

**Delivered free to 10,000 homes and businesses across East Finchley**  
 The Archer is a non-profit-making, non-political & non-religious newspaper, run entirely by volunteers

## Homes site to be sold with no conditions

By Lynn Winton

**Barnet Council have disclosed they are dissolving Places for Barnet, their 50-50 partnership with developers London Placemaking to build houses for the private sector. As part of the dissolution agreement, the Park House site opposite East Finchley tube station previously set aside for the Cherry Tree Quarter housing project will be sold ‘unconditionally’ to the developers.**

Valuations are currently being worked out to decide on the sale price. Residents have raised concern that more than £2million of the borough’s budget has already been spent on the Places for Barnet initiative and have questioned whether this will be written off or factored into the valuation.

Last year there was a public presentation at The Old White Lion Pub in East Finchley to unveil the partnership’s first artist’s impressions of Cherry Tree Quarter, consisting of 72 homes and a nursery building, then described by some visitors as “unfeasibly overcrowded”.

It remains to be seen how many or what type of homes will be in any future plans submitted for the site. Marcello

Burbante, spokesperson for Barnet Council, has confirmed to The Archer that there will “definitely” be provision for a nursery. As we have reported in recent editions, the current nursery tenant Monkey Puzzle is moving out to other premises on the High Road in May, and it is not as yet known if they will choose or be selected to return when any new nursery building is completed.

A smaller site in Manor Park Road, N2, which had been earmarked for ten new dwellings by Places for Barnet, will not be part of the sale and Barnet Council has confirmed it will remain undeveloped.

Continues on Page 2



Shoot and score: The Christ’s College Finchley boys netball teams ready for action

## Netball is not just for girls

**Proving that sport need have no gender boundaries, Christ’s College Finchley hosted its first-ever netball tournament for boys. More than 40 boys signed up to train and 16 were chosen to represent the school in two teams.**

The event in late February brought together teams from several schools, including two teams from CCF’s East Finchley neighbours Bishop Douglass School, alongside teams from Clarion School and Compton School.

PE teacher Evey Becker said the tournament was particularly meaningful for the players as many of them are currently studying netball as part of their

GCSE PE practical, and the event gave them the opportunity to put the skills they have learned in lessons into a real competitive environment.

Student Ola said it was a great opportunity to “explore a sport that is traditionally female-dominated and help break gender stereotypes.” His friend Torben described the event as “brilliant and really

fun” adding that he is already excited for next year’s tournament.”

CCF staff said the whole event was a huge success and left them extremely proud. They praised the students for their effort, sportsmanship, and commitment throughout. After such a strong debut, the tournament looks like becoming an annual fixture on the school’s sporting calendar.

**High Quality, Affordable German Kitchens**

Will your next kitchen be a **küchenhaus** The German Kitchen

Hampstead Garden Suburb, Swiss Cottage & Islington

www.hsikitchenhaus.co.uk  
0203 948 5006

Planning something special?

**In this issue**

Boiler breakdowns.....p3  
 Glassmakers of N2..... p4  
 Hospice revamp.....p7  
 ReGriddable.....p9  
 Arts and reviews.....p10  
 Your Letters and Ask JOY...p11

**STEWART-DUNCAN** Ophthalmic Opticians  
**ZEISS** Seeing beyond

**Give your child a better outlook on life**  
 ZEISS MyoCare lenses

**Slowing down myopia in children**  
 A myopia management portfolio tailored to meet your child’s individual needs. With full UV protection as standard.

Book your consultation by contacting us on:  
**020 8883 2020**  
**info@stewartduncan.com**  
 Stewart Duncan, 126 High Road London N2 9ED

**AMANDA WALKER exp**

Trusted local estate agent with years of experience. Give me a call – I’d be happy to see how I can help.

**Independent Estate Agent**

- Sales • Lettings
- Property management

07817 598309

e.amanda.walker@exp.uk.com  
 w.amandawalker.exp.uk.com

**Looking for volunteers?**

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation? Our Be Part of It column is published on page 2 every month and gets results. Submissions are free and are included subject to available space. Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to **news@the-archer.co.uk**, marking your email ‘Be Part of It’.

**BRITISH PROPERTY AWARDS**  
 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025  
**GOLD WINNER**  
 ESTATE AGENT IN EAST FINCHLEY

**BRITISH PROPERTY AWARDS**  
 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025  
**GOLD WINNER**  
 ESTATE AGENT IN MUSWELL HILL

**PRICKETT & ELLIS** ESTD 1767

**East Finchley Office**  
 82 High Road, N2 9PN  
 020 8883 0033  
 eastfinchley@prickettandellis.com  
 www.prickettandellis.com

Sales & Lettings | Surveyors | Valuers | Property Management | Financial Services



## The Archer

[www.the-archer.co.uk](http://www.the-archer.co.uk) Email: [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk)

[f](#) [X](#) [@](#) @TheArcherN2

Voicemail: (messages only) 0800 612 0748 for editorial and general enquiries

Published by East Finchley Newspapers CIC  
Registered in England & Wales company no 14524944

<b>Copy Editor</b> John Lawrence	<b>Production Editor</b> Nadia Savvopoulou	<b>Editorial Team</b> Ruth Anders, Diana Cormack, David Hobbs, Janet Maitland, Lynn Winton
<b>Sub Editors</b> Lucy Moorman Fiona Macdonald	<b>Distribution</b> Toni Morgan, Jane & David Marsh	<b>Social Media:</b> Justine Csaky
<b>Picture Editor</b> Mike Coles	<b>Finance</b> David Marsh	

Printed by Sharman & Co Ltd on 100% UK-sourced recycled newspaper

The Archer team wishes to thank all the generous volunteers who give up their spare time, in all weather, to deliver the paper for us.

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

Copy deadlines - May: 10 April June: 15 May July: 15 June

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

**Age UK Barnet** always needs volunteers to help in its Tuesday or Thursday day clubs in East Finchley, which are for people living with mild to moderate dementia. By chatting to people, helping with activities and serving lunch and refreshments, you will help to make the club a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment for members. To find out more, please contact Lisa on [lisa.robbs@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:lisa.robbs@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call 0208 432 1422.

**The Together Project CIO** is looking for a Group Welcomer to support its Songs & Smiles session at Spring Lane Care Home, Muswell Hill. The group runs on Mondays at 11am, bringing young children and older residents together through music and play. The Welcomer helps greet families, support the session leader, and create a warm, friendly atmosphere. If you're interested, please email [songs@thetogether-project.org.uk](mailto:songs@thetogether-project.org.uk)

**Finchley Foodbank** is looking for a new kind of volunteer to help people with all things digital e.g. searching the internet, sending emails, booking appointments. You will signpost people to help with the cost of living, employment, housing etc. You will need to be available for food bank sessions on Tuesdays and/or Saturdays 11.30am-2pm twice a month. To find out more about becoming a digital champion volunteer or a general volunteer, please email: [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com)

Volunteer stewards are wanted at **OmVed Gardens** in Highgate Village to welcome visitors, answer questions, signpost around the site and support Open Days and other events. A friendly, outdoor role with a chance to be part of a community and enjoy free access to some events. No experience needed – just enthusiasm and a love of people and nature. Contact [enquiries@omvedgardens.com](mailto:enquiries@omvedgardens.com) to register your interest or for more info.

**Food Bank Aid** is looking for new volunteers. The organisation provides essential goods to 33 food banks who in turn support over 20,000 people per week. Do you have spare time to sort and pack donations? Or are you a keen driver who can deliver donations to food banks in North London? The hub is a fun place to work in, with friendly people, music, cake, tea and coffee. Flexible shifts available. To apply, email [volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk) and put 'The Archer' in the subject line.

