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THE ARCHER




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Police forensic experts at the scene of the murder. Photo by Paul Dearing

Death on the Grange: two charged

Two men have been charged with murder following the death of a 38-year-old father-of-two on the Grange Estate.

Police sealed off large parts of the estate, off Oak Lane, after Colin Brown was found dying on a patch of grass on Wednesday 12 April at around 8.30pm.

Aaron Gordon, 18, of Berwick House, Oak Lane, and Lamont Emesibe, 19, of Long Lane, both appeared in custody on Monday 17 April at Barnet Magistrates Court charged with murdering Mr Brown. They were remanded in custody to appear at the Old Bailey on 24 July.

Officers from the Met Police's

Operation Trident unit are investigating the death. Operation Trident is a special initiative to tackle gun crime amongst London's black communities.

Mr Brown was from Leyton in east London and had two children under the age of 10. He was unemployed.

When police were called to the scene, about 30 officers arrived on the estate at around 8.17pm. Oak Lane remained closed for 24 hours and police carried out inquiries on the Grange for much of the Easter weekend.

A ring of floral tributes later marked the spot outside Bouchier House where Mr Brown had died.

Anyone who witnessed the murder or who has information that may help police is asked to call the Operation Trident Incident Room on 020 8733 4704 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Writing's on the wall for graffiti

By Craig Johnson

People living in East Finchley are being urged to be vigilant and work with special teams from the police and council to rid the area of the scourge of graffiti.

A large swathe of graffiti along East End Road was cleaned up by Barnet Council in mid-March as part of the special cleansing and graffiti removal service.

Other scrawls at Edmunds Walk and Durham Road have also been photographed and reported to the police's environment crime department after residents were plagued with unsightly tags on electricity boxes and abandoned vehicles.

Changes in the law mean the selling of spray cans to underage children will be an offence and this demands that East Finchley traders play their part, like all of London's schools, transport

operators, utility companies and communities.

Grffiti and criminal damage can be offensive and spread fear. It costs London's economy £23 million per annum, and that doesn't include the cost of damage to private property. The vast majority of graffiti in alleyways in East Finchley is on private property, normally fences, walls, gates and garages that back on to pathways.

Report it, trace it and scrub it

A spokesman for Barnet Council said: "In some areas, the council has entered into partnership with residents, the probation service and the local Safer Neighbourhoods police team to clear, then monitor, graffiti on private property. Barnet Council's graffiti officer would be very happy to work with residents of East Finchley to launch a similar clean-up project, and would invite them to get in touch".

Police teams may be able to trace the culprits by using a new database that identifies particular tags, or graffiti signatures.

The graffiti blitz coincides with the Government's Operation Scrub-it that will give new powers to all councils to order schools, hospitals and private businesses to clean up all graffiti on private property within 28 days.

For further information and to report graffiti where you live in Barnet please contact the Safer Neighbourhoods Police office at 113 High Road, East Finchley, on 020 8721 2845.

See our special graffiti reports on page 4...

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Your contributions

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Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

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Recycling & refuse 020 8359 4600
Primary Care Trust 020 8201 4700
Benefits Agency 020 8258 6500
Employment Service 020 8258 3900
Haringey Council 020 8489 0000

Leisure

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East Finchley Library 020 8883 2664
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Tourist Info Service 0870 128 8080
Warner Cinema 020 8446 9933

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National Express 08705 808080
Heathrow Airport 0870 000 0123

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Barnet MENCAP 020 8203 6688
Cancer Support 020 8202 2211
Carers' Line 0808 808 7777
Drinkline 0800 917 8282
Drugs Helpline 0800 776600
Health Info Service 0800 665544
MIND 020 8343 5700
National Blood Ctr. 0845 7711 7711

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Contact (N2) 020 8444 1162
Help the Aged 0808 800 6565

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Barnet General 020 8216 4000
Coppetts Wood 020 8883 9792
Finchley Memorial 020 8349 6300
Oak Lane Clinic 020 8346 9343
Royal Free 020 7794 0500
St Luke's 020 8219 1800
Whittington 020 7272 3070

Crime

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Mus. Hill Police Stn. 020 8345 2148
Crime Stoppers 0800 555111
Victim Support 0845 303 0900
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- ❖ 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

Bogus caller steals over £1,000

By John Dearing
A bogus caller pretending to be from the water board robbed an 88-year-old woman in her own home. The incident happened on Thursday 13 April at 11.30am at the victim's home in Sedgemere Avenue.

The man said he had come to check the victim's water supply and, once inside, began to check the taps in the kitchen. Then he said he would check the taps in the bathroom.

After about 10 minutes the man stated that everything was all right and left. A while later the victim discovered that £1,150 had been stolen and contacted the police.

The suspect is described as a white male aged 25 and 5ft 11ins. He was wearing blue jeans and a green jumper. If anyone has any information about this incident please contact Detective Sergeant Amanda Collier on 020 8733 4595 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Beware of 'cold callers'

By John Dearing

The borough's elderly and vulnerable residents are being warned to beware of con men claiming to be from Barnet Council's social services department to gain access to residents' homes, then stealing cash while inside.

Police and trading standards officers are working closely together to tackle the new scam, which has been used by tricksters across the borough over the last month. On every occasion, the modus operandi of the crooks has been the same. They tell the victims they work for social services and are there to find out whether they are eligible for cleaning or food vouchers, and that they need to check the victims' fridges. Every time, suspects have been allowed in, and every time they stole cash, on one occasion as much as £200.

The council's social services department never send officers to 'cold-call' at homes. If anyone comes to the door offering vouchers, or claiming to be from any council department or other agency, residents should not let them in without checking for genuine identification.

Don't open the door

Irene Findlay, Head of Adult Services at Barnet Council, said: "The conmen who are tricking their way in to homes and stealing money

deliberately target our most elderly and vulnerable residents. We are working hard with our partners in the police to tackle the blight of cold-calling but would urge anyone who receives an unsolicited visit not to open the door." A joint operation in March by the council, police and fire brigade warning people about the danger of deception and distraction burglaries, will be followed by a similar operation next month. There are also plans to hold a training and awareness conference for professionals who deal with the borough's vulnerable people, at North London Business Park in September.

Elderly woman mugged for her handbag

An 83-year-old woman was pushed to the ground and had her handbag stolen. The incident happened on Thursday 23 March at 2pm in Chambers Gardens, East Finchley.

The victim was making her way to the shops when she noticed two men standing chatting a short distance ahead of her. As the victim passed the men she was suddenly pushed to the ground and her handbag was snatched from her grasp. Both men ran off towards the A406 or Strawberry Vale.

The victim was taken to North Finchley Memorial Hospital where she was treated for a slight injury to her knee and hip.

Both suspects are described as white males aged 20. If anyone has any information about this incident please contact Det Sgt Gornall on 020 8733 4595 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Burglary, theft and fire

There is a saying that bad things happen in threes and that was certainly the case in Benedict Way recently. During March a resident in a block of flats there was burgled while she was out and two mobile phones and jewellery of particular sentimental value were stolen.

Another resident had his chequebook stolen in the post and only became aware of it when his bank statement showed several thousand pounds had been withdrawn. The money has now been refunded to his account by Alliance & Leicester.

Then on 3 April, the fire brigade attended a fire in a top floor flat in the same road. After they brought it under control the police arrived and a non-resi-

dent person was handcuffed and arrested, resulting in a pending court case.

There was an attempted break-in to the empty, burnt-out flat at about 4.0 am on 17 April. Neighbours heard noises and saw that a ladder had been put up to a window. Police were called but the culprit escaped on foot, leaving the ladder behind.

Local residents believe that the problems with the flat may be drug-related.

Planning Applications

Ground floor, 7 Fortis Green, N2
Change of use at ground floor from offices (A2) to restaurant (A3).

31 Baronsmere Road, N2
Conversion of property into two self-contained flats, with associated rear extension to replace existing conservatory, and rear access stairs to first floor.

12 Baronsmere Road, N2
Extensions to existing basement level and associated external alterations.

60 Bedford Road, N2
Alterations to front elevation, including new windows, canopy over front door, and external finishing materials to front façade.

7 Huntingdon Road, N2
Conversion of existing two self-contained flats and five bedsits to form three self-contained flats.

9 Howard Walk, N2
Single-storey rear extension.

41 Brim Hill, N2
Single-storey side extension. Alterations to roof, including side and rear dormer windows to facilitate loft conversion.

24 Edmunds Walk, N2
Alteration to roof, including addition of two rear dormer windows and one conservation rooflight to facilitate loft conversion. Single-storey rear extension.

1 - 36 Cedar Drive, N2
Reduce cedar to give four metre clearance from building/roof.

