



You are reading the 150th edition of *THE ARCHER*. To celebrate this landmark in the paper's history, we remember how it all started, rummage in our archives for some of our most memorable articles from recent years and find out what former members of the team are doing now.

## Arrow of Desire: 150 issues on

*THE ARCHER*'s chairman Kevin Finn remembers how it all began:

It hardly seems possible but *THE ARCHER* you are now reading is the 150<sup>th</sup> printed issue of our modest community newspaper. The first 'pilot' single-sheet issue was distributed in a small enclave of East Finchley (streets off and near Fortis Green) in December 1992, exactly 13 years ago.

The brainchild of then-resident Andrew Taylor, a community newspaper was dreamt up over a couple of pints in Welch's Ale House in the High Road. This pub, now Maddens, remains its meeting place. In fact, we believe that *THE ARCHER* is the only newspaper whose office is the recipient of a CAMRA 'Best Pub' award!

The mission at the time was to create a local newspaper exclusively focused on issues pertaining to East Finchley. It was an attempt to prevent the area slipping into anonymous suburbia and to preserve the feeling of East Finchley being an urban village.

In Issue 2, March 1993 (the first tabloid version) its founder said: "East Finchley needs something that is more than a parish magazine. It needs to strike the balance between being a chatty notice board and a genuine local newspaper." To this day this remains an apt description of *THE ARCHER*.

### What's in a name?

The title *The Archer* was inspired by the local landmark sculpture by Eric Aumonier, atop the tube station, and was also intended to capture the locale in history (East Finchley was strongly associated with archery) and its desire to deliver local news and information to a specific target readership, the residents of the area.

The masthead shows an icon of an archer whose arrow has already left the bow and is on

an unswerving path to its destination. The original mission statement 'Local News Is Our Aim' remains emblazoned in the wake of the arrow, a constant reminder of the newspaper's *raison d'être*.

In that same early issue, Mr Taylor made an impassioned plea: "It is you, the readers, that will make or break this newspaper. It will only work if we publish the sort of material that you want to read, and we can only do that if you tell us what you want to read. It can only become a real community newspaper if the community contributes." These words did not fall on deaf ears.

The evidence suggests that those very few early volunteers got it right, and that their many successors have continued to uphold the original ideals. East Finchley has 'welcome' signs with *THE ARCHER* logo featured on them, and the public benches have the same icon embossed on each end.

The best evidence, however, is that *THE ARCHER* is still here, eagerly read, and still attracts new volunteers. I am aware of no other volunteer community newspaper that has been so successful in its execution and longevity, so well supported by local business, so carefully nurtured by its producers and distributors, or so avidly consumed and communicated with by its readers. Let us work together to ensure its continued development through its teens into adulthood.

## The Archer got me started

Here, Femke van Iperen, a former contributor to *THE ARCHER*, remembers how the paper helped her on her way to a successful career as a journalist.

Where to start explaining the benefits I have received from my involvement with *THE ARCHER* - and how to say it in just a few words! My time as a local reporter during 2001 and 2003 for this unique paper was valuable in numerous personal and professional ways.

Changing my career from working in television, I wanted to start working in print as a journalist but this is not an easy route to take. *THE ARCHER* invited me with open arms. I learned how to interview interesting people in the community and how to plan, write and structure a story.

I discovered how fascinating and alive a local community still can be within London. Every week I looked forward to our Saturday morning meetings with coffees and drinks in the pub, followed by the 'meeting closed, bar open' sessions.

Since leaving *THE ARCHER*, I now help train students to

become TV reporters at the London School of Journalism. In addition, I write a column on British art and culture for a Dutch national paper, *The NRC*, and features on the differences in culture and business methods for a Dutch/English train company magazine. I also still do some filming and work as a freelance feature writer on other publications.

But nothing like this would have happened without the chances I got at *THE ARCHER*. Truly missing my time spent on the paper, I want to congratulate everyone on the team on this incredible 150th milestone!



Femke (right) at an Archer party in 2003. Photo by John Dearing

## Pave the trees

By Ricky Savage

Here's a favourite piece from our very own voice of social irresponsibility, Ricky Savage, dating back to June 1995, long before the issue of building a new Waitrose in East Finchley was even dreamt of.

