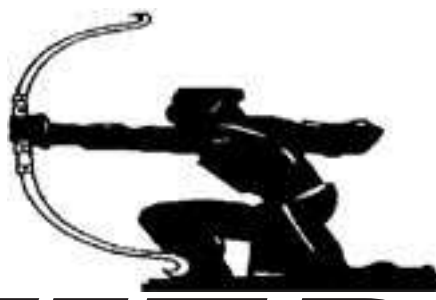


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Mackenzie Crook turned tube driver at East Finchley station for his new film. Photograph courtesy of Roving Picture Company

Pirates actor minds the gap

By John Lawrence

Actor Mackenzie Crook got behind the controls of a tube train in East Finchley to shoot scenes for his latest film. The star of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *The Office* plays a tube driver in British comedy *3 and Out*, due to reach our cinema screens later this year.

Crook was spotted in early December at the tube station where he filmed scenes in the cab of a tube train and with other actors along the platform.

Then later, during a break at the Windsor Castle pub, off Church Lane, he chatted outside with a group of Holy Trinity School pupils on their way home and signed autographs for them. One of his messages read: "Never trust a pirate!"

Free Dial-a-Ride service

From January 2008, disabled and elderly residents who cannot use public transport and who are registered users of the Dial-a-Ride service will be able to travel free of charge.

Dial-a-Ride is a subsidised Transport for London programme and Barnet has the second highest number of registered users. It enables people with mobility problems to visit local amenities and shops. For further details of this service telephone 0845 999 1999.

Spending the day working in East Finchley was agreeably close to home for Crook, who lives in Muswell Hill with his wife Lindsay and their four-year-old son.

In this latest film, he plays tube driver Paul Callow alongside co-stars Imelda Staunton, Mark Benton and Sir Anthony Sher. According to early publicity, it's a comedy about ordinary people with unique dilemmas caught up in a cocktail of desperation, friendship, loneliness and love. Sequences are also being shot in Liverpool and the Lake District.

Bag campaign steps up a gear

By David Melsome

Dozens of shoppers and traders supported the start of the campaign to turn East Finchley into a plastic bag free zone but organisers admit there is still a long way to go.

The message that there are alternatives to using a plastic bag every time you make a purchase is starting to catch on, thanks to campaigner and Holy Trinity School mother Sally Swann.

On the official launch day, Saturday 1 December, Sally and her friend Miho sold 90 reusable cloth bags to High Road shoppers. Shops across N2 are starting to sign up to the plastic bag ban and Sally has the backing of REEF, the group set up to promote business and leisure in East Finchley.

However, some of the largest local traders like Budgens, Iceland and the Post Office have yet to lend their support, making it difficult for campaigners to make any real impact on people's shopping habits.

Any volunteers out there?

Sally now hopes to step up a gear by talking to more retailers about the alternatives to plastic - paper and cornstarch, for example - and by getting the big stores involved. She's also looking for volunteers to lend her a hand.

Sally said: "Clearly, REEF and I have not yet achieved our goal of making East Finchley a plastic bag free zone but we are not going to give up. We plan to continue promoting the campaign, talk to retailers who have not yet joined in and persuade



Sally Swann and her friend Miho sell reusable shopping bags to High Road shoppers

them to stop offering plastic bags. If anyone would like to help with the campaign by donating some time, we would be most appreciative." Volunteers can contact Sally by email via info@east-finchley.com.

A fair trade, reusable bag, sponsored by Prickett and Ellis, is on sale at a number of outlets, including the Phoenix Cinema, priced at £2.50 for a small bag and £5 for a large shopping bag.

Sally's campaign was inspired by her own environmental concerns and by the success of a similar drive in Modbury, Devon, where residents and traders pulled together to make it Britain's first plastic bag free town.

About 1.6bn bags are used in London every year and only one in 200 of these is recycled, according to London Councils, which represents 33 boroughs.

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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

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Alexandra Palace 020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library 020 8883 2664
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema 020 8446 9933

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❖ **Toy library**, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

Clinic development 'too big'

By John Dearing

At the Muswell Hill end of Fortis Green, opposite the famous Fairport flats, is the former Haringey Primary Care Trust Fortis Green Clinic. No 150 is a rather non-descript 1960s two-storey building, which has evidently been empty and unused for some time, and is rapidly becoming derelict.

As reported in December's ARCHER, Haringey Council has received a planning application for a four or five-storey block of nine flats and a clinic. On Thursday 22 November the planners held a forum at Fortismere School, at which the architect presented the proposal to local people.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the proposed clinic will not be part of the NHS, and was also described as a "communal facility". It emerged at the forum that this was a planning requirement, and that a tenth flat would not be acceptable to the planners. The only alternative to this would be some social housing. No details of any section 106 agreement were presented. The proposed flats are quite large, clearly aimed at the luxury market, and represent a very low density of occupation.

Grounds for objection

Opinions expressed at the

forum were generally critical. The overall design was likened to a 1960s office block. Much concern was expressed about the height and bulk of the proposed building being more than twice that of the existing building and towering over the 'Fireman's Cottages' behind (to the north). Equally, there were concerns that its position, being well forward of the existing building, would dominate the street scene.

The amount of parking space to be provided was considered inadequate and likely to exacerbate the existing problems of on-street parking in the area. Most people at the meeting felt that a smaller, more elegantly designed building should replace this proposal. All these comments were rejected by the architect. At the time of writing, the planning decision was still pending.

New approach to autism

Children under five who are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) are benefiting from a new home-based service, which provides a specialist personalised programme responding to the particular needs of the individual child.

The Barnet Early Autism Model launched by Barnet Council works in partnership with families at home and offers a tailored package giving up to 20 hours educational input every week.

It has been proved that early intensive intervention for children with ASCs will improve their chances of communicating in a social setting and going on to have a happy childhood and school life.

Clean up for The Walks

Complaints from residents have led to a new cleaning regime for The Walks, the historic path leading from Market Place to Church Lane.

People living along or near the path noticed an increase in litter and dumped items and protested to Finchley and Golders Green MP Rudi Vis.

He took up the cause and was told by Barnet Council that street cleaning along The Walks would be increased to twice weekly. All other roads not in the town centre will continue to be swept on a four-weekly cycle.

In a letter to one resident, Mr Vis urged anyone who noticed another slippage in cleaning standards to contact him at his constituency office in Church Lane on 020 8883 0411.

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

62 Abbots Gardens, N2
Single storey rear extension
30 Chandos Road, N2
Proposed loft conversion.
First Floor Flat, 69 Durham Road, N2
Conversion of existing roof space into bedroom with shower room. Replacement of existing external access stair.
93 East End Road, N2
Conversion of property into two flats following loft conversion and roof extension.
16 Fortis Green, N2
Proposed front and rear light wells. Two dormer windows to rear and roof lights to front. Use of both loft and basement as habitable accommodation.
90 Heath View, N2
Single storey front and rear extensions.
111 High Road, N2
Erection of single storey rear extension at ground floor level and use as A1 (Shop) between the hours of 9am - 5pm and use of ground floor and basement as A3 (Restaurant) from 5pm - 11pm.
73 Huntingdon Road, N2
Ground floor rear extension
Land adjoining 60 Lankaster

Gardens, N2

Redevelopment of site to provide a mixed use development comprising 101 residential units and 180 sq m of commercial floor space and parking for 97 cars.
2 Lewis Gardens, N2
Change of use to mixed use motor garage and MOT station.
Ground floor flat, 358 Long Lane, N2
Single storey side and rear extension.
18 Summerlee Gardens, N2
Single storey rear extension.

