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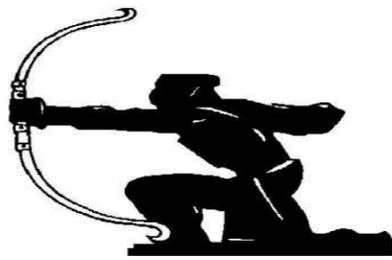
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Local News Is Our Aim

THE ARCHER



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April 2003 No. 119
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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Education under-funding hits East Finchley schools

While the local community has been absorbed by the debate about a supermarket development, another 'development' has hit the school community with potentially devastating consequences - the Barnet education budget.

The shortfall is estimated at 8% across the borough, the brunt seeming to be borne by secondary schools. In the case of Christ's College, East Finchley, Headmaster Paul O'Shea in a letter to the parents advised a shortfall of around £450,000, equivalent to 12.5% of the school budget. He has been

placed in the unenviable position of having to warn of the possibility of significant staff cuts, increased class sizes, reduction in books and equipment, a massive reduction in the already overstretched premises budget and even the possibility of not being able to deliver the national curriculum.

Several staff have already been advised that their short term contracts will not be renewed and the School is in consultation with the Trade Union Representatives concerning the selection criteria to be used should further staff reductions become necessary.

Register your concern

The school is a successful one, as evidenced by the fact that it has recently been granted specialist status and is oversubscribed. In order to preserve this singular achievement Mr O'Shea has urged parents to lobby their MP (for example using www.faxyourmp.com) and local Councillors and register their concern. Of course anyone else concerned for the future of the East Finchley community could consider doing the same.



Pathetic - Vandals have destroyed fifteen saplings in the Glebelands. Photo by Erini Rodis.

Trees Vandalised

Last month North Finchley's Agenda 21 funded a project to plant fifteen downy birches at the edge of the sports pitch in the Glebelands, in a bid to make the area more attractive for local people to use. Within three weeks though, vandals had destroyed every single tree.

Sited just west of Coppetts Wood nature reserve, the Glebelands is one of the last open spaces remaining of the Finchley Common, which was originally used for grazing and collecting firewood, and then for playing fields and allotments.

The trees, Latin name: *Betula pubescens*, were described by Mark Evison, green spaces development officer for Barnet Council as, "a native species, which should attract a good amount of the right invertebrates and birds". Sadly, thanks to the mindless actions of a few, we will not have the chance to see the benefit of these trees.

Accident Appeal

Police are appealing for witnesses to a road accident in Highgate on Saturday 22 March, in which a pedestrian was injured.

A Volkswagen Polo collided with a male pedestrian at about 1 pm in Highgate High Street, and carried him for a short time on the bonnet. It is believed the driver drove in zigzags down the road in an attempt to throw the pedestrian off.

The car then continued north up the High Street and turned right into Southwood Lane. The pedestrian, a white man in his early 40s, was taken to hospital suffering head injuries. He remains in a serious but stable condition.

The car, which has not yet been recovered, is a dark coloured, possibly blue, VW Polo registration V923GLK. Police have established the plates were false. The driver was a white male.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or has any information about the suspect car should contact the Major Incident Room at Holborn police station on 020 8733 6596, or alternatively if you wish to remain anonymous call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. The officer investigating is DS Ian Clark.

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Thank you to Madden's Ale House for providing us with a meeting place.

Your contributions

THE ARCHER team wishes to thank all the generous people who give up their spare time, in all weather, to deliver the paper for us.

If you have a news item, memory or anecdote please send it in to us at the above address.

14 April is the copy deadline for the May issue.

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Thames Water 0845 920 0888
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Transco Gas Emerg. 0800 111 999

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Com'ty Health Cncl 020 8349 4364
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*Calls to 09065 numbers are charged at £1.50 per minute.

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Contact East Finchley's
Community Police Officer,
PC Paul Carter, at
The Community Office,
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Tel: 020 8733 5562 or e-mail:
paul.carter@met.police.uk

Community Services

- ❖ Credit Union, Green Man Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Careers advice, Green Man, Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Toy library, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

Jail Sentence Reduced

Disgraced family doctor Timothy Healy, who was jailed last September for indecently assaulting young men and boys over a period of ten years, has had his sentence cut by a third.

The original twelve years has now been reduced to eight after the Court of Appeal heard that similar sentences had been imposed for what were judged to be much more serious offences.

Healy, who lived in Abbots Gardens, N2, was tried for offences that took place between October 1978 and February 1988 in various places, including his surgery in Southern Road. He had been arrested following police investigations into a paedophile ring and was struck off the medical register last December.

Fortis Green CPZ Abandoned

Following a meeting on 18 March with Council officers, Liberal Democrat Councillor Stephen Gilbert (Fortis Green), has said that it is now "highly unlikely" that Haringey Council will go ahead with plans to impose a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in parts of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green.

A clear majority (62%) of residents who responded to the Council's consultation were against the plans, with only 30% in favour. Participation in the consultation was a creditable 42%.

Support from some areas

The committee of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association however had decided that it would support the scheme in principle - with the proviso that it was an extension of the East Finchley scheme, i.e. designed to deter all-day parkers from outside the area and confined to 2pm to 3pm on Monday to Friday only.

Eugene Myerson, the association's Transport Officer, pointed out that because of the overspill from the East Finch-

ley CPZ, "we think it's fair to our members who live in those streets nearest to East Finchley that we support an extension of the scheme."

Chair of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, John Hajdu, said, "We do appreciate the views of residents in streets like Ringwood Avenue and Beech Drive and who previously successfully campaigned against the CPZ. But it would be wrong not to listen to those living in Springcroft Avenue, Eastern, Southern and Western Roads and parts of Twyford Avenue, who are strongly for a CPZ. "It should be stressed that we have told Haringey Council that we support the extension of Barnet's CPZ only if the restrictions which apply in Barnet also apply in Fortis Green."

Councillor Stephen Gilbert commented: "The Council's consultation process has shown that the majority of residents in the area do not want a CPZ. As local residents have spoken, this scheme will rightly not get the go-ahead. "I acknowledge that some residents did favour parking controls, and the council must not lose sight of the fact that there is still a problem with commuter parking in some parts of the area. I will be working with local residents and officers to find an alternative way to solve this problem."

Cherry Tree Wood Application Turned Down

A planning application to transform the ex-park-keeper's cottage into a 2-storey house with a metal roof has been turned down.

The planning application showed two car spaces having access to the footpath between Southern and Fordington Roads and there would have been metal railings along the walkway to Fordington Road. It seems the present three metre coniferous hedge hiding

the bungalow from view of the rest of the Wood would have been taken down and some form of galvanised fence with beech screen erected instead

Neither Friends of Cherry Tree Wood nor the Parks Department had received notice of the proposal.

Local Planning Applications

The following have been selected from Barnet Borough's planning lists because of their probable interest to local people. However, it should be noted that THE ARCHER is a monthly publication and is put together at least two weeks before you receive it.

90 and 92 High Road (the premises previously occupied by accountants and solicitors Pittalis and Co.):

Application for change of use of ground floor units from office use to beauty treatments and alternative medicine.

The Thomas More Centre, East End Road:

Application to erect a temporary pre-fabricated office building on the existing car park.

22 High Road (which is part of the proposed Waitrose site):

Permission sought for a single storey rear extension to existing offices.

Rear of 138 High Road:

Application to erect a single storey Yoga studio with access via Leicester Road.

Bishop Douglass RC School, Hamilton Road:

Application to replace a grassed area at the front entrance with hard standing to provide additional car-parking spaces.