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk)

## Open garden

OmVed Gardens in Highgate Village is hosting an Open Day fundraiser in aid of North London Hospice on Sunday 19 April from 11am. The event will be a chance to wander through the gardens with a cup of tea and a slice of cake and to buy tickets for raffle prizes.

OmVed Gardens, off Highgate High Street, is a garden, exhibition, events, and learning space exploring food, ecology, and creativity



Lush garden in OmVed Gardens

for climate resilience. Find out more and get tickets at <https://omvedgardens.com/events>

# Homes site to be sold



Saved space: The pocket park in Manor Park Road

Continued from  
Page 1

After hard campaigning, EEVRA, the newly formed resident's association for Manor Park Road and the neighbouring streets, is jubilant and its volunteers are working hard to improve the current site. Co-chair Nikki Austen said: "More than 200 residents have contributed to a 60-page proposal that cites repairs and

community uses of our park that has been woefully neglected by the council for over a decade." Councillor Ross Huston, Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration, said: "We will be working with residents in relation to how we can improve the site as it's currently configured." EEVRA has already played a significant role in

holding Places for Barnet partnership to account.

Referring to the Cherry Tree Quarter project, they said: "Over £2 million of public money appears to have been spent developing proposals, yet the site is now being sold to the incumbent developer without an open competitive process, and it remains unclear how that developer was originally appointed. "People are also worried about the future of the nursery and the six protected trees (five birch and one yew). We are told they will remain, but at the same time the sale is described as 'unconditional', which raises obvious questions about what guarantees actually exist. "Local residents simply want a well-designed, policy-compliant scheme that protects valued community assets and is developed through a transparent process. We hope the council will now work constructively with the community to achieve a better outcome for this important site". Barnet's explanation for the break-up and land sale is that it is due to the Council's budget pressures and that this sale will deliver a better outcome.

Oliver Kuropatwa, of London Placemaking, has already invited a party of up to ten residents from Ingram Road, neighbours to the Park House site, along with local councillors, to meet with him and this bodes well for signs of more public engagement before plans are submitted.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet

#### 62 Huntington Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window with juliet balcony and two front-facing roof lights. Ref. No: 26/1077/192

#### Fairacres, 164 East End Road N2,

Submission of details of general condition of planning permission Biodiversity Gain Plan of 25/1113/FUL dated 22/01/25. Ref. No: 26/1059/BNG

#### 456 Long Lane, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window with juliet balcony. Ref. No: 26/1050/192

#### 55 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension with two roof lanterns. Ref. No: 26/1048/HSE

#### 220A High Road, N2

Changes to side and rear fenestration. Ref. No: 26/1022/FUL

#### 21 Church Lane, N2

Submission of details of condition 3 (Materials) 9 (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan-BEP)

12 (Low Impact Lighting Bats)

13 (Hard and Soft Landscaping pursuant to planning permission 25/4594/FUL dated 02/01/2025. Ref. No: 26/0917/CON

#### 30 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension with two roof lights following demolition of existing timber extension. Single-storey outbuilding to rear garden with green roof. New front porch. Ref. No: 26/0905/192

#### Five Bells, 165 - 167 East End Road, N2

Remove one 12.5m pole and replace with one 20m pole with wraparound cabinet, remove three antennas and replace with one EE/H3G tri sector antenna and three EE antennas, install one GPS Node and ancillary equipment works. Ref. No: 26/0929/LIC

#### 54 Huntington Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with five roof lights. Ref. No: 26/0821/HSE

#### 72-74 High Road, N2

Change of use of first and second floors from offices (Class E) into

two self-contained flats (Class C3)

Associated refuse/recycling and cycle storage. Ref. No: 26/0817/PNE

#### 63 Bedford Road, N2

Variation of condition 1 (Approved Plans) pursuant to planning permission 25/1362/FUL dated 11/04/2025 for 'Single-storey side extension with five roof lights.' Amendments include increase in the depth of the approved side extension by an additional 0.5 metres. Ref. No: 26/0813/S73

#### Langley House, Park Road, N2

Change of use of part of the existing office car park (E (g)(ii)) to an outdoor play area for Day Nursery (E(f)) purposes including the construction of a new timber fence, surfacing and bin store. Ref. No: 26/0710/FUL

#### Haringey

#### 24 Greenfield Drive, N2

Erection of a single-storey rear extension. Ref: HGY/2026/0517



# Residents left without heat and hot water

By John Lawrence

People living on the Strawberry Vale estate in East Finchley have been left without heating and hot water repeatedly over the coldest months of the winter. In the first two weeks of February alone, their communal gas-powered boiler system broke down five times.

One resident told The Archer: "Strawberry Vale Estate is home to many elderly residents and individuals with health conditions or mobility difficulties. During the winter months, reliable heating and hot water are not luxuries, they are essential.

"Many residents require a warm environment for health reasons. Others must be able to wash and prepare for work each morning. The repeated failures and delayed responses are causing significant distress and disruption to daily life."

Another said the boiler problems were part of a systemic breakdown on the estate, with many ageing facilities like the lifts and sewage network also needing repair.

the scale of the fixes required. They told us that some of them had been asked to contribute £3,000 each towards the installation of the new boiler system, which made the frequent losses of heating and hot water even harder to take.

Strawberry Vale was built in the 1980s with 268 flats and houses. Some residents moved there when the estate was new and are now in their 80s. Some families live in severely overcrowded conditions.

A Peabody spokesperson told The Archer that this winter's issues had been caused by leaks from ageing pipework, which were repaired as quickly as possible.

"We're sorry that some residents have had problems with their heating and hot water and know how disruptive this has been," said the spokesperson. "We've already replaced the pipes on Old Farm Road and are planning to replace more across the estate. Given the scale of the network, this work will need to be done in phases to minimise disruption.

"We've also installed a new boiler system, improving the overall reliability of heating and hot water for residents.

"We know clear communication is important. Residents can contact us on the phone, online or in person, and we hold monthly drop-ins. We've also started a newsletter."



In the cold: The heating system on Strawberry Vale has repeatedly failed. Photo Mike Coles

Frustrated residents claim that the Peabody housing association, which runs the estate, does not communicate with them about the status of repairs and too often employs contractors who are unable to cope with



Paved over: One of the High Road plant beds is removed. Photo Mike Coles

## Watch this space as Town Square starts

By Diana Cormack

East Finchley Town Team's plans for the creation of a town square in the High Road, N2, began in a necessarily small way on Tuesday 17 March with the removal of one of the flower beds in front of Amy's hardware store.

Kate Brown, chair of the group, told The Archer that the Town Team would have loved to see the entire area of the wide pavement between Caffè Nero and East End Road redeveloped with all the features that local people requested when surveyed.

The reality is that this will be done bit by bit, as and when funding is available. The removal of one of the flower beds will make a more open area for events, which was one element people requested. The Town Team plans to organise a first

event in the space on Saturday 2 May and will continue to fund raise for the other elements such as seating and further planting. Some of the plants from the removed bed have been relocated to other beds in the space.

## Vinyl club

Age UK Barnet is starting a new Vinyl Club for over-55s giving music lovers a chance to share records and discover new sounds.

"From Elvis Presley to Elvis Costello, from The Ronettes to The Ramones, we're up for whatever you want to hear," says Age UK Barnet volunteer and journalist Phil Hilton, who will be hosting the group. "There will be short, informative talks, shared passions, memories and actual vinyl records!" Sessions will take place at 5pm on Tuesdays at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT and the first meet up is on Tuesday 21 April. There'll be a charge of £3 which includes all refreshments.