Land to the rear of 'Hornbeams', The Bishops Avenue, N2
Demolition of "Hornbeams". Erection of 2 two-storey detached houses with rooms in basement and roofspace, with associated access road and altered vehicle access at The Bishops Avenue.

Highways land on southern side of East End Road, N2, opposite junction with Church Lane.

Installation of eight-metre high telegraph pole, with one telecommunications antenna and associated equipment cabinet.

Highways land on eastern side of Ossulton Way, N2, opposite junction with Ludlow Way.

Installation of eight-metre telecommunications telegraph pole, with one antenna and associated equipment cabinet.

Grass verge at north-western junction of Lyttelton Road, N2 and The Bishops Avenue, o/s 26 The Bishops Avenue.

Installation of eight-metre telegraph style mobile telecommunications pole, with one antenna. Associated equipment cabinet.



London guide brands us 'lifeless and dull' (but the Phoenix is ok!)

By John Lawrence

What are we all doing living round here? East Finchley and the borough of Barnet have been branded 'lifeless and dull' and 'reassuringly boring' in a new guidebook to London.

There is 'more of a Horlicks feeling around here' says the Time Out London for Londoners book, written by a team of researchers and local contributors.

East Finchley is described as having a 'homely range of shops' with an increasing number of cafes and restaurants but none is considered worthy of a name check.

The new book seeks to give an insider's low-down on every part of the capital for those who may be visiting or hoping to move house. It proclaims itself to be the ultimate handbook to living in the city.

All the more galling then that Barnet comes off so badly. High spots of the borough are its plentiful greenery and top class bagel shops; lows are the Northern line and the staidness.

'Some people like the changeless lethargy of the borough,' reports the book. "Others will find it lifeless and dull".

Estate agent David Bettis, of Bennett and Hall, at the top of Long Lane, is quoted as saying: "It's not a trendy or fashionable borough but you get a lot of house for your money if you don't mind the travel. It's reassuringly boring - there's more of a Horlicks feeling around here."

It's not all bad news for East Finchley. Our two points of interest picked out for mention are the art deco gem that is the Phoenix Cinema and Cherry Tree Woods, popular apparently with 'yummy mummies with toddlers in tow'.

East Finchley has 'more of a liberal feel' than either North Finchley or Finchley Central

because of our proximity to Muswell Hill and Highgate. The area is said to have desirable Victorian and Edwardian dwellings and to be a big draw for writers, journalists and musicians.

Kate Fuscoe, a mother-of-two from East Finchley, has contributed to the book with some generally positive comments on local schools.

Do YOU think our area is lifeless and dull? Or can you think of nowhere you'd rather live? Let us know your highs and lows of living in East Finchley. Our contact details are on page 2.

What the guidebook says about our near-neighbours:

Hendon: Struggles to have much of an identity

Hampstead Garden Suburb: Despite its appealing veneer, there is something distinctly stand offish about the area.

Finchley Central: Suffers from a high volume of traffic passing through its congested High Street.

North Finchley: Dominated by chain stores with the desirable residences tucked away in the peaceful streets around Woodside Park.

Friern Barnet: Pretty drab to say the least.

High Barnet: Old-fashioned community feel and resolutely untrendy.

Muswell Hill: Full of prams and trendy young parents.

Highgate Village: The prime place to reside in this neck of the woods

Art gallery first for Fortis Green

By Diana Cormack



Jana Manuelpillai, Director of The Noble Sage
Photo by Diana Cormack

The first gallery in the UK to specialise in contemporary south Asian art has opened at 2A Fortis Green, East Finchley. Friends, family and other wellwishers packed The Noble Sage Art Gallery to bursting point for its grand opening and inauguration on the evening of 5 April.

They heard speeches by Dr Paul Spencer-Longhurst, Senior Curator, Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham and Professor RB Bhaskaran, President of the Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art), Government of India. Both these eminent men praised the skills and knowledge of the gallery's director, Jana Manuelpillai, who welcomed his guests to the first exhibition entitled *Chennai Excite: New Work from South India*.

Two of the artists had flown in from Chennai for the opening and were able to tell guests about their ideas and inspirations. As well as paintings, there were also drawings

and sculptures handpicked by Jana, a Walthamstow-born Sri Lankan now living in East Finchley.

Visitors can view the exhibition, which runs until 1 July 2006, on weekdays from 9am -6.30pm and at weekends from 10am ñ 5pm. Director's specialist tours will be taking place at 2pm on 14 and 28 May. Entry is free.

Power cut hits rush hour

By John Lawrence

Commuters, traders and residents experienced major disruption when a three-hour power cut hit East Finchley during the morning rush hour.

Electricity supplies failed for a large part of the area north of the tube station between the High Road and the rail line from 6.13am to 9am on Tuesday 4 April.

The power cut closed East Finchley tube station, forced some High Road stores and cafes to stop serving customers, and closed Holy Trinity School for the day.

EDF Energy, responsible for electricity supplies to East Finchley, located the source of the fault and restored power swiftly, but by then the damage had been done in probably the busiest part of the day.

Commuters who arrived at East Finchley tube station were turned away and advised to make their own arrangements to get into town. Most ended up getting on to crowded buses to get to stations at Highgate or Hendon, or walking one stop down the line.

Breakfast-time trade at cafes and shops in the High Road was badly hit. Many had to stop serving while they waited for the power to come on.

Tejas Somaiya, owner of the Cochin restaurant, said: "We were setting up for the day when the power went. Luckily, we weren't open

for business but a few of our neighbours on the High Road lost all power."

Tim Bowden, head of Holy Trinity School, sent his 200 pupils home for the day as soon as they arrived at the school gates, after being informed that it could be 9.30am before electricity supplies were reinstated.

He said: "The effect of the power cut was considerable for the school. The reason for shutting was that the health and safety of all who would be potentially on site during the day was compromised without electricity. There was no heating, lighting, phone system, or cooking facilities in the kitchen."

Hundreds of homes, too, were hit by the cut, as far north as the top of East End Road. All in all, about 1,300 customers were affected.

A spokesman for EDF Energy said the fault had originated in a cable under Viceroy Court, close to Budgens.

He said: "EDF Energy engineers managed to restore supplies to the majority of customers within about two hours, with the final supplies restored by about 9.30am. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the loss of power."

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Following the news that Barnet Council is cracking down on graffiti (see page 1), we look at how the problem is being tackled in Australia, and by another scheme here at home.

Zooming in on graffiti

Barnet Council is taking the fight against graffiti into the classroom with a new six-minute educational film set to be incorporated into the curriculum for nine to 13-year-olds in the borough.

The council-commissioned film, using actors from Finchley Youth Theatre, based in the High Road, aims to drive home the message that graffiti can incur environmental and financial costs for the community and personal costs for the perpetrator.

The film will be accompanied by an education pack and complemented by visits to schools in Barnet from the borough's Graffiti Officer.

Shot in a number of well-

known Barnet locations during February, the film follows fictional 12-year-old Mark Jones and his friends, as he scrawls his 'tag' on walls, street furniture and pavements, before being spotted on CCTV and eventually arrested and accused of criminal damage.

Graffiti costs Barnet £250,000 each year, in removal and proactive prevention work. London-wide, the figure is in excess of £100million.

Clean up down under

By Diana Cormack

They say travel broadens the mind and I certainly learned a lot on a recent visit to Australia. Not wanting to forget all the things to see and do, I kept an on-going note of them in my journey jottings. This writing was for my eyes only, unlike the scrawl of graffiti from which parts of Australia seem to suffer just as much as Britain does. But I discovered that one of the places we went to was making an effort to eradicate this anti-social problem.

In South Australia, particularly in the Adelaide area, there are Volunteer Graffiti Removal Programmes. For example, the Marion Council "acknowledges and accepts that graffiti is a crime that defaces the clean and safe image of this city. Rapid and continual removal of graffiti is the best method of reducing the chance of continuing attacks."

Residents who volunteer are given training, graffiti removal kits and personal safety equipment. They can look after a particular local area or undertake removal on a wider basis for other residents who are unable to clean the graffiti from their own property.

People who want graffiti removed have to phone the council and give them relevant

details of the size, surface and material used, along with permission for their phone number to be given to a volunteer. The volunteer then calls to arrange a suitable time to remove the graffiti.

"The rapid removal of graffiti maintains the image of the Council and also aids in the prevention of similar attacks," states the City of Holdfast Bay. They will remove graffiti on public property, including vandalism on the exterior of private fences and walls. Residents can also call the Rapid Response Hotline to report graffiti or to obtain a removal kit free of charge.

