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# THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURIERS

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*A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.*

## Graffiti spree defaces Cherry Tree Wood

By Maria Pereira

Following the excellent work carried out by volunteers in Cherry Tree Wood (*THE ARCHER*, December 2008) it was sad to discover almost 40 trees had been vandalised over the Christmas period. The initials 'JS' were spray painted in silver in 18 - 24 inch letters on tree trunks and also on The Lazy Sally café.

The damage on the trees ran from the entrance opposite East Finchley station all the way up the main pathway to Highgate Woods, where it continued on the fencing. Fortunately the trees inside Highgate Woods were spared, either because the gate was locked or the paint ran out.

Barnet Council were quick to come and clean up the trees, although it will still take some time given the scale of the problem and because the paint is on bark rather than brick.

### Park keeper needed

Sally-Anne Wigfield, who runs the café, was very upset that her kiosk had been damaged (not for the first time).

She told *THE ARCHER*: "We are used to graffiti on buildings and walls here and there, but on the trees it has a far more dominating effect in an otherwise tranquil area." She believes that a permanent park keeper is needed. However, two years ago Cherry Tree Wood lost its park keeper and many residents feel that having one could cut down on incidents like this.

### Costly vandalism

The organisation Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, a charity that has been running for 20 years, helps Barnet to maintain the park. A representative said: "It is infuriating because money spent on dealing with this could have been used to improve the Wood." The culprits have yet to be caught.

Members of BCTV (the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers) are scheduled to be working in Cherry Tree Wood again on 9 February and 10 - 11 March.

*Why we need a park keeper, see Letters, page 11.*

### Inside this issue:

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### Longer route for 263

As we were going to press, *THE ARCHER* learned that the 263 bus route will be extended to the Nag's Head, Holloway, from 7 February.

There has been a long campaign to improve the 263 bus service, the only bus running the length of the High Road in East Finchley. This extension will take it beyond its current southern terminus at Archway.

Look out for more details on this story in our next issue.

### Recycling for flats

People living in blocks of flats will be able to take advantage of Barnet Council's recycling service for plastic bottles and cardboard from this month.

The council began pavement collections via blue boxes for these materials in December but flats were not included.

Barnet Council has told *THE ARCHER* that communal green-coloured wheelie bins for recycling plastic bottles and cardboard will be offered to blocks of flats from this month.



Image supplied by London Transport Museum

## A sign of snow

By Betti Blatman

A London Underground attendant clears the snow at East Finchley tube station back in the harsh winter of 1962. The long range weather forecast tells us to expect more cold snaps in February but will we ever get snow like this again?

The photograph comes to us from the archives of the London Transport Museum. The museum's latest exhibition is *The Art of the Poster - A Century of Design*, bringing together more than 60 original artworks to celebrate 100 years of outstanding poster design for the capital's public transport network.

The multimedia exhibition features film, touch screen interactives and original quotes from the artists themselves, and is accompanied by a lively talks

and events programme and a new book.

London Transport Museum is at Covent Garden Piazza, London WC2E 7BB and you can catch the exhibition until 31 March. For more details, contact the museum on 020 7565 7299 or visit [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk).

*By the way, do you recognise the London Underground worker in the photograph? Get in touch with THE ARCHER if you do. Our contact details are on page 2.*



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us with a meeting place.*

*THE ARCHER team wishes  
to thank all the generous  
people who give up their  
spare time, in all weather,  
to deliver the paper for us.*

### Your contributions

If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address.

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

### Copy deadlines

March issue: 13 February  
April issue: 13 March  
May issue: 10 April

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Councils

**Barnet Council:**  
Admin/Town Hall 020 8359 2000  
Council Tax 020 8359 2608  
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

**Alexandra Palace** 020 8365 2121  
**East Finchley Library** 020 8359 3815  
**Muswell Hill Odeon** 0870 505 0007  
**Phoenix Cinema** 020 8444 6789  
**Warner Cinema** 020 8446 9933

### Transport

**BR Enquiries** 0845 7484950  
**City Airport** 020 7646 0088  
**London Transport** 020 7222 1234  
**National Express** 08705 808080  
**Heathrow Airport** 0870 000 0123

### Hospitals

**Barnet General** 0845 111 4000  
**Coppetts Wood** 020 8883 9792  
**Finchley Memorial** 020 8349 7500  
**Oak Lane Clinic** 020 8346 9343  
**Royal Free** 020 7794 0500  
**St Luke's** 020 8219 1800  
**Whittington** 020 7272 3070

### Health Advice

**AIDSline** 020 8363 2141  
**Alcoholics Anonymous** 0845 7697555  
**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

