



In fine form - Eric George in Maddens. Photo by John Dearing

Jazz saxophonist celebrates his 80th birthday

By John Dearing

Eric George, a long time resident of East Finchley, is known to many of us, not the least those who frequent Madden's Piano bar, as a charming and friendly man. Many may also remember him as a jazz saxophonist of considerable skill and achievement, who played in mainstream jazz groups and bands for more than 60 years, performing at many famous venues, such as the London Palladium, Fairfield Halls, the National Concert Hall in Dublin and St. David's Hall Cardiff, to mention just a few.

From Blues to Bebop

On 25 November, Eric, now resident in Whetstone, celebrated his 80th birthday at Madden's, with a large group of his family and friends. The evening's entertainment commenced with Nick and Simon playing some gentle blues on piano and guitar. After the inevitable champagne and photo-call, Eric joined forces with Doug Murray (piano), Ken Miller (double bass) and Mike Nash (trombone) to play an excellent set of mainstream and bebop favourites, showing that he had not in any way lost his touch with the saxophone.

It was a most enjoyable evening and a wonderful way to celebrate a significant milestone in his life. *The Archer* joins with those present to wish him many happy returns and many more years of playing the music he loves.

Film on Four

By Diana Cormack

Ten-year-olds Sam Davis of Huntingdon Road and Tomas McGrath of Long Lane took part in BBC Radio 4 children's programme "Go 4 It" when they reviewed a new Walt Disney film. They were treated to sweets, sandwiches and drinks at the Disney Centre in London, where they watched the film *Atlantis*. A researcher asked them to nudge each other at the good bits and made

notes about their various comments and reactions.

At the BBC the following week they were given biscuits, sandwiches and drinks as well as a question sheet to fill in about what they thought of the film. During the programme the host Matt Smith and his large furry cat Cromarty interviewed them about *Atlantis* and their photos were put on the web site.

Sam and Tomas thought it was fun. They remember particularly the free food, the big furry microphones but, most of all, the antics of Matt and his cat.

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East Finchley Station

Acute congestion in the ticket hall at rush hours is an ongoing problem. The station manager says that, in spite of trying various means to alleviate the chaos, the present layout and system of purchasing tickets sets a limit to any improvement.

London Underground are relying on the "Prestige" system to solve the ticket purchasing problem. Due to be implemented in 2003, this will use smart cards to store payment for travel.

The East Finchley Agenda 21 Traffic and Transport Group wants implementation of the Prestige system to be prioritised for this station; meanwhile, it is campaigning for us to be able to buy a wider variety of tickets, including advance tickets, from local agents.

The Group is also asking for special attention to safety during wet and icy weather. Floor tiling in the ticket hall should be kept dry, and snow and ice cleared from the forecourt.

It is expressing concern, too, at the amount of rubbish on trains, which it appreciates is a London-wide problem. It says that if eating on the system were banned, this would go a long way to improving conditions, pointing out that only a few years ago smoking was permitted.

The Group has asked for these items to be included on the agenda at the Council's next Transport Liaison Panel.

Traffic Schemes

The Bishop's Avenue/Great North Road

Proposals are being formulated for a signalled junction, which would include pedestrian crossing phases. (*The Archer* has highlighted the danger of this junction several times. Last year, an elderly pedestrian was seriously injured there. His neighbour, who has campaigned for a crossing, told us, "This is very good news. Only last week, I pulled back a gentleman who was about to be knocked down".)

Market Place

Funding is being applied for to implement traffic calming between Kitchener Road and East End Road, including junction improvements at East End Road. The width of the junction would be reduced, and the actual junction projected forward, benefiting both pedestrians and drivers. There would also be more obvious one-way signs.

Church Lane

£13,000 has been allocated from the Safe Routes to School budget, which will allow part of the proposed traffic calming scheme to be implemented. Work will include speed reduction cushions, dropped kerbs and textured red surfacing to highlight pedestrian crossing points. Consultation will take place early next year, with work commencing in the spring.

East End Road Local Safety Scheme

A scheme has been drawn up and consulted on (76% in favour), and will be implemented in spring 2002. The scheme includes:- A pelican crossing at Thomas More Way, a signalled junction at Ossulton Way, with pedestrian facilities, a textured red surfaced crossing at the junction with Church Lane to help pedestrians and two sets of speed cushions between the junction with Church Lane and Cromwell Close.

H3 Bus

The H3 bus, which connects Golders Green to Hill Top, via the Garden Suburb, on an hourly basis, will shortly be extended to connect with East Finchley Station.

Traffic and transport information supplied by Peter Hale, Agenda 21 Transport Group Coordinator. Peter can be contacted on 020 8444 5837

Future meetings of the Traffic and Transport Group: 20 February, 15 May, 14 August, 20 November 2002, at 8pm in the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane.

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New 263 buses

By Daphne Chamberlain

The 263 bus service has been re-tendered, and Arriva will give way to Metroline, who start a five-year contract next month.

Metroline has promised low floor vehicles, with space provision for disabled passengers, which they say will be more comfortable.

Too many new buses, though, as many of us know, have "nothing to grab" - except a fellow-passenger. The upright supports have vanished, making travelling hazardous on the two-way facing back seats, which are raised up over the wheels. It is not easy to get out of these seats, particularly for those carrying children or bags, especially when the bus is full.

East Finchley has suffered long enough with an appalling bus service. Let's do what we can to get a bus which is convenient, safe and comfortable for everyone. (Not to mention one that runs on time.)

Anyone with any concerns should write to London Buses, Customer Services Department, 172, Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 9TN.

Peter Hale, of East Finchley Agenda 21 Partnership, told *The Archer* that he will look into the design of the proposed buses.

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