Get in touch if you are interested and Age UK Barnet will send you a short survey to ask about your music tastes to kick off with the right tunes. Contact [activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call 07379 331807.

## Calling all plant lovers

The third annual charity plant sale at Tony's Continental in the High Road, N2, will take place on Sunday 3 May at 10am. A huge collection of home-grown plants will be available to help raise funds for the Haematology Cancer Care unit at University College London Hospital.

### Sarah King Psychotherapy

A safe, non-judgemental, confidential space to explore the thoughts, feelings and challenges in your life

Contact me to arrange a free 15-minute telephone consultation

[info@sarahkingpsychotherapy.co.uk](mailto:info@sarahkingpsychotherapy.co.uk)

[sarahkingpsychotherapy.co.uk](http://sarahkingpsychotherapy.co.uk)



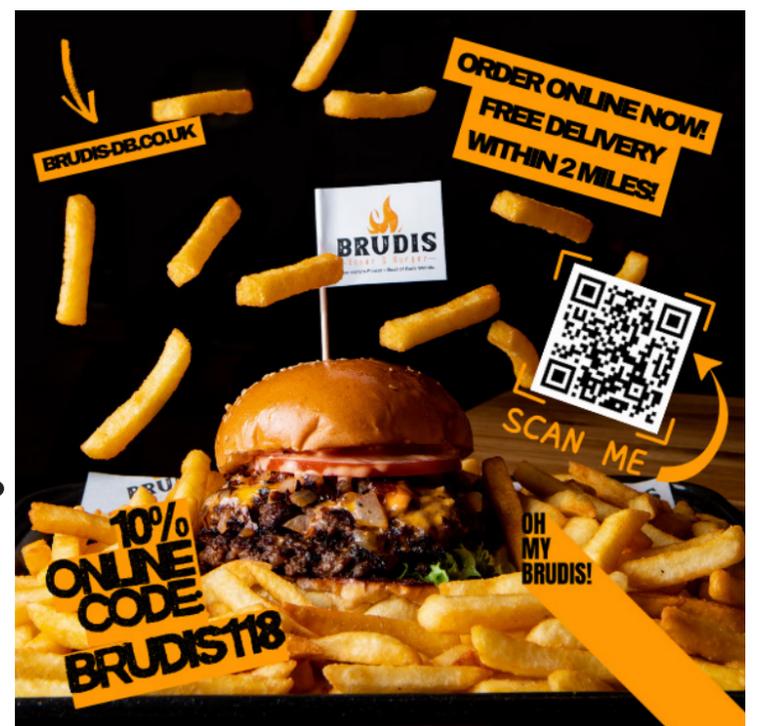
## brera gardens

- garden design
- maintenance
- hard landscaping
- irrigation systems
- soft landscaping
- East Finchley based
- indoor plants

Mob. 07939 557 934

Tel. 020 8365 3615

Email: [breragardens1@btinternet.com](mailto:breragardens1@btinternet.com)





## How an award-winning novelist took tips from N2 glassmakers

By Gail Norcliffe

Award-winning novelist Tracy Chevalier's latest wonderful novel *The Glassmaker* tells the story of a glassmaking family in Murano, near Venice, over five centuries. Orsola the main character becomes a lamp-work bead-maker to help with declining finances.

What intrigued me and my fellow book club members was an unexpected link to East Finchley in the author's acknowledgements for the novel.

Tracy, best known for writing *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, is renowned for her meticulous research. Back in 2019 she featured on Radio 4's *Only Artists* and mentioned glassmaking.

Phil Vallentin, a glassmaker from Bedford Road, N2, heard the programme and made contact to ask if Tracy would like to try bead-making. Tracy told *The Archer*: "If possible, I like to do what my characters do, as it makes it easier and more authentic to write about. In this instance, I wanted to learn to make beads." She jumped at Phil's offer and spent an afternoon in his shed making her first glass beads. Phil values bead-making's accessibility because glass is heated on a lamp and was historically an option for women in the male-dominated Murano glass industry.

East Finchley provided a further research opportunity when Tracy Chevalier found glassmaker Samantha Sweet offered classes and did one of her bead-making workshops.

Tracy said: "We spent a wonderful afternoon in Sam's studio next to Cherry Tree Wood, making some very beautiful beads. Sam was such a lovely teacher. Later my publisher brought a group of booksellers to her studio for an evening of



Artisan skills: Award-winning author Tracy Chevalier, far right, stands next to glass maker Samantha Sweet with publishing friends and colleagues

bead-making."

Sam was subsequently commissioned to make 300 beads as gifts for *The Glassmaker*'s launch party and a bracelet for Tracy. The red beads with gold flecks replicate those made for Josephine Bonaparte in the book.

Both Sam and Phil are impressed with Tracy's vividly accurate descriptions of glass-blowing and bead-making in her writing. My book club very much enjoyed *The Glassmaker* for its sense of place, history and the impact of the passing of time along with the story's central family saga. Sam has a glass furnace and runs glass-blowing classes.

Find out more at [samanthasweet.com](http://samanthasweet.com). Further information about Phil's work is available at [philipvallentin.com](http://philipvallentin.com)



Tracy Chevalier wears a bracelet made by Samantha

## Community group of the year

Hope North London, a charity rooted in East Finchley and working alongside residents on the Strawberry Vale and Grange estates, has been named Community Group of the Year at the Barnet Homes Community Awards.



A Hope North London session. Photo courtesy Helen Shannon

A Barnet Homes representative came to the group's weekly Tea & Toast group at the Green Man Community Centre to present a cheque, surrounded by local residents and volunteers.

Hope North London has been part of life in Finchley

since 1998, running free groups for children, young people and families, including after-school clubs and youth groups. It says much of what happens is shaped by local people themselves, with volunteer residents leading and caring for one another.

## The Archer online

The Archer's website is now easier to use on your mobile phone. Our online pages have been redesigned to make it quicker to find important information like contact details and deadlines, and simpler to read our latest edition or search and browse past editions of the newspaper in our archive stretching back to 1993. So now you really can take *The Archer* with you wherever you go. Bookmark our website at [www.the-archer.co.uk](http://www.the-archer.co.uk)

## Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley. Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you

## Junior allotmenteer: Chapter 3

By Nadia Savvopoulou

Having an allotment, one gradually becomes accustomed to the terminology, sometimes simply by wandering through different sections of the garden centre. What are 'early', 'mid-season', and 'main crop' varieties? Supermarkets never include such information on their fruits and vegetables. And what on earth is blood, fish, and bone fertiliser? Whose blood?

The answer to the first question is that all vegetables and fruits have varieties intended to be harvested at different points in the year, though not necessarily in different seasons. The varieties you choose should depend on what you enjoy eating, as some are better suited for salads than for cooking.

Another tip... as in life outside the allotment, do not succumb to other people's sense of timing when sowing outdoors. The only real measures are the temperature of the soil and the ambient temperature. One swallow does not a summer make.

Despite some people's conviction that I had 'missed' the growing season when I got my allotment in early April last year, I still planted and harvested 28 vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers.



