

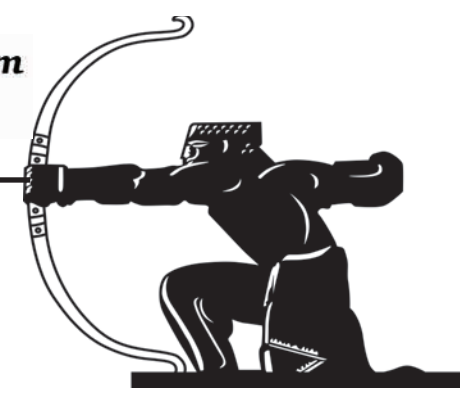


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# The Archer

**30** Local News is our Aim  
30 years 1993-2023



December 2023 No. 356

**Delivered free to 10,000 homes and businesses across East Finchley**

## Parking zone to encompass more N2 roads

By John Lawrence

Residents across the top end of East Finchley will be charged to park close to their own home when a new controlled parking zone is introduced in February 2024. Barnet Council announced the move late last month, two years after running a public consultation.

The new zone will encompass all residential roads inside the boundaries of the North Circular, East End Road (east side) and Coldfall Wood, joining up with existing CPZs south of Leopold Road and Hertford Road. It means the only streets in N2 remaining free of parking restrictions will be between East End Road and the A1.

Vehicle owners inside the new 'EF' zone will require a permit to park between 11am and 3pm from Monday to Friday. Twelve-month permits will vary in cost according to the vehicle's engine size and emissions, from £16.50 for an electric vehicle up to £200 for the most polluting, with an £11 surcharge for all diesels.

### Trial period

Barnet Council says it is introducing the new CPZ on a trial basis for 18 months and will go ahead with installing signage and road markings from January. It says the permit system is a response to concerns about

commuter parking congestion raised in the consultation by residents in Lewis Gardens, Lankaster Gardens, Brackenbury Road, Sedgemere Road and Chandos Road.

More general demand for spaces in King Street, Church Lane, Elmfield Road, Long Lane and Creighton Avenue mean they will be marked with a combination of resident-only, Pay by Phone and shared-use bays.

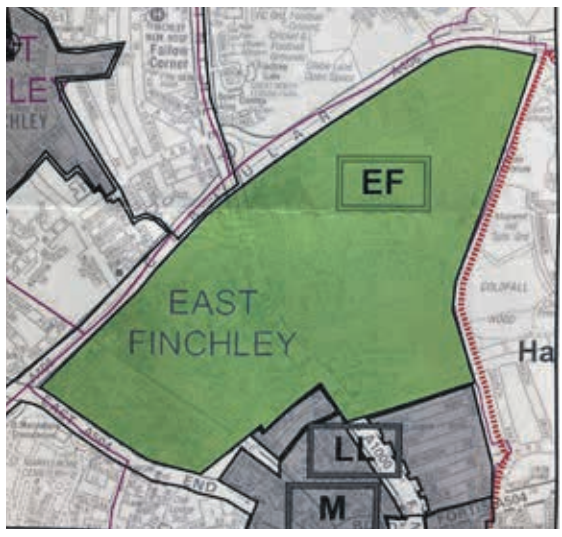
Blue Badge holders without a disabled bay already allocated to them will be able to park free of charge in any residential bay inside the CPZ.

### Have your say

Anyone can send their comments to the council within the first six months of the trial. Barnet Council said: "An experimental scheme enables officers time to consider any comments received, assess the effectiveness of the parking controls and make changes if required." General information on CPZs is available at [barnet.gov.uk/parking](http://barnet.gov.uk/parking).

*Give us your opinion on the introduction of the new parking zone. Email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk).*

*New rules apply: The parking zone covers the northern section of East Finchley*



The Archer team wishes all our readers, deliverers and advertisers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for all your support in 2023, our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and here's hoping 2024 is peaceful and prosperous for all

of us. Our Christmas card designed by Mike Coles sees Archie taking a well-earned break after buying his presents in shops around East Finchley. Let's all follow his example and keep shopping locally.

## Wonders of the wood

Everyone is welcome to the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood AGM meeting taking place on Tuesday 23 January at 7.30pm.

There will be an outline of events planned in the wood for the year ahead, and also an update on the woodland management plan and new forest gardens. In addition, there will be more news on dealing with the flooding issues in the wood. The venue for the meeting is still to be confirmed. Email [friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com) to be kept informed.

Before then, the Friends are repeating their very popular Christmas wreath-making event on Sunday 3 December, 11am to 1pm. Go along to the Cherry Tree Café near the tennis courts to join in. All materials will be provided.

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Thank you to The East Finchley Constitutional Club for providing us with a meeting place.

Copy deadlines - January: 15 December, February: 12 January, March: 9 February



Phoenix factor: The acts who performed at East Finchley's Got Talent earlier this year. Photo Mike Coles

## Talent search and bake-off cake competition return in New Year

By Diana Cormack

The local Town Team has announced that its popular East Finchley's Got Talent and East Finchley Bake Off competition will both be returning in 2024.

The first talent search at the Phoenix Cinema back in January saw a huge range of acts from the local area take part and more are welcome for the second edition being held at the same venue on Sunday 28 January.

As part of a collaboration with East Finchley Festival, East Finchley's Got Talent will be hosted by MOBO award winner Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock and is open to all ages and talents. Various prizes will be on offer, including a trophy

and the opportunity to perform on the community stage at the East Finchley Festival in June. To be considered for entry, email your best performance via your social media links, videos or photos to [EFgottalent2024@gmail.com](mailto:EFgottalent2024@gmail.com). All acts will be contacted after the selection process.

At the same time, the East Finchley Bake Off event will be back too. Budding bakers are invited to create a bake on the theme of 'The Silver Screen' to pay tribute to the fabulous films shown at the Phoenix, to be judged by local councillor

Arjun Mittra and one of the winners of last year's competition, 11-year-old Essie.

Slices of the cakes and bakes will be available during the intervals of the talent competition, with all funds raised going to the Phoenix Cinema charity. If you'd like to take part in the Bake Off, email [EFtownteam@gmail.com](mailto:EFtownteam@gmail.com) by Friday 15 December at the latest.

Further details about East Finchley's Got Talent & East Finchley Bake Off will be announced soon on [www.east-finchley.london/whats-on](http://www.east-finchley.london/whats-on).

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

**Jacksons Lane Arts Centre** in Highgate is looking for volunteer drivers on Christmas Day to help bring guests to and from their historic Christmas Day Lunch event and also deliver hampers to 200 socially isolated adults in the borough. If you would like to get involved, they would love to hear from you and can be contacted on [sarah@jacksonslane.org.uk](mailto:sarah@jacksonslane.org.uk)

Help young people learn new skills and make friends at **224 North London Air Scouts**, who offer rewarding volunteer and life skills. Whether you're a young adult aged 14-18 looking to volunteer for your Duke of Edinburgh or over 18 and eager to make new friends, they have a spot for you. Do more, be more, and share more by joining [224northlondonscouts.org.uk](http://224northlondonscouts.org.uk). Email [gsl@224northlondonscouts.org.uk](mailto:gsl@224northlondonscouts.org.uk) or call Scout Leader Del on 07707 763344.