A volunteer graffiti removal scheme might be one way of dealing with the problem here. Surely it's worth a try?

Raid Control

By John Dearing

Raid Control, an initiative aimed at reducing robbery and creating safer shops, has now been adopted in Barnet after it was rolled out nationally, following its initial success in the Croydon area.

Raid Control is a complete crime prevention package that includes a camera and a reactive dye that is activated if a robber attempts to steal money from a shop till. Barnet Council launched its part in the initiative with one store signing up for the service. It is hoped that many more local businesses will eventually join.

Participant Senapathy Narenthiran, of Yalnas, Ballards Lane, Finchley, has declared the scheme a success. Mr Narenthiran's business was chosen as a suitable site for Raid Control after the change in licensing laws gave him the opportunity to sell alcohol 24 hours a day provided he increased the security of the premises. With Raid Control, even if a robbery does take place, any stolen money would then be covered in a purple non-removable dye and the installation of the CCTV camera system enables extra security.

Retailers who join the Raid Control scheme receive a security-training package to improve staff awareness, with CCTV equipment and raid control branding to display both within and outside the premises. PC Stewart Satchell, Police Crime Prevention Officer, said: "A joint approach by the police, council and local businesses that helps to tackle and prevent crime is very worthwhile. Raid Control has proved to be a real success in other boroughs and we are expecting equal success in Barnet."

Anyone wishing to find out more about the scheme and other crime prevention can call the Barnet Police Crime Prevention Officers on 020 8733 5092.



Peter Oliver (Project Supervisor) and Peter Sharp (Production Manager) Photo taken at Talbot's premises in their Production Department by Talbot staff

Staircase to heaven

By Betti Blatman

A local firm has won a prestigious contract to supply a precision-built centrepiece for a major store in New York.

Talbot Designs Ltd, hidden away in premises off Long Lane, was asked to build a staircase balustrade to be fitted in the Longchamp Paris store in Soho, New York City.

This project is the brainchild of English designer Thomas Heatherwick, who is based in London's King's Cross area. The concept was to give the staircase a 'slumped' or 'relaxed' appearance to match its surroundings.

Having sourced the project, he met with Charles Woolff, Talbot's Managing Director, and negotiated a price, after which production began in the Long Lane factory.

Talbot Designs was formed in 1947 and is one of the oldest acrylic and plastic fabrication companies in the country. Its other achievements include an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for producing the biggest beer bottle, and a contract to

make a replica Dunhill watch - an amazing 40 times life size for the Dunhill Golf Tournament in St Andrews, Scotland.

Working on the New York project were project supervisor Peter Oliver, production managers Sean Isaacs and Peter Sharp and ten production staff.

After the 47 unique staircase panels (each having its own drawing) were shipped to New York in time for Easter, assembly was due to be carried out by the firm that is refurbishing the store. The balustrade will be fitted but not relieved of its protective bubble wrap until late May, ready for the grand opening in June.

This latest project has been testament to Talbot Designs' origins in engineering, with highly accurate and precision machining a speciality. Their advice to customers is: "If you can design it, we can make it - perfectly!"

Bird keepers urged to register

Barnet Council is urging residents who keep poultry to sign up to the Great Britain Poultry Register as a precautionary measure in case there is a bird flu outbreak in the UK. It is a legal requirement for anyone who has 50 or more birds to sign the register, but those with fewer birds are being encouraged to sign up voluntarily. If they do they will be sent an information pack about how they can help protect their birds against avian flu.

Barnet Council is also reiterating its advice to residents to contact the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) if they find one or more dead swans, ducks or geese, more than three dead birds of the same species, or more than five dead birds of different species, in the same place.

Residents who are concerned about the safety of eating poultry or eggs are encouraged to contact the Food Standards Agency. On

the basis of current scientific evidence, there is no danger of humans contracting bird flu from properly cooked poultry and eggs. Bird keepers can call the Poultry Register Helpline on 0800 634 1112, and Defra can be contacted on 08459 335577 or by e-mailing helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. A registration form can be downloaded from the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/vetsurveillance/poultry/index.htm.

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Take a minute to prevent crime

Watch those plasma TV screens! There is currently a deluge of screen thefts in this area. They can be snatched within seconds of entry, so fasten them down with security screws. As with all objects of 'burglar desire', put them where they can't be seen from outside, and pull the curtains at night.

It is also sensible to mark valuable property with secret DNA identification, and to check insurance provisos and locks.

Crime Prevention Officer Gavin Philips gave this advice to one of the best-attended meetings of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association.



Kissing gates and sewage

By Ann Bronkhorst

Kissing gates and raw sewage were two of the issues raised when Lynne Featherstone, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, and Haringey Councillor Martin Newton, both Liberal Democrats, came to the April meeting of the Friends of Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Field.

With the sale for development of the Lynx depot, £500,000 will be released to the locality under Section 106. Haringey has allocated one third, £166,000, to the Vampire Sports Club. Fine, say the Friends, but the local area should receive more than that third. They point out that the new housing will bring 550 new residents, so use of the field and wood as leisure facilities will increase.

The Friends plan to bid for some of the potentially available money, to install so-called 'kissing gates' at key access points to the field and wood so push-chairs and wheelchairs can pass through but not motorbikes. Ungated access could result in yet more damage to the football pitches, dumped household and builders' rubbish and burnt-out scooters.

Martin Newton agreed to

obtain a written response from Haringey clarifying what is meant by 'local' use of the Section 106 money. Lynne Featherstone remarked that any local area usually "bears the weight" of development so, because of that impact, residents should always be consulted. She said she would write personally to the council.

The MP and the councillor were also told, in graphic detail, about the drainage difficulties affecting the field and the wood. New measures such as reed beds may alleviate the stream's pollution, but the meeting felt that Thames Water must identify and deal with the 'rogue plumbing' notorious for causing the pollution. Lynne Featherstone, agreeing that the situation is highly unsatisfactory, said she would help to put pressure on Thames Water to sort out this longstanding problem.

Secret garden

Did you know that London has a secret garden? Mike Watson will describe it to the Finchley Society's meeting on 25 May at 8pm in Avenue House, East End Road.

He will be speaking about the Chelsea Physic Garden, where he is a guide. The garden was established by the Society of Apothecaries in 1673. He'll explain its contributions to medicine, botany and horticulture and will illustrate some of the garden's features, especially the medicinal plants and their importance today. Entry to the talk is free and non-members are more than welcome.

Pastures protected - for now

An area of open land off Long Lane is to be turned into a nature reserve after a community group was given a seven-year lease for the site.

THE ARCHER reported last spring that Long Lane Pasture, just north of the North Circular Road, was in line to become a wildlife haven that could be opened to the public.

Long Lane Pastures Action Group had been fighting for some years to prevent the space being sold to developers for house building.

But there are still concerns from the group that the seven-year lease will give the land little protection if Barnet Council changes administration and the decision to keep the land for community use is reversed.

In the meantime, members are pressing ahead with their plans to create wildlife-friendly habitats and a walk way through the site.

Stay at home and widen your horizons

A charity is looking for people in the East Finchley area who would be interested in having an occasional visit from an international student studying in the UK. There are many such students who come here hoping to get to know British people and to learn about our local cultures and customs.

Unfortunately, some find it impossible to make much contact away from their immediate campus or city surroundings. This is where the charity HOST UK can help.

Set up more than 14 years ago with the backing of the British Council and the Foreign Office, HOST arranges short visits for students with volunteer families. These can be for a day or weekend, or across Christmas and New Year. Hosts and students are matched so they know about each other and have something in common.

"From the first moment we met I felt very welcome and comfortable," said a German student from Kings' College, London. "My hosts were so friendly! We had lots to talk about and it was never boring."

The hosts can be equally pleased. "Am I just very lucky

Barking up the right tree

By John Lawrence

Disposable plates seem an unusual idea for a restaurant but when they are made from the bark of trees dried in the sunshine of southern India they become an attraction in their own right.

The use-once-only wooden plates are one of the brainwaves of restaurant owner Tejas Somaiya that are drawing diners to his new eaterie in the High Road.

Cochin opened its doors in early April and has proved an instant hit with its promise of a complete cultural experience, including live sitar music and genuine dishes from southern India cooked with organic ingredients and designed to be eaten with your hands if you wish.

Tejas had the idea of bringing in as many influences as he could from the Kerala, Goa and Karatak regions of the sub-continent and that includes his chefs and restaurant staff.

He said: "Cochin was once a fishing village in southern India, now it's a major city. The region is hot but the food from there is much milder than some Indian cuisine, with cream and coconut used a lot."

Tejas's father found a village community to supply the bark plates and they are being shipped over specially.