Haringey Council

25 Bancroft Avenue, N2
Erection of first floor rear extension and front, side and rear dormer windows (resubmission).
35 Bancroft Avenue, N2
Erection of a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
3 Greenfield Drive, N2
Erection of rear dormer window to facilitate a loft conversion, erection of single storey ground floor extension and conversion of existing integrated garage into a habitable room.
10 Lauradale Road, N2
Demolition of garage and erection of single storey side extension.

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Family support is crucial

By Linda Sansom

The sight of a naked toddler rushing across a busy road with a carving knife in his hand led to the start of a nation-wide charity that helps to put struggling families back on their feet, an annual meeting heard.

Speaking at the 10th AGM of Home-Start Barnet, the East Finchley based voluntary organisation that supports families throughout the borough, the charity's founder Margaret Harrison, explained how, as a volunteer in a Leicester community centre in 1973, she began chatting to the toddler's mother to find that she was an isolated, exhausted single parent who had no support, little money, and didn't get on with the neighbours.

Margaret began visiting the family, and others, and this led to the realisation that families having a difficult time needed someone to care, who could make the time and effort to bring a combination of fun and practical support into their lives. And so Home-Start was born, and now has 360 schemes in the United Kingdom, with 20 abroad and 40 more countries waiting to set them up.

"It's a very real pleasure to be here," she told an audience at the Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road, which included Barnet's Mayor, Councillor Maureen Braun, Councillor Lisa Rutter and Councillor Fiona Bulmer, Barnet's Cabinet member for education. "I was here at your launch and you are absolutely flourishing. So many families and children are benefiting from this scheme."

Model for other schemes?

The Mayor, who had also attended the scheme's anniversary dinner in October, said it was a humbling experience to have so many wonderful voluntary organisations in the borough, but Home-Start was particularly close to her heart.

She could think of nothing

worse than being cut off from family and friends, or having mental health problems or other stress, and not knowing which way to go. She added: "A hundred years ago families used to help out, but do not do that any more. Home-Start is a wonderful thing, and we in Barnet are very proud of you."

Councillor Bulmer said that as education cabinet member her work involved responsibility for under-18s in the borough and that she often wondered if the borough made effective use of resources and if they were making a difference, especially to children. She told Home-Start, "You are really making a difference to children's lives and we need to find other ways of replicating your model."



The wall came off worse in its argument with a lorry and a rubbish bin. Photograph by John Dearing

Unplanned demolition of pub wall

By John Dearing

On the afternoon of 13 December, the wall next to the car park of The Bald Faced Stag was largely demolished. A lorry was seen to be pulling out of the car park at the time. It stopped by the lights and then drove off up Fortis Green, apparently oblivious to what had happened.

It would seem the lorry had turned right out of the car park, catching and dragging a large rubbish bin with it, on its near side. The bin then hit the wall and knocked a substantial part of it down.

Bill Tyler resigns over Bothy dispute

By Daphne Chamberlain

The dispute over the Bothy has brought about the resignation of Bill Tyler from his posts of President, Trustee, and planning committee member of The Finchley Society.

The Trustees say they very much regret his resignation. Insisting that this single issue should not obscure his "enormous contribution" to the society, they describe his support over many years as "outstanding".

A founder member of the Society when it was formed in 1971, and President since 1992, Bill Tyler has also been Vice-president, Chairman, Chair of the planning committee, and architectural adviser.

However, when Avenue

House Estate Trust (AHET) evicted Finchley Arts Centre Trust (FACT) from the Bothy amid intense controversy, many Finchley Society members felt that he should not at the same time be President of the Society and Chair of AHET.

Members were deeply divided in their opinions about the eviction, and his opponents accused Mr Tyler of influencing The Finchley Society not to take sides.

Although the Society's Trustees maintain that he never attempted to do so, members called a Special General Meeting in November to thrash the matter out. After a heated debate, a "no confidence" vote in Bill Tyler was won by a narrow majority.

The Trustees have called on

all members to re-unite in support of The Finchley Society, to ensure that it remains a powerful force in the community.

Dedicated to Miriam

A screening of new film *In the Shadow of the Moon* raised funds for a charity set up in memory of Miriam Hyman, who was killed in the July 7 bomb attacks.

The film was made by Miriam's close friend, Chris Riley. The Miriam Hyman Memorial Fund has already raised £65,000 to support eye specialists in developing countries.

Few drinkers affected by law change

Finchley and Golders Green MP Rudi Vis says predictions of an increase in binge drinking following the introduction of flexible closing times have failed to come true.

A YouGov poll for the British Beer & Pub Association found that 78 per cent of those polled say they drink about the same amount as they did before the introduction of flexible licensing hours. 12 per cent say they now drink less while three per cent say they drink more.

Eighty three per cent say the change in the licensing law has not changed how often they go out. Eleven per cent say they now go out less and four per cent say they go out more often.

Mr Vis said the results of the survey showed that many people felt strongly about the role of the pub in the community and that, overall, the change in the law on opening hours was having a positive effect.

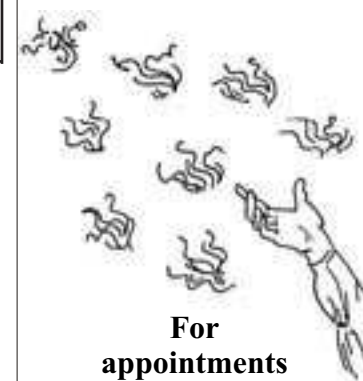
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When you wish upon a star

We asked readers and contributors what they were wishing for in 2008. Here's what they said:

Hazel Burnett, East Finchley Bus Watch organizer:

I have three wishes for 2008:
1) A decent, reliable bus service for all the people of East Finchley.
2) For each of us to be aware of our individual carbon footprint, and take personal responsibility for how we can reduce this.
3) Peace, and an end to the suffering of so many of the peoples of this world.

Maggie Driscoll, head of Martin Primary School:

I wish the whole of East Finchley peace and joy for the new year.

Staff at TD Hair Designers:

Peace and harmony for the world and a nice little wine bar for the High Road.

Helen O'Toole:

1) More shops with ramps
2) Lowered kerbs
3) Bins for recycling plastic
4) Safer, wheelchair-friendly buses: ones where the ramps work properly and come out at every bus stop. If the pavements were at the correct height, then the ramps would lower to the right level! If possible, I would like more space inside the buses for everyone to park a wheelchair, pushchair or shopping trolley.

Paul Homer, Phoenix Cinema general manager:

2007 was a great year for the Phoenix. We showed some excellent films and had lots of people through the doors. As a result, we were able to do lots of much needed work to the building, and also a new website and education work. I want to build on this in 2008 and push forward our redevelopment plans to ensure we have the brilliant cinema that East Finchley deserves. For East Finchley, I hope we can get our park keeper back, I hope we can save Stanley Field and make full use of that facility. I hope the farmers' market becomes a weekly fixture and that everyone living here grabs all the great things we have to offer in this community.

Sippy Azizollah:

1) More say by disabled people in designs of products made for them.
2) Kerb drops to be put back

where they were removed when the High Road was retarred.

3) The invention of a zapper for police that can disable a driver's mobile phone when not being used hands free, or (to satisfy the grumpy old woman in me) why not a zapper that melts the inside of the phone?

Maureen Antoinette, Brownies and youth club leader:

My wish would be for more people to get involved with the young generation and see the good within them. I recollect an article written earlier in the year regarding the Muswell Hill scouts and cubs group. Many children from East Finchley, including my youngest Gabriel, have had the privilege of attending the group; however it was noted that there were no cubs or scouts groups in East Finchley. I am not aware of any progress. East Finchley is a community full of talent, resources and church halls. It would be wonderful if we could all give a little back to this generation who need and deserve it.

Daphne Chamberlain rounds up N2's wishes from past years:

Millennium year 2000: more clothes, toy and shoe shops in East Finchley; a children's bookshop; playground and adventure playground in Cherry Tree Wood; sports facilities; fewer yellow lines; more buses; a cleaned-up tube station.