Just a couple of hours a week of your time could make a big difference to an older East Finchley resident. **Age UK Barnet** organises weekly friendly chats that can be a lifeline to someone who is isolated. The charity also particularly needs volunteer befrienders, shoppers and walking buddies to give older people the confidence to get out and about. If you have a skill you'd like to share, there are plenty of activity groups you can support too. Get in touch on [volunteering@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageukbarnet.org.uk). For a list of current volunteer roles, check out [www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet)

Become a Proms volunteer! Could you give a few hours a month to help make next year's **Proms at St Jude's** festival a success? The skills or experience needed include admin, IT, organisation and logistics, fundraising and education. It's a great opportunity to get involved in a local community project, gain experience and meet new people. For more information, go to [www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering).

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please send details (max 80 words please) to [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or complete the form at [www.iloveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it](http://www.iloveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it).



### Bee gifts

A wealth of honey-related items will be on offer on Sunday 10 December from 11am to 3pm at 18 Beech Drive, N2 9NY.

Local beekeeper Lucie Chameton, of Miel de Lucie, will be selling her delicious honey, plum jam, blackberry jelly, apple honey and rosemary jelly and quince cheese, along with beeswax candles, beeswax food wraps, beeswax, propolis winter salve (new for 2023) and lavender sachets. This is a great opportunity to stock up on Christmas presents while supporting Finchley Foodbank, to whom all profits will be donated.

### Sixty years of service

Muswell Hill charity CPotential recently celebrated six decades of helping young people with movement disorders such as cerebral palsy and acquired brain injury.

Since 1963, the charity has pioneered new therapy methods and technologies. Each year it works with more than 250 children and delivers 4,500 support sessions.

Joining the CPotential team for their celebration on World Cerebral Palsy Day in October were families, staff, trustees and special guests including Mayor of Haringey, Councillor Lester Buxton, Catherine West MP, Lady Jan Hulme of The Hadley Trust, and Janis, Mitch, and Jane of the Amy Winehouse Foundation.

Brett Parker, CEO of CPotential said: "Keeping a charity sustainable and evolving requires a huge amount of dedication; there are many variables and uncertainties. We all recognise that over the last 60 years the changes to almost every aspect of how we live, and work have been vast. Charities need to respond and influence these changes, holding in their minds and hearts the evolving needs of their beneficiaries."

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## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet Council

52 Bedford Road, N2

Roof extension, involving rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and two front facing roof lights.

22 Deansway, N2

Roof extension including hip to gable, rear dormer window with Juliet balcony, and three front facing roof lights.

50 Deansway, N2

Widening of front driveway, including new brick retaining wall, extension and alterations to existing rear patio, and steps to garden with associated alterations to landscaping.

Flat 2, 40 Fortis Green, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

24 Heath View, N2

Roof extension, including rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and three front facing roof lights.

138 High Road, N2

Partial conversion into four self-contained flats, including first and second-floor rear extension. Associated refuse/recycling/cycle storage.

Land adj to 290 Long Lane, N2

Two-storey dwelling with rooms in the roof space. Associated refuse/recycling store.

Land rear of The Bobath Centre, 250 East End Road, N2

Submission of details of condi-

tion 10 (Demolition and Construction Management and Logistics Plan), pursuant to planning permission.

1A Manor Cottages Approach, N2

Lowering of basement floor level, including creation of rear lightwell. Replacement of hard cover over existing front lightwell with metal grille.

7 New Trinity Road, N2

Seven solar panels to flat roof of dormer, and four front facing panels to sloping roof. Single-storey side and rear extension.

23 Sylvester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension.





# Festival faced cancellation in clash of dates

By David Melsome

Organisers of East Finchley's community festival faced the prospect of cancelling the massively popular event and disappointing thousands of visitors after an admin error by a Barnet Council contractor resulted in the festival's regular date being reserved for another event.

Plans for the 50th anniversary festival in its regular midsummer Sunday slot, this year falling on 23 June, were well under way when the volunteer team were invited by Kent-based company The Event Umbrella, who are contracted to handle Barnet's parks bookings, to submit their repeat event booking.

However, despite submitting their booking well before the 27 October deadline, they were dismayed to find that the date had already been reserved for East Finchley's other big summer event, the Race the Neighbours 10km run, where 300 runners from East Finchley, Highgate and Muswell Hill come together in friendly rivalry.

Entirely innocently, the race team had decided to move their event from its previous date on the first Sunday of June to later in the month. When they requested Sunday 23 June from The Event Umbrella several months ago, before the bookings process had officially opened, they were given the go-ahead with no questions asked.

Unfortunately, the Event Umbrella had not realised that Race the Neighbours were requesting a change of date and

approved the booking before the call had gone out to Barnet's regular events to secure their repeat dates. The festival team had no prospect of moving the festival by even one week as they'd already got sponsors, suppliers and facilities committed and their premises licence was only valid for that weekend.

Fortunately, East Finchley councillor Alison Moore stepped in and escalated the matter to the area's Executive Director, citing the festival's long history and importance within the borough as reasons that it should not be disrupted.

Festival director Alison Roberts said: "It was ironic that, having been acknowledged as Barnet's longest-running festival and invited to consult on the upcoming Barnet Borough of Culture bid, we found ourselves faced with the possibility of having to cancel the 50th East Finchley Festival."

Co-organiser Mike Hughes added, "We're very grateful to Race the Neighbours for being so accommodating and realise that none of this was their fault."

The Archer attempted to reach the Race team and the Event Umbrella for comment.



Long drop: Fire crews make safe the broken masonry and brickwork above the Amazing Grates shop.  
Photo Mike Coles

## Masonry collapses on High Road

By Janet Maitland

A chunk of masonry fell from the top of the Amazing Grates fireplace shop on the High Road at about 9am on Sunday 12 November. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

"I felt sick with the shock of what might have happened," said owner Liz Tew, who called the Fire Brigade soon after it happened.

Fire fighters evacuated the building, put a cordon around it and closed off the bus lane. As soon as their 32-metre turntable ladder arrived, officers were

then able to climb up to ensure the remaining brickwork on both sides of the building was safe.

A surveyor from Barnet Council also came to inspect the damage. "He said he was called out to falling masonry about twice a month in this area," said Liz Tew.

"Our building was put up in about 1905, so wear and tear over time is obviously a factor, but lots of rain doesn't help of course. After our experience, I would advise everyone to check for signs of crumbling bricks and mortar and to call the council surveyor if you're not sure."



Court concerns: Catherine West MP, third from right, meets members at Fortis Green Tennis Club

## MP hears views on tennis club housing

By Diana Cormack

Catherine West MP visited Fortis Green Tennis Club to hear views from members about the proposed redevelopment of the club's grounds, off Southern Road, N2. As we reported last month, site owner Muswell Hill United Reformed Church and developers Capstone Group have put forward plans to build eight homes and a new clubhouse, while reducing the number of tennis courts from four to three.

The MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, in whose constituency the club sits, heard many members express their opposition to the proposals. Like the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) on a previous visit, she also commented on the provision for children. The site as it is laid out now is particularly safe with its single entrance and total lack of traffic.

In its own inspection, the LTA recognised the club's unique features with its spacious tree-lined setting. Mrs West said the venue brought "an extra pair of lungs" to the vicinity.

The tennis club itself had

told neighbouring residents that it had been asked to get involved in the redevelopment discussions but was not supporting the plans as they currently stood.

At the time of writing there were hopes among those who opposed the proposals that a bordering ransom strip of land might play a part in thwarting them.

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# Electric car chargers on the street: how do they work?