The split-level, 40-seater, non-smoking restaurant, converted from its former use as a café, will be a family business. Tejas is excited at the potential that East Finchley has to offer.

He said: "More and more people are choosing to eat out in East Finchley rather than go



Tejas Somaiya and his innovative tree bark plates at the new Cochin restaurant. Photo by John Lawrence

to North Finchley or Muswell Hill and now they will have one more restaurant to choose from."

Cost of postage goes up

UK and international postage rates were increased in April. It now costs a minimum of 32p for first class mail and 23p for second class mail in the UK. Minimum prices for posting to Europe and Airmail to world zones 1 and 2 are now 44p and 50p respectively. A copy of the Royal Mail's leaflet 'Pricing Made Easy' is available from the Post Office or on their website, www.royalmail.com

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Stanley Emmott and Irene Anscome. Photo supplied by Contact the Elderly

Put the kettle on

Contact the Elderly is hoping to launch a new group in the Finchley area to help some of the most isolated elderly people in the area.

One Sunday afternoon a month, a group of lonely, elderly people will be taken out by their volunteer drivers to a tea party at the home of a volunteer host. They will enjoy something most of us take for granted: a cup of tea, a slice of cake and a chat in a friend's house.

Already a number of local people have offered to drive the elderly every month, but to get started the group needs to find 12 hosts with downstairs toilets who are willing to provide a simple tea.

"It's all very simple, all you need is a downstairs loo, easy access to the house without too many steps and space to seat eight elderly people. The volunteer drivers help with the tea, so you can join in the conversations and hear the many wonderful stories the elderly people tell of their past experiences," says Helen Lord, who is the Assistant London Development Officer for Con-

tact the Elderly.

One host, Maria Phillips, says: "Hosting is extremely rewarding. By spending just a few hours once or twice a year having a group to tea you are making a huge difference to the lives of local elderly residents. They are often unseen because they live alone and hardly get out by themselves. The monthly teas are something for the guests to look forward to and reflect back on during the many hours they spend on their own."

Houses don't have to be large and the main focus of the teas is informality and the chance for a good chat. If you have a warm heart and would like to help make a difference to some of the most vulnerable elderly people in East Finchley please call Freephone 0800 716 543. You can also visit www.contact-the-elderly.org or email helen.lord@contact-the-elderly.org.uk

Stanley Field fight 'going round in circles'

By Daphne Chamberlain

"What is going on in East Finchley?" asked Roger Chapman, Chair of the East Finchley Community Development Trust, at last month's Finchley Forum.

Along with the demolition of the Herbert Wilmot Centre in Eagans Close and the downgrading of the library, there had still been no response from Barnet Council to the Trust's proposals to keep Stanley Road Playing Field for community recreation.

Philip King, Chair of the Walks Residents' Association, said 18 months had passed since the Football Foundation had expressed approval for the proposals, and a year since the issue was taken to the Forum. "Since then," he said, "Things have just gone round in a circle."

Mr Chapman and Mr King handed letters of support, correspondence and a timetable of meetings and telephone conversations to the Democratic Services Representative. They are concerned that Council Leader Brian Salinger has said the field must be looked at in the 'wider picture' of East Finchley.

In a meeting with Paul Allen from the National Playing Fields Association, who was setting out means of preserving the field, Councillor Salinger had mentioned that there could be some land available elsewhere following the demolition and rebuilding of a local school.

Martin Schools named

Barnet's Deputy Chief Executive Brian Reynolds told the Forum that the Council was 'immersed in the Primary Schools Capital Investment Programme'. Saying that Barnet must look at playing field provision for all schools, he mentioned the Martin Schools by name. Martin Schools are on the proposed list for remodeling in 2012-13, though a senior governor has told *THE ARCHER* that these plans for the school may never happen.

Brian Reynolds said, "Priority should not be given to Stanley Field, but that doesn't mean that dialogue is not going on. Discussions are not exhausted". He has asked Councillor Salinger to include the Trust in further discussions.

Goodbye and thanks

This Forum was the last to be chaired by Conservative Councillor Leslie Sussman, who is not standing for re-election this month. Labour councillor Colin Rogers paid tribute to him, praising his many years of service and his very fair and courteous chairing of the Forum and other meetings. Leslie Sussman will continue his involvement with Finchley Charities.

Have the goalposts been

moved?

By Daphne Chamberlain
Following the discussion on the future of Stanley Field at last month's Finchley Forum, Philip King, from The Walks Residents Association, questioned whether the goalposts were being moved.

He said that if Barnet Council was thinking of offering a playing field on the demolished and rebuilt Martin School site in 2012-13, in exchange for selling off Stanley Road Field for commercial development, then it did not reflect previous discussions.

Mr King said: "The possibility of some leftover land being designated as a dual-use playing field in no way compensates for the selling-off of Stanley Road Field. The East Finchley Development Trust's proposals are directed specifically at saving the whole of Stanley Field for community recreation.

"The sale of the field to the local authority in 1956 was with the proviso that it should be kept for recreational purposes under the provision of the then Education Act. East Finchley has already lost the community facility of the Herbert Wilmot Centre. The library has been downgraded. Now Stanley Field may be earmarked for housing development as part of a 'wider picture'.

"I hope that this wider picture is not a ploy for presenting the Trust with a 'like it or leave it' fait accompli under the umbrella of Primary School Regeneration Plans.

"The Walks Residents Association and the East Finchley Development Trust are keen to continue dialogue with the Council. We will continue with our efforts to save the whole of Stanley Field from the developers."

Stanley Field draws in the artists

By Eti Wade

East Finchley Open, a group of artists and craft people living in and around East Finchley, is widening its scope to produce socially responsive work particular to this area. Operating since 2004, and with an active membership of 50, the Open is the biggest and most successful group of its kind in North London.

It already has a Summer Open House in July and a Winter Fair in November, but for some time now members have wanted to contribute to, and become involved in, local community issues.

Recently the Open has contributed original and inspiring decorations to the new police patrol base on the High Road, and is now taking on the Stanley Road Playing Field campaign. The aim is to produce work to highlight the important issues of maintaining and investing in our green and recreational spaces.

The Open is currently working, individually and in collaboration, to produce a body of creative photography, painting, poetry and other media, which will comment on, document, and commemorate the field. The Group hopes to add to awareness of the issue, and to fuel debate. The outcome

will be an exhibition of work in a local venue.

Boost for advice service

East Finchley Advice Service has been given a £2,500 boost this spring towards training volunteers in debt counselling. The money was handed over by Vyanjana Trivevi, manager of the local Abbey branch in the High Road, to Advice Service manager Terry Stone.

The charity, based in Church Lane, helps more than 4,000 clients annually and has several new projects planned for this year, including 'Age Matters', an outreach service for elderly people, and a series of eight-week training courses for the young unemployed.

One for the diary

Did you know that at three seconds past two minutes past one in the morning of 4 May, the time and date, properly written, was 01:02:03, 04.05.06. And that won't happen again for another 100 years!

Seen and Heard

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Friends will protect Alexandra Park

By Gerry Saunders

The granting of a 125-year lease of Alexandra Palace for commercial purposes to development group Firoka has led to a widely supported and rapidly growing movement to form Friends of Alexandra Park.

The new body would aim to protect the parkland surrounding the Palace when development of the building itself gets under way. It says the park should be preserved as a natural green space that can be enjoyed to the full by the community.

There are concerns over the possible encroachment within the park of commercial activities associated with the palace, particularly as Firoka may also be granted a contract for the maintenance of the park. The Friends would involve individuals, community and

resident groups and make representations to the Council, the Palace and Park trustees and the palace developer.

After much canvassing around the area, the Friends already have a core of keen would-be members and a constitution in draft form. If any person or organisation would like to register support, they can contact Peter Thompson of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association on 020 8883 0371 or Jane Hutchinson of the Alexandra Residents Association on 020 8444 3308.

Sixty summers: from khaki to pyjamas

East Finchley writer Peter Cox explains why he went in to bat for English cricket

Even if you're not a cricket enthusiast, you cannot have failed to spot that 2005 was a special year for English cricket. The Test cricket was thrilling, played at a hectic pace that would have seemed strange to a spectator of 50 or 60 years ago.

Long summer evenings now bring 20/20, finished in little over two hours, with colour-coded cricketers thrashing a white ball to all parts in front of sell-out crowds at Lord's and the Oval: county match sell-outs not seen since Denis Compton's glorious heyday.

As a boy I followed cricket avidly - playing, watching, and devouring the annual Wisden, the cricketer's almanack. While I was working full-time, my ability to watch it diminished, but not my enthusiasm.