2004: investment in youth and community provision (including saving the Herbert Wilmott Centre); improved children's playground and new café in Cherry Tree Wood; survival of, and investment in, the library; "The 263 should run on time"; the Institute should move to East Finchley.

2007: refurbishment of Stanley Field; more use of Cherry Tree Wood; better Christmas decorations; buses going beyond Archway; fewer betting shops and more bookshops; more clothes shops and shops for children; recycling service for plastics; safer crossing on Creighton Avenue; a lift in the tube station and a 'Next train' sign in the station car park.

Winter warmer from Contact

By Sarah Conway

The charity East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact held its Winter Fayre on Saturday 8 December and was delighted to raise just short of £1,000 to support elderly and vulnerable people.

Actress Pooja Shah, Kareena Ferreira from East-Enders, made a guest appearance and was more than happy to stay and chat with people, pose for photographs and announce the winners of the raffle towards the end of the day. One lucky winner won a £150 token for a photographic session with Photographic Synergy in Finchley.

Despite the wet and windy day outside there was a warm and charitable atmosphere inside and plenty to keep the children entertained whilst their parents chatted over baguettes and delicious homemade cakes.

Much appreciation and thanks go out to the fabulous stallholders and also to our sponsors, not to mention Tristan Green and Martin Primary School for all their support. And finally to all the volunteers, clients and friends who donated gifts, time and effort.

Sponsors of the Winter Fayre were Prickett and Ellis, Pentland, Fiori, Cootes Pharmacy, McDonald's, Jeremy



Masie, Stan and Mary barter at the book stall. Photograph by Sarah Clarkson

Leaf, Love and Lilly, East Finchley Electrical, Casa Pepe, Photographic Synergy, Barnet Library Services, Ron's Colney Hatch Post Office and Squires Estates.

The support offered by Contact includes befriending, transport, weekly shopping bus, lunch club, Muslim lunch club,

gardening service, advocacy and advice as well as arranging outings throughout the year.

If you are interested in supporting us or if you know of someone who could benefit from one of our services please contact Sian or Tareshia on 020 8444 1161 or email efncontact@dsl.pipex.com.

A difficult year for the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

By David Attfield

The past 12 months proved to be a difficult time for the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, with the loss of the park keeper and with the haemorrhaging of staff within Barnet Council's Greenspaces team.

This has meant that planned improvements in the park have been put back and, for much of the year, there has been nobody within Barnet Council able to address concerns about the park.

However, all is not gloomy and we have some exciting developments to report. The Friends held a very positive public meeting in Cherry Tree Wood in September to discuss the widespread concerns about the maintenance of the Wood following the loss of the park keeper. A lot of ideas were discussed and we hope over the coming months to develop at least two of them.

Conservation

First, a major concern is that no work is being undertaken, currently, for the conservation of the woodland. Without active maintenance the woodland is likely to decline further, meaning more trees becoming stressed and diseased, fewer new trees growing and less wildlife.

We plan to tackle this by working with a local expert to devise a maintenance and conservation plan for the woodland. Our aim is then to seek grants to realise that plan which is likely to see areas coppiced and extensive replanting. This is a big project which will require a good deal of work.

We also plan to develop our

website (www.cherrytreewood.co.uk) encouraging members to contribute to it and to pass on comments about the Wood to ourselves and to Barnet Council

Pavilion news

Barnet Council have informed us that they are in discussions with a prospective tenant for the disused pavilion. The plan would be to transform it into a day nursery. It would be great to have this near-derelect building restored and put to good use. There has also been interest in transforming part of the pavilion into an education area, though cost is a big obstacle.

Petition

A 400-signature petition opposing the axing of the park

keeper, lodged by the Friends, prompted Barnet Council leader Mike Freer to write a reply that claimed Cherry Tree Wood receives the highest level of maintenance of any park in Barnet. He has also promised to look into why a number of planned improvements to the playground have not been carried out.

Barnet Council, we are assured, will soon be recruiting a Greenspaces officer to oversee the upkeep of Cherry Tree Wood and a number of other parks. The post has been vacant since early summer; we look forward to having again a contact point within the Council.

Maybe things will be better in 2008?

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Loach brings "Free World" to The Phoenix

By James Luxford

East Finchley was once again a Mecca for film fans when the renowned and controversial film-maker Ken Loach came to screen his latest work *It's a Free World*, and participate in an audience Q&A afterwards. It's the latest in a long line of events at The Phoenix, backing its claim to be the best single-screen cinema in London.

Loach's engaging film was premiered on Channel 4 earlier this year, and has won three awards at the Venice Film Festival.

The film centres on the world of immigrant labour, and a young woman (played by Kierston Wareing) who sets up a company outsourcing these workers. As the film progresses, she becomes more deeply involved in illegal business decisions, and has to choose between playing by the rules or taking a risk for more money.

It's a very even-handed film: Angie is no tyrant; she's poor herself and sees this risky profession as a way to a more affluent existence for herself and her son.

The making of the film

Loach, who at 71 has the energy and enthusiasm of someone half his age, took the Phoenix audience through

the making of the film, and highlighted some of the issues behind the story. After questions by the host of the evening, the floor was thrown open to the audience who asked a variety of questions on subjects both on screen and off.

The answers gave some insight into the research Loach did for the film. Many of the film's cast had no acting experience and most of the worker extras were real workers from Poland (all paid fairly for their time, he hastened to add). He also briefly touched on his controversial reputation, one that has led to his recent film funding coming mainly from Spain and France, rather than his native Britain.

Following this event, Loach announced that he has become the latest patron of the Phoenix Cinema. He joins a host of well-known personalities who support the venue.

Alien trees must go

By Ann Bronkhorst

Balancing on the steep slope the team dug, swung pickaxes and tugged at tough roots. Eventually they were victorious and the Norway Maple saplings admitted defeat.

Nine or so men and women from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, led by Catherine Price, were tackling one of the tasks that have emerged since Coldfall Wood got its makeover. With more awareness of the wood's fragile ecological balance, invasive species of plants and trees, especially non-native ones, are seen as suspect. Left any longer, the maple saplings would have taken firm hold, shutting out light and affecting slower-growing native species.

The team worked through a December morning, breaking for a brew-up and a chat. We discussed the new bat boxes installed high up in trees bordering the stream (for good flight paths and plenty of insects). I learned what one man puts in his cordon bleu brown bread sarnies for foxes: Marmite and

honey plus a dab of vegetable oil for sleek coats.

Some people were studying subjects like Ecology while others were there just because they enjoy being active outdoors. What this group, and all the other urban BTCV groups do is make a difference to the little bits of wild land surviving in the urban jungle. To know more or to get involved locally, contact Catherine Price on 020 8348 6005 or www.btcv.org.

Veggie aliens and rock boots

By John Lawrence

What happens when you ask children to write their own songs and perform them? The Kaos Signing Choir has the answer.



Children of the Kaos Choir

You may think you'd end up with something somewhere between a nursery rhyme and an R&B pop song. In fact, you get fantastically funny accounts of young life in 2008, all about ditching junk food, finding your hamster dead or wearing your favourite boots to make you feel special.

With titles like *Veggie Aliens With Attitude* and *Build It High*, the upbeat music and cheeky lyrics perfectly capture the way children think, rather than the way adults think they think.

The choir is a mix of deaf and hearing children who sing and sign their self-composed songs. All the songs originate at workshops where the children sit with musicians and boil down their ideas to some snappy two-minute numbers.

Rivron drums up support

On 15 December, scores of choir members and proud parents came together at the

Phoenix Cinema to launch a collection of their best songs on CD and DVD. Comedian and musician Rowland Rivron is one high-profile supporter and plays drums for them.

