



Hole in the ground: The architectural dig gets under way in Market Place in July. Photo Mike Coles

Never too old to get digging

By Jenny Lee

I always enjoy reading *The Archer*, but my eyes lit up when I spotted 'Market Place: what lies underneath?' in the June issue and discovered that an archaeological dig was coming to East Finchley on 17 and 18 July.

All my life I have wanted to join a dig, but the nearest I came to it was when my parents were having a new garage built in the late '50s. My mother and I descended into the pit clutching trowels, but despite Roman pottery having

been found in a neighbour's garden, all we unearthed was a small metal elephant I had lost as a child.

I felt a bit guilty that most of the hard digging had been done the day before, but I'm

there I was, beaver away with a borrowed trowel at the bottom of one of the two pits that had been excavated in the Market Place playground.

I met with the group again on the morning of 1 August in Avenue House, East End Road where they have a room, and we resumed the washing process. Eventually the items will be classified, dated, and written up. What fun – thank you, dear *Archer* – I wouldn't have known about it but for you!

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"Am I too old at 77?" I asked myself. "Not on your nelly," my inner voice responded. I promptly joined Hendon and District Archaeological Society (HADAS) who were conducting the dig, and

my daughter and I shot off to Mountain Warehouse to secure a pair of hard-toed boots (insurance companies insist on these).

I wasn't free for the first day, but on Sunday 18 July

not sure I would have been much use at that anyway. The HADAS people were delightful, very knowledgeable and helpful, and I loved every minute of it, whether digging ("Er... I think I have



Uncovered: A bottle is found in the earth

A lively evening at the Death Café

By Diana Cormack

Having attended the first East Finchley Death Café (*The Archer*, October 2018) I wondered how the second would compare, particularly since the coronavirus has condemned millions globally to an early grave.

Host Phillip Othen told the small group gathered in Madden's Bar in the High Road: "I'm so scared about death I think about dying every day." But this fear was not caused by Covid-19; it is something that has haunted him since his early teens when he began to wonder about existence itself.

Phillip has confronted these thoughts with counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and now, 34 years later, they seem to be something to make use of in questioning our existence through meetings, broadcasts, writing and podcasts.

at what he was doing that evening in mid-August was beneficial to the participants, providing a relaxed atmosphere where everyone was given the opportunity to put their points. This group was younger than the previous one and came from other parts of London (only Phillip and I were from East Finchley) but inevitably the same questions as before were raised. Theories about heaven and hell; the soul; reincarnation; the afterlife; eternal life; etc. The list of course is endless, unlike our lives.



Deep discussion: Participants at the death café hosted by Phillip Othen, centre. Photo Diana Cormack.

Relaxed atmosphere

Hence the Death Café, where his evident enjoyment

Starting-point

The Death Café concept (see deathcafe.com) came into being in Hackney in 2011 when Jon Underwood and his mother developed the ideas of Swiss sociologist Bernard Crettaz. It has spread to 56 countries in Europe, North America and Australia with the objective "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives".

Phillip says his plan for 2021 is "to make the subject of death and existence as fun and rewarding to talk about as possible." He's definitely getting there, as the pub's clientele would probably never have guessed our topic of conversation if they'd judged it by our gales of laughter.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

The waters are rising

As the world goes to hell in a flaming handcart and starving polar bears invade Iceland to hunt for seals, everyone is saying that climate change is here to stay. No more British summers of gentle drizzle and warm sunshine; the future is summers of scorching heat mixed with torrential rain.

Rising sea levels will turn the Shard into a shipping hazard and St Paul's Cathedral into a fun place for scuba diving, while the Thames Clipper will be able to come all the way to Highgate. So what can we expect in East Finchley? People will flock to the flooded grass of Cherry Tree Wood, renamed the Boating Lake, for kayaking lessons, and our pubs will be packed every June for the annual community regatta. In nostalgic winter moments, huddled round a carbon-neutral fire, people will tell their grandchildren tales of how they used to deliver *The Archer* on foot, not by canoe. So, folks, what are we going to do about it? How are we going to ensure that the community festival is visited every third year by gentle showers, as it always has been, rather than being drenched under a never-ending downpour?

We've got to start somewhere so let's start with food. To cut emissions, we need to change our diet and go vegan. You can even do a Lewis Hamilton and let your dog join in. No more bones for Roscoe; his loyal pooch can go and bury bananas in the garden instead. Of course, dogs are loyal and do as they're told. Just don't try it with the cat; it will order steak on the internet just to spite you.

But there's so much else we can all do. We can get rid of the gas central heating, stop flying and driving, and cycle everywhere we can't walk. But even then I bet it won't be enough to make us truly carbon neutral. In the end someone will decide we're all pumping out too much carbon dioxide from our own bodies and the only solution will be for us to hold our breath on alternate days.

Indoor car boot sale

The monthly Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale will be held on Saturday 25 September at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH, from 10am to 1pm. Admission is 50p with refreshments available, and everyone is welcome.

FUN and MUSIC for BABIES and TODDLERS in N2 on **TUESDAYS** and **THURSDAYS** at 10am



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