Land adjacent to 45 Heath View:

Proposal to erect of a new two-storey end of terrace house.

119 High Road:

Change of use from retail shop to telephone Internet access.

Former neurological hospital, Great North Road:

Proposal for new vehicular access from Deansway, involving demolition of the existing side extension at 59 Deansway.



Growing Interest in Finchley Credit Union

By Kim George

Finchley Credit Union is a democratic, savings and loan co-operative, which has been offering low cost financial services to the residents of East Finchley for the past three years. It is run by and for its members.

Savers receive free insurance with their savings and can access cheap loans. Loans are based on a person's savings record with the credit union, and their ability to pay. We don't encourage indebtedness; we encourage people to save regularly and to borrow prudently. There is no minimum amount (last year we granted an unemployed man a loan of £100 in order to buy winter coats for his children.) but there is a maximum of £5,000. Many members use the credit union to pay off large credit card bills.

Finchley Credit Union is unusual in that it has a high number of ethical savers, who have invested because they share the credit union's ethos, rather than in the expectation of a higher return on their savings.

Developing Trust

As the Credit Union is not a charity, but an Industrial & Provident Society, it is diffi-

cult to attract the funding we require to grow and develop new services. The East Finchley Community Development Trust has been tremendous in this respect. Its support has enabled us to increase our total opening hours from five and half to twenty hours per week. The council's shortsighted and politically motivated decision to withdraw funding this month would have been a severe blow without the work of the Development Trust.

In the year ahead my three wishes are for more people to join the credit union, more existing members to take out loans and more people to offer their services as volunteers.

The Neighbourhood Centre, 42 Church Lane, East Finchley, N2 8DT

Wednesday: 7pm-8.30pm; Saturday: 10am-12 noon

Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, East Finchley, N2 9BA

Wednesday: 10am-5pm; Thursday: 5pm-8.30pm; Saturday: 10am-4pm

For further information contact The Green Man: 8883 4916 or Kim George: 8444 8673

Credit Union Funding Reprieve

Barnet Council has reversed its decision of 4 March to withdraw funding by way of a £2,000 annual grant from Finchley Credit Union. Whilst the withdrawal would not have threatened the survival of the scheme, short notice withdrawal of such funds would almost certainly have given the Credit Union a management problem that it had not anticipated.

At a meeting of the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Martin O'Donnell, representing the Credit Union,

made an impassioned plea that resulted in the Council reversing its earlier decision by reinstating the grant.

Speaking in support of the Credit Unions Rudi Vis MP, Finchley & Golders Green said: "It is due to the dedication of volunteers that the Credit Unions in the borough have been so successful and it was with dismay that I learnt that the Council were to cut all funding for community credit unions in this year's council budget. When an estimated 26% of people have no current account with a bank or a building society and up to 40% lack credit-worthiness, credit unions help because they are a democratic, membership-owned body of people who have joined together to provide services and loans to its members. "They tend to operate in deprived areas, but they are not the 'poor person's bank'. In reality who would say no to interest rates of 1% a month on loans, a dividend on savings, first class insurance and a democratic say in how their money is used? That's what credit unions offer to everybody, rich or poor."



Tree time for Archie

Photo and story by Erini Rodis

A tree has been planted in Cherry Tree Wood to commemorate the 10th anniversary of THE ARCHER'S existence.

Members of THE ARCHER team looked on early Tuesday morning as tree surgeons Mick and Paddy planted a double-flowering bird cherry to commemorate the ten years of continuous community effort that has produced this newspaper.

Latin named *Prunus avium plena*, the sapling is sited by the Summerlee Avenue entrance to the Wood and it's already beginning to flower, so enjoy!

Drugs Awareness is Power

By Erini Rodis

The Old Barn Community Centre, in association with Barnet Impact Young People's Service, hosted a drugs awareness evening on 10 March, involving an introduction to a number of projects that have been set up for young people and their families who might be concerned about drug or substance abuse.

The aim was to empower local communities to minimise the harm being done by the misuse of drugs/alcohol and the crime related to it.

Those attending were greeted by a display of processed drugs, their prices and their slang names, and were shown a video of teenagers' views on the subject.

Barnet Drugs Prevention Campaign points out that it would be useful to discuss with your child what could happen if the police found them to be involved with drugs. A single police reprimand can have far reaching effects on a child's future, affecting their potential job prospects and things that they may be more interested in, like being allowed car insurance. That's if discussion about the effects on their health, relationships or ability to study doesn't seem to sink in.

Other items discussed included concern about needles and syringes in the neighbourhood, peer education,

date-rape drug and the mentoring of drug users who need to cut back their use before they give it up completely.

Perceptions must change

It was stressed that the community's perception of drug use needs to change. This was illustrated by the poor attendance of the event, which was a shame.

Persuasive discipline and a freer flow of information are the keys to tackling this problem. Advice to parents was to start these discussions at an early age by treating it as a preventative measure, like learning to cross the road. Remember: Knowledge is power".

Mystery of the Missing Urns

Two concrete marble-effect flower-urns were stolen from outside Fairacres in East End Road in the early hours of 17 February.

Also known as the 'White House', the Joan Milne wing of the Fairacres estate is a listed building, and the urns had stood outside it for 17 years.

"They were still there when I came back from the pub quiz on Monday at midnight," recalls resident Sippy Azizollah, "but by morning they were gone! They're lovely, but who

would want to nick them? If somebody sees them please send them home!"

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FINCHLEY FORUM REPORT

By Daphne Chamberlain

Several issues concerning East Finchley were raised at the Forum held on 19 March.

Traffic between the station and the Bald Faced Stag

A report suggesting adjustments to the northbound traffic flow, particularly the bus lane, will be discussed in committee in April. If approved, adjustments will go ahead.

Questions were asked about the effect on traffic of the proposed Waitrose development and altered use of the Neurological Hospital site. Further speakers from the floor doubted that a 135-space car park at Waitrose would be adequate. The platform agreed that the junction at Fortis Green is very narrow, so "why add to it?" (i.e. the chaos)

Traffic Speed in County Roads

Petitioners from the County Roads were concerned about the speed of through traffic, quoted as reaching 50-60 mph, which they said had killed some animals and endangered children. They asked for mechanical speed reducers.

Barnet Traffic Department agreed to consider the problem in April, when discussing the traffic flow at Fortis Green. Meanwhile, a member of the department will speak to Peter Hayle from Agenda 21.

Library Protest

Several speakers asked for it to be put on record that East Finchley "does not want a new library foisted upon it to replace a perfectly good one". They asked the Chair, Councillor Leslie Sussman, to find out whether it had been the Council or the developers who had suggested installing a library in the Waitrose plans.

Replying to the related issues of traffic and the library, Councillor Sussman said that local people would be entitled to ask for a public inquiry.

Rubbish Collection

A request was made for wheelie-bins to be issued to all households sited above shops, in order to prevent rubbish being dumped on the pavements.

Credit Union Funding

Credit Union representatives complained about the imminent withdrawal of their £2,000 p.a. funding, pointing out that half that sum went back to Barnet in rent. Their business plan was for complete independence in five years. The funding had been withdrawn following failure to meet Best Value, but the Best Value criterion had not been applied to the CU itself. In addition, they had been informed very late and by e-mail.

Adamson Court

Questions were asked about the future use of Adamson Court, Hertford Road. It was still uncertain. Councillor Sussman said he would seek clarification.

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Experienced singers are always welcome.
Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>



In memoriam, photo by Erini Rodis

Forever Friends

By Diana Cormack

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood have had an English oak planted in memory of Robin Chapman, who died suddenly last year at the age of 64. Robin loved the Wood and it was on his initiative that the Friends came into being in 1995.