Introducing the screening, he said: "Welcome to seven of arguably the most annoyingly catchy songs ever recorded." And he wasn't wrong. All the songs are instantly memorable.

It's a joy to watch the choir singing with obvious enjoyment and performing their signing actions with gusto so that the whole stage moves to the beat. Kaos are certainly a far cry from the staid and static image of a traditional choir.

Kaos are winners

Suzy Davies set up The Kaos Organisation 12 years ago and now works with 120 children from all over north London, meeting at St Mary's Junior School in Hornsey and the Blanche Nevile Primary

School in Highgate. They have won the North London Festival of Music and Drama for the last two years.

She said: "It was lovely to see the children's reactions to the film today. We're trying to create a new brand of children's songs. What they produce bridges the gap between *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* and 50 Cent."

To find out more about the Kaos Signing Choir, visit www.thekaos.org.

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Where are they now?

"My grandmother had one of these but she threw it away" is how Maurice Collins describes his forthcoming talk to the Finchley Society.

Among the items he'll be bringing along will be a clock-work burglar alarm, skirt lifters and the first Teasmade. Audience suggestions will be welcome.

Everyone is welcome to the talk at Avenue House, East End Road, on Thursday 31 January at 2.30pm. Entry for non-members is £2.

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It all happened in 2007!

"Whoosh! What was that? That was your life, mate." The irascible Basil Fawltly, of Fawltly Towers, summed up the passage of time with typical ill-temper. A new year is upon us and the last 12 months seem to have whizzed by in a flash. But a lot happened in that time. Come with us on a reflective canter to revisit the news, events, people and pictures of 2007.



The Domino Effect: Passing motorist Nick Leigh caught this row of pizza delivery bikes lying on their side outside Domino's after a spell of windy weather.. Photo courtesy The Sun.

January

Pizza chain company **ASK** has its planning application rejected to turn the former Barclays Bank premises on the High Road into a takeaway pizza parlour.

Finchley's **College Farm**, under threat since 1972, is finally saved after being bought by the College Farm Trust, a charity set up specifically to rescue the Grade II listed community farm.

Flooding hits parts of East Finchley, most notably the **North Circular slip road** and **The Bishops Avenue**. Residents say Barnet Council had failed to clear leaf piles from gullies, leading to overflow in the lowest areas.

A merger plan is unveiled for **Martin Infant and Martin Junior Schools** and parents are consulted. The plan is approved and the merger happens in September.

February

Scores of park lovers are disappointed to find that **Cherry Tree Wood** remained locked throughout one of the sunniest days of the winter after a mix-up kept the keyholder away.

Barnet Council relaxes its rules for residents who want to **park their cars in their front gardens** in a move billed as a boost for flexible parking. Those opposed to the move say too many gardens are disappearing under concrete and paving.

Work begins on the regeneration programme for **Coldfall Wood**, off Creighton Avenue. New bridges, benches and conservation works are installed.



Frozen points: Not a chilly commuter outside the tube station, but a snowman built by James Conway and Nardina Betts while waiting for trains to start running during February's snows. Photo by Jane Conway.

THE ARCHER publishes your answers to our survey on **what makes East Finchley so great**.

Top of the recommended list are Cherry Tree Wood, the Phoenix Cinema and all our friendly local shops and restaurants. Features that readers wanted to change included the high number of betting shops and the neglected state of Stanley Field.

March

Plans take shape for a new secondary school. **The Wren Academy** will open in Hilton Avenue, North Finchley, in September 2008.

East Finchley Library Users Group unveils its suggestions for a Big Lottery Fund bid to breathe new life into the library service and the building it occupies on the High Road.

Father Laurence Hill celebrates 30 long and happy years as priest of **Holy Trinity Church** in Church Lane.

School teacher **Clare Lewis** skydives from 13,000 feet to raise money for the children's education charity Kenya Kids. Her verdict: "It was fast and totally overwhelming."

April

East Finchley learns that it will lose its **park keeper** in Cherry Tree Wood because of budget cuts by Barnet Council. The decision leads to a campaign to restore the keeper, which is still going on.

People from N2 put up a good show in the energy-sapping London Marathon, run on one of the hottest days of the year. They included **Bishop Douglass School** teachers Brian Lenane, Andrew Fyfe and Cormac McCormack.

CCTV cameras are switched on in the High Road and East End Road in an attempt to fight street crime. The cameras are

monitored 24 hours a day all year round.

THE ARCHER reports that the number of **residential burglaries** in East Finchley has been on the rise all year. Laptop computers, digital cameras, jewellery and car keys are the most commonly stolen items.

May

Children at **Manorside School** in Squires Lane receive rave reviews for their production of *Dropped*, a story of football and fairness told in opera. Three experts from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, helped put the show on.

The organisers of the **East Finchley Community Festival** put out a call for volunteers to help with the annual event. The festival itself at the end of June is a massive success with the crowds.

Taxi firm **GLH**, based in the High Road, celebrates 40 years in business.

Britain's oldest university student **Bernhard Herzberg** dies peacefully at his home in Fairlawn Avenue, just before his 98th birthday.



Do not pass Go: A life-sized Monopoly motorcar is spotted parked amongst the commuter cars in the tube station car park. McDonald's were using the vehicle as part of a promotional campaign. Photo by Guy Welch.

June

The campaign grows to bring back a park keeper to Cherry Tree Wood after **vandalism and litter** grows. A petition signed by more than 100 people is handed to Barnet Council.

The Monday Club, a popular youth club, appeals for a new home as it outgrows its regular meeting place at the Methodist Church Hall in the High Road.

Hundreds of women take part in a **midnight walk** around north London to raise money for the North London Hospice and the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.

Chandos Road, Cherry Tree Road and Summerlee Gardens are the first roads in East Finchley to take part in a Metropolitan Police and Neighbourhood Watch scheme to stop **cold callers** knocking at doors.

The East Finchley Open event, held over two weekends, displays the brilliant work of N2 artists in their own homes and studios.

July

Litter buster Vidura Cetrulo is given a Community Recognition

Award by the Barnet Voluntary Service Council for his crusade to clean up **Strawberry Vale**.

The 'I ♥ N2' campaign, organised by local traders and business people, gets off to a flying start. People are seen wearing t-shirts and carrying cloth bags with the slogan after a successful launch at the Community Festival in June.

The **Phoenix Cinema** appeals for information about a British Film Institute Cinema 100 plaque stolen from the front of the building after 11 years in place.

East Finchley's new **CCTV cameras** don't appear to have impressed everyone. Graffiti scrawled on a sign saying 'CCTV Zone: Tackling Crime' reads "U wish!"

August

Campaigners fighting to develop **Stanley Field** as a sports facility for local people react angrily to the news that Barnet Council is offering to preserve one third of the field for leisure, while building houses on the remaining two-thirds.

The **café in Cherry Tree Wood** is up and running again in the hands of Sally-Anne Wigfield, who offers a tempting new menu of natural and organic snacks and drinks.

East Finchley boasts two winners in the annual **Barnet in Bloom** competition. Pauline Moran, of Juliana Close, and Martin Primary School both pick up prizes.

September

East Finchley Library loses its bid for £857,000 in Big Lottery Fund support, which would have been used to redevelop the High Road building and the services it offered. Campaigners are deflated.

A new school opens. **Martin Primary School** is the result of the merger of Martin Infants and Martin Junior Schools under the leadership of headteacher Maggie Driscoll.

A **public meeting** calls for the restoration of the park keeper in Cherry Tree Wood. The Muswell

Hill Festival held there is a rip-roaring success.

We get our own **farmer's market** when the Green Artisan company sets up a regular gathering at Martin Primary School. The markets continue to run on the second Sunday of each month.