Of everything I planted before August, I was only "late" with the courgettes and the sweetcorn, yet I still harvested one courgette from three plants. The ancient 'three sisters' method I used for squashes, beans, and sweetcorn produced only three small squashes. My tomatoes, grown from seedlings, produced so many fruits that I eventually tired of eating them all summer. I harvested about 700 g of strawberries (Cambridge and Sweetheart). My potatoes (Maris Peer, Maris Piper, King Edward) were bought from the garden centre, almost fully chitted. I planted 16 seed potatoes of three varieties (not having cheated growing indoors until leaves formed) and ended up with only about 26 small to tiny potatoes, some looking as if they had grown on the planet of Dune. I was also happy to harvest several good-sized broccoli heads, many beetroot, and the strangest looking carrots (Chantennay Red and Flyaway F1). Preparing

the ground and implementing my own landscape design proved hard on my back. Despite my athletic lifestyle, all the crouching, kneeling, digging, and weeding disagreed with me. It took a

whole summer of physiotherapy to regain pain-free movement. So here is my biggest tip: allotment work is physically demanding, and time flies when you're busy. Take breaks... and stop much earlier than your body insists you should.



Beetroot grown from seedlings

## From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:  
April 2016

Mobile phone theft is nothing new. We warned readers to protect their phones and other valuables after a gang of thieves on motorbikes tried to rob a mother in the High Road, N2, just after she had dropped her children at school. Local police advice is to keep mobiles out of sight whilst out and about but, sadly, this advice is usually ignored and phone theft is still a major problem.

15 years ago:  
April 2011

Local campaigners formed the Barnet CPZ Action Group to fight Barnet Council's plans for huge increases in residents' parking charges. The council had to delay its proposed increases after the group highlighted mistakes in the consultation process. Campaigners went on to launch an ultimately successful High Court challenge against the increases, following a fundraising appeal to help with legal costs.

25 years ago:  
April 2001

The Salvation Army closed its East Finchley Mission in Hertford Road after 104 years. Local residents who had enjoyed the Parent and Toddler Group, Evergreen Club and other support services from officers Haris and Anna Giannaros said they would be greatly missed. The Salvation Army Hall was subsequently sold off and is now a children's nursery.





# Tribute to Alex who brought joy and laughter

We reported in February how the family of 23-year-old Alex Warwick were desperately trying to raise funds for his treatment after he was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumour. Very sadly, the former student at the Archer Academy in East Finchley passed away last month. Here is the tribute released to us by Alex's family.

It is with heartbreak that Alex Warwick's family share his passing, aged just 23, after a ten-month battle with brain cancer. Alex was a much-loved local resident and a wonderful brother, son and boyfriend.

Alex's courage, humour and resilience were extraordinary. He was kind, caring and thoughtful, with a gift for understanding people and bringing joy and laughter to those around him. He loved music and had an eclectic taste spanning multiple decades and genres.



Caring and thoughtful: Alex Warwick

Alex was a talented medical student and returned to his former school Archer Academy in January 2026 to speak to current students about studying medicine, hours after discovering that his cancer had spread. He nevertheless went ahead, determined to inspire the next generation.

In recent months, Alex was fundraising for cutting-edge treatment in Germany. He was deeply grateful for the kindness and generosity shown by the East Finchley community and was proud to attend a fundraising quiz night at Archer Academy. Even in his final week, Alex drew strength from reading the messages on his fundraising page. Alex's fundraising page will remain open at

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/alex-warwick-2025>

All unused contributions will go to the charity Brainstrust. Alex dreamed about becoming a doctor and helping others, and was passionate about raising awareness of brain tumours, so it's fitting the funds will be used to support brain cancer patients and their loved ones. A private funeral will be held for close family and friends. The family are also considering ways to commemorate Alex's life and legacy within the north London community.



Paper work: Year 6 pupils at Holy Trinity Primary with their own newspaper

## Read all about it in newspaper written by classroom journalists

By Divyansh, Bella and Victoria, Year 6

At Holy Trinity School, a group of Year 6 pupils have been writing a school newspaper called the Trinity Times. They have been offering up their Thursday lunchtimes to create an eight-page paper, which sold nearly 100 copies.

Eleven children and their teacher, Mr Craig, worked on this amazing piece of work over several weeks. The school spent nearly £200 on printing the copies but got all of the money back after selling it. First, the young reporters club had an

introductory session, to see who would write about what, and then instantly got started with writing. The club often writes about school news, popular books, interviews and much more. All of this is thanks to the hard work the Year 6s are

doing and guidance of their wonderful yet "cheesy" (which at times is not needed but is still gratefully appreciated) teacher, Mr Craig. The Year 6s will be putting more hard work into making more brilliant newspapers.

## Trees inspected in Cherry Tree Wood

By David Melsome

A survey of trees in Cherry Tree Wood has now been completed following the recent fall of two hornbeam trees (The Archer, March 2026), one narrowly missing a passing mother and child, the other landing partly across the children's playground.

Barnet Council officers say the survey findings will now be reviewed before they respond in detail to questions raised by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

A number of incidents, including the recent falls of the two hornbeams, as well as a hornbeam failure and the loss of a large oak limb last year, have prompted interest among park users about how the woodland is monitored and managed. Roger Chapman, from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said: "We welcome the survey being carried out and look forward to discussing the findings with council officers. The aim is to ensure the long-term safety and

resilience of the woodland while preserving the character of this much-loved park." Council officers have proposed a site meeting later this month with members of the Friends group.

## Free tech talk on AI

A free talk on understanding AI and ChatGPT takes place on Monday 13 April from 2-4pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2. You can turn up or find more information from Howard on 020 8432 1415 or email [howard.chapman@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:howard.chapman@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

### Kundalini Activation & Family Constellations

From April 11 - scan QR for more info & bookings or mail [gill@gilldavis.com](mailto:gill@gilldavis.com)



# KOKOS

SHOE REPAIRS  
SINCE 1976



WE'VE MOVED TO  
UNIT G14 ATLAS BUSINESS CENTRE  
OXGATE LANE, LONDON NW2 7HJ

GET 20% OFF OUR "SEND A REPAIR" SERVICE  
BY ENTERING PROMO CODE **KOKOS20**  
IN THE FORM ON OUR WEBSITE  
[www.kokos.co.uk/send-a-repair](http://www.kokos.co.uk/send-a-repair)

020 8883 0876  
[www.kokos.co.uk](http://www.kokos.co.uk)  
@kokosfinchley

## THE MUSWELL HILL CLUB FITNESS AND LEISURE

Over 100 classes per month • Swimming Pool  
Cardio floor • Free weights rooms • Sauna & Steam rooms  
Spin studio • Coffee bar • Stretch room • Friendly team

DAY  
PASSES  
£15

Membership  
From  
£44.95  
T&C's Apply



140 FORTIS GREEN, MUSWELL HILL N10 3EF 0208 883 0500  
[INFO@MUSWELLHILLCLUB.COM](mailto:INFO@MUSWELLHILLCLUB.COM) @THEMUSWELLHILLCLUB

Join online NOW [muswellhillclub.com](http://muswellhillclub.com)



Heritage: Colourful scenes of a builder's yard and a stained glass maker on what is now the Olympic Park captured by photographers Debra Rapp, right, and Marion Davies.

# Industry that made way for the Olympics

By Geoffrey Davies

A display about the impact on London of the 2012 Olympics Games is to open this month at the new Victoria and Albert Museum in Stratford East – more than two decades since the first photograph was taken.

Captured by Muswell Hill resident Debra Rapp and Hampstead Garden Suburb resident Marion Davies, the images show some of the 70 businesses affected by the redevelopment of the area around the Olympic Stadium and Park.

“Marion and I had become friends on a photography course and decided to work together afterwards,” says Debra. “When it was announced in July 2005 that London would

host the Olympics, we wondered what impact it would have on Stratford.”

With her new digital camera at the time, and Marion shooting on black and white film, the pair visited the area once or twice a week for the next 18 months, amassing 10,000 pictures of some of the 284 businesses. Before the Games, the site hosted a wide range of industry from waste management and salmon smoking to a café and

a taxi company.