By Mike Coles

Many readers will have noticed the circular fixtures with lights that are being installed along pavements around East Finchley. These are pavement-level on-street electric vehicle (EV) charging points of a particular unique design supplied by the Scottish company Trojan Energy.

Barnet Council secured a £5.19m government grant from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS) who will pay for 60% of the total project costs of installing 1,293 EV charge points. Trojan Energy is installing them.

## Are the charging points borough-wide or just in N2?

**Robert Poole:** The latest round of installations represent phase 2 of the Trojan project. Phase 1 saw the installation of 463 Trojan Energy units across 33 sites; phase 2 will build on this by installing 793 charge points across 65 sites across the borough.

## When will they be online and how will motorists be notified?

Phase 1 of the project is now live and operational. Installations for phase 2 will be taking place between now and April 2024, with the commissioning taking place once individual sites are finished. Residents will be notified via a targeted letter drop and social media posts. The council will also be getting in touch with residents who have previously requested a charge point, and will be updating its webpages accordingly.

**Who will provide the 'lance' that pavement-level points need and how much will they cost?**

The distribution of the lances will be controlled by the council but will be done by Trojan. A resident will be asked to provide a deposit of £100; however, this will then be provided as charging credit and taken off the first few charges. In order to sign up to

the system and secure a lance, residents should visit: <https://trojan.energy/hub-locations/london-borough-of-barnet>

## Are other charging points from different suppliers being installed in Barnet?

Barnet already has 200 lamp column charge points and 16 freestanding charge points within town centre locations. Additionally, between now and April, the Council will also be installing 500 lamp column charge points, the locations of which will be based on resident request, and up to 120 JOLT charge points.

## What charging rate will the pavement-level chargers give and how much will it cost?

They will provide charging speeds of up to 22kW. The current tariff on the phase units is £0.45/kWh. However, this will be kept under review and change in line with wider energy prices.

## Will the road adjacent to the chargers be painted 'Electric Vehicles Only' and will there be fines for non-electric cars parking there?

The number of charge points installed means that we do not envisage having to dedicate bays as EV-only, meaning that the parking provision for residents will remain the same. We therefore do not foresee the installations as causing significant issues with congestion or loss of parking as we are not planning any changes to existing parking arrangements.

**Thank you to Cllr Arjun Mitra for his help in sourcing this information**



Pavement power: One of the new street chargers in action

But how can you get the power from the surface fixture on the pavement into your car? Apart from parking near the charging point and having an account, you will need to carry what Trojan Energy calls a 'lance' in the boot of your car. This is a device which looks a bit like a stirrup pump that plugs into the pavement fixture and has a cable that plugs into your car. Following a simple procedure and checking coloured lights, you press the plunger and make a connection.

The Archer asked Robert Poole, the EV Infrastructure Service Manager at Barnet Council, for more information on these pavement-level electric vehicle charging points and his plans for future installations.

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.



## Digital explosion

By Peter Hale

Barnet's Streetscape Design Guide encourages global advertising companies to install large stand-alone advertising units, for a 15-year contract, on our pavements to support revenue generation for the council. The Design Guide deems this "as part of commercial success".

With the current installation of 793 electric vehicle charge units in our residential streets, there is inevitably disruption during the works, but at least they are flush with the pavement when not in use. However, as part of Barnet Council's investment to provide for residents' electric vehicles, they have quietly slipped into the contract the installation of 120 Jolt EV charge units, to be installed on the pavements in Barnet's high streets.

These units are the same large black advertising hubs already cluttering our pavements, for example outside Budgens and Iceland. They are justified by the council as they incorporate an EV charge unit, so we will end up with more advertising units blighting our pavements.

Each Jolt unit is required to have a planning application, so it is possible to object to a particular installation – but a statement from Barnet Street Scene Service in each application threatens that, if planning permission were refused, this would impact the council's EV charge point programme and the council's ability to secure funding in the future.

Advertising units are proliferating on high streets in the borough. Are we content that the council makes money from this physical and visual disorder intruding on our pavements or should we send the council a message that we want revisions to the Design Guide so that future generations enjoy an improved pedestrian environment?

East Finchley seems to have its quota of advertising units already so probably will not get the Jolt charge units, but I have sympathy for other areas of the borough who have to take some of the 120 on their high street pavements. Barnet Council's motto is caring for people, our places and the planet, let's ask the council to put their words into practice, pavements are for people.



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Boxed up: Staff at CW Andrew pharmacy collect items for Ukraine

## Hand in items for the punishing winter

By Lynn Winton

Family-run pharmacist CW Andrew is among those supporting the winter push to get aid to people in need by accepting donations for local initiative Driving Aid to Ukraine. The charity is the brainchild of Lynmouth Road resident Michael Byrne, whose career, spanning many roles in delivering healthcare both in and out of the NHS, provided him with the skill sets to be especially well placed to organise aid.

"We have now delivered over 200 tons of vital humanitarian aid over 18 journeys," confirmed Michael, whose last transport run was on 18 November. Such is the charity's reputation for speed and logistics, they have now created partnerships with other countries, including

France and Italy, to help them deliver goods too.

Michael and his collection team, led by Springcroft Avenue resident Nicola Cousins, will collect or accept delivery of any lightly used clothing, bedding, new toiletries and medical aids. With the Ukraine's punishing

cold winter on its way, anything warm is especially welcome. The full list of items can be found on their website [driving-aidtoulkraine.org](http://driving-aidtoulkraine.org). Michael can be contacted on 07791 912389 and Nicola by email at [nicola-cousins0812@gmail.com](mailto:nicola-cousins0812@gmail.com)





# Debt cases rise as cost-of-living crisis continues to bite

By Violet Mermelstein, Citizens Advice Barnet  
Debt has been one of the most pressing issues at Citizens Advice Barnet in 2023. The organisation has already helped more than 1,000 people in the borough with debt-related issues and these numbers are set to increase sharply over the Christmas period.

Last year, the winter months saw a jump of over 50% in community members coming to us with fuel debts, and we expect this number to rise again as the cost of living goes on climbing.

For those who find themselves in these difficult situations, the Citizens Advice Barnet website at [barnetcab.org.uk](http://barnetcab.org.uk) has dedicated videos for managing energy costs and debts. Our energy adviser Natalie helps people manage debts, overpayments and tariff troubles alongside our specialist debt advisers.

### Michael's story

When Michael first sits down to tell me his story, I can see that he is uneasy. A cheerful gentleman in his 70s, it is clear that it is hard for him to discuss the last few months. After retiring nearly a decade ago, Michael tells me he struggled to manage his own affairs. Shaking his head, he says with a self-deprecating smile: "I feel like a hairdresser trying to cut his own hair."

Not knowing how to claim

a pension and living entirely on his savings, Michael ran out of money and found himself quickly trapped under a growing mountain of debt. When I assure him this has become all too common during the cost of living crisis, he shakes his head: "I felt like I couldn't talk about it. It was a feeling unlike anything else. At my stage in life you've coped with so much, bereavement and injury and loss, but this is a different kind of hell." Our support for Michael is ongoing. After chatting with me, he is seeing one of our advisers for help with his energy debts. There is no easy fix to finding yourself in this kind of situation, but Michael assures me that he is feeling more positive following his appointments with us. As Christmas approaches, we at Citizens Advice Barnet want to make sure that people like Michael are not left alone with their problems. It costs £19.94 to fund a free phone call with an adviser. Please donate whatever you can afford on our website: [barnetcab.org.uk](http://barnetcab.org.uk).