When I retired in 2003 I began to mull over the dramatic changes to the game that had occurred since I was born in the summer of 1945, particularly in the last 15 years. Oddly, there was no book on the shelves that told me the answers, and that was how *Sixty Summers - English Cricket since World War 2* was born.

The book follows England's Test team after the war as it leaves its khaki behind and starts again. The

team begins badly, recovers in the glorious Fifties, reaching heights it has only recently begun to regain after younger countries began to compete more strongly, something we have seen this winter.

At intervals I break off to explain some of the trends: why throwing became an issue in 1959 (and resurfaced a few years ago), how county cricket nearly went bankrupt and was saved by one-day cricket, why English spinners have virtually disappeared despite their resurgence elsewhere, and many others.

The book took a year to write at my home in Hertford Road, finishing in October 2005 after that 60th summer. It's an illustrated 400 page hardback, retailing at £20 in bookshops in Muswell Hill, Highgate and Finchley Central, and in the major chains soon, but I'm happy to sell signed copies to *ARCHER* readers for £15, delivered to your door. Phone 020 8883 6952 to solve your Father's Day present at a stroke!

Mass for new arrival

By Len Willcocks

St Mary's RC Church in the High Road was packed in mid-February for a Mass celebrating the induction of a new parish priest, Father Anthony Pellegrina. This was attended by many former priests of St Mary's, including Canon Robert Plourde, Canon Pat Davies, Father Gerard Quinn and the Dean of Barnet, Michael Kennedy. The choir and organist performed music by Mozart, Colin Mowby and Sir Edward Elgar.

Clocking up a third decade in East Finchley

By John Dearing

Victory Auto Services first came to their High Road workshop more than 20 years ago. Mark Bharadia and Wayne Adams, who had worked there for some years, took over the company in 1996. A year later Wayne set up a new location on Fortis Green and they decided to concentrate their business there five years ago, when the High Road workshop was closed.

Wayne told *THE ARCHER* that the motor services trade has changed a lot over the past two decades. Cars are much more reliable mechanically, require servicing less often, and there is less need for roadside repairs (apart from the inevitable flat batteries).

Most cars now have an Electronic Control Unit (ECU) that manages all aspects of engine performance, via electronic sensors. The first step in repairing or servicing a car is to connect a diagnostic computer to the ECU to extract information about the health of the engine, in order to decide what is required.

Wayne has been in the motor trade for 25 years and, when not working, is a full-time family man. Mark Bharadia came to the UK in 1971 and went to school in Finchley, before joining the trade in 1974. He has been a member of Finchley Cricket Club for 25 years and still plays, primarily as a bowler.

Mark said that Victory Auto Services were pleased to have a very diverse team that includes a Czech, a Tanzanian, an Englishman and a British Indian. They are located at 109 Fortis Green and are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. Contact 020 8883 9707.



Mark Bharadia and Wayne Adams of Victory Auto Services. Photo by John Dearing

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PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

Reception children had a real treat when one of the parents brought in some exhibits to show them from her place of work, the Natural History Museum. The beneficial effects of this were evident at their subsequent class assembly.

Children from Years 3 and 5 performed well when they took part in a dance event at Bishop Douglass Secondary School.

Year 5 joined several thousand other children singing in the Royal Albert Hall at the annual Proms for Praise concert.

The Year 6 football team narrowly missed out on reaching the quarter finals of the Barnet Borough Schools Football Tournament.

The school's Easter performance by mainly Years 3 and 4 took place with an audience of family and friends at Holy Trinity Church.

The school is raising money for the charity Water Aid which helps people in developing countries who have difficulty accessing water supplies.

An amazing £6,000 was raised at the Auction and Quiz Night organised by the Holy Trinity School Association.

The end of term was celebrated with the whole school joining in an Easter Egg hunt.

Martin Schools

Barnet's music adviser was very impressed by Martin junior school's orchestra, who delighted their audience with a wide variety of pieces ranging from Dvorak's New World Symphony to Everybody Got to Learn Sometime.

Wearing their new football kit, girls from Years 5 and 6 played well and showed great team spirit in the Barnet Schools Football Tournament. The boys also played well, without conceding a single goal, but sadly their goal scoring didn't quite make the grade.

Years 4 and 6 visited Tate Britain and Tate Modern to further their art studies. As well as being made to think about modern art, they have also delved deeper into the stories and artistic inspiration of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Some of Year 5 enjoyed working with secondary children at the new Bishop Douglass dance studio, prior to performing their own dance at the school.

Year 6 pupil Susannah Fleiss has continued her mathematical success story by achieving a bronze medal for doing so very well in the nationwide Primary Maths Challenge.

The hard work put in by all concerned ensured that Martin infant school's singing concert was a huge success.

Along with the French club which was founded in 1991, the children can all learn Spanish as part of the infant school curriculum. (See right)

There was an Easter Egg Hunt in the school grounds to mark the end of the spring term. This was also celebrated by an afternoon of activities and an Easter Disco organised by the PTA.

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.

Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

Experienced singers are always welcome.

Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

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

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Visitors always welcome

YOUNG ARCHER

May be, may be not

By Diana Cormack

The first day of May used to be party time! People rejoiced because winter had really ended and the sun was warming up the earth. Houses were decorated with blossoms and greenery and children danced round the flower-decked maypole to celebrate the new life growing around them.

May Day brought parties and processions and it was also the day on which country-wide fairs began. These would continue for a week or more. In the streets would be entertainers, pedlars and street criers selling their wares alongside huge fires roasting pigs and oxen. One of the biggest fairs was held in the district of London which is still known as Mayfair.

But despite these celebrations May could still bring cold weather, so people were advised to keep their winter clothes on. Though a French proverb said, "In April, don't remove a stitch: in May do what you like," the Spanish did not agree. They used to say, "Don't take off your coat until 40th May," which was a warning to keep your warm clothes

on until well into June. Our proverb "Cast ne'er a clout till May be out" means roughly the same thing, as "clout" meant "clothing", which you should not cast off until at least the end of May. William Shakespeare wrote, "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May", so remember that when your mum tells you to put your coat on!



Bunnies on the bounce

Photo and story by Helen Drake

Wearing rabbit ears and masks they had made themselves, the children at St Mary's Parent and Toddler group in East Finchley finished off their Easter Party, held on 7 April, with a treasure hunt in the garden. Luckily for them the Easter bunny had left plenty of chocolate eggs to find!

Lots of lovely lots

An auction night at Holy Trinity School on Friday 24 March raised more than £6,000 for school funds. The magnificent sum was generated in just a few hours by generous parents who turned out to bid for the dozens of tempting lots on offer.

Most-wanted lot of the evening was a dinner party in your own home to be cooked by the head chef at the school's Restaurant Ecole and served by headteacher Tim Bowden.

Other items on offer included a signed Chelsea football shirt, an Italian hamper from Amici Delicatessen, tickets for local attractions and many beautiful goods kindly donated by East Finchley traders.

The school has thanked everyone who contributed to making the evening such a success and to making such a huge difference to the school's fund-raising efforts.

Martin infants say "Hola" to language learning

By Diana Cormack

Martin Infant School is the only one in Barnet where all the pupils are able to learn Spanish. It is one of a cluster of five schools funded by the Primary Network Project. An Advanced Skills Teacher from Hendon School gives lessons every Thursday, conducted entirely in Spanish.

Basic class work involving such things as counting, nouns and simple nursery rhymes gradually extend the children's ability and vocabulary; in fact one Spanish song featured in a recent Infant Singing Concert. The school also boasts a long established French club, *La Petite Ecole*, which is run at lunchtime by experienced native staff.

An early age is undoubtedly the best time to learn a language, so headteacher Kevin Anscomb told *THE ARCHER* he was delighted to learn that funding has been preserved for these lessons to continue at the school next year.

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Top of the crop

Louise Davidson has spent three hard years training to become a qualified hairdresser and has passed her final tests with distinction.

Nineteen-year-old Louise has been training through the 202 academy in East Finchley, where she began as a junior at the age of 16. Since then she has nurtured her skills and passion for the work and has now become a technician in her own right.

Her examiner Amy, who was a top lecturer at Vidal Sassoon School as well as the head of Aveda School and hairdresser to the stars, awarded her the high mark after appreciating her talent.

Louise said: "One of my models, who was only 21, had dark brown hair; I decided to dye it grey. Amy commented on how innovative that was, and I know the model liked it, because he's been back for me to do it again."