With the responses he received from notices that he pinned up in the park he organised a meeting and a committee was formed. From then onwards he never allowed Barnet Council to forget the existence of the Wood and was always there to inspire and encourage the Friends in their many beneficial activities.

Robin visited Cherry Tree Wood almost daily with his wife Kirsten and their dog Trina. Fittingly, the oak tree has been planted in line with the spot where Robin loved to sit and gaze upon the place he loved so dearly.

Festival Falters

There will be no Muswell Hill festival this summer, although it is hoped it will be back in 2004, providing enough volunteers can be found to make it a success.

The organisers are taking a year off, partly because of the bus company's objection to the road closure and also due to the burden of work involved in organising this event.

There are suggestions that the festival next year could be held off the road, possibly on the school playing fields or a similar open space.

John Hajdu, chairman of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association reports that there will be a meeting next September to discuss the festival's future. If anybody would like to take part John would like to hear from you.

Fairtrade Village

The East Finchley Local Agenda 21 Partnership held a public meeting, including their Annual General Meeting, at the Green Man Community Centre on 11 March.

As the meeting fell during Fairtrade Fortnight, the Partnership invited Nick Tancock from the Fairtrade Foundation to speak at the meeting. The Fairtrade Mark guarantees a better deal for Third World Producers by paying fair prices for their products including coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas, sugar, rice, honey and chocolate bars. There was some Fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate to sample and all agreed that the quality was excellent.

Nick also described the Fairtrade Town initiative. This involves local communities making a commitment to Fairtrade and trying to raise awareness and understanding of the Fairtrade Mark. By doing this, it is hoped that more people will buy Fairtrade products. There are currently 17 Fairtrade Towns in the UK. A motion

from the floor asked the East Finchley LA21 Partnership to try and help make East Finchley a Fairtrade Village! The Partnership is keen to pursue this with everyone's help. Perhaps you could start helping by purchasing a Fairtrade product on your next shopping trip.

Repair, recycle, replant

The evening then moved on to the AGM of the LA21 Partnership, which included brief reports from the outgoing chair, treasurer, traffic and transport group and the greening group. The Partnership has also recently been awarded funding from the council Local Agenda 21 Grants Fund to undertake three projects: developing a waste directory that will be distributed to all households in East Finchley encouraging people to reduce, re-use, repair and recycle their waste; creating a publicity leaflet to promote the work of the Partnership; and funding for the greening group to plant young trees on the LA21 allotment. The steering group of the Partnership was also elected but there are still some vacancies

for interested people.

The meeting was then opened up for a discussion of local issues. There was an interesting debate surrounding the proposed Waitrose development. The LA21 Partnership steering group said that they would comment on a formal planning application if, and when, it is submitted to Barnet Council. Other issues that were discussed included the locking of Cherry Tree Woods and anti-social behaviour in the Woods and also plans for the site of the old Neurological Hospital. These discussions could have carried on long into the night.

Many thanks to the more than 40 people who attended the meeting and participated in the discussions. The LA21 Partnership hope everyone found it interesting and worthwhile. They are hoping to make their AGM an annual event. We hope to see a good turnout in March 2004! For further information on the Partnership and to find out forthcoming steering group meeting dates, please contact Stuart Gadsden on 8359 4664.



The National Hospital

By Alison Stein

Part 3 Royal Past - Uncertain Future

Many readers will have watched the Stephen Poliakoff drama, *The Lost Prince*, on television. Not all may be aware, however, that Johnnie was not the first member of the British Royal Family to suffer from epilepsy. Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, died in 1884, aged only 31, leaving behind a young wife, a baby daughter, Alice – and an unborn son.

Throughout his short life he suffered from haemophilia as well as epileptic fits. However, he managed to attend university (despite his mother's objections), and at Oxford became very friendly with John Ruskin, who gave him an enthusiasm for reform and social justice. In 1882 Prince Leopold presided at a fund-raising dinner in aid of the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic, Queen Square. In commending the hospital for affording "relief to maladies of so peculiarly mysterious and distressing a nature", he was speaking from painful personal experience.

It was thus appropriate that in June 1897 his widow Helen, Duchess of Albany, should perform the opening ceremony for the Country Branch of the National Hospital at East Finchley. The *Hendon and Finchley Times* reports that she "was received at the entrance to the grounds by a guard of honour of the 3rd Middlesex Rifle Volunteers". There followed, according to the *Hendon Times*, "a long", and according to *The Lancet*, "a short religious service", and an Oxford contemporary of Prince Leopold's, Mr George Russell, made "a speech, primed with pleasant personal recollections".

Poignant Memories

Time passed – with visiting days, summer garden parties, and homegrown winter entertainments round the fire. The building was requisitioned by Middlesex County Council during the Second World War, but re-opened in 1947, and in the 1960s upgraded and extended. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, performed the opening ceremony in July 1967. She was then in her mid-eighties – no longer the baby in a high chair, with an uncanny resemblance to her grandmother, Queen Victoria; but perhaps dimly remembering her doting father, Prince Leopold, who played the 'piano organ' to amuse her, while John Ruskin danced to its music¹.

And what of the future? If the current development scheme succeeds, the convalescent home and its fine grounds will soon be only a memory. But a memory which reflects credit on East Finchley and its warm-hearted welcome to the National Hospital Home, at a time when sufferers from 'nervous diseases' were shunned elsewhere.

¹ Charlotte Zeepvat, *Prince Leopold - The untold story of Queen Victoria's Youngest Son*, 1998, Sutton Publishing Ltd.

Need a Hand with Shopping?

East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact have spaces available on their free twice-weekly shopping bus to Tesco, Colney Hatch Lane, to assist older or less able people who need help in carrying heavy shopping.

Users of the shopping bus are collected from home in the morning, assisted with carrying shopping to the bus and dropped back home. The driver also assists with carrying shopping from the bus to the front door – a welcome help for its happy users. The bus runs most Thursdays and Fridays.

Sian Jones coordinator of East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact comments: "For people unable to carry heavy shopping, a regular trip to a larger supermarket is a welcome help, plus it gives a chance to meet other people in the same position."

If you would like to make use of the shopping bus please call the East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact office on 020 8444 1162.

East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact provides a range of services from visiting elderly people, to reading, doing odd jobs, hosting lunch clubs and helping with shopping. If you can spare a few hours each week and can help a neighbour in your street, call Sian on 020 8444 1162.



(L-R) Vicki Stanton of the Bobath Centre, Nick Dean of Barclays Bank, Rob and Jacqui Dobor of the Bald Faced Stag present a cheque to the Bobath Centre. Photo by Diana Cormack

Local Spirit

By Diana Cormack

Vicki Stanton's appeal for the Bobath Centre in February's *ARCHER* received an instant response from Jacqui and Rob Dobor, landlords of The Bald Faced Stag. They got together to organise a Valentine's Day raffle, when two hampers filled with goodies given by shopkeepers in the High Road could be won. They also held a Saturday night Battle of the Sexes pool competition and auctioned some fireside equipment, generously donated by their neighbours at Amazing Grates.

The company who own the Bald Faced Stag, Spirit Group, usually supports the NSPCC but the Dobors were attracted by the local angle and because they have disabled friends. In fact, Richard Bullard refereed the pool competition and ran the auction from his wheelchair. Having successfully raised a total of £225.50, they now intend to hold more events to support the Bobath Centre at 250 East End Road, which treats people from all over the world who have cerebral palsy.