A full life: Joan Edwards at home in Leopold Road, N2, and, right, as a young woman

# A woman of East Finchley... in memory of Joan Edwards

By Ruth Anders

Joan Eileen Edwards (née Harvey), who died in October aged 102, spent her entire life in Leopold Road, East Finchley. Born in August 1921 at number 48 to Albert and Cecelia, she was the youngest of seven children and a pupil at Holy Trinity School.

She left education at 14, her parents unable to pay for further schooling. As a child she bought bread from Rincroft the bakers in Church Lane, N2, and collected coal from Jackson's Yard in Market Place. Joan and her sisters would picnic on the farmland at the top of Church Lane or walk across the fields to play among the haystacks with an uninterrupted view of Hampstead, before the building of the Garden Suburb was complete.

In her teens Joan enjoyed "working to process photographs in the dark room of a photographer, reviewing the images of all the good-looking men", her son-in-law Dave told *The Archer*. When war broke out, she moved to Simms Motor Units in Oak Lane, N2, to do war production work.

The 13-strong Edwards family lived next door at number 46, one of whom, Horace William Edwards (known as Nid), would eventually become Joan's husband in May 1944. In 1953 the pair moved across the road to live at 17 Leopold Road. A daughter, three granddaughters and seven great grandchildren followed. Nid died in 1991, and Joan remained fiercely

independent until becoming unwell last year.

During her long life she undertook an assortment of jobs, cleaning the Muswell Hill police station, acting as an office block tea lady, and delivering parcels, before running a sandwich round and an ironing service. Joan loved shopping in the West End with a friend or her niece, taking river trips and visiting Buckingham Palace. Dave added, "It's amazing that Joan had such a long life as her diet was supplemented by vast amounts of home fried chips, double cream and sweets."

The Edwards family legacy continues in Leopold Road, where Joan's great grandson William still lives.

# Race night brings the cash rolling in

Back in October, the East Finchley Constitutional Club held a race night in aid of the University College London Hospitals Charity Cancer Fund. The night was organised by Liz and Dave Gardner and the East Finchley Constitutional Club Sub Committee, with Bill Harrigan as the compere.

The charity is particularly close to everyone at the club's hearts as it has been treating long time member and treasurer Dave since he received his cancer diagnosis eight years ago. Dave and Liz have received excellent treatment and support from the charity so the Club wanted to give something back.

The Club was packed out with around 80 members, friends, family and people from the community coming out to support the cause. There were eight races that people could bet on with half the money taken being kept for the charity and the other half being paid out in winnings. So far this year the Club has raised £4,300.

Local businesses, friends and family donated prizes for the raffle. The Club thanked



And they're off! Dave and Liz Gardner at the club race night

Josephines Flowers, Gus Metin & Sam hairdresser, men's hairdresser, the Phoenix Kokos shoes, Yelanda Leeds Cinema, Tony's Continental, Cakes and Brenda Mansfield.

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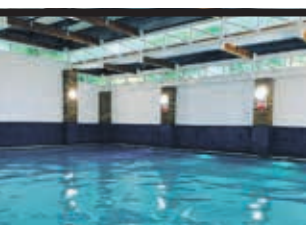
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# Meet some of the faces running the food bank

By Louis Victor, Finchley Foodbank

Let me introduce you to a small cross section of the regular volunteers at Finchley Foodbank, who are ready and waiting to welcome you to join them. We hope you enjoy reading their profiles and that it might provide inspiration for you to become part of the food bank family.

Based in St Mary's Church in the High Road, N2, most of our volunteers live within walking distance or a short bus ride away. If you can find the time to help out for a minimum of two shifts per month, manager Anna Maughan would love to hear from you at [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com).



**Libby** began volunteering in the pandemic and is now a long standing team member. "It gives me so much; a place to feel like I am doing something to help, a community of kind people, and an outlet for all the anxiety that's happening in the world."



**Lucy** has worked in various universities for 35 years. "I joined five years ago and I love it. Do volunteer, it's very enriching and gives you perspective."



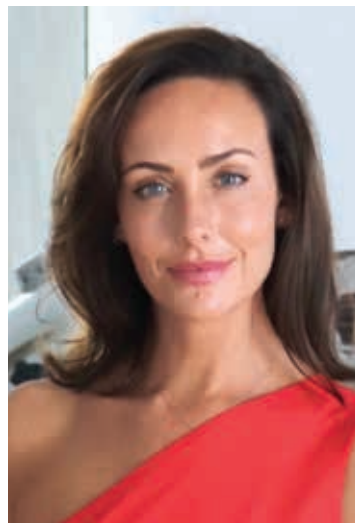
**Holly** is a fanatical crossworder, content writer and aspiring Francophone. "I have found immense joy volunteering at the food bank. I've had the pleasure of meeting some remarkable people, volunteers and clients alike."



**Afua** is a martial art expert, having trained in Krav Maga for eight years. "This vital work is eye opening and deeply enriching. I've so enjoyed meeting people and helping this amazing community."



**Susan and Eddie** are also fairly new recruits, and find, as retired people, it gives structure to their week. "We rock up at the church hall and help distribute fresh veg from allotments, bread from the local bakeries and then the staple foods like pasta. Halal foods too. So glad we joined up."



**Tabitha** started volunteering in 2021, and when she's not volunteering can be found travelling, usually on a thrill-seeking adventure. "This organisation is such a beautiful thing. The time flies during the sessions."



**Maria** is a keen tennis player and avid reader. "Like most volunteers, I assist in the collection and sorting of donations, but also provide administrative support which I find extremely rewarding."



**Steve**, who organises flamenco shows, got involved four years ago and enjoys that there is fun to be had. "Like Esther Rantzen, we are easily amused by deliveries of misshapen veg. And thanks to Google I can translate vital information into the many languages spoken here, so I now know the Ukrainian for deodorant."



**Louis** is a retired school librarian, who has just clocked up his first year at Finchley Foodbank. "I love meeting the clients and helping out. When I'm not here you'll find me reading, at the theatre, or walking."

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## From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

**10 years ago: December 2013**

Teething problems affected the implementation of Barnet Council's new refuse and recycling scheme, the first few weeks of which saw uncollected waste on the streets and many complaints from residents. Many households did not receive their new bins in time for the changeover and there was confusion over the new timetable for collection days, all of which took some time to resolve and bed in.

**15 years ago: December 2008**

Readers celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of East Finchley Library, which was opened in 1938 by Alderman Pike, Mayor of Finchley. It was the third library to open in the new Borough of Finchley and was intended for "the professional worker, the artisan, the student and the general reader (including children)". Despite many tribulations in the years since, East Finchley Library still exists to serve its local community.

**23 years ago: December 2000**

For the second time in a year, a group of Martin School pupils were chosen to perform at what was then the Millennium Dome. They were to be included in the London Borough of Barnet's 'Our Town Story', part of a nationwide programme sponsored by McDonald's. The programme enabled people to tell the past, present and future story of their communities and the children's piece 'Changing Places' was the only one from a Barnet junior school selected to go on to the Dome.



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Game of skill: Annabel and Sophie with their bridge coach Sue Johnson. Photo Milly Sutton

## Take your partners, please

By David Gritten

You may not immediately associate the card game Bridge as an obvious pastime for 10-year-old girls. But Annabel Sutton and Sophie Ward, two pupils at Coldfall Primary, where it is an optional after-school activity, have been playing Bridge for just over a year. And remarkably, they have now been invited to join the England Under-16 Bridge team, where they will be among the youngest players in the group.