### OAP's Advice

**Barnet Age Concern** 020 8346 3511  
**Contact (N2)** 020 8444 1162

**Help the Aged** 0808 800 6565

### Crime

**Emergency** 999  
**Finchley Police** 020 8442 1212  
**Mus. Hill Police Stn.** 020 8345 2148  
**CrimeStoppers** 0800 555111  
**Victim Support** 0845 303 0900  
**East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team** 020 7161 9014

### Help & Advice

**Childline** 0800 1111  
**Disability Info Service** 020 8446 6935  
**E.F. Advice Service** 020 8444 6265  
**Gingerbread** 020 8445 4227  
**National Debt Line** 0808 808 4000  
**NSPCC** 0800 800500  
**Rape & Sexual Abuse** 020 8683 3300  
**Relate** 020 8447 8101  
**RSPCA Inspector** 08705 555 999  
**Samaritans** 08457 909090  
**Refuge Crisis Line** 0870 599 5443

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Saturdays: 10am - 11.30am

### Community Services

❖ **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

## £250 for a bag of onions

By Janet Maitland

**Police have issued a warning about a scam that tricks people into handing over hundreds of pounds for items worth only pennies.**

Typically, the victim of the scam is approached in the street and asked if they would like to buy a laptop at half price. They are taken to a parked car and shown a new laptop in good working condition. The victim goes to the bank to get the cash, returns to the car and buys it, but when they get home and open the bag, there's no laptop.

Police report that victims have handed over as much as £600 for a laptop bag containing bottles of water, magazines,

catalogues or bricks. One man paid £250 for a bag of onions. To date, the scam has been operating in N22, N4 and N11 but could happen anywhere.

"We must advise extreme caution if you are approached by anyone in the street trying to sell something," said DC Suzie Chantry, of Haringey CID. "Even if you do get the item you are paying for, there is a real danger that you could be buying stolen property, which means you could be arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Haringey CID on 020 8345 0712 or, to remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## Planning Applications

### Barnet Council

**107 Abbots Gardens, N2**  
Extensions to roof including rear dormer windows to facilitate a loft conversion.

**1 Aylmer Road, N2**  
Two storey front extension. First floor rear extension. Conversion of part of double garage into habitable room. Alterations and extension to roof including front and rear dormers.

**41 The Bishops Avenue, N2**  
Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a part two and part three storey detached house with basement level swimming pool, car parking and associated landscaping.

**11 Elmfield Road, N2**  
Single storey side and rear extension.

**11-59 High Road, N2 (McDonald's Restaurants)**  
Erection of smoking shelter with retractable awning and external timber door.

**Islington & Camden Cemetery, 278 High Road, N2**  
Conversion of existing garage into a disabled toilet.

**27-29 Leicester Road, N2**  
Erection of a detached two-storey, plus rooms in roof house at No

29 and formation of two car parking spaces and associated landscaping and alterations to the rear of existing detached house at No 27.

**72 Leicester Road, N2**  
Conversion of existing dwelling into three self-contained flats.

**8 Ludlow Way, N2**  
Conversion of existing detached garage into habitable space. Enclosure of external passageway between house and garage.

**45 The Market Place, NW11**  
Change of use from Tile Sales (class A1) to Beauty Salon including new shop front and single storey rear extension.

**14 A New Oak Road, N2**  
Single storey front and rear extensions

**The Sternberg Centre For Judaism, The Lodge, 80 East End Road, N3**  
Continued use of construction access to the Sternberg Centre for a further 2 years.

**Ossulton Way, N2**  
Telecommunications Prior Notification: Installation of new green coloured fibre cabinet 1700mm (width) x 1465mm (height) x 450mm (depth) adjacent to existing cabinet (British Telecom fibre network).

## Gun scare at Lido

By Janet Maitland

**Police are appealing for witnesses to an incident involving a firearm that happened in the grounds of the Finchley Lido complex on 5 January at about 6.15pm.**

An 18-year-old man is alleged to have pointed a ball-bearing gun at a group of teenagers who had congregated next to a roundabout. The man was arrested shortly after the incident but the group of youths had already dispersed. He has now been bailed.

"I would like to hear from anyone who was in the vicinity of Finchley Lido on 5 January who might be able to shed more light on the sequence of events," said DC Mark Bennett. He can be contacted on 020 8733 4595 or you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

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# Change is coming to the Playing Fields

By Ann Bronkhorst

**Ramped seating for an amphitheatre, fruit trees, floodlit basketball and a football cage: a few of the wackier suggestions from last September's Area Assembly, at the start of a public consultation about improving Muswell Hill Playing Fields.**

A follow-up questionnaire delivered to all Haringey households within 400m of the field and available on the Council's website produced overwhelming support (80%) for keeping the sports pitches and for providing a new park pavilion with changing facilities and other public amenities (60%).

Dog walkers, who make up 38% of the field's users, a significant percentage compared with 5% in other Haringey parks, were lukewarm about extra facilities for children and a new pavilion or shelter. Of the respondents who do not use the field at present, however, 94% were in favour of additional children's facilities.