Show of faith

Jacqui, Rob and Vicki would like to thank everyone who took part in the raffle and the pool competition and they are extremely grateful to the shopkeepers who provided them with prizes. "The High Road was brilliant," said Vicki, delighted with this "show of faith by local people."

Those who donated were

Amazing Grates, Amici Italian Cafe, Andrews the Chemist, Ellemen hairstylists, Natural Choice Health Shop, Josephine's the florist, Mandara Italian delicatessen, Stewart and Duncan Optician, Finchley Wines Off Licence and Threshers, who also provided wrapping and ribbons for the hampers.



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Lineup outside the station. Photo by John Dearing

Dateline...Paris...01/04/03...

Van Prix for East Finchley

By Jon Ashton

After years of campaigning East Finchley has at last won the chance to stage the 2003 British Van Prix. Tran Zit, the director-general of the Federation Internationale de Camion told *THE ARCHER* earlier today that the new East Finchley street circuit will replace Silverstone as home of the Van Prix from this year and that the FIC was committed to ensuring a full grid of 30 Class One Supervans.

Although the Van Prix will be the first time the new circuit has been used, teams are already using it for testing. Basically triangular in shape, from the starting line at Fortis Green, this fast circuit sweeps down to a tricky 'S' bend leading onto the North Circular straight. After a hairpin bend onto Falloeden Way the circuit runs through Market Place before turning left into Bishops Avenue and back onto the High Road by the Old White Lion.

Smells like team spirit.

Class One Supervans are the pinnacle of van technology and are closer to Formula One cars than anything you see on the road. Looking like normal vans, they have underneath the skin carbon composite chassis and 600+ horsepower engines. A van like the Mercedes Vito V10 AMG of reigning champion Manfred 'Mani' Truch, can out sprint any supercar and on

a circuit like East Finchley the works Vitos could easily exceed 170mph. Not that Mercedes will have it all their own way as Ford's new Transit Costworth RS with its 650 horsepower V12 has been very fast in testing. 2000 champion, Dutchman Veit van Mann, has been delighted with the performance and Sun sponsored 'Page Three' Fords are looking good.

The Renault Traffic Sport of Jean-Pierre Tumbri broke the lap record in Monte Carlo recently and the Fiat Ducato F550 of Veit's brother Rhed van Mann was fast in Milan. Following the withdrawal of the Royal Mail team, Irish ace Paddy Wagon joins Mani Truch at Mercedes, while Algerian-born Frenchman, Youf bin Had, drives the new V12 Peugeot. Add a number of very fast privateers and it looks as if an exciting season could be approaching its climax when the

teams arrive later this year.

Anyone who follows motorsport knows there is nothing quite like the sound of a grid full of these monsters leaving the line, so the chance to see them shrieking down the High Road is not one to be missed. As Rhed van Mann said at the Fiat press conference, 'It will be like the North Circular at rush hour, only faster'.

When Too Much is Not Enough

By Diana Cormack

Many of us are familiar with the symptoms of compulsive eating disorders such as *anorexia* and *bulimia* from the coverage they have had in the press and on television. Yet little is heard of another disorder involving food which is at the opposite end of the scale, that of overeating.

This doesn't mean forcing down the After Eights when you have just sworn you're not going to eat another thing until a week next Wednesday. It is actually a progressive illness where the time between meals and mealtimes themselves are filled with the thought of and consumption of food. It has been called "ruthless cramming". The sufferer becomes unable to control their mental obsession with food and, even though it no longer gives them any pleasure, they feel unable to break away from the addiction. Elvis Presley may well have been a victim of the disease, for it is a killer, yet family and friends may not realise what it is doing to their loved ones. This mental, physical and emotional condition destroys lives as the sufferer closes down as a person and loses the ability to escape. However, help is available.

Everyday help

Overeaters Anonymous was started in the USA in 1960 by a woman with eating prob-

lems. Based on methods used by Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous, for the first ten years it had to rely on speakers from those groups until it had "recoverers" of its own to address meetings. It can be described as a fellowship of people who share experiences, information and hope with which to support and encourage one another, whilst at the same time reinforcing their own personal progress.

Recovery needs to be taken one day at a time and regular attendance is necessary to ensure success for people who have tried everything else, so there are daily meetings at a variety of venues. There is no charge except for a voluntary donation for hire of the room and beverages.

Sunday meetings are held at 11am in room 4 of the Neighbourhood Centre, 42 Church Lane, East Finchley, N2 8DT. For more details contact 8883 8336 or call up www.aa.org

East Finchley's Flagship Centre

By Daphne Chamberlain

One of East Finchley's newest landmarks may be leading the way for communities all over London. The Green Man Community Centre at Strawberry Vale has become the flagship for the Peabody Trust's 15 other estates, all now under the overall management of the Green Man's Martin O'Donnell.

Martin, who grew up on Strawberry Vale and started as Housing Manager there, will keep the Centre as his base. "It will always remain special to me," he told *THE ARCHER*. He went on to pay tribute to

the Green Man's Users' Committee and other residents of Strawberry Vale.

"When I started here, I was surprised to discover so many people already engaged in voluntary projects, but without an adequate place to develop them. The Peabody Trust provides the space and facilities, but many activities are run – and largely paid for – by community groups." Now, he says, they find that one project or idea will spark off another.

The Users' Committee organises a wide-ranging programme, with money from bookings and from Bingo paying for children's parties, pensioners' outings, etc. Pat's Pantry, run by Pat Dean, is an on-site café service that also provides food for outside bookings.

Open to all

Almost all activities are open to

everyone in East Finchley (and beyond), with outside agencies making regular bookings. Martin describes the link with Barnet College as "massive", saying it has really worked well. When I spoke to him one Wednesday morning last month, the Centre was hosting an I.T. group, classes in English as a second language and in literacy, the East Finchley Advisory Service and a crèche.

Peabody Trust policy is to become a regenerative agency, providing facilities for advice and opportunity on people's doorsteps. Following the success of the Green Man Centre, Martin O'Donnell is currently visiting their fifteen other estates around London, meeting residents, finding out what they want, and training managers. Interested groups may well visit East Finchley to see the action plan at work.

Time for Thanks

By Irene Zevallos

It's time to thank the Neighbourhood Wardens for their invaluable efforts to make Barnet safer.

This service is provided by specially trained individuals, who patrol right across the Borough, particularly targeting town centres and estates. They cover a geographical area inhabited by approximately

314,564 people (according to the 2001 Census).

Safe and Clean

One of their main objectives is to cover known problem areas to help in the fight against anti-social behaviour, fear of crime and crime itself. They also work with residents, acting as a focal point for gathering and disseminating information.

Wardens wear high visibility uniforms and work closely with police to build community confidence. Their main focus is improving the environment as well by reporting issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, vandalism and abandoned vehicles. They also offer information and advice on council services, providing help and support to vulnerable members of the community... 314,564 reasons to thank them are not enough!

For more information call Barnet Council on 8359 2000.

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Haringey Councillors write:

We have received many letters from local residents concerned about the Waitrose development at East Finchley and we are sure that there are many residents who have not yet contacted us but want to know what is going on.

It is clear that any development so close to the Haringey border will have implications for nearby Haringey residents, and as such we can promise you that we want to make sure that the views of Haringey people are fed into the process – it's time for joined up local Government!

We are also aware that people on the Haringey side are both for and against this development, and we think the important thing for the moment is to ensure that as much information as possible is given to people who will be affected. To this end, we have written to Barnet to request that Haringey residents are a formal part of the consultation process.