The two girls are devoted to Bridge, and play it outside regular school hours, either in person or online, for some six to eight hours each week. Their ambition now is to be part of the international team representing England.

None of this has happened by accident. Annabel and Sophie have been coached by the highly rated Sue Johnson, who is based nearby in Muswell Hill, and runs the Bridge club New

Tricks, not a commercial venture but a UK-registered charity. Sue works with a number of schools in north London, teaching Bridge to interested pupils. She has been described in the media as “the fairy godmother of Bridge”.

In a delightful sideline, Sue has noticed that several parents of New Tricks pupils have themselves taken up Bridge, and meet up in evenings and at weekends in order to play.

Annabel’s mother Milly Sutton makes the point that while Bridge is widely considered to be a game for older people, it is also an ideal means of keeping the brain active and refreshing the memory, as well as being an easy way to mingle with new people.

**Town Team date**  
The Town Team Christmas social meeting will take place on Thursday 14 December at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, 9, The Walks, N2.

Anyone who is interested or wants to contribute ideas is welcome. Light seasonal refreshments will be provided and drinks are available at the bar. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

## Why we must never lose sight of human rights

Debora Singer explains why the work of the human rights charity where she is a volunteer is more important than ever in today’s war-torn world.

When I retired from running the Women’s Project at Asylum Aid four years ago, I made two key changes to my life. One was to move to East Finchley where I enjoy Cherry Tree Wood, the local shops and the sense of community. The second was to continue using my campaigning experience for human rights.

Sunday 10 December sees the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, published by the newly formed United Nations in 1948. This was written as a response to the Holocaust so that never again would a state perpetuate gross violations on its citizens with impunity. It was the first time that a community of nations had made a declaration of human rights and freedoms. It remains the most translated document in the world.

The charity I volunteer for, René Cassin, is named for the co-writer of the Declaration, French Jewish lawyer, Monsieur René Cassin. He had himself lost most of his family in the Holocaust.

Based in North London, René Cassin is the Jewish voice for human rights. We use our experience as a Jewish community to speak up for minorities in the UK who are now facing the types of abuses we experienced all those years ago. Hence our work against discrimination and modern slavery and for asylum seekers and refugees.

My theme is the human rights framework in the UK. Working with other organisations we saw off the Bill of Rights which weakened the Human Rights Act. Now my focus is on the proposal by some senior government ministers to withdraw from



Rights campaigner: Debora Singer

the European Convention on Human Rights, the offspring of the Declaration. My time is spent producing parliamentary briefings and social media campaigns emphasising the importance of remaining within the European Convention.

The Convention plays a huge role in numerous human rights advances including freedom to wear religious symbols, same-sex marriage, rights for disabled people and those fleeing domestic violence. It is a cornerstone of the Northern Ireland peace agreement and Scottish devolution.

Most recently I was involved in making a film of key Jewish people explaining why we need to stay signed into the Convention. The film includes local Olivier award winning actor, and René Cassin ambassador, Elliott Levey, which you can see on our website [renecassin.org](http://renecassin.org).

With the conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine, Afghanistan, the Declaration and the Convention continue to be needed as a framework for human rights across the world.

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## Stanley undefeated at UK chess champs

Congratulations to 14-year-old Stanley Badacsonyi from East Finchley for winning the UK Chess Challenge under-14 final at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

Thousands of children from all over the UK competed in qualifying rounds and the final 12 in each category competed in an 11-round all-play-all tournament. Stanley, a year 9 student at Fortismere School, who started playing chess aged nine at Coldfall School, played over 30,000 games online during lockdown, and is currently ranked first in both blitz and rapid chess in his age group in England. Stanley said: “This was my third consecutive year playing at Blenheim Palace. I really enjoyed the last two years and gained loads of experience playing, but I enjoyed it even more when I won the whole thing without losing a game!”



Chess king: Stanley Badacsonyi





## Residents drum up a special day

Barnet Mayor Councillor Nagus Narenthira was guest of honour as The Finchley Charities marked Black History month in October with a lunch and a session of African drumming at its residential site in Wilmot Close, N2.



Numbers up: Some of Celia Rufey's French-inspired signs

## Celia's signs make the French connection in Fortis Green

By Diana Cormack

If you've ever travelled through France, you may well have noticed the blue or green house numbers and signs typical of that country. These enamelled signs were once the rule for every house and they became popular with tourists who wanted to buy them for their own homes. However, many were disappointed as the signs were not easily found in shops.

Step in East Finchley resident Celia Rufey. Nearly 20 years ago she was working on the readers' queries page of *Homes and Gardens* magazine when a letter arrived enquiring about how to get one of these signs.

Celia searched for someone who could make them and, after help from the French Embassy's Trade Department, she used a series of factories over the years. Eventually circumstances made it necessary to make them nearer home.

It was hard to find an expert vitreous enameller in Britain to work on the delicate glass-based

signs and produce different graphics or fonts, not to mention slogans. Visit [www.franco-file.co.uk](http://www.franco-file.co.uk) for full details. Clients from around the world contact Celia at her Fortis Green home with their specific requirements. Being bespoke, the signs make a unique and unusual present.

*The Archer* came across Celia at The Muswell Hill Club's November Art and Craft's fair in aid of the North London Hospice. Looking at the variety on display (pictured) it was amazing to think that these typically French plaques originated here in East Finchley.

## REVIEW: *Treason The Musical*

Alexandra Palace Theatre  
By Jessica Holt

The story of the Gunpowder Plot is a historic tale of division, religious persecution, and brutality, ending in an ambitious yet failed plot to bring down both the monarchy and the government. Now *Treason the Musical* is set to blow audiences away with stunning original folk and pop songs. This one-of-a-kind show tells one of the most intriguing tales in Britain's history as it's never been seen before.

It creates a tense and fearful atmosphere with the opening scene of a Catholic marriage held in secret. The groom Thomas Percy falls under the influence of Guy Fawkes as he strives for justice in a divided England now ruled by James I of Scotland.

The songs are simply exquisite and sung so beautifully and, in my view, on a par with musicals such as *Les Misérables*. The narrative may not be as strong as that West End blockbuster focussed mainly as it is on the Catholic couple who eventually drift apart as a result of Percy's treason.

The set is impressive; soft browns matching the soft browns of the costumes, and very few other colours, successfully creating a sense of time and the gloomy atmosphere of the period. The lighting effects are sensational, contributing to mood and more importantly directing the action.

This production is well worth seeing, hugely enjoyable shedding light on a troubled time.

## Talented cellist earns place in national orchestra

By Rachel Rubinsohn

At just 15 years old, Kalli Ziegler is among the youngest musicians to have been inducted into the National Youth Orchestra (NYO) of Great Britain. For this academic year, Kalli will be representing East Finchley as one of 18 cellists in the 158-strong ensemble of the nation's finest teenage musicians.

The year ahead is set to be a busy one, with a tour schedule that will take the orchestra to iconic venues across the country, from London's Barbican to the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham. The NYO usually performs at the BBC Proms, although the official line-up is yet to be published.

The young, savvy musicians of the NYO are in a unique position to make classical music relevant to their generation, a responsibility they do not take lightly.