Louise had a two-day assessment to determine her mark, which she found nerve-racking. Her first day was 'salon day' where she undertook the general daily duties of a hairdresser, but applying her technique to models, while being examined. The second day was more challenging, involving the presentation of ten models entirely prepared by her. She describes the style she uses purely as 'me', but takes



Hair styled by Louise Davidson. Photograph by Davide Bozzetti

inspiration from photographer David LaChapelle. This day allowed Louise her own freedom to express herself through creativity. She had total control over the colour, cut, make up and clothes.

Louise's love for fashion work originated from studying Art and Art History at college, which she then incorporated into her career. Her future plans don't stray too far from what she's doing now; she does want to travel, however. "I want to move to Germany for a time not only to see another country and culture, but also to take my fashion work over there."

Take this article into the salon at 202 High Road to receive a 20% reduction with Louise until the end of May.

Food for thought

By Diana Cormack

Although it's not unusual to see someone reading a book while they dine alone in a restaurant, to see a group of people doing so might be regarded as a novel experience. But not if you live in East Finchley!

Early last year an *ARCHER* reader in Huntingdon Road set up a book club consisting of eight of her friends, neighbours and workmates. They decided to take it in turns to choose a book which they would meet to discuss every two months. There is nothing unusual in that, nor in the fact that, despite coming from different backgrounds and holding a variety of opinions, they enjoy listening to and learning from one another. However, listening can be a bit of a problem, depending on where the meeting is taking place.

Movable feast

As they all work full time, they meet on a Friday night and the idea of combining the pleasure of sharing a book with that of sharing a meal appealed to them. But no one wanted the

hassle of preparing and clearing up a meal for eight people at the end of a working week. So they decided to make it a night out and hold their meetings in local restaurants.

This has proved to be a process of trial and error, for some restaurants have better acoustics than others. At present the group seem to have found their niche at Nahling, the Thai restaurant at 106 High Road, where the upstairs dining room suits their purpose well. Despite having been usurped by a noisy birthday party on the night of *THE ARCHER*'s interview they still managed a lively discussion, helped along by plenty of good food and drink.

If you belong to a reading group with a difference, please let *THE ARCHER* know. Contact details are on Page 2.

Seasick and homesick: a fisherman's tale

By John Dearing
John Macdonald, a former fisherman from Grimsby, has been delivering fresh fish to homes, pubs and restaurants in north London for two years.

After nearly 20 years working at sea, John decided to stay on dry land and bring his supplies to the capital. He delivers all over north London, including East Finchley, on Mondays and Tuesdays.

On John's first trawler trip in the early 1980s, he worked for £5 a day and was seasick all the way. Undaunted, he joined the crew of a trawler called Ballona that specialised in fishing around wrecks, going on trips lasting four or five days, and landing their catch of cod, haddock and plaice in Holland.

John spent most of the next 14 years on a four-man, 40ft trawler called Whitebank from Grimsby. He has good memories of stopovers in Dutch ports, and bad ones of the weather and seasickness.

Eventually quotas and competition meant they could no longer make a living, and he was forced to move to the big trawlers. These were typically 300ft long and would fish all around the North Sea, the Shetlands, the North-East Atlantic, Iceland and Norway, taking anything they could catch, but particularly herring and mackerel, staying away for



John Macdonald takes a short break outside the Library from his rounds. Photo by John Dearing

five weeks at a time, with one week at home.

He spent five years doing this but missed his family so much that he decided to give up fishing. After learning to drive, he started John Macdonald Fish Supplies, and soon built up

custom by word of mouth.

He delivers all over north London, including East Finchley, on Mondays and Tuesdays.

John can be contacted on 07796 462396 or 01472 329381.

Local novelist's family ties

By Linda Soper

Fascinating relationships between family and friends are at the centre of local author Vicky Dowling's first published novel.

Called *Family Ties* (published by Pegasus at £8.99), the story follows the problems of Niall and Nicky. Their relationship is a strong one throughout the book and other characters' lives are woven into the story, adding sub-plots and twists. The characterisation is convincing and I found the novel un-put-downable.

Vicky's grandfather lived in Fortis Green for most of his young life and later moved to Muswell Hill, where he met his wife. Vicky still lives in north London with her two sons, Chris and Lewis.

Family Ties took her two months to write. She has also had poems published in various collections and she is already writing her next novel.

Jack needs your help

Come and join a walk from East Finchley to High Barnet to raise money for life-saving treatment for little Jack Brown.

The family of Jack, aged four, of Bedford Avenue, Barnet, are desperately trying to raise £200,000 to take him to New York for the treatment needed for his rare form of cancer, called neuroblastoma.

A group of East Finchley mums and families are taking part in the Walk for Jack on

Saturday 6 May, setting off from the tube station at 10am and finishing at High Barnet tube station, a walk of about five miles.

To join the fun and obtain sponsorship forms, please visit www.jackbrownappeal.org or call 020 8732 3373. Donations are also very welcome along the route up the High Road.

LICENSING ACT 2003

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that (a) East Finchley Community Development Trust has / have applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Barnet for a Premises Licence to permit: (b) Live Music, Recorded Music, Performances of Dance, Supply of Alcohol for the premises (c) Cherry Tree Woods situated at (d) East Finchley, London N2

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP.

Appointments to inspect the register can be made by telephoning 020 8359 7995 during office hours.

Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to the London Borough of Barnet, Licensing Team at the address above, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than: (e) 31st May 2006

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Authorities Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain

Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

It is an offence liable on conviction to a fine up to £5000 under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application.

Dated this 25th day of April 2006 Signed by Chris Mentipty



Regular Events

SPORT & FITNESS

- ❖ **Finchley & Hornsey Ramblers Group** Call Vivien 8883 8190
- ❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** Wednesdays Christ Church N12. Ring Bridie 8883 5269
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 1178.
- ❖ **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029
- ❖ **Pilates class** Wednesdays, 2.15-3.15pm at Youth Theatre, N2. Ring Penny Hill 8444 2882.
- ❖ **Tae Kwon Do** at The Green Man Thursdays 7-9pm 07949 612 706
- ❖ **Tai Chi** at the Green Man on Mondays 1.30-3pm. An "ageing well" class for older people.
- ❖ **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8440 6953.
- ❖ **Wood Walk**, meet 10am at Cherry Tree Wood cafe on 1st & 2nd Mon of month for 1 hr walk. Call 8883 8750.
- ❖ **Yoga, breathing & relaxation**. Weekly drop-in classes - N2, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 8444 7783.
- ❖ **Yoga classes** Tuesdays 8-9:30pm at EF Methodist Church. Experienced teacher. Call Rosalind 8444 8134.

DANCE, DRAMA, ART & MUSIC

- ❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 020 8888 5133.
- ❖ **Ballroom dancing classes**, beginners and improvers. Phone 01707 642 378
- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call 8883 7110.
- ❖ **East Finchley Writing Workshops**. Creative writing, poetry and prose. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club** - 15 & 29 May at 8pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3. New members welcome
- ❖ **Line dancing** Tuesdays from 8.30pm at The Constitutional Club. Call Maureen 8440 8530.
- ❖ **Memory Lane Singing Club** - a communal singing club. Call Idit Gold 8458 4508.
- ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 8346 8736
- ❖ **Pottery Class** at The Green Man, Call Celia Holmes 8349 9315
- ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church. Call 8883 4070 for info.
- ❖ **Street Dance** every Tuesday at Old Barn for children of various ages. Contact Lorna 07976 203669.
- ❖ **SwampRock** events: Call Carole 8810 7454 or Neil 01727 830280 www.swamprock.org.uk
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** of North London, Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children beginning at Old Barn every Monday, Contact Sharon 8349 4613

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **East Finchley National Childbirth Trust**, Contact Sophie on 8444 1890
- ❖ **East Finchley Writers** meet weekly at The Old White Lion. Call Lilian 8444 1793
- ❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
- ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Mouldon on 8361 1696.
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- ❖ **Muswell Hill and Highgate Pensioners' Action Group** Call Bob Cottingham on 8444 7635.
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390
- ❖ **Old Barn pre-school club**, contact 8349 4613/1961
- ❖ **Parent & Toddler Group**, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276
- ❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professionals. Call Eric 8340 0822.
- ❖ **Stepping Stones**, interactive play session for under 3's. Karen 07957 278860.



(L-R:) Naomi Sadler (Adjudicator), Yoshijka Masuda (2nd Prize Winner), Hiroko Umezawa (J & A Beare), Ashok Klouda (1st Prize Winner) and Mark Messenger (Adjudicator) Photo by Hiroko Umezawa from J & A Beare.

Bach to the future

By Betti Blatman

I attended the finalists' concert of the 4th Solo Bach Competition on Sunday 26 March at the United Reformed Church in Muswell Hill, organised by the North London Festival of Music and now sponsored by the internationally renowned London Violin Dealers, J & A Beare Ltd.