“It was not obvious how much industry there was there,” says Debra. “For instance, Bowden’s had been making curved glass there since Victorian times. The owners and workers were very open with us, but clearly concerned at having to move. There was great uncertainty about compensation. They were having to run their business while planning on moving. Bigger firms with resources did better.” A selection of images

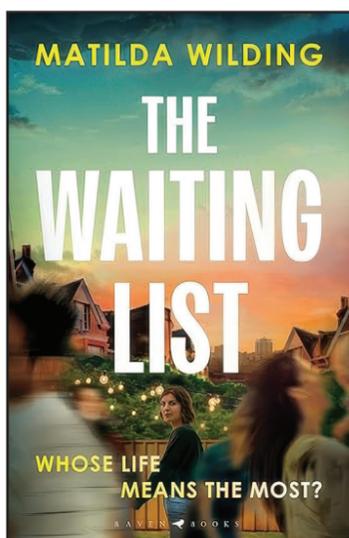
was originally shown at the Museum of London in 2015, who have acquired some for their collection. A big exhibition was held at the premises of salmon smokers H. Foreman and Sons in 2017, next to the Olympic Stadium, along with the launch of the book *Dispersal* published by Historic England, which included academic insight on the impact of redevelopment in the area. The latest showing of over 40 pictures will be on the top floor

of the new V+A East, Carpenters Road, E20 2AR, directly overlooking the area featured in the photographs. It runs for six months from Saturday 18 April. “The museum’s curator of photography sent me the *Dispersal* book,” says Brendan Cormier, the chief curator at V+A East, “and I realised the space has a view across the park and Hackney Wick and the sites they were documenting. And of course, the V+A has a link to industry.”

## New mum channels her fears into her first published fiction

By Matilda Wilding

With the name Matilda, and after many happy hours over many years spent ensconced in East Finchley Library, perhaps it was inevitable I was going to write stories.



Reading list: Matilda's debut novel

My journey to being a published author wasn't fast. After studying English Literature at university, I tried writing children's novels, and whilst they will only ever be read by my own, they gave me the confidence to keep experimenting. With more time thanks to lockdown, I launched into a destination thriller. This book got me a literary agent, but unfortunately didn't sell to

publishers due to crossover with other books. It's so often market forces that can dictate an author's path but getting that far made the dream feel reachable.

So, after my son got the hang of sleep (miraculously fast), I used the remainder of my maternity leave to write what has become my debut, a book club suspense novel published by Bloomsbury/Raven called *The Waiting List*.

After doing something as hard and amazing and privileged as bringing a child into the world, writing a book felt like a breeze! I channelled the potent emotions I was experiencing in new motherhood - profound anxieties and fierce new depths of love - into the moral dilemma at the heart of the story.

Set in north London, not far from where I grew up in East Finchley, the book is about a new mother who, faced with an unenviable dilemma, must grapple with whether she could ever take a life in order to save her own and survive for her family. After the very sudden

loss of my father, I've lived with a latent fear of something happening to me which increased after my son was born. Writing this story allowed me to process the weight of that fear and the new responsibilities of parenthood through the prism of fiction. I often joke that I should have had therapy but instead I wrote *The Waiting List*.

The *Daily Mail* has described it as 'extraordinary' and 'unpredictable', and I very much hope it proves thought provoking and compelling to readers of *The Archer* too.



First-time author Matilda Wilding

## Academy hosts international guests for British Council

The Archer Academy in East Finchley was selected to be part of the British Council's UK Study Tour earlier this year, welcoming 40 educational leaders from across the Middle East and North Africa for a week-long professional learning programme.



Follow me: British Council visitors are guided round the Archer Academy by a student

The programme began with a keynote address from headteacher Lucy Harrison, examining how schools can lead with vision, empathy, and strategic intent in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Later in the week, the delegation visited the school for a full day of observing leadership in action. Guests heard from senior staff and members of the student leadership team, toured the school, joined discussions, and shared lunch with students.

Staff described the event as a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues from around the world and to showcase the strength of the school community. Students involved in the day were praised for representing the academy with confidence and pride.

The visit formed part of the British Council's ongoing work to connect educators internationally and promote global dialogue in education.



# Hospice patients will move while modernisation work takes place

By Lynn Winton

Prior to any public announcement, The Archer has learned that North London Hospice have decided that there will be a complete redevelopment of the inpatient unit at their 30-year-old building in Woodside Avenue, N12.

Hospice inpatients will be relocated to Jade Ward at Edgware Hospital for about a year to make way for the work needed to update facilities and structures. The hospice team told us that they will do everything in their power to minimise the inevitable disruption this will cause.



Entry point: North London Hospice will be modernised

“As you can imagine, there are a lot of moving parts right now,” explained hospice spokesperson Paul Jordan. “We have received planning permission and will be appointing a contractor imminently.

“We are incredibly proud of the care we provide to thousands of patients every year. However, in the three decades since our hospice building opened, much has changed. “The numbers of people requiring our help has increased and as the population grows and ages, their needs have become broader, multi-faceted and more complicated. Whilst our models of care have adapted and advanced, our facilities and structures have not.”

Trustee Suzanne Joels paid tribute to the “incredible” staff team who ensure that people have the best possible end to

their life but who at times are hampered by an out-of-date building.

Proposed improvements include a private, more dignified entrance for patients when they enter the hospice, larger all en-suite bedrooms filled with natural light, individual heating controls including air-con and sofa beds and other guest facilities so that loved ones can comfortably stay the night.

These larger rooms will also allow space for the most innovative specialist equipment to better support patients. North London Hospice’s Woodside Avenue centre offers 24-hour care for patients and their families from across Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. In 2024/25 its services cost over £16 million to run. Find out more about the hospice’s work and lend your support at [northlondonhospice.org](http://northlondonhospice.org)

# Tiny gardens take root

By Rosemary Coates

Tiny Forests is an international scheme by Earthwatch Europe to plant dense woodlands in small areas and now a new initiative has sprung up in East Finchley... called Tiny Gardens.

It is an expression coined by The Finchley Society chairman Mick Crick when he visited a ground and are turning it into a planted garden.

It is the latest piece of ground to be planted up following similar initiatives by residents’ groups in nearby Leopold Road and Church Lane. Mick said: “This is a wonderful example of residents coming together and creating something which not only improves the area for people but will attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies”. Mick presented Matteo Lanzini, who has been co-ordinating the group, with



Mick Crick, second left, presents a cheque and certificate to Matteo Lanzini with fellow volunteers



You’ve been wrapped: Reframed artwork ready to send to buyers. Photo Geoffrey Davies

# Café hosts reframed art show

By Geoffrey Davies

The first examples of picture framing work by trainees at the work skills charity 2econd Chance will be on show at the Finch Café, East End Road, N2, throughout April.

As we reported last month, the charity runs workshops in refurbishing computers and tech and has an offshoot called ReFramed running classes in making and restoring picture frames for those with mental health challenges.

“The charity aims to help those without jobs to give them both practical skills to get work, but also the social skills,” says co-founder Debs Good, who is Head of Creative at ReFramed. “We also support ethical framing, using and re-using

picture frames. Income from sales of the framing we do goes to support the charity.” The reframed artwork on display and available to buy at Finch Café this month is by Frank Rosen, who was born in South Africa and served in the British Army in the Second World War, moving to England in the 1950s to study art and later living in Hampstead Lane. He died in 1998.

“I’m delighted that we have the pictures on show here,”

says Finch owner Jenny Rainsford, “as we too want to help people into work by building confidence and a sense of purpose.”