Reflecting on a recent collaboration between the NYO and its partner programme NYO Inspire, which serves



Strings to her bow: Kalli Ziegler

Kalli first picked up the cello at the age of six, enchanted by its warm, resonant sound. She has since been an active participant of chamber and symphony orchestras, balancing a full school timetable with Saturday classes at the Royal College of Music. Admission to the NYO represents yet another triumph in this decorated musical journey, having sailed through a gruelling series of auditions and assessments.

underprivileged communities, Kalli was adamant in her faith in the power of music to bring people together, and bridge divides: "These events open classical music up to everyone, encouraging people from different backgrounds to play music together, share ideas and attend concerts."

Those wishing to see what the NYO has to offer can visit [www.nyo.org.uk](http://www.nyo.org.uk) for a full list of upcoming performances.

## Christmas singalong

Age UK is opening its doors for a festive celebration of music and song where guests can enjoy a singalong and mince pies, plus a raffle and tombola, and a chance to buy cards designed by its art group. The event takes place on Monday 11 December from 3pm to 5pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. To register, email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call Teresa on 07502 989 403.





# Bump in the road for Robin's tumour treatment

By Lynn Winton

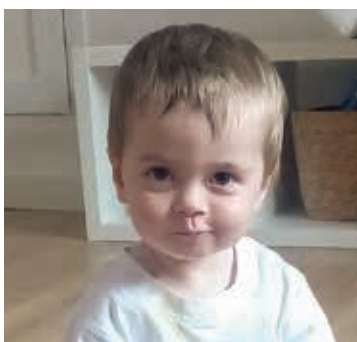
Back in October, readers of *The Archer* were among many who responded to a desperate plea for financial help from local couple Rachel and Nick Samuel, whose baby Robin had been diagnosed with a ferocious tumour, known as a neuroblastoma.

After their son had numerous operations and punishing chemo cycles at Great Ormond Street, the family were raising funds for treatment at Barcelona's Sant Joan de Deu hospital. Its groundbreaking immunotherapy, not available

"On arrival, the medical team discovered some badly-behaving cancer cells were trying to activate and so overnight, rather than start the treatment, it became a rescue mission. Luckily the operation was 100% successful and Robin was, again, 100% awesome."

Robin might have come through this setback with flying colours, and his medical team are still confident he will make a full recovery, but it has added a huge chunk to the hospital bill. Robin is now on his way to receiving his second (of seven) cycles of immunotherapy, but the treatment can only continue if there are funds, and the third cycle requires another £65,000.

Dad Nick, who is a saxophonist and composer, is planning many local fundraising gigs. If you would like to help Robin, the family's crowdfunder QR code is below, or you can go to crowdfunder.co.uk and search using keywords "robin cancer london". You can also follow their planned events on twitter @savebabyrobin. Rachel and Nick can be contacted on 07399 447705 or rachel.samuel@myyahoo.com.



Treatment: Robin Samuel

here, will give him an excellent chance of growing up to be a healthy adult.

Robin, now two, has had his first round of this immunotherapy and I spoke to his mother Rachel to find out about his progress.

"Please thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts. There aren't adequate words to describe what your support means to us. It has been a roller-coaster of a time, and sadly not the fun-of-the-fair kind," she said.



Coming through: The Finchley Girls U-18 side in action. Photo Crocodile Snaps

## Finchley Girls bring it home

Exactly two years on from their first-ever match, Finchley Girls RFC were out in force at the Girls Festival of Rugby 2023 at RAF Halton, Aylesbury, in October, competing among more than 1,400 young female players from clubs across the country.

Teaming up with their friends at Hampstead RFC, Finchley fielded five teams across four age bands from ages 11 to 18, with 70 girls representing the club in their red and white stripes. The Under 12s enjoyed teaming up with girls from Saracens. Having completed all their group phase matches, they went on to beat Kettering, Buckingham and Gosford All Blacks in a physical final to secure victory in the Plate Competition.

Finchley Under 14s faced tough opposition in their pool, but put the effort in to score tries throughout the day. The Under 16s B team, consisting of many players new to the game in recent months, held their own through the pool stages, growing stronger throughout the day. The Under 18s progressed through their pool and knock-out stages to face Gosford All Blacks, a tough, well established team in the final, eventually coming away runners up.

And last but not least, the Finchley U16s A team went undefeated all day, running up dominant wins against prominent teams including Welwyn, Fullarians, Buckingham and going on to beat Old Albanians

10-5 in a tense and exciting final.

Head coach Chris Grilli said: "To see how far we have come in the last two years, starting with just seven girls on a cold, wet Thursday evening, to where we are now, is just incredible. It's testament to the dedication of the players and parents, but also the coaches and admins

who put in so much time and effort to offer this amazing team sport to this awesome bunch of girls. To say I was a little emotional after the final whistle is a bit of an understatement." If you or a girl you know would like to be part of Finchley Girls RFC, contact Emily Grilli on 07890 554505.

## RICKY SAVAGE ...

### Bardolatory

Time to brush up your Shakespeare because this year has been the year of the Bard. Okay, in the world of GCSE English every year is the year of the Bard as another generation of kids try to dissect a 400+-year-old play to find out what it tells us about the human soul before being force-fed a recording from the BBC Shakespeare collection.

So what's been special about this year? Well, it's 400 years since a couple of actor mates of Will's decided to publish his complete works in the first folio. It's thanks to them that his 38 plays got gathered together and passed down like some kind of literary holy grail. And why every castaway on Desert Island Discs gets to take all his plays and the Bible with them.

Shakespeare isn't boring. He gives us suicide pacts, regicide, revenge, young love, murder, death, feuds and a mass of vaguely necessary violence all in a couple of hours and all in one play if we are talking about *Romeo and Juliet*. Look a bit further and you get a man with an ass's head called Bottom, a prince of Denmark staring at a skull as he tries to avenge his father's death, a king desperate for a horse, mistaken identities, love, lust and racism.

Such was his power that by the time Britain got down to conquering most of the world in the name of King or Queen, Shakespeare was one of the cornerstones of British life they took with them into empire. The genius Stratfordian ruled supreme as someone, somewhere was always reciting from *Hamlet*. The sun may have set occasionally on the British Empire, but it sure as hell did not set on Shakespeare.

Not everyone liked this. Starting in the 1850s in America people staring asking whether Shakespeare really wrote the plays. How could a clever grammar schoolboy and actor pen such perfection? Their answer was he couldn't; it had to be a university educated aristocrat like the Earl of Oxford.

In 1920 the appropriately named J Thomas Looney brought out 'Shakespeare Identified' which claimed to prove the real genius was Oxford. People like Charlie Chaplin, Sigmund Freud and Prince Philip were convinced. But they were wrong. The complete works were written by a grammar schoolboy because that's what clever grammar schoolboys do. So, brush up your Shakespeare, because all the world's a stage and Will wrote the words for players to perform on it.

## Treasure trove of craft treats

Craftspeople, artists and eager buyers packed a special fair at The Muswell Hill Club in Fortis Green on Thursday 26 October, helping to raise money for the North London Hospice. Decorations, glass works, jewellery and terrariums were just some of the items available to browse and buy.

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## What's On at the Phoenix in December

By Zalan Pall,  
general manager



An action epic, a children's favourite, classics, live opera and ballet, plus many more treats await you at Phoenix in December.

**Napoleon**, from Friday 8 December, is Ridley Scott's spectacle-filled action epic that details the rise and fall of the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, played by Oscar winner Joaquin Phoenix and also starring Vanessa Kirby from *The Crown* as Josephine.