The parking problem round East Finchley is really starting to bug me. Yesterday I had to double park the car on a pedestrian crossing. I didn't want to do it, but there was nowhere else and some other frustrated driver had dumped his car by that particular piece of kerb, so I figured I may as well do the same.

It's not the first time I've had problems finding somewhere to park. I once had to park a Range Rover on the station platform because there was nowhere else I could leave it. I left a Rover Metro in Budgens once, hidden behind the baked beans and as obtrusive as possible. The only problem was getting it past the frozen food counter at one in the morning.

But now I have had enough of being forced to find new and unusual places to park, which means that it is time for action, time to build the one thing East Finchley needs: a new car park.

### Parking lop

I know the merry conservation lobby will get upset, but what's wrong with Cherry Tree Wood? Just because it's got trees and squirrels and people like getting lost in the place doesn't mean that it is sacrosanct. If it was special I could understand it, but it's not. It's just some scummy woodland that has no place in the world. It is pretty simple really, solve the parking problem, get rid of some ancient hide-away for foxes and other vermin, just concrete over the damn place.

### Shop chop

Just think how many cars would be able to park completely safely and comfortably there. More people would come to East Finchley, trade would boom, especially if you combined it with a decent hypermarket. No-one would need to park on pedestrian crossings anymore. Nor stop on the High Road to call in on some tiny shop. I mean, why should they if they can get everything cheaper in the hypermarket and be able to park there as well.

Come on, get real, write to the local council and demand that they get on with it. It wouldn't take long to bulldoze the woods, lay the concrete and build the new hypermarket and once they'd finished there would be no more parking problems.

## Cat-ologue

By Paul Savill

First published in May 1994.

All prices are 1994 prices.

It appears as if all the cats in East Finchley have just heard that I have forked over my flower beds for their convenience. Treatment takes many forms from the drastic to the not-so-drastic, as I discovered when I called on my neighbour in Lauderdale Road one May morning.

### Cat-apult

As I slipped through the side gate a missile whistled past me. A loud chortle came from the window of the potting shed, from which a long pipe was protruding.

"Bet that scared you," my neighbour's voice boomed from the shed. "It's my anti-cat bazooka. Come and have a look."

### Blasted heath

Pure Heath Robinson is the best description of what I saw in the shed. Some two yards of 4-inch diameter pipe was mounted on a wooden cradle; ropes and levers everywhere.

"Made it myself," said my neighbour proudly. "There's a powerful spring in the pipe which is cocked by pulling this lever and it's loaded with tennis balls. I sit here and when the cats pass I let them have it. It's harmless but scares the living daylight out of them and they don't come back. If they do they meet my other anti-cat devices. See there".

Beside the lawn was a translucent object shaped like a dog, about 18 inches long, shimmering in the sunlight. I have seen these advertised in mail order catalogues for about £20 each. The plastic dogs are filled with water and create moving rays of light by means of prisms. Allegedly, they are scary to cats.

### Scary eyes

On the other side of the lawn there was a life-sized model of a black cat with glass eyes. Cats are said to be frightened of its 'glowing eyes'. The 'Scare Cat' costs about £8 through mail order advertisements.

But do any of these things work? Presumably not, in view of my neighbour's bazooka.

"Well, I still get cats," admitted my neighbour, "but I am sure there are fewer than before. Mind you, there's this ginger tom from next door which is scared of nothing and actually woos the black cat with scary eyes!"

And here's the letter we printed in August 1994 in response to Paul's piece:

Dear Sir,

While I appreciate that your recent article in *THE ARCHER* was in a light-hearted vein, I think your readers would welcome more humane ways of keeping cats off their flower beds and vegetable plots.

The anti-cat bazooka is not something we would recommend, and your neighbour could well injure humans as well as cats. Instead, here are some ideas:

Garlic granules,  
Pepper,  
Water pistols.

Brian L. Morris

The Cats Protection League,  
Horsham

Ethical, co-operative and democratic

Savings invested in local area

Free Life insurance



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