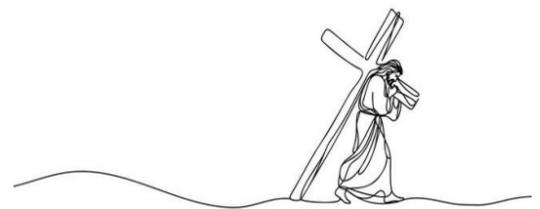
Visitors are encouraged to bring along work for framing which takes place at 2econd Chance ReFramed, Enterprise House, 2 The Crest, NW4 2HN. The charity is also keen for donations of frames that are no longer used and might be revived.

Debs Good can be emailed at: [debs@2econdchance.co.uk](mailto:debs@2econdchance.co.uk)

# Plant-astic

A very special plant fair is returning to Highgate this month, with all the money raised going to Plant Heritage, who focus on preserving over 700 rare plant collections. Regular attendees from East Finchley report the choice of plants are “out of this world” and “brilliant value”. Around 20 nursery exhibitors will be offering plants including culinary herbs, as well as tools and accessories. The Spring Plant Fair takes place on Saturday 25 April from 9.30am to 2pm at St. Michael’s School, North Road, N6 4BJ. Entrance fee £2.50.

a cheque from the Society to buy more plants and a certificate recognising their work to improve the environment. Matteo, who volunteers with his daughter Alma, was grateful: “It’s nice to receive support for an initiative that, while small, can make this area greener and hopefully stop fly tipping, which costs the local authority time and money to clear regularly.”



“HOLY WEEK” at ST MARY’S CATHOLIC CHURCH 279 HIGH ROAD N2 8HG

### 2<sup>nd</sup> April—Maundy Thursday

Mass of the Lord’s Supper: 8:00pm  
Followed by Vigil at the Chapel of Repose until 11pm

### 3<sup>rd</sup> April —Good Friday

Family Stations of the Cross in Church 11:00am  
Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion 3:00pm  
Stations of the Cross 7:00pm

### 4<sup>th</sup> April —Holy Saturday

Confessions 10:30 am to 11am  
Easter Vigil 8:00pm

### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April —Easter Day

Sunday Masses: 8:30am, 10am and 12noon



# Tracy honoured as volunteer of year at the food bank

By Jane Marsh

Volunteers at the Finchley Foodbank were surprised recently by a visit from Charmaine Carr, representing the Barnet Group Community Awards, which celebrate local community heroes. She came to present volunteer Tracy Simons with an award for being voted Volunteer of the Year 2025.

Tracy's nomination stated that she has been an incredibly dedicated and active volunteer at Finchley Foodbank for many years. "She has overcome the challenging barriers of being deaf and having to communicate with volunteers and donors. In her role she helps restock the foodbank on a weekly basis and recently has become a session leader, managing a team of 11 people to ensure the smooth running of the restock and intake of deliveries. "Tracy's willingness to learn and incredible patience, enabling her to thrive in a busy environment where her communication is limited, is inspiring. She brings a positive energy to every interaction, making sure that the team feels supported. We are exceptionally fortunate to have her, she is a motivated and highly engaged volunteer, whose dedication to Finchley Foodbank is much appreciated." Tracy started volunteering at the food bank during lockdown and says "it is an excellent team, so well run and organised.... I love going." More importantly, she



Trophy and flowers: Food bank volunteer Tracy Simons is presented with her award by Charmaine Carr

highlights the constant support she has received over the years from Foodbank Manager Rachel Nelson and fellow volunteer Louis Victor, who have always gone the extra mile to help her when needed.

The Finchley Foodbank is always looking for more volunteers so, if you are interested in joining Tracy and her colleagues, please email [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com).



Frank and forthright: Dr Miriam Stoppard, third from left, with the Age UK Barnet team

## Miriam Stoppard on intimacy in later life

By Karen Williamson

Age UK Barnet welcomed author and TV presenter Dr Miriam Stoppard for a frank and no-holds-barred discussion about sex in mid-life and beyond, and about her new book *Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks*.

Dispelling the myth that we lose interest in sex and intimacy as we get older, she claimed that "we're all sexual beings until the end!". Miriam shared lots of great tips to a packed hall at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, about learning to love your ageing body.

Research from Age UK highlights that, despite three in five over 50s believing that a

healthy sex life is important for a relationship at this age, 39% feel uncomfortable discussing this. Many people assume that sex and intimacy fade with age, but for countless older adults they remain meaningful, comforting and deeply personal parts of life. At the same time, illness, hormones, bereavement and disability can all shape how

we experience closeness and connection. Age UK's new guide *Sex, Relationships and Intimacy* covers changes in sexual function, the impact of health conditions and medication, shifting relationships, new partnerships and online dating. To request a copy, call 0800 169 6565 or you can find it on the Age UK website [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

## Artisan bakery celebrates 10 years in East End Road

By Nick Allan

The team at Margot Bakery, the artisan bakery on East End Road, N2, celebrated their ten-year anniversary in February. What started as a bold leap of faith in a rather sorry-looking former post office has quietly become one of those places the neighbourhood seems not to be able to do without.



Ten years and rising: Michelle Eshkeri at Margot Bakery

Founded by baker Michelle Eshkeri, who started baking sourdough at home, the premises was transformed into a light-filled, modern space thanks in part to architect Lucy Tauber's design that preserved industrial elements like steel and ribbed glass.

Specialising in naturally leavened sourdough, the bakery produces fresh daily loaves, flaky sourdough pastries, babka, challah, and other treats made on-site with high-quality ingredients.

Over the decade, things have grown steadily. A production and retail site opened in Holloway, the Holloway Model Bakery, followed by a second shop in Highgate on Archway Road.

## Sessions that tap into inner energy

After more than four decades in East Finchley, Gill Davis is bringing a deeply personal journey back to the community she has long called home.

A North Londoner with roots in Archway and long-standing ties to the area, Gill's career has spanned the City, property development, hypnotherapy and executive coaching. Yet beneath professional success lay a lifelong search for deeper meaning.

That search led Gill to Kundalini Awakening, a transformative energy practice that works beyond the thinking mind. During a session, participants lie down, close their eyes and listen to carefully curated music. An energetic transmission then gently activates their innate Kundalini energy to rise naturally, supporting the release of stored emotion, stress and limiting patterns.

Experiences vary widely, from emotional release and deep relaxation to moments of insight or inner stillness. Sessions take place in a small, safe container where participants are gently guided through the process. Many leave feeling lighter, calmer and more connected to themselves.



Gill Davis, second from left, leads a Kundalini Awakening session

Weekly sessions begin in April at Finchley Yoga (Saturday 4pm-6pm) and Finchley Youth Theatre (Monday 9.30am-11.30am). A one-day full immersion is planned for 7 June, with a six-day retreat scheduled in the Catalunya mountains of Spain in July (11-16). For further information or booking details, contact Gill at [Gill@gilldavis.com](mailto:Gill@gilldavis.com) or visit: [www.tickettailor.com/events/the-humanexperience/2096692](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/the-humanexperience/2096692)

## Nature nurtures

Professor Catherine Loveday will be giving a talk for Age UK Barnet on the impact of nature, fresh air and natural environments on memory, mood and mental health plus tips on how to use nature to boost your thinking skills.

It takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, on Wednesday 6 May from 6.45pm to 8pm. Contact Teresa on 07502 989403 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)



# Centre offers safe space for families to come together

By David Melsome

Where parents have separated and can't agree on how or when a child can see the parent they don't live with, a contact centre offers a safe space for that to happen in a neutral and welcoming environment. More than 20,000 children use contact centres every year.