October

Beer, sausages and song make the party go with a swing at N2's first **Oktoberfest**, held at the East Finchley Constitutional Club.



London Marathon runners Brian Lenane, Andrew Fyfe and Cormac McCormack, teachers at Bishop Douglass School, display their medals. Photo by Diana Cormack

The Institute officially opens its new **Arts Centre** in a £6 million purpose-built centre behind the tube station.

Record audiences enjoy the wealth of entertainment that is the **East Finchley Arts Festival**. Music, drama, storytelling and art draw the crowds to All Saints Church.

The Monday Club for young people avoids the threat of closure after finding a new regular home at St Mary's Church Hall in the High Road.

November

Traders are puzzled by Barnet Council's decision to move a **bus stop** just 10 metres along the High Road. They claim it obstructs their businesses while making no difference to the flow of traffic.

The annual art fair organised by the **East Finchley Open** group of artists is a huge success. Art and special items produced locally are on show and on sale.

A cyclist is injured in a collision at the junction of **Creighton Avenue** and High Road, leading campaigners to renew calls for a new corner that forces motorists to slow down.

December

A campaign to declare East Finchley free of **plastic bags** begins on Saturday 1 December. Scores of shoppers get behind the idea but campaigners acknowledge they need the support of all local traders to make it work.

Groups and individuals fighting to save **Stanley Field** for the community carry out a leaflet blitz to keep the issue in the public mind.

Members of the north London-based **Kaos Signing Choir** for deaf and hearing children launch a CD and DVD of their best songs at the Phoenix Cinema.



Says it all: Jessica Manning's N2 cakes were part of a campaign launched in June to encourage shopping and leisure in East Finchley. Photo by Toni Morgan

Thank you to everyone who contributed to THE ARCHER in 2007. If you have any stories or letters for us in 2008, email us at the-archer@lineone.net or write to us at the address on page 2.



Staging a local drama group

By Diana Cormack

Coming into contact with Heath Ledger whatever the circumstance might fulfil the fantasy of some, but the car park of Homebase, New Southgate, at 4am would not readily spring to mind as the perfect setting. However, for local actress Carolyn Pickles it was all in a day's work and happened recently during the filming of Terry Gilliam's future presentation *The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*.

As well as acting in films Carolyn, of Bedford Road, has a wealth of experience in radio, television and the live theatre. In television she is often remembered for her starring role in *The Bluebell Girls* and for series such as *From May to December*, *The Bill*, *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*. She has appeared in programmes such as *Midsomer Murders* and *Doctors* as well as comedies. She does a mean Camilla Parker Bowles and was in *Ali G Indahouse*, which gave Carolyn some street cred with her two daughters.

Sharing her skills

It probably helped, too, in another role Carolyn has taken on, that of teaching drama to young people. Previously she has worked on a one-to-one basis with those hoping to go to drama school, building their confidence and audition skills, which includes choosing the right piece for the audition. Lately, she has been holding drama workshops in nearby secondary schools and has decided to extend this idea. Carolyn is planning to form a local drama group which will work on voice, movement, improvisation and script and will teach theatre and television acting techniques. Aimed at age 14 upwards, it should start on Monday 14 January from 6.30 to 8.00 pm. For full details email cpdrama@hotmail.co.uk

"I find it really stimulating and energising working with young people," Carolyn told *THE ARCHER*. No doubt the youngsters will feel the same about working with her.



Carolyn Pickles. Photo by Diana Cormack

Restaurant thrives on word of mouth

By John Lawrence

A new restaurant has been open for five months and has been earning a loyal following purely through word of mouth. Owner Mohi Syed is relying on the good reports of his customers to build up a steady trade.

Indian Rasoi is situated on Fortis Green halfway between East Finchley and Muswell Hill, close to the Alexandra pub and opposite the refurbished Clissold Arms.

When *THE ARCHER* visited on a Tuesday evening, the restaurant was pleasantly busy. Trade throughout the rest of the week is strong, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays.

The name of the restaurant means Indian kitchen and Mohi offers simple traditional recipes from all parts of India. There are mild and hot dishes to suit different palates and the menu is a distinct departure from the normal 'curry house' fare.

Mohi said: "Because of where we are, we don't have passing trade but rather we're a destination restaurant. People come and enjoy the ambience then tell



Mohi Syed outside his Fortis Green restaurant. Photo by John Lawrence

their friends. I haven't needed to do much marketing yet because customers have been spreading the word."

Three chefs, one from north India, one from Goa and one from the south, serve lunch from 12 - 3pm and evening meals from 6 - 11pm. There is a wide selection of vegetarian and seafood dishes as well as

some interesting meat recipes, with fresh ingredients all sourced locally.

Mohi already runs a restaurant in Richmond, south west London. He decided on Fortis Green for his new business after a friend told him the area was badly under-served for eating-places. Now the future looks bright for Indian Rasoi.

Football with a twist

A new football training programme that mixes skill and fun game activities with dance music to promote creativity and self-expression has taken off in our area.

The Ministry of Football programme ran last term at Fortismere School in Muswell Hill on Sunday afternoons. The players have learned many new skills with a ball, as well as gaining a better understanding of how to work with others.

Head Coach and inventor of Ministry of Football Mark Carter said: "We want to move away from the epidemic of traditional coaching, which in many cases is really just adults telling kids what to do."

He explained that the emphasis in Ministry of Football sessions is on children finding their own solutions to problems and, in doing so, building their own self-confidence.

Rishul Karia, a seven-year-old pupil at Coldfall Primary School, has attended the programme and said: "I love going to football on Sundays. It's fantastic. I like learning new skills: passing better, dribbling, shooting. And it's great fun."

Even parents are getting involved so this year a parents' programme is starting up to help grown-ups have fun expressing themselves with a ball and being creative. There will be Parents & Kids classes, with the two groups coached separately in the same session.

To book a free trial session at Ministry of Football, call Mark on 07772 716876. For more details, visit www.ministry-of-football.com.

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YOUNG ARCHER

Saint Pancras

By Diana Cormack

After years of rebuilding work costing an enormous amount of money, the stunning station St Pancras International is now open. As the British base for the Eurostar train, its name is becoming known throughout Europe and the rest of the world. But who was Pancras and why was he made a saint?

Apparently there were two. One was from Taormina in Sicily, but the one we are interested in was from elsewhere in Italy. He was born in Phrygia around 289 AD. His mother died giving birth to him and then, when Pancras was eight, his father passed away. He was taken care of by an uncle and they moved to a villa in Rome. Here the two of them were converted to Christianity and Pancras was particularly religious.

But the Christians were being persecuted and around 303 AD Pancras was ordered by the authorities to perform a sacrifice to the Roman gods. Pancras refused. Impressed by the boy's resistance the emperor promised to give him wealth and power if he did what they wanted, but Pancras still said no. Eventually the emperor gave the order for Pancras to be beheaded. This happened on 12 May, which is now celebrated as his feast day.

Over the years various stories spread about the young martyr and how he died. Some of his relics were brought to this country and many churches were named after him. People prayed to Saint Pancras for his help against cramp, headache, false witness and perjury. He is also the patron saint of children.

Many cultures, one community

A storytelling festival in leafy Hampstead Garden Suburb brought together children with close connections to the diverse community through traditional storytelling. Hosted by The Henrietta Barnett School, the event was a huge success, drawing a total audience of over 700 adults and children.

Over 150 children from 10 local schools and youth organisations took part. The festival included stories from Africa, Asia and Europe as well as from Hindu, Jewish and Christian traditions. Brookland Infant School told an African tale called *Handa's Surprise* using colourful props, costumes, percussion music and song. Brookland Junior School told the story of Rama and Sita from the Indian epic *The Mahabharata* using choral speaking and classic storytelling techniques.