Barnet has actually not yet received a formal application for development. As the development is in Barnet, it is Barnet that will have the final say. However, Haringey will be formally consulted – and we've asked our planners that the Haringey response be brought up to a political level (rather than being done under delegated powers by the officers).

We hope this update is helpful to those concerned; we will keep you posted as more information becomes available.

Councillor Stephen Gilbert, Councillor Barbara Fabian and Councillor Matt Davies, Fortis Green Liberal Democrats.

'Warning On Waitrose' Update

By Diana Cormack

At the time of writing no planning application has been received by Barnet Council for the construction of a 20,000 square foot Waitrose supermarket, which would extend from the borders of Cherry Tree Wood up to Baronsmere Road.

The property developers, Kiafield, are said to be ready to go with their application at any time but the topic was not on the agenda for discussion by the Cabinet in March.

WOW are not sure whether this results from ongoing Compulsory Purchase Order concerns within the council or to letters sent in by local objectors to the proposals. Either way, WOW believes that this written pressure needs to be kept up so that councillors are aware of the scale of the opposition when they do eventually discuss it. This could well be in April.

Keeping informed

With Barnet unwilling to enter into discussions until planning permission has been

sought, WOW organisers want to ensure that people maintain interest and are kept informed of any developments. Members of the protest group have distributed thousands of letters throughout East Finchley, outlining their objections and describing the possible effects of the scheme. Six shops in the High Road display current information (Plummers newsagents, Tony's Continental Stores, Chivers A1 Motors, Natural Choice, A. Scott & Sons Fishmongers and Mandara Italian Delicatessen).

Meanwhile WOW says it is continuing to make preparations for action to be taken if and when the proposed planning application is made.



Harley John and the mighty beast! Photo by John Dearing

Drag Racer

By John Dearing

John O'Sullivan, "Harley John" as he is affectionately known, has been competing in drag racing for many years.

John started in the Street Bike class, where the bikes are largely as purchased from the shop, with just a few permitted modifications. He rose to become National Champion in this class no less than five times, racing a Buell which is a motorcycle based upon a Harley Davidson engine.

Raw Power

Now he has decided to race in the Street Bike Modified class, which involves building a bike that is customised to a much

greater degree. Again it is based upon a Harley Davidson-Buell, but it has a longer and lower frame than before, with a huge rear tyre, and a 1400cc engine whose power is boosted by Nitrous Oxide Injection. Revving to 7000 rpm, he expects it to produce 150 horsepower. To manage all this power, he has an 'air-shift' gearbox, whose operation involves pressing a button, rather than moving a lever. He intends to cover the quarter mile in 10 seconds, with

a top speed of 140 mph.

John plans to start testing the bike in mid-April, and will definitely compete in the first meeting of the year, on 5 May at Avon Park. He is in talks with some potential sponsors, but says that he needs further financial help and would welcome sponsorship from local businesses. A group of supporters often travel to watch him race, and he says that Drag Racing is a great day out for all the family.

Could you Drive our Van?

The North London Hospice Shop urgently needs volunteers to drive their small collection van. This would be for one day a week to pick up books, clothes, bric-a-brac, etc. and does not require a special driving licence. For further details call into the shop at 123 High Road and speak to Eugenia the manageress.

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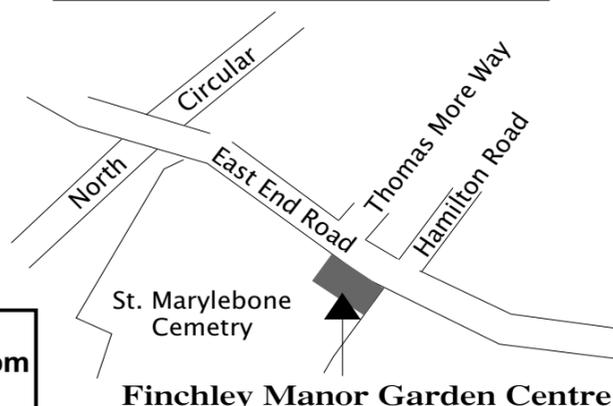
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YOUNG ARCHER

Cricket, Lovely Cricket

The cricket season is about to begin and some boys and girls at Martin Junior School will be more than ready for it. They attended training sessions given by professional players at the Middlesex Academy on East End Road as part of the *Awards for All* programme. This built up their playing skills as well as their team spirit. Here is what two of the pupils thought about it:

Cricket at Middlesex was fantastic. The cricket coaches were really skilful and they gave us a lot of confidence and support. They taught us a great deal about cricket and taught us step-by-step bowling and batting. Altogether we had eight sessions, two hours

each, and all of us really enjoyed playing cricket at the Middlesex.

When the cricket coaches told us that we were going to play a cricket tournament against three different schools, which were Bell Lane, Chalgrove and St Theresa's, we

became very nervous. When we reached the tournament our hearts were beating so fast, but we did fantastically well. We came second in the first match and third in the second match. However, we would have been even happier if we had come first in both matches.

By Hiren Vadhavania and Marcus Cara



Martin School Year 6 Cricket Team. Photo courtesy of Martin School.

Do be Silly!

By Diana Cormack

Having had a morning of silliness on April Fools Day, let's have a look at some silly poems written by children in Year 5 at Holy Trinity School. We call them 'limericks' but nobody really knows why. Some people think that they started off in the county of Limerick in Ireland. They were originally called nonsense verse and the nursery rhyme *Hickory, Dickory, Dock* is supposed to be one of the first to be written. But they are not easy to write because they have to follow a set pattern of beats in the five lines and rhyme in their own special way. Can you work out what that is when you read them?

Freddy Fear

There was a young man name of Fred,
And Freddy still slept with his ted.
A bad film made him scream
While eating some ice-cream
And he ended up wetting the bed.

By Oliver Glick aged 10

Flower Power

There was a boy that came from Leeds
Who swallowed a packet of seeds.
The beautiful flowers
Came out in big showers
They were roses and daisies and trees.

By Albert Wood aged 9

Fire! Fire!

A lazy young lad name of Dyer
Was just the most terrible liar.
He sat all day asleep
It made the people weep
Then he was burned by the fire.

By Goda Greivyte aged 10

Ham

There once was a big fat pink pig
Who had a terrible name Fig.
He was turned into ham
By his mean master Sam
And was decorated with twigs.

By Eric Hu aged 10

Missed Kiss

There was a girl her name was Cis
Who hated getting a large kiss
A weird boy tried a smooch
She got her mad dog Pooch
He bit so much the weird boy missed!

By Cecily King aged 9

Messy Jessie

There was a young girl called Jessie
Who was really rather messy.
She was stuck in the muck
She had really bad luck
And called "Help!" to her Aunt Bessie.

By Catherine Gibbons aged 9

April Antics

By Daphne Chamberlain

On 10 April 1843, eight labourers in Tufnell Park dug up two jars containing nearly 400 gold sovereigns. No sooner had they shared them out between themselves than Mr Tufnell, Lord of the Manor, claimed the lot as treasure-trove. Enter a Clerkenwell brass-founder, who was able to prove that the money was actually his. Nine months before, he had buried it "under a temporary mental delusion".

Things like that don't happen every year, but the first Friday in April used to be an annual conference date for all witches in Scotland.

In 16th century France, April Fools' Day (or All Fools' Day) was the start of a week's holiday with present giving. (Hopefully, treats rather than tricks.)

Nearer home, in 19th century Lancashire, 30 April

was known as Mischief Night. Shop signboards were mixed up, and young people left plants or flowers outside each other's houses. The mischief in the last bit was the rhyming meaning to these gifts; e.g. something with a thorn meant scorn.