Family life: The Muswell Hill Contact Centre offers a relaxed meeting place

The Muswell Hill Child Contact Centre (MHCCC) operates at Muswell Hill Methodist Church and is open to families of all faiths and none. It runs every other Saturday from 10am to 1pm, giving families space to move and play in, with toys and a garden.

The centre is run by volunteers who are all DBS-checked and receive regular training to ensure they offer a safe and professional service to the families, as well as the warmth and support needed. The centre is accredited by NACCC, the national association of contact centres. Families can be referred

to the centre through a solicitor, family court officer, family mediator or social worker, and parents can self-refer as well. Families are first assessed for suitability and then their visits are facilitated by volunteers. Supervised centres for higher-risk families can be found elsewhere.

At MHCCC, families are free to move around and are encouraged to see the service as a stepping stone towards independent contact outside.

Spokesperson Lucy Ellis said: "The contact centre service is founded in the belief that a breakdown of partnership between adults does not need to affect the long-term parent-child relationship. The focus is on the wellbeing of the children and volunteers don't take sides with either parent. There's also a clear set of rules that all parents sign up to."

MHCCC currently has space to welcome more families and is always keen to hear from potential volunteers too. Find out more at [mhmc-contactcentre.org.uk](http://mhmc-contactcentre.org.uk), email [contactcentre@mhmc.org.uk](mailto:contactcentre@mhmc.org.uk) or telephone 020 8444 2544.



Tunnel vision: Ben Nathan's photo of the point where the Chandos Brook enters the Strawberry Vale Brook

# Beauty and pollution

By Margaret Crockett

Striking photos of water courses above and below ground formed an exhibition called 'The Brook' by artist Ben Nathan, who specialises in documenting hunting culverts and other overlooked aspects of the city.

As reported in The Archer last August, the two streams running through East Finchley Allotments are tributaries of Bounds Green Brook. The image shown here was taken inside the culvert and shows the point at which Chandos Brook (also known as the allotment

stream) enters the subterranean Strawberry Vale Brook.

Where Ordnance Survey mapping fails to chart a brook, Ben researches other maps in local archives. His own circular map of the area of north London through which these waterways flow was also displayed.

The exhibition at Bruce Castle in Tottenham ran until 22 March but Nathan continues his work as a citizen scientist recording water quality tests across the Bounds Green Brook catchment. We plan to report more on water quality in our area in future editions of The Archer.

## RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

### Goats on wheels

It's that time of year, you know, spring, when everyone starts talking about GOATS, by which I mean 'the Greatest of All Time'. It's the chance to have a three-pint argument about football and cricket, but when it comes to motor racing just about everyone says Ferrari. And they are wrong. Yes, they've won the most drivers' and constructors' championships and they have been at it since Formula 1 was invented in 1950 but, if age was everything, we'd still have steam trains.

When former Alfa Romeo team manager and mediocre racing driver Enzo Ferrari launched his team in the aftermath of the Second World War, the only country with Grand Prix cars was Italy. The all-conquering pre-war Mercedes and Auto Unions were gone so it was left to Alfa Romeo, Maserati and the new boys Ferrari. By 1959, only Ferrari was left. They'd won four drivers' championships and from here on, the boys from Maranello were Italy's team. And oh boy did they go on about it.

Enzo Ferrari was a man of his time and that was probably the 16th century, the time of the Medicis when backstabbing was an art form. He called the British teams who brought modern engineering to the sport 'garagistas' and went on complaining long after his cars had started to look dated and new boys like Lotus were doing the winning.

In the real world, the scarlet Ferraris have not been as great as the myth suggests. At times, they have just made up the numbers. Between 1979 and 2000, no Ferrari driver won the world championship and, since Schumacher left in 2006, there has only been one winner. In fact, it has become a bit of a driver's graveyard.

Vettel won four championships, went to Ferrari and his career died. The same thing looks to be happening to Lewis Hamilton.

But they are Italy's team? No, not really. An Italian driver has only won the world championship twice. Yes, he was driving a Ferrari, but it was in 1952 and 1953. Brits, Germans, Austrians and the occasional Finn have won the rest.

Back in 1967, Ferrari offered a drive to Jackie Stewart which was fine until Jackie found out dear old Enzo had offered it to a couple of other drivers. Jackie went to Tyrell and in the next six years won the championship three times. The other titles went to Lotus drivers. And Ferrari? They were still making up the numbers. The greatest of all time? I don't think so.

## New puzzle: Re-Griddable

Re-Griddable is a twist on the free daily online game [griddable.co.uk](http://griddable.co.uk) created by two East Finchley residents, Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson. There may be more than one solution to each Re-Griddable but there is definitely at least one, which comes from a maximum scoring game of Griddable.

If you get stuck the official Griddable word-checker may help ([griddable.co.uk/word-checker](http://griddable.co.uk/word-checker)).

If you like playing Griddable online, why not join the East Finchley Leaderboard? Go to Groups on the site and use code BUJRM4.

**Re-Griddable**  
No.2

Place the letters to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four downwards.

A E H O O L T Y

B			S
	B	E	
S		L	
	E		P

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution



# Singing that bursts with joy

By Margaret Crockett

Attending her first Rock Choir rehearsal one January evening, Margaret Crockett found herself in a brightly lit hall full of chattering people. Here she reports on how the evening unfolded.

We sorted ourselves into voice sections and the warm-up started: physical exercises, then fun nonsense songs to get voices going. The choir-mistress began to teach Green, Green Grass, the George Ezra song, each part in turn. She sang a phrase and we repeated it. We learned as children.



Members of Hampstead Rock Choir in rehearsals at their venue in Golders Green. Photo Diane Kenwood

Once all parts of a phrase were learned separately, we came together to sing in harmony, gradually building up to the whole song. As I left, I knew it was just what I needed, a totally absorbing activity that filled me with joy. There was neither audition nor judgement, just familiar popular rock numbers.

Hampstead Rock Choir leader Nicola Cain is an East Finchley resident. She's petite and vivacious, carrying a handyman's work platform in her music kit to ensure she is visible when conducting. She leads two other choirs for Rock Choir Ltd, founded by Caroline Redmond Lusher MBE in 2005.

A classically trained soprano, Nicola sang in the National Youth Choir of Scotland from age eight.

"My voice is my greatest attribute," she says, "I was the kid performing to myself at the top of the slide."

Nicola moved to East Finchley seven years ago to join her partner who grew up here. She explains she welcomed new challenges and more scope for performances. Now also Regional Manager for London, she supports nine evening-working colleagues, all of whom aim to make Rock Choir welcoming and inclusive.

Now in its 16th year and 90-strong, our Choir moved from Hampstead to Golders Green to meet in a larger venue, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral hall. Nicola admits that she is more comfortable with her back to the audience leading and encouraging her choir members

but last November saw her, looking glamorous and sounding amazing, performing with her fellow Rock Choir leaders at the Rock Choir LIVE event in Birmingham.

We have two friendly hard-working prefects, Louise and Abbie, who organise social events. We recently voted Food Bank Aid Finchley as our charity so look out for us at our tube station bucket collection. We will also be performing on Sunday 12 April at the London Landmarks Half Marathon on Westminster Bridge.

Singing is an easy way to switch off from what is around you and do something for yourself but also to meet new people. Free taster sessions are on offer. See <https://rockchoir.com/> for full details.

# What's on at the Phoenix in April

By Zalan Pall, general manager

A sci-fi, a classic drama, special Q&A and festival screenings, live score, theatre and ballet plus many more await you at the Phoenix Cinema in April.

The relationship of a happily engaged couple (Zendaya and Robert Pattinson) is put to the test when an unexpected turn sends their wedding week off the rails in *The Drama*, from Friday 3 April.