Based on the extraordinary character at the centre of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Roald Dahl's most iconic children's book **Wonka** tells the wondrous story of how the world's greatest inventor, magician and chocolate-maker became the beloved Willy Wonka we know today. It plays from Friday 15 December.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have the Met Opera's **Flancia en el Amazonas** on Saturday 9 December and the Royal Opera House's **The Nutcracker** on Tuesday 12 December. We also celebrate the New Year with the **Berliner Philharmoniker in Concert** on Sunday 31 December.

Elsewhere in December, we carry on with our fantastic Powell and Pressburger classic season by screening **I Know Where**

**We're Going** on Sunday 3 December, **Black Narcissus** on Sunday 10 December and **The Red Shoes** on Sunday 17 December.

Then from Boxing Day, **Next Goal Wins** follows the American Samoa soccer team on their journey from no-hopers to qualification for the 2014 World Cup. In this heartfelt underdog comedy, the team hires down-on-his-luck, maverick coach (Michael Fassbender) hoping he will turn their fortunes around.

From Monday 1 January we are screening **One Life**, starring Sir Anthony Hopkins and a tremendous cast. The film pays heartwarming tribute to the remarkable humanitarian effort of Nicholas Winton, who helped save hundreds of children from the Nazis on the eve of the Second World War.

*Become a Friend of the Phoenix and help the cinema stay independent. Friends packages include free tickets and discounts off regular ticket prices and refreshments. It's a Christmas present that can be used again and again. Find out more at [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk) or ask at the box office.*

## Family church opens its doors

A new family-centred church community has launched at the Tarling Road Community Hub, N2, with an open invitation to all families to join its after-school services for activities, songs, Bible stories and creative prayers.

The weekly gatherings of Families Church take place every Tuesday during school term from 3.30-4.30 pm. The newly launched church is the first new venture from church@five, a church based on the neighbouring estate of Strawberry Value. Its leader, Revd Helen Shannon, wants to see every estate and low-income

area of the UK have access to an open, accessible church community.

"Everyone's welcome to come and celebrate the goodness and kindness of the N2 community. We're just wanting to provide a space to help make that happen," she said. Find out more on Facebook at 'families.church.tarling.road'

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## Sophie has the station all sewn up

By Ruth Anders

The winner of Transport for London's recent Art in Bloom competition has found a different and imaginative way of recording urban scenes. The only stipulation from TfL was that entries must feature one of the stations entered for their Underground in Bloom competition.

Sophie Levi-Kallin uses fabric to create images of inner-city landscapes, including her winning impression of East Finchley Tube station. She was inspired by a photo she took from the Tube train one day on her journey home, and her win was celebrated at a recent event at City Hall.

North Finchley-based Sophie has been creating textile art for the last two years, picturing scenes as diverse as the Oxo Tower in Waterloo, South Kensington's Natural History Museum, the Dollis Brook Viaduct and our own Phoenix Cinema. Together with her mother, brother and sister, also artists, she has held exhibitions at Burgh House in Hampstead and Lauderdale House in Highgate.

In her day job she deals with demand on the Underground, analysing those travelling, and calculating how future demand may develop and how services might be changed to meet those demands. This includes quantifying the benefits of installing



Material girl: Sophie Levi-Kallin and her fabric creation

step-free access in stations, something close to many travellers' hearts.

The mother-of-three told *The Archer*: "I work part-time for TfL, and make my collages on other days when the children are at school. My job tends to be rather maths- and analysis-based, so I need an artistic outlet to satisfy my creative side. I only use scraps or found fabrics,

never buying anything; I only machine, never hand-stitch; and no sticking, painting or dyeing."

Sophie only creates images taken from real life, and added: "I love it when people recognise the places in my fabric pictures." You can see more about Sophie on her Instagram account @sewthescene and her website [www.sewthescene.co.uk](http://www.sewthescene.co.uk)

## Tales from a career coping with the stars

By Claire Biek

Celebrity personal assistant and long-time N2 resident Merryl Futerman has written her first book which, funnily enough, is about a young celebrity PA living in, you guessed it, the local area, specifically Muswell Hill.

From the get-go, *Don't Make a Scene* is fast-paced and fun, exposing the reality of a job that many think of as glamorous whilst revealing jaw-dropping stories about the life of a personal assistant to the stars.

You can be sure that although the stories in the book are fictitious, they are somewhat based on real life, with one case in point in the first chapter being an outlandish request regarding a Parka coat.

As you might have already guessed, Merryl wrote from what she knows. She was a celebrity PA for 25 years, counting the likes of Julian Clary and Jonathan Ross amongst her clientele. Although she enjoyed her job, she'd always wanted to be a writer, loving the imagination and escapism of fiction.

She said the idea for *Don't Make a Scene* came to her over her years in the job, developed from an accumulation of stories and experiences. She'd attended a few writing classes in the past, but really it was lockdown putting her job on hold that finally gave her the chance to pursue her dream.

Having lived in East Finchley and Muswell Hill for the last 30 years, Merryl decided to set her book here. She has always loved the area's individuality, particularly East Finchley's, noting the



Funny stories: Merryl Futerman celebrates her first novel

Phoenix, Campbell & Syme, and Cherry Tree Wood as some of her favourite local spots.

To help build up anticipation, Merryl has decided to hide some of her books around the area. If you're lucky enough to find one, do contact her (you'll find a note inside) and then pass the book on.





Letters

Traffic trials

Dear Editor

The situation on the road outside East Finchley Station, running all the way to the North Circular road, is a continuing source of jams due to halving the road space for the cycle lane. It is worst just outside the station where, on the three busy times of the day, there is a queue of cars crawling along, stopping and starting and emitting fumes.

Started in November 2020, the scheme is a disaster. Barnet Council's website said: "The road was identified as an important new cycling route introduced on the basis of an experiment with consultation to take place during the life of the scheme." There has been no consultation, and a review of the scheme was promised but has not happened.

I walk past the station each day and drive frequently. It is rare to see more than two cyclists, and the idea that people will stop using their cars and walk or cycle clearly is not happening.

In addition the 20mph speed limit is universally ignored by cars, buses and indeed police cars. Traffic adapts sensibly to conditions, and when not at a standstill drives generally at 25-30 mph, which is a reasonable speed for an open main road with good visibility. So far, little enforcement has taken place, unlike in the main Finchley Road where a colleague was fined for doing 24mph.

It is not difficult to understand the financial incentives for councils behind this limit, which may be reasonable in narrow side roads or where there is a school, but in an open large clear main road is entirely unnecessary.

**Barry H White**  
Fordington Road, N6.

## East Finchley a century ago at Christmas

By Frank Edwards

**Praise for voters, coal for the winter, a concert that never was and festive fun. This is just some of the news from East Finchley in December 1923, 100 years ago this month, taken from national newspaper archives.**

### Intelligent voters

In December 1923, there was a General Election. Holy Trinity School, then on East End Road, was a polling station, as were North Road schools, now known as Martin School. Here there were "streams of voters and queues of perambulators". A presiding officer, impressed by residents' knowledge of how to vote, commended East Finchley electors as "most intelligent".

It was also winter. To assist with the cost of heating, Finchley Charities invited East Finchley's "deserving poor" to apply for an allocation of coal. Preference went to widows, aged persons and those out of work.

### Imaginary concert

Cold or not, it was the season to be merry. To spread cheer, Douglas Gentle, a 15-year-old engineer's assistant from Elmfield Road, N2, had 100 tickets printed for an entertainment by the Long Lane Concert Party at Holy Trinity Hall in Church Lane. Proceeds were in aid of the Royal Northern Hospital and Douglas instructed that the printing bill be sent there. Douglas and Sydney Frater, a 15-year-old errand boy from Market Place, sold the tickets at 1s each.