Open to violin, viola and cello players of conservatoire standard and beyond up to 30 years of age, the competition attracts some of the finest young musicians both from this country and abroad. Eight of this year's competitors live in North London, so there is still a local feel to the occasion, but players have also come from Austria, France, Switzerland and the USA, as well as the major British conservatoires in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Reflecting our multi-cultural society, the range of nationalities represented is even wider than this with Russian, Chinese, Dutch, Hungarian and Japanese players among others.

The standard of performance was so high this year that every entrant would have made a worthy winner and the adjudicators Mark Messenger and Naomi Sadler had

a daunting task.

Most competitors are undergraduate or postgraduate music students, but the youngest, the highly talented 15-year-old Molly Cockburn, is still at school and the two oldest, 29-year-old Reiko Kakinuma and 28-year-old Balint Szekely, are both launched on professional careers.

Second place with a £200 prize was awarded to Yoshika Masuda who played Cello Suite No.2 in D minor. The £500 First Prize went to Ashok Klouda who played Cello Suite No 6 in D major, a difficult and challenging piece of music.

Ashok started playing the cello at eight years old and has lived in Kentish Town since 1990. He is currently studying with Jérôme Pernoo as a Postgraduate Scholar supported by a John Lewis plc Award at the Royal College of Music.

East Finchley on the silver screen

Our part of London has got quite used to being the backdrop for assorted television series and commercials but did you know that in 1913 the epic film *The Battle of Waterloo* was filmed in East Finchley?

This is just one of the fascinating film facts unearthed by Gerald Turvey, a director of the Phoenix Cinema Trust, who will give a talk to the Finchley Society.

He will outline the growth of British cinema from 1905 to 1916, focusing on the development of the British & Colonial

Kinematograph Company and its studios in Oak Lane from 1911 to 1916, where the films made included a series about Dick Turpin.

The talk takes place at Avenue House, East End Road at 8pm on Thursday 8 June. Non-members are welcome.

Anniversary concert

By Linda Soper

East Finchley Methodist Church hosted a concert on Sunday 9 April to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth and the centenary of Shostakovich's birth. The programme included a wide range of works from both composers, which were a delight to listen to. It ended with Dvorak's Piano Quintet, a cascade of melodies.

The violinists for the evening were Sylvia Castoon, Bryan Fairfax and Sanae Honda, while Helen Cooper played the cello and Caroline Soresby the piano.

Admission to concerts at the

church in the High Road is free although people are invited to make a donation to a chosen charity. The hall has access for disabled people. For details, contact 020 8346 7325.

A festival on our doorstep

By Ann Bronkhorst

This month our southern neighbours Hampstead and Highgate hold their annual festival. Here is a preview of some of what's on offer in the week of 11-20 May.

Music dominates, as usual. Topping and tailing the week are the Gala Opening Concert and the Festival Finale, which feature music by Mozart, Schubert, Shostakovich and Arvo Part. The Allegri String Quartet plays in Hampstead and concert pianist Tessa Uys performs at Highgate School. The Music Collection will demonstrate period instruments, and there's choral music from Highgate Choral Society and Camden Chamber Choir.

If you enjoy jazz or musicals, visit Lauderdale House to hear the jazz singer Ian Shaw or Liz Robertson with Denis King in a Cabaret Special. And the City of London are organising a Gig on the Heath, an afternoon of jazz and popular music.

Some programmes are especially for young audiences and performers. Five local primary school choirs will sing in *Peter and the Wolf* and winners of the Young

Composers' competition will have their pieces showcased. There's even music for the under-eights who are invited to Mozart's birthday party.

Music meets drama at New End Theatre, with a dramatisation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's *The Dead Fiddler* laced with Klezmer music, and an unusual Freudian song-programme called *Dreamlives*. Local writers, including Melvyn Bragg, will take part in a series of talks called *Transformations*. Poetry and film are on offer, too.

If this feast of culture requires too much sitting, you could join a walk through Hampstead or Highgate, hunt for bats on the Heath, or peer at the night sky through the 1899 telescope in the Hampstead Observatory.

For details contact the Festival Box Office, New End Theatre, on 0870 0332733 or email shawboxoffice@newendtheatre.co.uk

Mrs Puffin knocks

The Guild Players's spring production will be *Good Night Mrs Puffin*, a comedy by Arthur Lovegrove.

The play sees the Fordyce family looking forward to the wedding of their eldest daughter when a strange woman arrives on their doorstep.

Performances at Finchley

Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, Finchley N3, run from Thursday 4 May to Saturday 6 May at 7.45pm. Tickets are £7. For more details visit www.guildplayers.org.uk.

What's On...

E-mail your listings to the-archer@lineone.net

Saturday 29 April to Sunday 10 September

The Sound of the Suburbs: the story of pop music in Barnet. Exhibition at Church Farmhouse Museum, Hendon. For information, and museum opening times, call 020 8203 0130.

Tuesday 9 May to Sunday 21 May (excluding Mondays)

Exhibition of work by local artist Mari l'Anson at Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate.

Saturday 13 May

A fund raising quiz for the East Finchley Festival will be held at the Green Man Community Centre. Entry costs £10 per person which includes a half bottle of wine and nibbles. Further details from 020 8883 4916.

Sunday 14 May

Free guided walk in Coldfall Wood, led by David Bevan, former Haringey conservation officer. Meet at 2pm at main gate, Creighton Avenue. Also visit the charcoal-burning demonstration, 10am-4pm.

Thursday 25 May

Finchley Society illustrated talk on the Chelsea Physic Garden, London's secret garden, by garden guide Mike Watson; Avenue House, East End Road, 8pm. Free entry.

Wednesday 31 May

Open Day, 11am-3pm, at the Horticultural Resource Centre, Boundary Road, St Pancras and Islington Cemetery. Visitors welcome. Some bedding plants for sale.

Thursday 8 June

Finchley Society talk on the growth of British cinema from 1905 to 1916 by Gerald Turvey, director of the Phoenix Cinema Trust; Avenue House, East End Road, 8pm. Entry is free.

Is 2006 the year you learn how to surf the web and use email?

The Green Man Community Centre offers a wide range of courses to help you make the most of new technology. If you just want to learn how to use email or even get a professional qualification we have the course for you.

Learners study at their own pace with a friendly tutor on hand to offer help and advice if needed.

For more information about the courses on offer call Helen on 020 8815 0703.

The Leamdirect Centre is managed in conjunction with Barnet College



A valuable service in court

In the January edition of *THE ARCHER* we reported on the Haringey Magistrates' Court Witness Service, which provides support through trained volunteers for people going through the daunting experience of giving evidence in court.

Bridget Daly, who lives in one of the county roads in East Finchley, has been in Victim Support, which runs the Witness Services, for over 20 years. She manages the service at Blackfriars Crown Court and also trains regional and national staff and volunteers.

"While people joining the Witness Service do not need any special qualifications other than a caring attitude and good communication skills," says Bridget, "it is vital that they are properly trained."

"We are the only voluntary organisation in the courts and

at first the statutory court agencies thought we might act in an unprofessional manner and influence the course of a trial. However, due to the fact that our volunteers are properly trained, supported and supervised, the other agencies now realise that our work makes their jobs easier by enabling witnesses to give their best evidence."

Volunteers undergo a six-day assessed induction course. It includes training on how to explain the court process to lay people, how crime affects victims, how to address witnesses' concerns, listening skills, equalities issues and working within the Court Code of Conduct. This last subject is vital because it stresses the fact that volunteers do not discuss the evidence in a case, nor do they give legal advice.

The course is highly interactive with small group work, role plays, videos, quizzes, discussions and the minimum amount of lecturing.

Bridget adds: "We try to have fun though dealing with a serious subject and feedback has often stated that it was the best course people had been on."

Come and join in, folk

By Jonathan Doering

Are you interested in open music sessions? You should check out the session running at Maddens in the High Road, every second Monday from 8.30pm.

For centuries folk music has been a way for people to make their own entertainment, telling tales through music, and this session carries on that community spirit. All instruments and traditions are welcome, from penny whistles and Irish flutes, through guitars and mandolins, to the hurdy-gurdy, a stringed instrument operated by a crank handle on the end and keys along the side.

Traditional music from Ireland (naturally!), England, Wales, Scotland, America, and France was being played at the session held on Monday 10 April. There were even some Reggae covers for good measure.

Bob Dylan said, "He not busy being born is busy dying". All the people at Maddens are busy being born: trying out new tunes and old favourites, picking away at their own songs, punctuating rounds of music with chat. There is no band or group as such if anyone is

welcome who wants to bring an instrument and join in.

