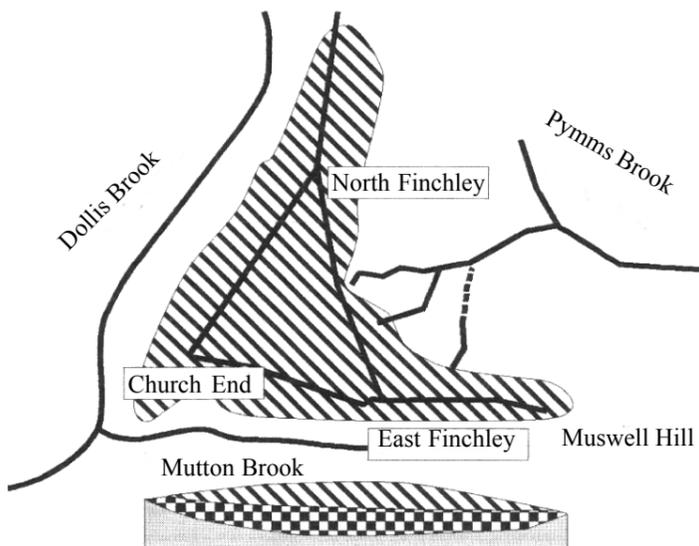




HISTORY

Over the next few issues we hope to bring you interesting facts about the history of East Finchley. Tony Roberts is delving into local publications and *The Archer* would like to acknowledge the information and inspiration that these have contributed. For a complete list, please send SAE to *The Archer*, marked "History List".

In the Beginning



The development of present-day Finchley owes much to the far-off era of the Anglian Ice Age which has left us a fascinating legacy.

The reason why some gardeners in N2 break backs and garden tools in the effort to find some semblance of soil amongst the heavy clay, while others delight in softer, manageable earth is best explained by the British Geological Survey Map.

Opening the map your attention is caught by a light blue triangle, the Finchley triangle, sitting in the midst of the surrounding brown clay. Fortis Green, East End Road and Ballards Lane run along southern and north western sides of this triangle at a fairly regular height of 90 - 95 metres but the triangle dips down toward the north east, to where the High Roads of East and North Finchley meet the North Circular.

Feet of clay

The light blue represents a unique surface layer of chalky, sandy clay, pushed down from the north and deposited when the ice melted. Under this clay, in a hollow in the base clay of the region, lies a "filling" of Dollis Hill gravel, probably de-

posited by a major tributary flowing north to join the Thames, then flowing through Watford. The ice cap blocked these northern routes, forming enormous lakes, and diverted the Thames through London on its current course.

The gravel "filling" has acted as a reservoir ever since, excess rainwater flowing over the join between gravel and clay in numerous streams, noticeably to the north east, to join Pymm's Brook and the River Lea. The steep southern and north western sides drain westward, the Dollis Brook and Mutton Brook joining to form the Brent Brook which flows backward along the earlier river course.

The topography of this triangle has played a key part in the history and development of East Finchley, as we shall see in future months.

Acknowledgements: British Geological Survey, London & The Thames Valley, 1996 edition.

Next month: Finchley in Times Immemorial

Bowled over by "Hollywood" multiplex

By Pamela Kent

The new Warner Cinema Multiplex at Finchley High Road was recently labelled one of the worst six in the country by the BBC. As a 50-something non-cinema goer (well not regularly anyway) I decided to see for myself what the fuss was about.

I opted for "Evita" on Screen 4 and joined the ticket queue for the 6.15 showing. As I had about 20 minutes to spare before the film started, I spent the time enjoying a glass of wine in the bar whilst watching the experts at ten-pin bowling. It's certainly a lot different from the pub skittles I used to play!

All too soon it was time to make my way up the escalator to the cinema complex. And boy was I impressed! What a foyer. No usherettes carrying heavy trays of ice-cream and orange drinks-on-a-stick here. No-one calling "tickets please" and pointing at your feet with a dim torch. But a warm, welcoming sight of a wonderful array of delicious popcorn, chocolate and sweet snacks plus a small amusement arcade to keep you busy until the film begins.

Inside the auditorium there

were more surprises. The tickets have seat numbers on them, a far cry from my last visit to a popular film at the Phoenix when I was almost trampled on as I endeavoured to reach a central seat.

These seats are huge and extremely comfortable - with a holder in the armrest for the popcorn which I wished I had bought. It doesn't matter where you sit; everyone has an unobstructed view even if you are behind Finchley's tallest person with the tallest hat. The size of the screen, the quality of the picture and the acoustics are absolutely perfect.

I stayed right to the end, reading every credit at the end of the film - remembering the days when I used to stay in my seat to watch the entire production all over again. But not this time - as I left the auditorium I could

hear the next audience arriving for the 9.15 showing. Lucky people - they weren't missing out on the popcorn. Neither will I next time.

Olde England

By Melanie Daniel

There is nothing more stunning
Than a blue-hued sky in
England
And radiant clouds
Drifting by a church spire.

And an ancient tree
Reminding us of times of
beauty - past
of Chivalry, Hospitality,
Kindness and Humanity.

We are the worst -
Now that these qualities
are lost.

"Why is this night different from all other nights?"

By Lynn Fidler

This is the question asked by the youngest in the family at the Seder table.

The Seder is the service held on the first night of the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach, which commemorates how in biblical times the Jews in Egypt fled from slavery and oppression.

The festival lasts for eight days, during which no food containing flour may be eaten. Bread is replaced by Matza (unleavened bread). This is because when the Jews left Egypt they did not even have time to wait for their bread to rise (or leaven).

At the Seder, the Exodus from

Egypt is recited from a book known as the Haggadah. The familiar bible story tells how the Jews were slaves to Pharaoh. Under the leadership of Moses, they fled across the Red Sea into the desert where they then wandered for forty years.

This story is helped along with songs, interactive plagues and a variation of a treasure hunt for the children, who search for the "Afikomen", a piece of Matza hidden at the start of the evening.

Like all good Jewish celebrations, the Seder centres on the meal. We eat bitter herbs to remind us of the suffering of our forefathers. We have these with

charoseth, a paste made from almonds, wine and fruit. The consistency is supposed to reflect the cement used by the slaves to build the Pyramids.

It is also traditional to start the meal with egg and salt water - the egg symbolises life and the salt water, the tears of the Israelites.

Throughout the service, everyone must drink four glasses of wine - no-one objects to this!

Every family enjoys the songs, although tunes vary from around the world. The evening ends with the rousing Had Gadya (one little goat), a tale in the style of "The House that Jack Built".

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