All good so far, except this was a scam, 1920s style. There was no Long Lane Concert Party and no planned entertainment. The hospital was surprised by the arrival of the printing bill.

The East Finchley Tradesmen Cricket Club, who had booked the hall on the night in question, were surprised by the arrival of many eager concert-goers. Apprehended, Douglas and Sydney appeared before Highgate Police Court. Douglas accepted full responsibility for the fraud and said he got the idea "from reading a book". The court placed him on probation for three years and let Sydney off with a warning.

### Festive cheer

There were other entertainments in the festive season of 1923 to attract those disappointed by the Long Lane Concert Party non-event. A Grand Christmas Fair at North Road schools offered a ventriloquist and Punch and Judy. All Saints' Church in Durham Road hosted a lecture on Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas. On Boxing Day, the Finchley Carnival Amateur Dramatic Society performed *Babes in the Wood* at Holy Trinity Hall.

For those who stayed at home, a local paper printed over 60 "Conundrums" to amuse and divert. One of the best (which says something about the rest) ran: "How did the householder know the burglar was a blacksmith? Because he made a bolt for the door."

And that's a Happy Christmas from East Finchley, a hundred years ago this month.



New business: Nadya Angelova at the Timberzone store in the High Road

## Flooring shop sets up base in High Road

By Ruth Anders

**Readers will have noticed a surprise replacement for the Martyn Gerrard office at 146 High Road, when wood flooring company Timberzone appeared a few weeks ago. Timberzone began activities 15 years ago and has relocated from Watford.**

"We wanted to move further into London", explained manager Nadya Angelova, "and East Finchley, with its friendly High Road and shopkeepers felt just right".

The shop was much in need of attention when she first took it over, admits Nadya, but after a radical refurbishment one would never guess. The rich scent of timber greets visitors at the door, as do the racks of standard and custom-built samples of wooden flooring.

Nadya, who is Bulgarian and runs her own wellness business in Edgware in the evenings and at weekends, has worked for Albanian-owned Timberzone for over three years. Arriving in

the UK nine years ago she spent five years as a property lettings manager in Watford and Hemel Hempstead.

She explained that the company imports their timber from the Ukraine and Lithuania. Timberzone can provide every step of the process from initial consultation, survey and design through to installation, warranty and maintenance.

Nadya added that "Clients are like our family: they let us into their house where we discuss everything from infrastructure and underfloor heating issues to the look and feel they are after. It's very personal." For further information visit [www.timberzone.co.uk](http://www.timberzone.co.uk)

## REVIEW: Oh, What a Lovely War

Artsdepot, North Finchley

By Jessica Holt

**As I write this review of Oh, What a Lovely War, I have just participated in the two minutes' silence on Remembrance Sunday. Conceived and developed by Joan Littlewood this musical play first performed at Stratford East in 1963 focuses on the First World War. However, its themes of inadequate and corrupt leadership, widespread profiteering, the use of propaganda and the slaughter of innocents are familiar to all of us even when we are not at war ourselves.**

The Artsdepot production performed by Blackeyed Theatre Company is thoroughly entertaining, employing satire, farce and slapstick with considerable skill. Each actor plays multiple instruments and characters. One of them is Harry Curley who grew up in Barnet and attended Compton School in North Finchley.

### Moving and humorous

The actors sing the songs without mics, which makes a change in today's musical theatre. It adds to the intimacy and enhances audience involvement. Some of these songs are familiar; *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, incredibly moving. Other songs are humorous such as *Hush Here Comes a Whizzbang* or satirical such as *Oh,*

### What a Lovely War.

The actors energetically move around the small stage with a variety of props and costumes establishing different places and characters. Visually stunning, the short scenes are played within the framework of a Pierrot show and offer the audience a way out, an opportunity to remain at a distance.

But then we are presented with slides projected high on the back wall so there is no escape from the death toll. The statistics are stark and astonishing as the slides guide us through the events of 1914-18. There is a perfect balance in Joan Littlewood's work, enabling us to watch the tragedy of war, helping our understanding of how it comes about, and leading us to recognise who is responsible.

## Award-winning pasture open in winter months

**The volunteers who run Long Lane Pasture, the nature reserve situated opposite the fire station on Long Lane, are continuing to keep it open to visitors from 10am to 12 noon on Saturday mornings through the winter months. This is the time when many of them are there keeping it well maintained and new volunteers are always welcome to join the working party.**

It has been an excellent year for the pasture team, who have won their 12<sup>th</sup> Green Flag Award in a row from the environment charity Keep Britain Tidy.

Long Lane Pasture Trust Chair Donald Lyven and Harriet Duffield, Barnet Council's Biodiversity & Conservation Officer, travelled to Southampton to collect the award.

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## Test your local knowledge with our end-of-year quiz

### Are you ready for your close-up?

Our fiendish festive quiz this year challenges you to recognise 12 well-known sights and landmarks around East Finchley... all pictured in extreme close-up.

Can you spot where our photographer Mike Coles has been taking his zoomed-in portraits. They may look familiar but they're not as easy as they first appear. All of them are inside the borders of N2 and many of them are on our most popular walking and driving routes. Perhaps you could organise a treasure hunt with family

and friends over the holiday period to find them all. It's just for fun this year so, sorry, no prizes, but send us your answers by Saturday 6 January and we'll give honourable mentions to all correct entries in our February edition, as well as revealing where every photo was taken. Email your answers to news@the-archer.co.uk. Good luck!

## Repair shop hailed as one of the best in the world

By Ruth Anders

When the *Financial Times* ran an article in their 'sustainability special' in October listing the Best Repair Shops in the World, no one could have been more surprised to have his shop featured than the owner of our own Kokos, George Stavrou.

The list placed his High Road shoe shop alongside a variety of suppliers worldwide such as a watch repairer in Miami, a tailor in Paris and an upholsterer in New York. George told *The Archer*: "My son Chris kept getting these mails from the *FT* and we thought it was a scam. But they were just fact checking before confirming the award."

The shop that he took over in 1976, was originally called The East Finchley Boot Repairing Company. The present-day name Kokos is loosely based on his own name, "though no-one can pronounce it properly" laughs George.

### Building relationships

"I worked round the clock at first," he added. "I used to see people going home from work, and then watch them coming back in the morning and I hadn't been to bed." Colin, the older man I worked with for almost 30 years, used to say 'George, stop talking to people, look at all this work piling up', but I was busy building relationships with customers."

George's father came to England from Cyprus in 1953, opening a shoe repair shop in Stroud Green in 1960. George remembers being given jobs in the shop from early childhood. "But I wanted to be a footballer," added George, who enjoyed coaching at both Crystal Palace and Tottenham Hotspur. As a teenager he attended Tottenham Tech where



Top of the world: George Stavrou behind the counter at Kokos.

Photo Mike Coles

he met his wife Maria.

He loves the East Finchley community who he says have been very supportive over the years. With Maria as the firm's accountant, son Chris as manager and George's other son, artist Alexander, having

designed the stork logo for the shop's online business "Send A Repair", it is in every sense a family concern. *The Archer* congratulates Kokos and the team ("all trained by me!" adds the irrepressible George) on a well-deserved accolade.

## Christmas car boot

The last Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale of 2023 takes place on Saturday 16 December from 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH.

Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. For information, call 020 8368 8180.

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