The Iranian tale *Sam and Zaal* was told by The Rustam Iranian School, which is based at Christ's College on Saturdays.

One of the most charming aspects of the festival was the fact that all the children in each group performance sat on stage together. When not performing, they were as engrossed in each performance as the audience and it was a joy to watch their faces as each tale unfolded. Jane Pendry, teacher at Brookland Junior School and one of the event organisers, explained: "When communities share their stories they discover common values and can celebrate the richness of their respective cultures. Storytelling festivals celebrate many cultures, but one inclusive community."



Rustam Iranian School performing *Sam and Zaal* from *Shamaneh*. Photographs courtesy Jane Pendry

Bishop Douglass annual residents' party

By Pamela Kent

Year 10 pupils of Bishop Douglass School held a Christmas party on 13 December for around 70 people. Residents from Nazareth House, Paul Byrne House and some from the roads around the school gathered for a fun-filled evening.

Each guest was escorted by a pupil to their seat and welcomed with a glass of wine or

soft drink. The event started with entertainment by the pupils and teachers. Christmas songs from year 7 choir were followed by excellent flute and guitar solos. Mr Foley rose to the occasion and played his guitar whilst singing a couple of festive songs, together with a rendition of 'Twas the night before Christmas'.

Pupils waited at the table to serve a three-course Christmas dinner, which was followed by

a game of bingo. The evening ended with everyone receiving a gift from Father Christmas. Judging by the merry atmosphere and happy faces, it was all a great success and it is hoped that even more residents will attend next year.

Danger around the corner

By Ruth Brown

Last month, *THE ARCHER* reported that a cyclist was injured in a collision at the junction of Creighton Avenue and High Road. Parents and pupils at nearby Martin Primary School, who cross the junction every day, are campaigning for measures that force traffic to slow down.

A recent meeting of Martin School Council discussed walking to school. Some of the oldest pupils walk to school by themselves and said that crossing Creighton Avenue was sometimes frightening.

Children's experiences

Year 6 School Council member, Markha, said it was risky crossing Creighton Avenue: "You can't judge when they're going to turn, they don't always indicate."

Drivers are in too much of a hurry at this corner. "Loads of drivers don't stop to let you cross. Sometimes a driver stops and lets you pass, but then shoots off behind you while you're still crossing the road."

Barnet Council has said it will work with parents and staff at the school to improve safety at the junction if possible.

Sweet success for school fair

By Rebecca Smith

Pupils and parents at Holy Trinity School kicked off their Christmas festivities with their annual Christmas Fair. The cake stall, tombola and food stall did particularly brisk business.

The highlight of the event was a visit to Santa's Grotto. Other crowd-pullers included the 'children only' Secret Santa room, where youngsters

could make a surprise present for members of their family. The fair raised more than £2,500, which will go towards funding the school's newly updated ICT facilities.

Claire Chapman, Chair of the Holy Trinity School Association, said: "We had a fantastic afternoon with everyone enjoying themselves; it was a great way to start our Christmas celebrations."

Headteacher Tim Bowden said: "I would like to thank everyone who came to support our fair and to everyone who helped make it such a successful event."

Other events included two trips to Holy Trinity Church, one for the school's annual carol service and a second for the Christingle Service.

Parents also enjoyed the infants' nativity play *Manger Mouse*, while the juniors took part in a production of *Aladdin*.



The cake stall was a big draw
Photo by Mark Franklin

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Holy Trinity

The school choir sang carols for the elderly residents of Homefield at their Christmas party and also at Tesco to raise money for the North London Hospice.

A cake sale for the BBC's Children in Need appeal raised £89.

A total of 127 shoeboxes full of donated presents were sent to Operation Christmas Child.

The Christmas Fair raised around £2,600 which will be used to fund projects around the school.

Children who took part in the quiz with nine other Barnet schools held at Martin Primary did well.

Money from the School Travel Plan grant, which aims to promote travelling to school by non-motorised transport, has been used to build a playground shelter. This is for children to use in the day and for parents to wait in before and after school. Hopefully it will encourage them to walk to school with their children.

Martin Primary

A grand opening ceremony for the new Martin Primary School will be held on Thursday 31 January. This is to coincide with the 95th anniversary of the original opening in 1913.

The school hosted the regional quiz heats and did really well with their team achieving third place.

The school teams are continuing to do well. In the first rugby tournament of the season the boys lost in the final by just one try whilst the girls still have an unbroken record in their football matches. The swimming team swam extremely well in Cophall Baths at Barnet's swimming gala.

In the East Finchley Open Winter Arts Fair, held at the school, the PTA ran an Arts Café and raised £600.

Year 6 girls devised and ran a treasure map hunt to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care in memory of Lynn Cornelius, a much-loved former member of staff.

Manorside School

Hot on the heels of the violin concert of 5 December was the steel drums concert on 10 December; both were a huge success.

A team of juniors enjoyed representing the school at the Quiz hosted by Martin School. The entire school visited artsdepot to see *Fungus the Bogeyman* for the annual Christmas outing.

The Infant Concert was another great show in the Manorside tradition, and was followed by another great school tradition: end of Christmas term parties.

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Wendy Hallett is building a fashion empire

Wendy forges a fashion empire

By Lucy Chamberlain

Milan, Paris, East Finchley, the true fashion capitals of the world. That is, if Wendy Hallett has got anything to do with it. For 20 years a local resident, Wendy runs her own fashion empire from close to home in N2.

She has created two successful concepts: Fuse, a line of young fashion with a fast turnover and 30 outlets across the country, and Gallery, targeted at a more mature customer and still being expanded. Her clothes are sold on a commission basis in department stores.

Wendy started out in the fashion industry as a graduate trainee and then a manager with the giant Arcadia retail empire before founding her own company, Hallett Retail, in 1999. Driven by her love of meeting people, as well as of fashion itself, she set up on her own because she wanted to have more influence on what went on at shop-floor level.

By this time she was married with two young children, and the attraction of working from a friendly office space close to home outweighed any benefits of remaining in the competitive environment of the big name stores such as Topshop.

Local involvement

A brush with cancer four years ago caused her business to suffer and also forced Wendy to take stock and realise that too much rested upon her. She says: "I have some great people working for me; it's very important to delegate and give the team responsibility."

Some of her team are East Finchley mothers, and she emphasises the value of local input. She says she'd like to employ more people in the area. A network of friends nearby helps out with the 'other job' of being a mum, for instance picking up her children from Martin and Fortismere schools. Although an East Finchley outlet is not feasible at the moment, Wendy is optimistic about the future of her business and rightly proud of her achievements. "There are a lot of opportunities out there," she says, and she is not one to miss out.

A brilliant show

By Daphne Chamberlain
If you couldn't get along to the Community Focus Open Exhibition at the artsdepot last month, you missed a treat.

The visual impact was stunning. There was an engaging picture of a meerkat from a six-year-old, a portrait of a literally Red Ken, views of Barnet and of exotic places beyond, still life and life drawings, framed poems.

The exhibition showcased the work of Community Focus members and other Barnet residents, including students, children and professional artists.

Visitors could buy their favourite pieces, as well as voting for the People's Choice. The winner of this gets free entry to a term of Community Focus classes.

Local talent

East Finchley artists exhibiting were Helen O'Toole, John Silverton, Craig Johnson, Chris Chaitow, Kit and Terina Foster-Friend, Dennis Evans and Marlene Cohen. Marlene won the judges' third prize while *ARCHER* photographer Craig won the People's Choice award for his photo shoot in Tottenham cemetery. As a tribute to film director Tim Burton, Craig photographed a model posing as Edward Scissorhands.