In French Algeria, Meursault drifts through life and love with mysterious detachment. When he stands accused of murdering an Arab man, indifference is his only alibi in François Ozon's fresh take on Albert Camus's classic novel *The Stranger*, from Friday 10 April.

A visually dazzling space odyssey that's carried along effortlessly by the gravitational pull of Ryan Gosling at his most winning, *Project Hail Mary*, from Friday 10 April, is a near-miraculous fusion of smarts and heart.

On Thursday 16 April, we are screening Kendal Mountain Festival's award-winning adventure films, showcasing daring feats, breathtaking locations, and powerful stories of human resilience. Experience the thrill and excitement from the comfort of your seat and escape into the world's most stunning landscapes and be inspired by the extraordinary journeys of those who dare to explore them.



In *Colours of Time*, from Friday 17 April, four cousins who were previously strangers are brought together by the unexpected inheritance of an abandoned house in Normandy, where they discover a mysterious shared past.

We're screening a few exciting Q&As in April: Exhibition on Screen: Turner & Constable on Friday 10 April, Goodbye Breasts on Wednesday 15 April and *The Conspiracists* on Monday 27 April.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have RBO Live: *The Magic Flute* on Saturday 21 April, NT Live's *All My Sons* on Monday 23 April, *Power to the People: John & Yoko Live in NYC* on Wednesday 29 April, and *The Lodger* with a live score by Hugo Max on Monday 30 April.

For full details and to book visit our website [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk) or pop in and see our friendly box office staff.

# Review: The Hunt for Moriarty

## Artsdepot, North Finchley

By Jessica Holt

*The Hunt for Moriarty* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a gripping story that seamlessly blends suspense with adventure, keeping readers engaged from start to finish. The plot is intricately woven, with many twists and turns.



Mark Knightley as Sherlock and Ben Owora as Dr Watson

Nick Lane, the writer and director of this stage version has amalgamated the novel with several of Conan Doyle's short stories and created an equally complex and evocative experience. It was no surprise to see a very full auditorium at the

Artsdepot in North Finchley to watch The Blackeyed Theatre company bring it to life. In 2024 they had a hit with *The Valley of Fear*, another Sherlock Holmes story. *The Hunt for Moriarty* provides this world-wide touring company with many challenges such as multiple locations. Victoria Spearing, the set designer uses a versatile set to aid this small cast as they travel from place to place. Effective lighting and soundscapes help the transitions from scene to scene. The moving images projected across the back of the stage are imaginative ranging from fast moving trains to Moriarty's threatening notes.

Ben Owora's Dr Watson is entertaining as narrator and also in his role as Holmes's friend and close colleague, adding a humorous tone throughout the

play. This is well contrasted by Mark Knightley's Sherlock with his clipped delivery of lines to match his quick thinking leading to sudden theories as he responds to clues that Watson often fails to notice.

Pippa Caddock plays four roles and achieves clear characterisation with all of them helped by Madeleine Edis, the costume designer. The performance held the attention of the audience and for enthusiasts of the Sherlock Holmes stories it was an interesting and enjoyable piece of theatre. The pace picked up in the second half, but I must say it was too long overall and at times hard to follow. But congratulations must go to the company, now celebrating 20 years together, for their innovation in bringing a wide variety of works to the theatre.



COMING SOON  
AT ARTSDEPOT

THE GRUFFALO'S  
CHILD

Fri 3 – Thu 9 Apr

COMEDY PREVIEW:  
HUGE DAVIES  
& KATIE NORRIS  
Wed 15 Apr

ROLLERCOASTER  
Fri 24 Apr

GARY STEWART'S  
GRACELAND  
Sat 9 May

...and lots more!  
See the full line up  
at [artsdepot.co.uk](http://artsdepot.co.uk)



arts depot

Box Office: 020 8369 5454  
[artsdepot.co.uk](http://artsdepot.co.uk)

artsdepot, North Finchley, N12 0GA



## 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.



## Brrrr... First cold bath swim in 200 years

Easing himself in gently, Highgate Men's Pond swimmer Jamie Knowles was the first

person in 200 years to take a dip in the restored Cold Bath at Kenwood House, close to the café.

English Heritage completed the restoration and conservation of the bath last month.

It originally dates from the early 1700s when Hampstead was becoming known as a spa

village before the trend for health-giving dips faded away in the 1800s. **Photos Mike Coles**

### Drama of forgiveness

Garden Suburb Theatre's next production will be *The Long Road*, a poignant and troubling story of grief, forgiveness and loss by Shelagh Stephenson. Developed with Synergy Theatre Project and The Forgiveness Project, the drama asks whether dialogue can be found even in the darkest circumstances.

This acclaimed play, inspired by real-life situations, is being performed by a talented group of local actors. Performances run from Thursday 16 April to Sunday 19 April at Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village. Tickets priced from £13 are available from [boxoffice@gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk).

### Rich road

We know *The Bishops Avenue, N2*, as 'Billionaires' Row' but in fact it's the parallel road next door that is home to Britain's priciest properties.

Winnington Road, which also runs between East Finchley

and Hampstead Heath, has for the second year been named by Rightmove as the country's most expensive street. The average asking price for a house there is £12,538,095, even more expensive than Belgravia in central London and way above third place *The Bishops Avenue*, which averages a price of £8,930,650.

### Cash in on an evening of Johnny

The next free music event at East Finchley Methodist Church is an evening telling the stories of singer Johnny Cash's remarkable life.

Rev David Maclure will talk about Cash's adventures, faith and activism, interspersed with songs, and the second half will be a singalong of some of his best-loved hits.

The concert takes place on Sunday 12 April at 7.30pm at the church on the High Road, N2, opposite the junction with Creighton Avenue. Admission is free with a collection in aid of the Prison Fellowship and Own Merit. The venue is fully accessible.

**BOILER FUNDRAISER!**  
**QUIZ NIGHT!**  
Fun for the Whole Community!  
St. Mary's Catholic Church, East Finchley  
**Saturday April 18th - 6PM**  
- How does a boiler work?  
- What is the ideal temperature for hot water?  
- How old is your boiler!!!?  
**RSVP HERE!**  
**£5 ENTRY PER PERSON**  
**& £5 CORKAGE - BRING YOUR OWN WINE!**  
Prizes, Brain-Teasing Questions & Tasty Nibbles Included!

### ART MEETS BEAUTY

NINY BEAUTY SALON COLLABORATES WITH ARTPLAND

The best-rated beauty salon in North London  
Welcoming you in East Finchley  
130 East End Road, N2 0RZ - 07384478764

[www.ninybeauty.co.uk](http://www.ninybeauty.co.uk)  
[www.artpland.com](http://www.artpland.com)



### Comedy night

Tickets are still available for the all-star comedy night being organised by an East Finchley family in support of the dedicated gastroenterology ward, Squirrel Ward, at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, where their loved one is being treated.

Called North London Laughs, it takes place at Alexandra Palace Theatre on Thursday 14 May. The line-up features UK comedy stars Al Murray, Jen Brister, Phil Ellis, Hayley Ellis, Huge Davies, Bilal Zafar and Eytan Bayme.

Find out more and book tickets by going to [www.alexandrapalace.com](http://www.alexandrapalace.com) and searching 'North London Laughs'

**DAVID HILLEL OPTOMETRIST**  
Offering an enhanced eye examination and a comprehensive hearing care service  
Contact us today to book an appointment  
Tel: 020 8444 2233  
Email: [office@davidhillel.co.uk](mailto:office@davidhillel.co.uk)  
119 High Road, London, N2 8AG  
**Bela Shah**  
Practice Partner