The organiser, Peter Eiseman-Renyard, explained: "Any musicians are welcome. It's not about grandstanding but participation and enjoyment."

Take the young man with a penny whistle quietly following some of the tunes before breaking into two of his own, enthusiastically accompanied by guitar and mandolin, getting the loudest rounds of applause. In the buck and sway the audience is swept along as well. Everything becomes an instrument: your voice humming, a foot drumming, a glass tapping on the table.

This session has been running since November and is a welcome addition to a thriving scene in North London. Come along and listen. You'll be beating time before they call time.

Contact Peter Eiseman-Renyard on 07958 282898 for details.

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

Letters to the editor

We should preserve our green spaces

Dear Editor,

The cuts to East Finchley library and other traditional housing development plans for the green spaces of East Finchley are short-sighted and probably irreversible.

How will East Finchley be in the future? Will it become just another featureless urban sprawl with all the associated social and economic problems?

Because of global warming, we can and must become more innovative and imaginative. We are part of the 'lungs' of London. This is an invaluable resource that we can maximise.

We can create a 'green' high-profile model and working centre to develop the local economy for and by the community to serve the wider public.

By combining new technologies with the arts and the natural environment we can improve the quality of life to produce interactive exhibitions, entertainment, education and sports facilities, through collaborating with businesses and sponsorship.

With foresight, the library and surrounding areas in East Finchley could become a far more valuable resource.

**Yours faithfully,
Sheila Stewart,
Church Lane, N2.**

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

Walk a dog for someone who can't

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you to appeal for volunteer dog walkers.

Cinnamon Trust is the national charity for elderly and terminally ill people and their pets. We seek to keep owner and pet together for as long as possible with the help of a national network of volunteers who assist when any aspect of day-to-day care poses a problem.

Some volunteers also offer foster care of these pets in their own homes, when the elderly or terminally ill face a short spell in hospital. The Trust also provides permanent home from home sanctuary for companion animals which outlive their owners.

Although we are always seeking volunteers in all parts of the country, we have a particular problem at present in the East Finchley area. We have owners most concerned because, due to failing health, they are no longer able to exercise their dogs.

We would like to arrange for a rota of people to help these elderly owners, but unfortunately we do not have enough volunteers available in the immediate area at the moment.

Potential volunteers are asked to ring 01736 757900 during office hours to register. Alternatively fax your address to 01736 757010 or email moira@cinnamon.org.uk for an information pack.

Anyone with even an hour a week to spare can make a huge difference!

**Kind regards,
Moira Butler
Volunteer Co-Ordinator**

Festival date

Get the date of the East Finchley Festival in your diaries now. It's the weekend of 24-25 June, with the main event taking place in Cherry Tree Woods as usual.

All right on the night

Marian Bunzl reveals the rehearsal agonies that make for a perfect performance.

We in the North London Chorus seem to be addicted to cliffhangers. Rehearsing recently for a concert at St. Michael's Church in Highgate we tested our conductor's nerve to the limit. But it's the composer's fault, not ours. The Bach B 'Minus' is complex and difficult, but Holst's Hymn of Jesus is fiendish. In this short and intense piece, Holst has managed to throw in everything to make life difficult for a chorus.

For a start, it is written for two choirs and a semi-chorus of high young voices, so the chorus has to split up. There are staggered entries for each section of each choir, variable time signatures that most of us have never heard of, let alone tried to count, and chords of the utmost dissonance (aka divine discord!). We were never sure if we were singing the right note at the right time and our voices tended to die away into an anxious silence. By the end of the rehearsal period, the choir (and the conductor) had lost the will to live.

To cap it all, our semi chorus, the Finchley Children's Music Group, came to the last rehearsal and sang beautifully and with no problem at all, while we floundered. Our conductor gave us a look that said 'I don't think I love you anymore'.

However, performance day worked its magic: St Michael's Church was warmly lit, the choir was elegant in black and when

our conductor raised his baton we suddenly realised that his patient coaching had actually got through to us, and we gave him (almost) everything he asked for. At the end he actually smiled at us for the first time in weeks.

We did, of course, sing other pieces. The Hymn of Jesus, after all that angst, only lasted ten minutes. In the second half of the concert we sang a short work by Finzi, and Faure's lovely Requiem. These had had their difficulties in rehearsal, but we got through without too much anguish. We were very fortunate to have as our soloists Janis Kelly and Toby Stafford-Allen, both Principal singers with The English National Opera. Their exquisitely sung solos brought an extra lustre to the performance. And when the last gentle 'requiem' died away there was a wonderful hushed silence before the audience erupted in applause, and our conductor looked as though he loved us after all.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

The complaining classes

The sun is shining, the flowers are bursting into bloom, vermin of the air are coughing happily on Nelson's Column and the old gits are complaining once again. You can't go into a pub or bar or Starbucks without hearing someone moaning that things aren't what they used to be. And, guess what, the grumpy old men are whingeing their way back on to TV as well.

The leading grump is one-time prog rock keyboard fonder Rick Wakeman and if I'm going to complain it is about him. This is a man who once did King Arthur on ice, complete with red and silver cape and symphony orchestra. Just as he would never fondle one piece of electronic junk when 25 would do, he can't just moan about one thing when there's so much else available to moan about. People ask what use are wasps? I want to know what is the point of Rick Wakeman?

The list of things that wind up the old gits gets longer with each passing wind. 'Why can't they make good films like *Towering Inferno*?' asked one of the whingers. Simple answer, *Towering Inferno* was rubbish and if you want to watch rubbish movies subscribe to Sky.

The list of things that old gits can moan about has no end. Bottled water? They can moan that it is French or Welsh or Scottish or not out of a tap and doesn't taste like a municipal swimming pool. They can find something wrong with just about anything, from computers to Beijing to postmen to mobile phones to the price of cheese.

They come on like they want to go back to the 'good old days' of black'n'white TV, smog and only two channels, BBC1 and BBC2 - people like them don't want to sully their minds with commercial television.

Sometimes it's hard to remember that they were once young and funky, except they probably weren't. They were probably the kind of kids who went from being children to being middle-aged without any of the interesting, drug-crazed bits in between. So where does that leave me? Well, I haven't got past the drug-crazed bit and, looking at the old gits moaning, I sure as hell don't want to.

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Total eclipse over the desert

By John Dearing

A partial eclipse of the sun is an interesting distraction, but a total eclipse is another matter... the sun's disc is completely covered, the sky darkens, the temperature drops and the spectacle of the corona and the prominences can be seen, ending with the glorious diamond ring effect. However, to see it, one must be in exactly the right place at the right time, with a clear sky.



Totality ends with the glorious diamond ring effect. Photo by John Dearing

My partner and I had the unique opportunity to go on a trip into the heart of the Libyan desert to view the total eclipse of 29 March 2006, as part of a tour which included visits to ancient monuments and excavations in Greece and Libya.

We flew to Crete, where we went to the Minoan city of Knossos, then joined the cruise ship MV Perla and sailed to Benghazi in Libya. We visited the Grecian temples at Cyrene, and the following day travelled 300 miles into the desert for the eclipse.

The whole tour party, some 800-plus people, had to board a fleet of coaches which travelled in convoy with a large escort of Libyan police vehicles. Libya is a heavily-controlled country, with numerous roadblocks stopping traffic for checks, but our escort was our

passport. In all, the journey took about seven hours each way; it was a very long day, but we had a wonderful view of the eclipse.

As fellow East Finchley resident David Stewart said: "No sensible person would normally stand around for a couple of hours under the midday sun in the middle of the Sahara desert, but this year's eclipse provided the perfect excuse."

Afterwards we sailed to Tripoli and visited the well-preserved Roman town of Leptis Magna, thence to Thira for the Santorini volcano crater, and finally to Athens for a visit to the Acropolis.

This exciting trip was organised by Explorers Tours, whose expeditions over the past 25 years have travelled all over the world to witness astronomical events such as total eclipses.

Pocket parks given spring clean

The corner parks of Midhurst Green, Eastern Green and Twyford Green, all along Fortis Green, have been rejuvenated by the efforts of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association.

John Hajdu, Chair of MHFGA, told us: "I have lived in Muswell Hill for over 30 years, and as far as I can remember there has never been any work done on any of these greens, apart from cutting grass, cutting back rose bushes, and taking away rubbish.

"During our work, new trees

and bushes have been planted, new bark put down, and accumulated rubbish (including a dog kennel, television set, and other bulky items) have been taken away. Two new benches have been installed at Twyford Green. We have three lovely pocket parks, brought back to life for residents to enjoy."



John Hajdu enjoying the bench at Twyford Green. Photo by John Dearing

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