



## One woman's vote, the case for a free library and a sewage surprise...

By Frank Edwards

This is some of the news from East Finchley, 100 years ago, as revealed in newspaper archives.

There was a general election in October 1924. Women over 30 who met a property qualification had secured the vote for the first time in 1918. There were, however, no postal votes for civilians. This did not deter a clearly unwell Mrs Harris. She was taken by ambulance from her home in Hertford Road, N2, to the polling station in the High Road and then carried on a stretcher into the building to vote. Her commendable effort contributed to an 80% turnout.

### Let the people read

Recent years have seen energetic actions to defend library services. In East Finchley, 100 years ago, there was no public library to save; the campaign was to have one built. In November 1924 a resident of East End Road wrote to the local paper to praise the virtue of a free library. How long, they asked, would library-less

the local paper had enough letters on the 'Free Library controversy' to fill two columns. When the local Council considered the issue later that month, it decided now was not the time. The wait for a public library went on. (Spoiler alert: Finchley's first library, in North Finchley, opened 12 years later in 1936. East Finchley's library opened in 1938.)

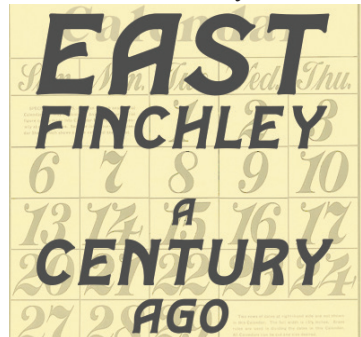
### Healthy bodies

If there was no official interest in healthy minds there was in healthy bodies. In October the Council organised a 'Health Week' of open days, lectures and school visits, to demonstrate how it promoted public and personal health and to highlight the role of the individual. Take care of your own health, it said, and help not only yourself but the whole community.

The week was deemed instructive but things did not always go as planned. As its contribution the local sewage farm organised a tour for schoolboys. One fell into a tank used to filter effluent. He was soon rescued from his 'unpleasant position' and after changing into fresh clothes completed the tour (possibly with fewer close companions than when he started).

### Calling all axemen

Finally, in November 1924, tree-feller George Sharman, from Long Lane, N2, placed a notice in the local paper: "I, George Sharman, do hereby challenge any axeman in Finchley to chop a 35in. oak log against time. Contest can take place on any picture show stage or elsewhere for the best prize on offer." There were no takers. It looks like George was the only axeman in the village.



Others added support. As well as benefiting young people and the general public, a library would become a home for pamphlets and prints relating to the area, which might otherwise be lost.

Not all were in favour. People will only use a library to get racing tips from newspapers and borrow cheap fiction, asserted a local Councillor; he did not consider this a good use of ratepayers' money. The debate continued. In December



BIRTHDAY PARTY: MAUREEN CLEMETSON, CENTRE, WITH MONDAY CLUB MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS PAST AND PRESENT

## Youth club celebrates another birthday

By Diana Cormack

Members of the Monday Club gathered at Tarling Road Community Hub in East Finchley on Friday 1 November to celebrate the club's 19th birthday. Founder of the club Maureen Clemetson, who is passionate about the role of youth clubs, assisted by several local helpers, supplied plenty of food and drinks alongside activities and games for the youngsters to enjoy.

People who came along to celebrate ranged from those Maureen calls her first generation (some now with their own children), second generation (some of whom helped with the party activities) and the present day third generation club members. Some pretty hair

scrunchies were produced by the sewing group, who also make bracelets and badges at the club's regular sessions. Art and craft activities are available along with physical ones such as basketball, football, and Kung Fu. Once the kitchen is completed at the Tarling Road

centre, Maureen hopes to include baking and a healthy eating project.

The club's official birthday is 31 October and Maureen is already making plans for next year's 20th celebration, which will take place at a different time of year. Watch out for news of the big one.

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## Park news

Everyone has a chance to hear about plans for the year ahead when the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood hold their AGM at 7.30pm on Thursday 23 January 2025, at the Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Park House, High Road, N2.

There will be a major update on the feasibility study and its proposed solutions for dealing with flooding in the wood, along with information on all the activities of the Friends group, including how to get involved and events for the year ahead. If you require further information in advance or would like to attend, email the Friends at [friendsofctw@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofctw@gmail.com)

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