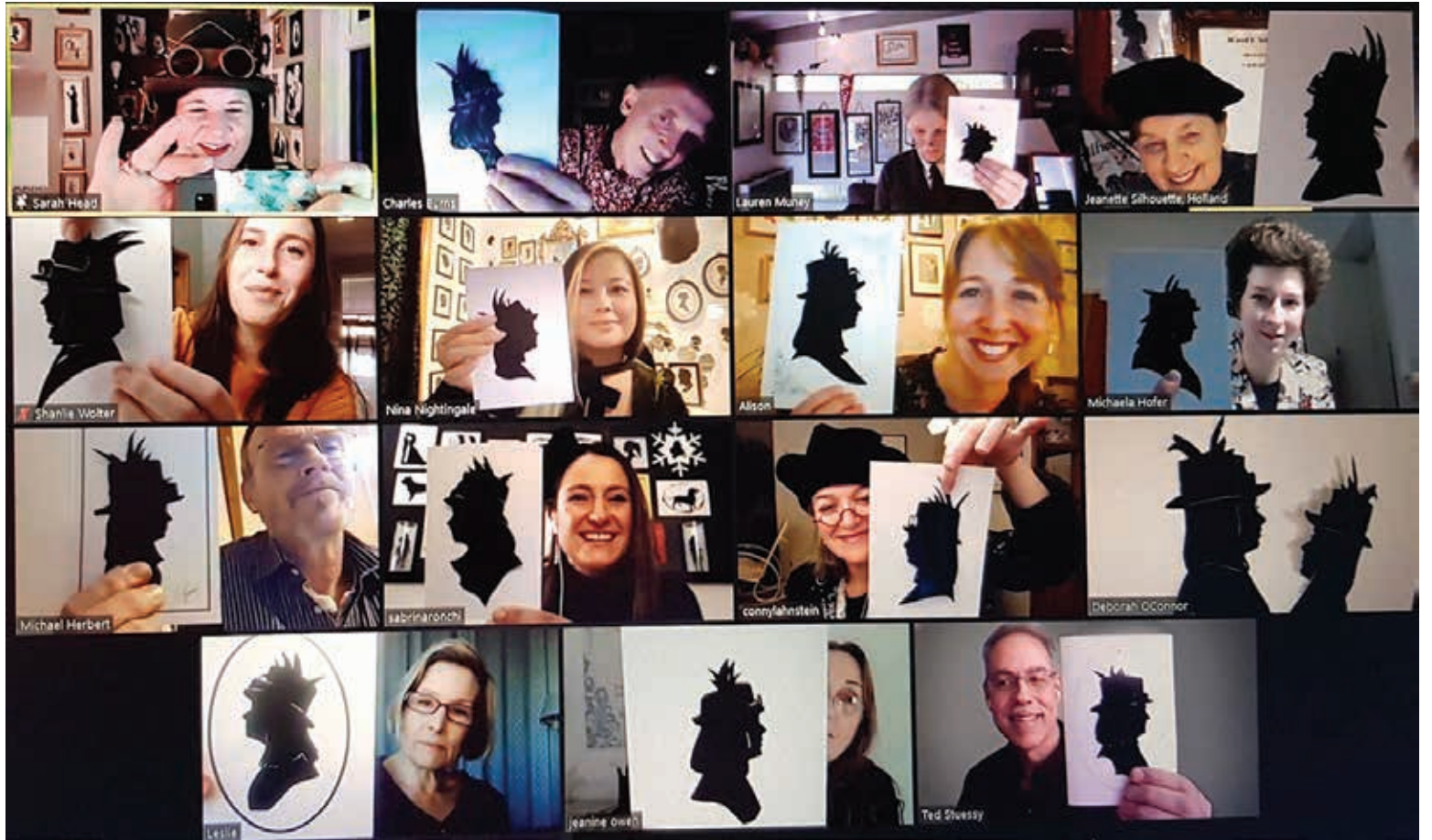
At the moment it looks as if the Society's June Flower Show at least will be a virtual one, but there is still hope, especially for home-made cake lovers, that perhaps we will all be able to meet at the Autumn Show in the Free Church Hall in Northway, NW11, in September.

Membership is open to anyone interested in gardening, regardless of whether you live in the Suburb or not. If you would like to join, email [hghs.membership@virginmedia.com](mailto:hghs.membership@virginmedia.com).



## Yesterday's news today

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## World's first cut-out-and-keep call

By John Lawrence

**A Muswell Hill artist found a new way to liven up an online group call by hosting the world's first international convention of silhouettists.**

Alison Russell is skilled at the popular Victorian and Edwardian art of cutting profiles of a loved one or well-known person using paper and scissors, a cheaper alternative to photography at the time.

Before the pandemic, she was in demand at weddings, trade fairs and corporate parties, and also worked with the Royal

family and with celebrities such as Victoria Beckham, Dame Shirley Bassey and fashion designer Paul Smith.

Stuck at home for the last year, she realised that being in isolation was no barrier to practising her craft, so she tracked down fellow professional silhouettists from around the world on Instagram and Facebook, and invited them to join her for the special gathering.

### Live portraits

By way of introduction, each artist sat in profile for five minutes sharing how their

love affair with silhouette cutting was first ignited, while the rest of the group cut their silhouette live. The resulting 15 versions of each participant were then posted for the recipients to keep as a memento. Alison said: "Rather than becoming deflated by the isolation caused by our current circumstances, I decided to utilise the tools at hand to reach out further than our own borders

and boost everyone's morale." The convention was a huge success and everyone who attended was keen to turn it into a regular event. Once Covid restrictions lift, Alison expects the trend for online experiences to continue. "We have found a new platform for our art," she said. Find out more about Alison's work at [www.alison-russell.co.uk](http://www.alison-russell.co.uk) and follow her on Instagram @alisonlouiserussell

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