Thirty per cent of money raised from this exhibition goes towards fundraising for Community Focus, which hopes to involve the whole community in their 30th birthday celebrations next year. New classes starting in January include Ceramics, Eco-Bag Design and Portraiture.

Find out more at www.communityfocus.org.uk or 020 8369 5484.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Something to celebrate

Now that we've kicked 2007 into touch it's time to take a deep breath and look forward to what lies ahead in 2008. This year we'll be spared the excitement of watching assorted Brits make a pig's breakfast of Euro 2008 because none of us qualified for the football kickabout. Instead we can hope that our athletes don't look too stupid at the Olympics and that Lewis Hamilton doesn't make do with second place in everything. Which means that there is zero to look forward to in 2008.

Well, not exactly, because 2008 is the year to drink seriously. For anyone with a glass in their hand 2008 is a seriously important anniversary: the 75th anniversary of the end of Prohibition.

Prohibition was America's great mistake. Driven by a Puritan protestant ethic, the country gradually got the non-drinking bug, starting in the 1850s. The anti-drinking lobby finally got their way with the Volstead Act in 1929 and, on 16 January 1920, America went dry. This weird decision was backed by such unlikely bedfellows as the Klu Klux Klan and most African-Americans. It was difficult to enforce and meant that the country lost \$500 million a year in tax. To add to the fun and games, it gave organised crime the best chance it would ever have to get very rich very quick.

Real-life gangsters like Dion O'Banion, Bugsy Moran and Al Capone took over just about everything and Al ended up controlling 10,000 speakeasies in Chicago. Nice work when you can get it.

Prohibition didn't do much to stop the drinking, either. Even if you couldn't run a brewery in America, you could still smuggle in everything from beer to meths from Canada and the Caribbean. Never mind its popularity in 1920, by the end of the decade prohibition was anything but popular and within a year of Franklin D Roosevelt becoming president it was over.

Prohibition left a legacy of weak beer and a destroyed wine industry. The wine industry might have recovered, but the beer's still weak. And not everywhere went with the flow when it was over. Mississippi stayed dry until 1966, which is probably why the blues moved from the Delta to Chicago because at least you could get a drink there.

So, celebrate the anniversary in style, have a drink, have another drink, forget drinking responsibility and just enjoy. You know it makes sense.

A girl's best friend

By Sheila Armstrong
Regulars in Lazooli will have met the elegant and widely travelled Angela Patterson. Arriving in East Finchley about five years ago she has been able to help set up the retro frock shop by her daughter Gaynor Spry on the High Road near the Phoenix Cinema.

Though she was a specialist travel agent for several years, Angela was always interested in fashion and colour. She says she got this from a very stylish mother, who amongst other things had a hat shop in Manchester.

She told *THE ARCHER* that being part of the shop had enhanced her life and she loves living in East Finchley.

Very much Gaynor's idea, the shop was first mooted three years ago and after a year buying stock and looking for premises, it opened two years ago.

I find it's hard to go in to this Aladdin's Cave and come

out without buying anything. Not only are the jewel coloured clothes carefully selected, cleaned and well presented but the prices are reasonable and they stock up to size 20, and have accessories and men's fashions.



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- ❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** on Wednesdays, Christ Church N12. Call 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
- ❖ **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8883 7723.
- ❖ **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**, pregnancy yoga, meditation classes at Holy Trinity Church. Call Sunnah 07941 321 772 or visit www.stretchingpeople.co.uk

MUSIC, DANCE & CREATIVE ARTS

- ❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 8888 5133.
- ❖ **Ballroom Dance Classes**, Wednesday evenings for beginners & improvers. St Mary's Church Hall, N3. 8444 0280.
- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call 8883 7110.
- ❖ **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 0208 444 7217
- ❖ **East Finchley Writers Group** Creative writing 6.30pm every Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Carola 8883 5808 or Lilian 8444 1793.
- ❖ **East Finchley Writing Workshops**. poetry writing monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club: All Stars Special** 7 & 21 Jan at 8pm, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
- ❖ **Line dancing** Tuesdays from 8.30pm at The Constitutional Club. Call Maureen 8440 8530.
- ❖ **Memory Lane Singing Club** - friendly singing club meets every Friday in Finchley. Call Valerie 8458 4508.
- ❖ **Over 50s Tea Dance** at Christ Church, North Finchley. Every Weds, 1pm. 020 8444 0280.
- ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards La. Call 8888 4412.
- ❖ **Street Dance** every Tuesday at Old Barn for children of various ages Contact Lorna 07976 203669.
- ❖ **SwampRock** live music events. See www.swamprock.org.uk
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children beginning at Old Barn every Monday, Contact Sharon 8349 4613
- ❖ **Traditional Music** in the Alexandra pub, Church Lane from 8.30pm on the last Thursday of every month.

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- ❖ **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5459
- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **EF National Childbirth Trust** contact Joanna 8883 0941 or joanna-brunt@cybergal.com
- ❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
- ❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood**. www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or call 020 8883 7544.
- ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Mouldon on 8361 1696.
- ❖ **Highgate Film Society**, contact Admin Office 8340 3343 or email: admin@hlsi.net
- ❖ **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 John 8883 8114.
- ❖ **Stepping Stones**, interactive play session for under 3's. Karen 07957 278860.

REVIEWS

Bogeymania hits artsdepot

By Helen Drake

If you like plenty of bogey flicking, odorous gases and rotting mice in your pantos, combined with a touch of romance and catchy songs, then this year's festive offering at artsdepot was definitely for you.



Raymond Briggs's lovingly disgusting characters came to life on the stage at artsdepot

Adapted from the well-loved children's book by Raymond Briggs, *Fungus the Bogeyman* was presented in a fresh way for the iPod generation, with references to bogel warming (global warming) and recycling.

The story was told as a classic tale of boy (Mould) meets girl (Maxine); a clash of cultures between bogeyworld and the drycleaners (humans); and worried mothers, Mildew ("a wondrous whiffy wife") and Miriam (never without a pair of rubber gloves).

Dads everywhere would have related to mild-mannered Fungus going about his regular work waking babies and making things go bump in the night, but pondering the meaning of it all ("what's it for?") as he eats his snot noodle.

With strong songs (favourite line: "we're Bogeys and we always stick together"), this was an upbeat show that children loved. It got a definite thumbs-up from my children and also contained enough traditional panto elements to keep everyone happy.

Not quite a pantomime

By Daphne Chamberlain

What does a drama group do when building work puts most of their rehearsal and storage space out of action for nearly six months? The Church End-based Guild Players decided the show must go on, but with a break from tradition. So, for the first time since 1993, their winter production was not a pantomime. With the absolute minimum of props and a virtually bare stage, they put on a light comedy "in a slightly pantomime style".

For me, the pantomime style was the best part of the evening, and I think it could have been developed more.

The Fumblings at Friar's Bottom, about a boarding school facing a sell-out to American tycoons, seemed a bit static, but was livened up by a masterly performance from Alan Jobson as Dr Mildew Sponge. Sporting a mortarboard and cane, this character brought audience participation into the proceedings. Treating us as a particularly backward class, he bombarded us with a manic quiz between scenes. Get the answers right, and you got a sweet. Get them wrong, and

you wore a dunce's hat.

The play itself included some clever little acting cameos, but might have benefited from similar direct contact with the audience. It would have been fun to have some comments from the stage to us. I felt we needed to be drawn into the plot.

The Guild Players meet at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards Lane. Their next production is at the end of April. New members are always welcome, whether as performers or backstage. If you are interested, contact membership secretary Betty Robertson on 020 8441 7696 or find out more at www.guildplayers.org.uk.

January at the Phoenix

By Paul Homer, Phoenix Cinema manager

You can tell it's the awards season again. Oscar and BAFTA must be poking their head round the corner when the films that we have playing in January are released.