April is a funny month...

Acknowledgements to Forgotten English (ISBN 0-7649-0792-1)

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

The annual Book Week was a huge success. The children produced their own books on a wide range of subjects, and an after school Book Fair raised well over £1,000, of which 55% will go towards new books for the school.

The School Association held a quiz and auction night to raise money for school funds. Items available included a signed England football, a DVD player, health club memberships, tickets for family days out, signed photographs of Ms Dynamite and Lennox Lewis and restaurant vouchers.

Great Ormond Street Hospital wrote to thank the school for its "fantastic achievement" in raising £700 from the Christmas production of Peter Pan. As requested, the donation was forwarded to the Peter Pan Ward of the children's hospital, which celebrated its 150th birthday last year.

Thirty-two children took part in the Barnet Music Festival at the Peele Centre, Colindale.

Year 5 visited the London Planetarium. They answered questions very well and their behaviour was a credit to the school.

Reception class went to the London Aquarium as part of their project on water.

Both the football and netball teams are doing well this season.

Martin Schools

Everyone enjoyed Multi-Cultural Week, which was a great success. Junior school children were able to take part in Indian sweet-making, origami and hair-braiding. For one day the whole school experienced African drumming workshops, learning a song, performing a dance, using the drums and dancing in traditional Nigerian costume.

For World Book day, children who speak more than one language read stories in languages they speak at home.

Both schools held a very successful International Evening with food from all around the world available. Parents, children and staff were entertained by Year 5 steel band players giving their first public performance, and two other children played the tabla drums.

On UNICEF's Day of Change there was a non-uniform-day with a difference. Juniors thought up amazing creative hairstyles using wigs, spray, gel, strange colours, plaits and anything else they could think of to look wonderful (or weird!). As well as having great fun, they raised £146 for children in Cambodia and Tanzania on the theme of building peace.

The junior school's bid to the John Lyons Trust has been successful and the playground committee will be able to go ahead with more exciting playground developments.

Infant school pupils have also been raising money. For Red Nose Day they wore the colour red and had a Big Hair Do along with a voluntary contribution of 20p or more.

Visitors to the school that week included the Japan Festival Education Trust, Indriyasha Das from the Bhaktivedanta Manor Temple and Monika Wengraf-Hewit who brought along lots of beautiful works of art from Africa.



Sue and Kevin present Angie (centre) with a bouquet. Photo by Erini Rodis

A Decade of Fun

1 March saw *THE ARCHER* team celebrating ten years of publishing news in East Finchley with an open party at Maddens Ale House in the High Road. Contributors past and present gathered from early evening for drinks, music and good food, not to mention excellent company.

THE ARCHER's current Editor, Kevin Finn, took the opportunity publicly to thank everyone who has, over the years, contributed to the newspaper's success. He particularly singled out

distributors, who deliver the paper to homes and businesses in the area, advertisers who fund the newspaper and readers who have consistently supported *THE ARCHER* over the years.

The entertainment for the evening, courtesy of Maddens, was provided by local residents Jeremy and Eddie on piano and percussion respectively. Robin and Janet of Village Florists were generous in providing beautiful flowers for the occasion. *THE ARCHER* would like to thank everyone who came to the celebration, helping to make it such a joyous occasion.

Photos of the evening can be found on *THE ARCHER*'s website at www.the-archer.co.uk

Traditional Easter Biscuits

These biscuits used to be tied together in groups of three to represent the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Ingredients (enough for 30 small biscuits)

225 g / 8 oz self raising flour
113 g / 4 oz margarine or butter
113 g / 4 oz sugar
56 g / 2 oz currants
Pinch of salt
One egg (beaten)
A little grated lemon peel

Method

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl, then rub in the margarine or butter with your fingers.
Add the sugar, lemon rind and currants.
Mix in the beaten egg.
Knead the mixture into a firm paste (leave it for about an hour to stiffen if necessary).
Roll out the mixture on a lightly floured board so that it is 6 mm / ¼ inch thick.
Use a biscuit cutter or small cup to cut the dough into biscuits.
Lightly grease an oven tray and cook biscuits at 375 F or gas Mark 4 until they are a light golden colour (for about 15 minutes).
Cool on a wire tray.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Open Season

Ho, ho ho, I mustn't laugh, but sometimes I just can't resist it when the rickety old House of Windsor displays itself in all its feudal glory. Haven't the last few weeks been wonderful for us republican vultures everywhere? After 'What the Butler Sold' we got 'What Everyone Else Flogged off Down the Market', a bright farce starring Fency Fawcett, a couple of blokes from down the pub and He who Talks to Plants. Now we've got the latest in that long line of feudal farces, 'Whoops What a Whitewash', by Sir Peat-Bog, the personal secretary (servant) of the plant-talker which naturally finds no evidence of wrong doing by his boss! Welcome to the thirteenth century? No, not quite, Fency only had to resign.

The incompetence and arrogance of Camilla's lover is mind-boggling. Here is a grown man who has to have toothpaste squeezed onto his brush for him and gets a flunkie to hold the specimen bottle for him when he has to give a urine sample. I bet most of his flunkies are pleased that the bottle is all they were expected to hold. Once upon a time the heir to the throne would have had help with performing almost all his bodily functions.

Floodgates

Of course once the floodgates open they stay open and the next little nasty waiting to crawl out of the cupboard is 'video diary of a princess'. Yes, the saintly Diana apparently made tapes to help her learn public speaking. On them she gave her opinion of her husband's bedroom performance compared to Major James Hewitt, Will Carling (allegedly) and Dr. Spock. And guess what, the tabloids will pay and pay and pay to get the chance to run that little story.

Home alone

So, where does that leave the man who was born to give republicans a good name? Quite clearly not riding on the crest of a wave of popularity nor resisting pressure to persuade his mum to quit while the going's good. Instead Charles is looking more ridiculous than he has looked since he confessed to adultery live on television or was last caught trying to chat up a daffodil. Yes, he's up the creek and now that Fency's gone there's no one left to paddle for him. Well, at least I hope so.

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- ❖ **Body Control Pilates** classes. Call Deanna Wisbey 020 8883 7029
- ❖ **Counselling and psychotherapy service** at the Green Man Centre. For details phone 8440 4174
- ❖ **London Cycling Campaign** (Barnet), has monthly meetings & rides. Call 020 8440 9080.
- ❖ **Step/Aerobics classes**, Sundays at Bar XL. Phone 0789 0033 968.
- ❖ **Tae Kwon Do** at The Green Man Thursdays 7-9pm 07949 612 706
- ❖ **Tai Chi** at the Green Man on Mondays 1.30-3pm
- ❖ **Tennis Club** off Southern Road. Call 020 8440 6953
- ❖ **Yoga & Meditation** classes at Holy Trinity Church, 020 8444 7217

Dance, Drama, Art & Music

- ❖ **Adult Line Dancing**. Call Footloose 020 8440 8530/ 8216 5633.
- ❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 020 8888 5133.
- ❖ **Ballroom dancing classes**, beginners and improvers. Phone 01707 642 378
- ❖ **Barnet Schools Music Centre** call 020 8359 3111 for details.
- ❖ **Broadway & West end Musical Singing Workshop** call Idit Gold 020 8449 0011.
- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call Vicky 020 8883 1554
- ❖ **Country & Barn Dancing**, at Oakleigh Park, 020 8349 0754
- ❖ **Columbian party dancing** classes, Call Nelsy 020 8444 2012
- ❖ **Incognito Theatre workshops**, Colney Hatch Lane, 020 8883 0911
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club**, Monday 7 & 21 April at Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
- ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 020 8346 8736
- ❖ **Private drum tuition**, beginners welcome. Contact Eddie 8444 8376
- ❖ **Pottery Class** at The Green Man, Call Celia Holmes 020 8349 9315
- ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church 020 8455 2403
- ❖ **Private singing lessons**, all levels Contact Anouschka 020 8444 82 05
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra of North London**, Contact Stephen Kelsey, 020 8883 3365

