



Are you working comfortably?

Registered osteopath Nicky Sharp explains the hidden dangers of working at a computer.

As use of computers has increased so too have back, neck and upper limb disorders. Working at a computer is associated with conditions known as cumulative trauma disorder (CTD), repetitive strain injury or occupational overuse syndromes, the "industrial injuries of the Information Age". CTDs include carpal tunnel syndrome, tendon inflammation disorders especially of the wrist and thumb, tennis or golfer's elbow and tension neck syndrome. Some CTDs are secondary to other conditions. For example, diabetes, obesity, thyroidism, rheumatoid arthritis and previous injury are all predisposing factors for carpal tunnel syndrome.

Most CTDs are preventable, and curable if caught early. Early signs may include pain, pins and needles, numbness, burning, or aching. Problems often arise from sitting at a poorly designed workstation, carrying out a repetitive activity or holding a static position for a long time. In addition, localised pressure from resting wrists or elbows on a hard surface can damage the nerves and/or tendons. CTDs are not exclusively linked to poor work ergonomics: non-work activities, hobbies, sports, driving, and even sleeping positions can contribute to them.

How to prevent CTDs:

An important preventive measure is 'variety'. Change posture and activities often. If possible, take breaks before getting tired, by doing something else for a while. Extremely short, frequent breaks can be very helpful.

Sit in a position where shoulders and arms can relax. Avoid positions near the extremes of your joints' range of motion; the most neutral joint position is about halfway.

At the workstation, keep head and neck erect, the top of the computer screen horizontal with your eyes, with forearms parallel to the floor. The mouse should be alongside the keyboard and you should have good wrist support, with wrists horizontal or slightly extended.

Copyholder should be between screen and keyboard

or attached to the screen. Hips should be higher than knees for good spinal posture. Sit well back in your chair supported by the backrest. Feet

should be flat on the floor.

To make an appointment with Nicky at the Nova Dental Centre in East End Road, contact her on 020 8815 9433.

A night at the opera

By Sheila Armstrong

East Finchley's Phoenix cinema recently showed the critically-acclaimed film *U-Carmen eKhayelista*. On 22 April, the film's star and director, Mark Dornford-May, attended a question-and-answer session at the cinema. Opera singer Alison Buchanan gave the audience a preview of her scheduled performance at the artsdepot to end the evening.

The film is a vibrant and exciting take on Bizet's *Carmen*, set in the black townships of South Africa's Cape Town and sung in the local dialect, Xhosa. The music is a blend of Bizet and Xhosa songs: a deliberate clash of styles.

The film capitalised on the strong musical tradition in South Africa, and many locals were in the film.

Pauline Malefane, who sings *Carmen*, is quite

extraordinary; feisty, statuesque and thoroughly modern. She gets good support by the rest of the cast from the acclaimed South African Dimpho Di Copane Theatre Company. This was a great evening at the Phoenix for local opera lovers.

Unsurprisingly, the film won Berlin's Golden Bear Award for Best Film in 2005. Mark's next film is *The Son of Man*, also set in Africa with Pauline as the Virgin Mary.

Scandal Upstairs at the Gatehouse

By Sheila Armstrong

A production of Sheridan's *School for Scandal* by Traffic of the Stage played at The Gatehouse in Highgate from 12 April to 6 May. The story is all about rich men marrying younger women, young men getting into debt, scandal and rumour.

With a cast of 14, directed by Harry Meacher, the play romped along and reached an entertaining climax in Act Two. Removing the play from its original period, the 1770s, to the 1920s worked well.

Nicki Kelly and Miranda

Nolan turned in witty performances as Lady Sneerwell and Maria respectively and were well supported by the company.

East Finchley producer and playwright John Cooper

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, at publication.

Letters to the editor

Our field belongs to us
Dear Editor,

We are railing against the perceived view of Barnet Council that Stanley Road Playing Field belongs to them to do with as they see fit.

We believe the space belongs to the community, and should be re-invigorated to meet the needs of our community for play and garden space.

We are making original mixed media artworks, which will be displayed tied onto the railings outside the playing fields. A presentation about the fields will be on display in and around the police office on the High Road.

We welcome public contributions to the railings artworks, which will be put up on or after 1 June.

From East Finchley Open Artists

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net.

Get your facts straight

Dear Editor,

The researchers on whom *Time Out's London for Londoners* based its opinions of Finchley (*THE ARCHER*, May 2006) have not done their work carefully enough. If they had, they would have found out that Finchley Central is a station on the Northern line and that the correct name for this area is Church End Finchley.

Yours faithfully,
Robert Winton
Hon Secretary,
the Finchley Society
Creighton Avenue, N2

Wildlife diary

By Linda Mitchell

I noticed a marked decline in the number of birds coming to the garden after the dreadful depot fire at Hemel Hempstead in December, but I'm pleased to have seen many more ladybirds this spring. The foxes are again regular visitors, and I have seen one who has no tail. Again, so far no frogs. Bumblebees first appeared in January, even during the light snowfalls.

For me, the early morning is the most magical time of day because of the birdsong. In February I heard a lone blackbird at about 6am most days; now it's a real chorus at just after 4am.

I spotted a sparrowhawk several times in January, and on one occasion it was being chased by a large crow. In early

February I had a rare visit from a pair of redwings which fed on apples I had left out. A garden warbler has been a regular visitor this spring, its beautiful song heard long before I spotted it.

Bluetits, wrens, robins, dunnocks and blackbirds are all busy darting in and out of their nests. An owl flies across the gardens at night, hooting loudly, and bats dart about at dusk.

Tiny saplings are appearing in the garden and in pots, the result of conkers stored by squirrels during the winter. The garden is a busy place.

In memory of Lynn Cornelius

By Maggie Driscoll

Martin Junior School celebrated the life of a dearly loved teacher, colleague and friend at the end of April. Two services were held, one for the children and one for past pupils, families and colleagues.

We now have three permanent memorials of Lynn. First is the plaque in our memorial garden. Second is a wonderful picture by South African artist Gabisile Nkosi. Most spectacular is the new window in the Junior Hall. Knowing Lynn's passion for modern art and her love of stained glass, Adam Justice-Mill, a local artist and former parent, designed the window which represents Lynn's love of life in vibrant colours and flowing shapes.

After reading in *THE ARCHER* about so many school successes

another former parent and local resident, Robert Winton MBE, decided to give a special trophy to Martin Junior School. The beautiful glass trophy will be awarded on an annual basis to the pupil who has demonstrated outstanding achievement over the year. The child will receive a special book to keep and there will be a new board of honour in school, engraved with the pupil's name. An announcement will be made at the beginning of June naming the first recipient of the Lynn Cornelius Award for Outstanding Achievement.

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