

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

No schools for local children

Barnet's grammar schools - the pride of the borough or an outdated system?

The dispute over their future continues. See page 4.

Finchley children are being educated in a church hall because of a shortage of secondary school places reports Daphne Chamberlain.

Local parents and their children confronted Councillors at October's Finchley Forum, held in the Old Barn, Tarling Road.

One schoolgirl, with good achievements at primary school, told how she was refused ad-

mission to a secondary school only five minutes from her home. In all, 17 children are being educated privately in a church hall, because they say they have not been offered suitable schools.

This is in spite of Barnet Education Department main-

taining that there are enough places in local secondary schools for all children. "Depends what you mean by local" was the response to this, with several fathers protesting that Whitefields School in Cricklewood should not be considered a local school for children in East Finchley.

Girls in the East Finchley and Finchley Central areas get a particularly raw deal, because of the lack of all-girls schools.

Girls losing out

In defence Chair, Councillor Kathy McGuirk, said that Barnet controlled only nine of the Borough's 21 secondary schools. Ravenscroft and Whitefields Schools have taken on extra children, and Ravenscroft is running a pilot scheme in single-sex classes.

The parents and their supporters were far from satisfied with this response. They want the Council to lobby Central Government to stop children from other boroughs using our schools. (One pointed out that letting children travel miles across London doesn't even agree with Government environmental policy.)

Million pound promise

Meanwhile, questions continue about educational provision for children among the 3,000 people expected to move into the new estate on the old Friern Hospital site, at Friern Barnet. Councillor McGuirk said that the Department of Health has promised £1,000,000 towards the building of a school - either on the site, or elsewhere, - but so far this has not been received.

The Light Fantastic

Since our article about the Christmas lights for East Finchley, *THE ARCHER* has been approached by local people who would like to see a concerted community effort to raise the necessary money for a third annual display.

Last year's were generally agreed to have been better than those in the West End! This was due largely to Lawrie Chivers, of A1 Motors, who has lightened up the spirits of both young and old by putting in a tremendous amount of time, not to mention money, into making the High Road look festive.

But, in this day and age, we do have to mention money. Hiring the lights, putting them up and taking them down costs and, even if the area to be lit is reduced this year, Lawrie reckons we will need to raise at least £5,000 ourselves. Barnet will still have to provide some funding, as will other sponsors, who need to be contacted in advance. If, as you are reading this, you are thinking that someone else will do it, think again. There must be East Finchley residents who want to make sure that the last Christmas of this millennium is a memorable one.

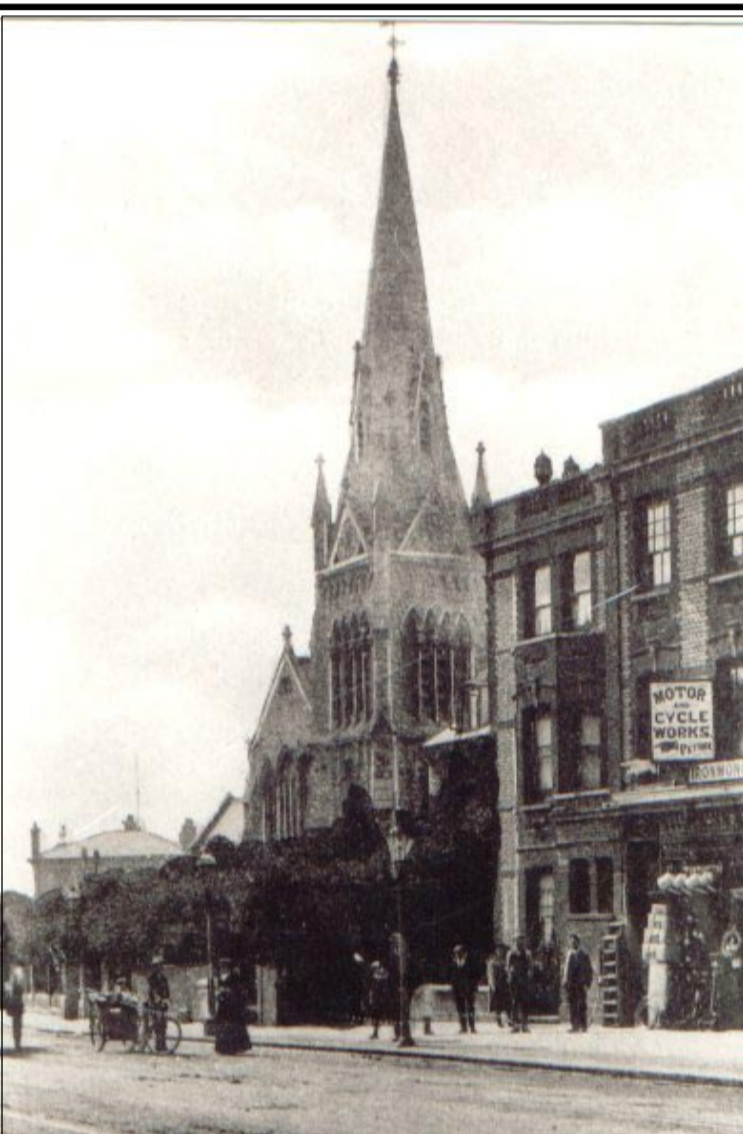
It has been suggested that collection boxes be placed in local shops, restaurants and in

the library. Maybe money could be collected in churches, schools, pubs, at the tube station or maybe you know of a source which has not yet been tapped? People are needed to help write a few letters, to approach local traders that they deal with and encourage them to make a contribution.

Although Lawrie has been pleased by the initial response to the previous article, that alone is not going to be enough. So he still needs all the help you can give.

Please phone him on 020 8883 8628 or call in to A1 Motors at 113 High Road, East Finchley and help to make a brighter Christmas for us all.

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East Finchley Congregational Church in 1910, on the site now known as Viceroy Parade - occupied by, amongst others, the Post Office, Iceland and soon-to-be-refurbished Budgens. Photo courtesy Barnet Library Services.

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