Clubs & Social

- ❖ **All Saints Beer and Wine Circle** Call Richard Baldwin 020 8883 7081
- ❖ **Bingo**, Green Man Community Centre, 020 8883 4916
- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book a place. Every Thursday. 12.30-2pm
- ❖ **East Finchley National Childbirth Trust**, Contact Ann Sullivan, 020 8442 1941
- ❖ **East Finchley Writers** meet weekly at the Old White Lion. Contact Lillian on 020 8444 1793.
- ❖ **Fairacres Monday Club** for Jewish people, Rene & Reuby Hyams, 020 8883 0448 or Sylvia Lee 8958 7878
- ❖ **Finchley Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian Merryweather 8444 3251
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn, 020 8349 4613
- ❖ **Hampstead Social Group**, membership late 30's-late 40's Call David Morris, 020 8455 0477
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill, 020 8348 3495
- ❖ **Muswell Hill and Highgate Pensioners' Action Group** Call Bob Cottingham on 8444 7635.
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Synagogue**, Tetherdown, 020 8883 5925
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, 020 8883 4390
- ❖ **Old Barn pre-school club**, 020 8349 4613/1961
- ❖ **Parent & Toddler Group**, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276
- ❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professional and business people, Details Eric Dalton 8340 0822
- ❖ **Single Solution** over 30s night. call 020 8802 2326/ 8363 2328

The Power Of Good

By Femke van Iperen

As part of the Jewish Film Festival, last month the Phoenix introduced *The Power of Good*. As a somewhat reluctant audience dragged itself out of the first spring sunrays into the darkness to watch 'yet another Holocaust documentary', we could have been forgiven for having mediocre expectations. But we were wrong. As with most films chosen by our local art cinema, it was a unique film well worth seeing.

"We may be horrified, but hey, it's not our problem. There's nothing we can do anyway," starts the narrator over pictures of war throughout history, a stark reminder of the film's relevance to our own lives today. Winton 'The British Schindler' - received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List 2003 for saving hundreds of Jewish children from the Nazis; today their families number at least five thousand people.

The film then enters 1930s Czechoslovakia, ahead of Nazi occupation. An elaborate sequence of unique film footage and photos gives an intimate insight into life in the thirties. Childhood memories of hot chocolate and whipped cream in dark cafes fill the screen in warm, nostalgic sepia colours, disturbed by cold blue images of the Nazis.

Winton's family

Enter English stockbroker Winton, who intuitively worried about the fate of the Jews before any widespread suspicion. He began his 'Czech Refugee Trust' from his house in Willow Road NW3 for the safe transport of children to the UK. Despite unsuccessful attempts to get help, even



Helen and Lawrence Lewis, the cinema trust's directors who have just returned from a trip to Prague and who met Vera Gissling, one of the saved children in the film. They say, "The film shows remarkably well what people are capable of on both sides; the Germans on one and a hero on the other. The balance between both has created a different angle to the subject." Photo by Femke van Iperen

from US President Roosevelt, he saved nearly 700 children. After the war, Winton, preoccupied with further philanthropic projects, did not tell anyone till 50 years later.

The narrator, John Schlesinger, who last saw his own father the night they spent along a train track in Germany, is one of Winton's 'children'. He always appears with a strong smile despite the dark nature of the story. Several members of 'Winton's family' traced by the film-makers, many of whom had

no knowledge of being saved, give powerful details about blankets they slept under on their first night in England and the strange new 'soppy' white bread.

The Power of Good simply allows the pictures to speak for themselves - the interviews appear in natural, soft light. With such compelling real images of confused children saying their last goodbyes to their parents, who needs to say anything?

The film is surprisingly optimistic and objective. Winton, a remarkable, honest, down-to-earth family man, simply explains his heroic act. "There is nothing that can't be done if it's fundamentally reasonable."

'The Power of Good'. Director: Matej Minac, narration Joe Schlesinger Czechoslovakia, 2001, 64 minutes.

For details of other future programmes contact the Box Office on 020 8444 6789.

Wheelchair Facts

By Daphne Chamberlain

Are wheelchair users all getting the same deal? That's the question emerging from our recent report of Sippy Azizollah's accident, and a letter in the March issue from one of our readers.

Sippy was thrown out of her chair when it caught an uneven manhole cover. Our reader considered she should have been wearing a lap belt.

MAVIS - Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service - has confirmed that there is no legal obligation to be strapped into a chair while travelling along the street. In fact, a belt is an extra - not a standard - part of a chair.

Our correspondent was correct in stating that users of NHS chairs are advised to belt up, but Sippy, who bought her chair from a well known and reputable disability outlet, was not so advised.

Stability

Her own reluctance to belt up stems from seeing a friend, who was strapped into a chair, topple off a kerb. The friend lay helpless in the road until three men managed to right her.

Sippy believes that an accident like this occurred because of the difference in stability between indoor/outdoor chairs and those designed solely for outdoor use. Barnet's NHS unit does not supply specifically outdoor chairs. (Sippy has just ordered an outdoor one privately for £7,000.) Meanwhile, the manhole cover opposite East Finchley Underground remains a hazard.

Month of the Dog

Our local RSPCA branch believes in equality among pets. In March and April it runs a neutering programme for cats, and this year in May it will introduce a similar bargain offer for dog owners. These services are only offered to pensioners and others in receipt of state benefits, so bring your documents along to save any embarrassment.

Bring your pet to our clinic in Park Road any Monday or Thursday in May between 6 and 7.30pm. The vet will do a health check; then, all being well, you will be given a voucher to make an appointment for the spaying or castration to be carried out at a local veterinary practice. The cost will depend on the weight of the dog and will vary from £15 to £30 - about a half to a third of the usual fee.

Junk Mail

By Diana Cormack

Do you receive a steady stream of leaflets and letters through your door that are only destined for the recycling bin? If so, there is something you can do about it, besides re-addressing and returning them to the sender.

The Mailing Preference Society is a non-profit making organisation which has been in existence since 1983 with the aim of safeguarding your right to choose the post you want. It can remove your name from up to 75% of Direct Mail lists (or have your name added to them). Though it may take a few months, there should be a noticeable difference in the post you get. Many people who wish to do this may have suffered a bereavement or, as in my case, have both parents now living in a care home. Others may simply wish to prevent waste.

Registering with the MPS is free - it is sponsored by the Direct Marketing Association (UK) Limited, the Mail Order Traders' Association and the Royal Mail. Supporters include the Office of Fair Trading, the Advertising Standards Authority, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Home Office.

For full details write to: Mailing Preference Service, Freeport 22, London W1E 7EZ or email mps@dma.org.uk or visit MPS online at www.mpsonline.org.uk

Music Festival

The North London Music Festival now in its 79th year begins Thursday 24 April. This music and drama festival attracts entries from all over the country. Call 020 8883 2082 for more information

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Letters to The Editor

Checks and Balances

Dear Editor

Re: Proposed Waitrose Store in East Finchley

The lack of balanced discussion of this proposed development probably stems from the wording of the invitation to the public meeting, which was phrased so as to discourage the attendance of most Waitrose supporters.

