



Letters

Godsend in the park

Dear Editor,

My name is Sev and my son Imi attends Community Focus in Friary Park, Friern Barnet. He is an adult with autism and learning difficulties and this amazing place is a godsend to families like ours.

He is always made welcome and the staff and teachers go above and beyond their duties in their care. There is no formality, the service users and parent/carers wander into the office at all times. The classes in all kinds of arts are a chance for users to interact as well as learn new fun skills.

In my personal experience with Imi, I feel that the encouragement never wanes. Every member of staff is a brilliant cheerleader and a kind, amazing person.

People with special needs thrive on "the feeling" they get from other people, not just their words and actions.



Treasured: Sev Mawany and her son Imi in Friary Park

Community Focus is an independent charity so rely on donations. I cannot stress enough how vitally important it is to keep places like this open and available to the adult special needs community.

Sev Mawany,
Address Supplied

Go-to place

Dear Editor,

What a lovely photo and piece about La Gourmandise (The Archer, March 2026)... my "go-to" place. There's always a welcome there. A few of us have become friends just by being regulars.

The pastries are good, the menu attractive and healthy. Best of all is the beautiful colourful display of cooled vegetables which taste and look so good and nutritious, teamed with salmon, chicken or quiche. If you haven't been yet, you are missing out.

Linda Dolata,
Leopold Road, N2

Send your letters to:
news@the-archer.co.uk

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be printed. Contact details can be withheld on request at publication. We reserve the right to abridge letters for reasons of space.

Headphones, hedgehogs and herrings: East Finchley a century ago

By Frank Edwards

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

On the radio

Older readers may recall listening to the wireless. They may also know that it was called a wireless because it could receive broadcasts without being connected to a transmitting station by telegraph wires. And a hundred years ago, wireless radio was the coming thing. By 1926, more than two million households held licences to listen and transmissions provided by the British Broadcasting Company (not yet the Corporation) were nearly nationwide.

Get well quicker

These developments explain what at first sight seems surprising. Finchley Cottage Hospital opened in 1908. In 1922 it became the Memorial Hospital in honour of World War One casualties. In January 1926 a local resident launched an appeal to raise £150 (perhaps £10,000 in today's money), to purchase a wireless for the hospital and headphones at every bedside. Collection boxes, cards, letters to the press and cinema slides promoted the appeal. Individuals, churches, schools and businesses, many from East Finchley, responded and nearly £300 was raised. Celebrating the successful outcome, a member of the organising committee reported that listening to the wireless took two or three days off the time

patients needed to be in hospital. The hospital expressed thanks for the donation and welcomed anything that shortened the stay of patients, as it always had a waiting list.

Now here's a thing

If you weren't listening to the wireless, you might be combing The Finchley Press for news and information. If so, you learned stuff you probably didn't need to know. The paper, amongst many trivial items, reported that someone had stolen the council messenger boy's bicycle and mackintosh and that a van had bumped into a lamp post in New Trinity Road in East Finchley.

You might have done a bit better, but not much, if you attended a lantern lecture at North Road School (what is now Martin Primary School) titled At Home with Nature. Here you could learn that squirrels like nuts and a hibernating hedgehog can be placed in a bucket of water for half an hour without the slightest effect.

Herring moan

Some things that appear trivial can be more serious, however. A correspondent wrote to The Finchley Press about the unlikely topic of fresh herrings. Why, they asked, can you buy herrings in Clerkenwell or Walthamstow for 2½ or 3 pence a pound while on the same day, in Finchley, they are 6 pence a pound? Nobody responded to



Fishy tale: The price of herrings

the letter, but the writer raised an important point. Herrings (and their smoked version, kippers) were a welcome addition to a plain diet and, although it may not have been fully appreciated at the time, an excellent source of vitamins and omega-3 acids. For those on tight budgets, how much they cost was something that mattered.

Re-Griddable solution from page 9

Across:
BOYS, ABET,
SOLE, HELP

Down:
BASH, OBOE,
YELL, STEP

Ask Joy: I dread my son's relationship getting serious

Joy is a trained counsellor and she can help you tackle issues that matter to you. No problem is too big or too small to be shared. Every email will be answered by Joy, and we will anonymise those that go into print, so confidentiality is assured.

Joy trained as a counsellor in the 1990s and worked in education for 20 years with young people and parents. She has many years' experience of listening and problem-solving. It's always good to talk, so don't hesitate to reach out.



Design by @archnote

Email Joy at askjoyatthearcher@gmail.com.

Dear Joy,

We have one son and we have always been close to him. When he came back from university a few years ago, he decided not to move back in with us and now lives with friends in south London. Despite the physical distance, we have remained close, meeting up regularly and speaking a couple of times a week, but about six months ago he met someone new and things began to change. We have liked most of his girlfriends, but this one is difficult to get on with. To make matters worse, he is totally besotted and brings her with him every time we meet up. They're not living together, but I'm dreading this relationship getting more serious. Should we try to speak to him and tell him how we feel, or would that just make things worse? **KB**

Dear KB,

It sounds as though your son is happy in his new relationship, so any strong criticism of his girlfriend probably won't go down well and may in fact push him away.

Interestingly you don't say why you don't like her. Could it be that this relationship is feeling quite serious and making you feel insecure as a result? Perhaps you're scared of losing that closeness if he were to take this relationship to the next stage.

It's important to remember that relationships do change and evolve, and your relationship with your son is no different. It is natural that his focus shifts away from you as he embarks on the next stage of his journey. That's not a rejection of you, but rather an indication that you've done

your job of parenting well by allowing him to make independent decisions.

So meet him on his terms, embrace his new relationship and try not to see whoever he's with as a threat. You may not love his choice of partner, but you can be open to trying to see why he does.

Perhaps he will include you in his future more readily if he feels that you trust him and his choices. And if you are able to do that, the closeness you've built over the years will stand you in good stead. Good luck!

Useful resources:

In your search engine type 'huffington post + better relationship with adult children' for a few articles worth a read.