First up is Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*, his first Chinese film for a few years (although made with American money) after success in the US with *The Ice Storm*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and of course *Brokeback Mountain*.

The film follows a young Chinese woman who is tasked by her government to seduce and get information from a man they suspect of being a Japanese spy. It is sumptuously shot, as one would expect from Lee, and has great performances from Tony Leung (who was so good in *In the Mood for Love*) and Wei Tang who debuts in the film. After *Brokeback Mountain* Lee is rightly tipped to be in Oscar contention for this epic tale of star-crossed lovers.

My favourite directing brothers, the Coens, have found their feet again after losing

their rhythm with *Intolerable Cruelty* and *The Ladykillers*. *No Country for Old Men* has more in common with their terrific debut *Blood Simple* than their later work and that will be welcome for their fans. *No Country* could well be their most successful film to date.

It tells the story of Llewelyn who stumbles upon a pile of money and drugs and decides to help himself. Understandably there are those that don't take so kindly to his decision and we get a brilliantly executed, stripped down crime drama. Tommy Lee Jones gives one of the best performances of his life as the local sheriff who has to sort out the mess.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Phoenix in January. Our box office is on 020 8444 6789, or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk.

The past brought to life

By Janet Maitland

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there," wrote LP Hartley in *The Go-Between*. On 2 December the Phoenix Cinema presented *Bombs at Teatime*, a snapshot of Britain in the 1940s, using footage from the archives of the British Film Institute.

The Britain portrayed in the films is long gone. Women wear hats indoors. Trolley buses speed through town centres without a car in sight. People dig on communal allotments. Children are called in to a lunch of meat and two veg, the table set with a white cloth. Eighty thousand people cheer at a football match before going home to high tea.

Made by agencies such as the Ministry of Food, the films were originally intended for ordinary people struggling with the deprivations of war. Each film therefore has a practical message, such as using only five inches of bathwater or saving cabbage water to make gravy.

But the films were also intended to inspire people, so they are full of images of everyday courage. Sixty years on,

some of these images can be a shock. Just as you are feeling nostalgic for a time when the Empire Tea Bureau thought there were no less than eight golden rules for making tea, the film switches to a scene of devastation, showing us tea vans that are "sent off into the night to help distressed people in bombed areas".

Everyday life in the 1940s now seems quaint. But all times are modern to those who live in them. How we live today will seem equally quaint in 60 years' time.

It's also possible that people in the 2060s, trying to survive devastating climate change, will wonder why we forgot the lessons of the 1940s. Why didn't we at least save water? Grow our own vegetables? Turn off the lights?

What's On...

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

Sunday 20 January

The Battle of Barnet, a guided tour of the famous battlefield of 1471. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road, 11am. For further details of this and other Barnet walks in January, phone 020 8440 6805.

Thursday 31 January

Maurice Collins gives a talk to the **Finchley Society** on old household items your grandmother probably threw away, including a clockwork burglar alarm and the first Teasmade; Avenue House, East End Road, 2.30pm. Everyone is welcome. Entry for non-members is £2.

Friday 1 February

Martyn's of Muswell Hill, W. Martyn talks about the history of the famous grocer's shop, 11am - 12 noon at East Finchley Library, hosted by **Friends of Barnet Libraries**. Refreshments provided. Everyone welcome.

What's On at artsdepot

Saturday 12 January, 7.30pm, **A Night at Rick's Place** - Mairi Armstrong; Sunday 13 January, 8pm, Premier Screening: **Full Circle**; Monday 14 January to Saturday 19 January, 7.30pm, **Big the musical**; Sunday 20 January, 7pm, **An Audience with William Roache**; Tuesday 22 January, 7.30pm, **Mistero Buffo** - Antonio Venturino; Thursday 24 January, 7pm, **City:zen** - Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company; Thursday 24 January to Monday 31 March, 12 - 4pm, **Something That I'll Never Really See**: Contemporary Photography from the V&A; Saturday 26 January, 8pm, **The Solomon Sisters**; Monday 28 January to Wednesday 30 January, 8pm, **Omid Djalili**; Thursday 31 January, **Trying is Good** - Josie Long; Sunday 2 February, 3pm, **An Audience with Michael Rosen**; Wednesday 6 February, 8pm, **Eleanor McEvoy with the Tim Edey Band**.



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Who threw that tennis ball?

By Daphne Chamberlain

When we published a photo of a tennis ball lodged in an East Finchley building, little did we know what would bounce back.



The offending tennis ball. Photos by John Dearing

Ex-pat and *ARCHER* contributor Brian Timms, now living in Australia, claimed it was the ball that 55 years ago he or one of his mates slammed into the air vent of what was once Holy Trinity Church Hall, on Church Lane, and is now a Hindu centre.

But Connie Ferguson from Hamilton Road had a bone to pick over that. "My brother George Austin threw that ball up there in 1919," she told us. "Why are you letting that Australian get away with saying he did it?"

From his home down under, Brian Timms replied in typical tongue-in-cheek style. "I'm shocked and stunned at such an outrageous claim," he said. "I've no doubt that we put it there."

"Tell him not to go stealing other people's thunder," Connie Ferguson retorted. "My brother threw that ball up there in 1919, the year I was born. One throw, and that did it. My family have always looked up at it, and when my niece read your article, she said, 'Look at this Australian saying he threw up Uncle George's ball.'"



Age test demanded

Could there be two balls? Brian Timms agreed he was "pretty sure there were several balls lodged in the slots at one stage", conceding that his ball throwing contest could have been about putting more alongside the one thrown there by Mrs Ferguson's brother.

"How do we resolve the fracas over whether the ball is around 55 years old, or, in fact, 88?" asks Brian. "To get things settled, I want an autopsy. I think we should ask the Hall's current custodians if they will allow a forensic scientist to scale a ladder and take a slice of tennis ball DNA to assess its real age. But one thing is certain: the ball should never, ever, be removed. Mrs Ferguson and I want it Heritage Listed."



(L-R) Gary Zimmerman, David English, Frank Moshgim, Cllr. Mike Freer, Mike Milton (Chairman), Steve Selwood (Coach), Wes Morrish (Coach), Richard Johns (club Manager), Grahame Potter, Jake Milton (Captain), Sydney Livesey

Cricket club secures long-term future

One of Barnet's leading cricket clubs has struck a deal that will see the sport safeguarded in the borough for the foreseeable future.

Finchley Cricket Club is set to agree a 150-year lease on the ground at East End Road, regarded as among the best club grounds in southern England.

This means the club, established since 1832, will have a secure long-term future for

its three senior teams and five junior sides.

Barnet Council Leader Mike Freer said: "Barnet Council's policy is to give long leases to well-established organisations offering significant benefit to the community and Finchley Cricket Club fits the bill perfectly."

Club Chairman Mike Milton said: "We are delighted to have secured our long-term tenure at Arden Field. The new lease will

provide a substantial boost to our plans for the development of our young cricketers and allow us to maintain our position as one of the leading cricket clubs in London."

Finchley Cricket Club has produced a number of cricketers in the past who have gone on to play county cricket, most recently Ben Scott now at Middlesex, Josh Knappett at Worcester and Steve Selwood, who played for Derbyshire.

A new view of the wood

By Dawn Powell

Unusual and beautiful views of Cherry Tree Wood will be on show at Chorak café in the High Road during January.

The photographs have been taken by walkers taking part in a series of workshop walks organised by the Art & Artisan's Forum.

The aim was to encourage people to keep fit during winter. Denise Wyllie, one of the organisers, says: "We want to show people that you don't have to spend a great deal of money to be healthy."

During the walks, experts gave talks on various topics including workshops on photography, healthy eating, relaxation, and learning about the local wildlife. Their photos were taken with professional equipment as well as mobile phones.



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