I know many people who, given the necessary safeguards concerning size of store and traffic arrangements, would positively welcome a Waitrose in East Finchley. It would be an instrument of regeneration and a service to the broader community, particularly the car-less. In fact, the traffic would probably be little changed, as, even if some shoppers do come from elsewhere, many residents would no longer drive north to find satisfactory supermarkets. Please also consider that, as many people would drop in to shop on the way home from the underground station, some car journeys might be eliminated completely.

The issue of moving the library is surely a red herring, providing emotive reasons for opposing the supermarket. It really is not that far from the old site to the proposed new one: many walk that distance every day to reach the underground station and would follow the same route to the proposed new library. Public libraries do not exist solely to service schools' needs, though if they did then a larger library should surely be welcomed. The needs of disabled and older residents are at least as valid as those of schoolchildren: if there is no possibility of providing disabled access to all parts of the existing premises then the library should, in any case, move to a building offering adequate facilities.

Yours sincerely

Valerie Teague
Leopold Road, N2.

Regeneration?

Copy of letter sent to Mr Leo Boland, Barnet Council's Chief Executive

Dear Mr Boland

Re: Proposed Waitrose Development in East Finchley

I take great exception to your letter of 14 January 2003 to Dr Vis.

You talk about "regeneration benefits of such a development to East Finchley". What possible benefits could such a development bring if it results in the closing down of existing successful small businesses, losing the village atmosphere of the shopping area and creating total traffic chaos and gridlock. We have a very good library in close proximity to two schools and which, with careful adaptation, could meet all disabled needs.

If regeneration is what you are seeking for the Park House site, you would be far better served in building low rise affordable flats, much needed for nurses, teachers and other low paid individuals who would welcome good access to public transport. This would also bring more customers for the existing businesses.

I feel very strongly that this Council is totally misdirected in its even considering such a development in this area. What it does 'smack' of is corruption and it would be a terrible indictment of local government if that were the case.

Your comments would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Black
Maya Road, N2

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Smartening up

Dear Editor

I am in favour of the proposed building of a Waitrose supermarket. It will provide much needed jobs for East Finchley with a high-quality employer and will help smarten up what is, with some exceptions, a rather shabby High Road. Residents will be able to shop in a convenient spot right opposite the tube and will not have to drive out of the area to Muswell Hill, Finchley Central or Brent Cross to get their shopping. As for the concerns about existing businesses such as greengrocers and the fishmongers, I believe they will survive because, unlike Waitrose, they have a loyal clientele, a very competitive pricing structure and are extremely high quality.

For those who say that Waitrose will destroy community life, I do not think that two large bookmakers, takeaway food chains, hire shops and stores where goods are thrown into the front window or have dilapidated signage constitute a 'community village feel' and are not going to tempt people into shopping locally.

Consulting the community

With regard to the new library proposal, I do think the plans to incorporate it into the Waitrose supermarket need to be considered carefully. The existing library is a beautiful building in an ideal location as it's next to a school and its playing field. I do think there should be a way to provide disabled library users with the facilities they require without demolishing the existing building. I do not think Waitrose would have objection to revamping the existing library as it would cost them much less than building a new one.

It's only by Barnet Council, in consultation with the community, taking a more pro-active approach with regard to the planning of the High Street that it can be transformed into a more lively, attractive area and not an unattractive, drive-through.

Deirdre Coughlan
Trinity Road, N2.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Planning

Gain

By Ian Cormack

Recent goings-on in East Finchley have brought the thorny problem of 'Planning Gain' to the fore. Barnet Council is apparently negotiating with the potential developers of the Park House and adjoining land site for the "public good" – for things such as better library facilities, state of the art toilets and smoother, more scenic walkways, and the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood and possibly other groups have been encouraged to do likewise.

But isn't negotiating with the developers for a sweetener in return for their getting an increase in land value tackling the problem the wrong way round? This haphazard procedure with whatever 'wish list' is available at the time is not the way to deal with a very precious natural resource in our crowded country.

A common resource

If we "the people" are somehow also entitled to get benefit from the land value, should we not also be tapping in to any land where the value is being appropriated into private hands, not just where there is a change? After all, land is distinct from buildings and manufactured goods in that it is not man-made. It is a common resource to which we should all have an equal claim and this can be achieved by people paying rent for the land they use into a pot for us all to share.

This is not a new form of taxation but an alternative source of revenue, ethically underpinned by seeking to recover wealth created by the community to fund the expenses of the community. The supermarket scheme would not work in the Outer Hebrides but would work in East Finchley, due to the surrounding population increasing the number of potential customers and this is what creates the land value. Traditional taxes largely ignore this publicly created wealth, allowing it to be taken by diverse private interests.

So let us not ride on developers' backs but let developments be judged solely on their merits, pure and simple, with the public interest being catered for by a more rational raising of public revenue.

Send your correspondence to:

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Morning Coffee

By Diana Cormack

Regular customers have been welcoming the return of Caffè Mobile to the concourse of East Finchley station after a six-month gap. It is now being run by Nabil Bouzar and his partner, Zac, but the coffee should be of the same high quality because Nabil says that he trained with Leo Amoruso, the previous owner.



Caffè Mobiles are to be found at The Angel, Highbury and Islington and Belsize Park and claim to serve coffee of the highest flavour because they grind the beans the Italian way, by hand on site. Nabil, who comes from Algeria and lives with his French wife in Finchley Central, has been in the coffee trade here for nearly nine years. He serves coffee daily except for Sundays from 6.50 am to 1.30 pm.

Moving on

After 16 years in London, Leo himself has moved on. Last September, in a story which could well have featured on TV's *A Place in the Sun* or *No Going Back*, he and his family set off for Italy with another young family. The children attend the local village

school and, like their Cornish mother, are rapidly becoming fluent in Italian. The adults have been busy renovating the place of their dreams, a traditional farmhouse set in relaxing and peaceful surroundings between the mountains and the sea on the beautiful coast of Liguria. Leo says that here their guests will experience the real Italy when they open as Castagnola 64 Bed and Breakfast in May.

If you want to know more about Leo's new venture you can take a look at his website at www.castagnola64.com. He is offering ARCHER readers a 20% discount on room prices, so don't forget to mention that if you decide to book.

Above:
Nabil takes a coffee break.
Photo by Erini Rodis

Responsibility

By Mal Jacobs

Responsibility in life is at all levels of society. For some there is too much, for others not enough. It can increase or decrease, it can be liked or disliked, respected or rejected, used or unused. For some it means the power to control or manipulate. For most of us it starts when we are born, as we soon learn the effects of waking our parents during the night and ends by us having to get our affairs in order ready for the next trip!

Most Seniors can remember bygone times when respect and responsibility in society were quite the normal facts of life. Over the years we have all seen these principles somewhat eroded to reach a point where today it influences the actual life style we lead.

None of us wants to turn the clock back totally or stop young peoples' energy, but the current imbalance demands more input from the Senior generation.

Seeds for the future

Fortunately we can all recall 'special people' with vision who gave us all an incentive, not only to survive in times of great hardship, but who also planted the seed for life to get better as time went on. Looking

back it seems almost beyond comprehension – the gigantic achievements that this small island accomplished in our time. How different that same nation is today, with bland faces and no knight in shining armour bearing a seed or a vision on the horizon.

The moral being: We are not dead until we die so at least do some living whilst alive! That means keeping mind and body healthy plus getting involved in things with other people. For some it's harder than others but not impossible! Responsibility used sensibly can be a power for good and make a much happier world for us all whoever we are, now that's quite some responsibility.

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