



# Get ready for the Big Day!

More than 10,000 people enjoyed last year's East Finchley Community Festival and organisers are hoping the 2006 event will smash even that amazing total.

On Saturday 24 June, the day before the Festival, there will be activities for the whole family throughout the day at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale. As well as bouncy castles, a barbecue and entertainment, the parade costume workshop will be open to make masks, hats and costumes for anyone who wants to take part in the parade.

The Mardi Gras Parade - this year with a theme of pirates and princesses and featuring a pirate ship - will leave the community centre at 11am on Sunday 25 June and make its way along the High Road to Cherry Tree Wood.

The parade's arrival at 12 noon marks the official opening of the festivities by Rudi Vis MP. The afternoon will be filled with live music and performances on two stages, plus more than 80 food, craft and charity stalls, as well as children's activities.

The main stage this year features an eclectic mix of Rhythm and Blues, Indie and Rock & Roll with larger-than-life MC Antigua Joe.

The acoustic stage is back in its original position by the Coronation Oak with local musician and MC John Cassidy and a bumper crop of local performers.

# Morning cinema screenings saved

By Daphne Chamberlain

A threat to shut the doors on the popular senior citizen screenings at Muswell Hill Odeon has been lifted. A compromise solution means the Tuesday morning screenings will continue but will no longer be designated for senior citizens only.

The film shown is one of those screened during the rest of the week, whereas previously it was often a classic, brought in for that one session. Anyone is welcome (as before) though younger people now pay £6.50 instead of £4, while seniors are discounted at £4.50 instead of £3. Tea, coffee and biscuits remain on the house.

East Finchley resident Helene Davidian enjoys the Tuesday programmes. Mornings suit her, and she points out that daytime visits are much more comfortable for anyone who visits the cinema alone. The bonus here, she says, is that if you go regularly, "you soon make friends, and it's nice to have a chat over coffee or tea".

An Odeon representative told *THE ARCHER* that the staff encourage socialising, and soon get to know regulars. He said that the manager had fought to maintain the discounted screenings, which draw average audiences of 40-50.

Doors are open at 10.35am for socialising or watching the trailers and the film starts at 11am. As the sessions are now for the general public, senior citizens may need to prove their status with something like a Freedom Pass to obtain their discount.

For more information, try your luck with 0871 224 4007 (the general line for Odeons), or speak to a human being on 020 8442 0336.

# East Finchley is hip - official

By John Lawrence

Just as the citizens of East Finchley were reeling from seeing their patch of London being branded dull and lifeless by a new London guide book, the *Evening Standard* rode to the rescue by calling our village hip, trendy and family friendly.

A full-colour double spread in the *Standard's* Homes & Property section on 19 April praised East Finchley as the cooler sibling of its neighbours North Finchley and Finchley Central, and an area with a strong community feel that is emerging from the shadow of ultra-desirable nearby areas like Muswell Hill and Highgate.

Using photographs of Maurizio Businaro at Amici Delicatessen, Michelle George at Josephine's flower shop and Suzanne Grantham, manager at the Old White Lion pub, the piece gave a run-down of why East Finchley really is the place to be.

The Phoenix Cinema, Cherry Tree Wood, Tony's the greengrocers, Majjo's Indian takeaway, Chorak café, the Meze Bar and Nah-Ling restaurants were all given honourable mentions for contributing to the high quality of life.

The *Evening Standard* article restores the balance after a distinctly lukewarm write-up in Time Out's new London For Londoners handbook (*THE ARCHER*, May 2006) that described East Finchley and Barnet as staid, lethargic, lifeless and dull.



The festival parade passing the Phoenix cinema - just two of the things that make East Finchley desirable. Photo by David Glick

Martyn Gerrard, of Martyn Gerrard estate agency, was quoted by the *Standard* as saying: "Families like East Finchley because the schools in the area are so good. It's on the periphery of Highgate so it has grown in importance. But it's not as expensive and it still has a village atmosphere."

The 'hip' factor in East Finchley, said the article, comes from the strong local arts scene - the Phoenix, the Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road, the East Finchley Arts Festival at All Saint's Church in Durham Road and the East Finchley Open artists group - along with recent shop openings like retro womenswear shop Lazooli, close to

the tube station.

And finally, our strong community spirit is attributed to events like the East Finchley Festival in Cherry Tree Wood and the publication of *THE ARCHER*.

The piece summed up with this final line: "If you are looking for community life in London, look here."

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