75% of all respondents thought a parks staff presence would be essential. In comments accompanying their replies, many people feared that new facilities would be vandalised, citing existing problems.

### Wide-ranging comments

Comments ranged from the particular (drainage, litter

bins, benches) to the general. One respondent remembered the field in the 1950s as a council rubbish tip; another advised "toxicology tests on soil and air" for the field and the landfill beneath. A few people wanted it to remain "open, free space...an oasis of green" but several nursed hopes for a "mini-Kenwood" or "something similar to Highgate Woods". There was much concern about long-term funding to ensure that a new park would not "fall into a state of disrepair in a couple of years."

### Next stage

A Master Plan, based on the residents' survey and on the views of interest groups and local young people, with a supporting business plan, will lead to a decision by Haringey Council in April. A key objective, apparently, will be to increase and broaden the number of local people visiting the field, coming more often and staying longer. The days of a quiet, empty open space may be numbered.

## Health food store closes

**Loyal customers of The Natural Choice will have been sad to see that the health food shop has closed its doors permanently. The High Road store failed to reopen after the Christmas break.**

A notice posted on the door from owner Siobhan stated: "It is with regret and a great deal of sadness that I have to inform you that The Natural Choice has had to close its doors. I would like to thank all my wonderful customers that have made my shop a worthwhile place to be and work over the last six years."

## Bank building occupied

**Chartered surveyors Jon Christopher have moved into the ground floor of the former Barclays Bank building on the corner of Fortis Green and the High Road.**

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Charlie the cat safely back home with Rosie, Brent and India.

## Shock comeback by disappearing Charlie

By Rosie Smith

**An amazing story has happened to our family. My husband Brent and I have lived in Manor Park Road for the past 11 years. We have had our much-loved cat Charlie from a kitten and he has always been adventurous and outgoing, spending most of the day on the street to be petted by passers by and local school children. Consequently, Charlie was very well known and became a street character. Even the post woman knew him by name.**

Then on a cold February morning in 2007 he vanished without trace. That day, Charlie had insisted on being let out of the front door as usual, the cat flap to the garden being beneath him.

He skipped after some schoolchildren and was never seen again.

### The search...

It seems everyone on the street got involved in the search for him. Posters were put up and all his usual haunts were investigated. Even people we didn't know started to ask: "Have you seen Charlie?"

After three months, we feared the worst and assumed that he'd been run over and thrown into one of the skips that are always around. We

entertained the thought he had been stolen because he was so friendly, which was more comforting, but he always liked to come home and no one had seen him with anyone strange.

### ...and the find

Then, 20 months later, on 13 October last year, we received a telephone call out of the blue from All Creatures Veterinary surgery in Dagenham, Essex. The lady told us that they had our cat, Charlie, there with them, 15 miles away from home.

Shocked and stunned, we thought she was going to tell us that he was dead but he was very much alive, although very skinny and suffering malnutrition.

So, after a rather expensive

makeover at the local vet, he's back home and reasserting his position in our household with our other two cats. He has really taken to his human baby sister, India Elizabeth, who was born while he was away.

Although back to patrolling Manor Park Road with gusto, he never ventures too far from the front door.



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## Shotguns seized in raid on Strawberry Vale Estate

By Janet Maitland

Officers from the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team arrested a 54-year-old man during a dawn raid on the Strawberry Vale Estate in late December. Officers seized not only nearly £7,000 in cash and a quantity of drugs, but also four shotguns.

The arrest followed a long investigation into a spate of thefts that had been taking place on a weekly basis from cars at the Islington and St Pancras Cemetery.

"This is a despicable crime which preys on people when they are at their most vulnerable," said Sergeant Lee Benham. "When visiting



Police arrest man in connection with theft from cars at Islington and St Pancras cemetery. Photo: Sgt Lee Benham

the cemetery to pay respects to lost loved ones, the last thing you need is to get back to your car to find your valuables stolen.

"We are pleased with this arrest, and the fact that we were able to seize four shotguns from the property was an added bonus."

## Bike thief makes clean getaways

By Janet Maitland

Police have issued a warning to anyone trying to sell a motorcycle, following a series of thefts.

In December, a local man went to Aylmer Road, N2, to meet a young man who had expressed an interest in buying his Suzuki GSXR1000 motorcycle. The victim allowed the suspect to take the bike for a test drive but he didn't return.

The same thing happened to a victim who went to Toyne Way, N6, with his Yamaha YZF R1 and to another man who met

the suspect in Grand Avenue, N10, to sell his Yamaha R6.

Police believe the offences are linked, although different methods are used. One man took his Yamaha YZF R1 bike to Stormont Road, N6, and started it so that the supposed buyer could hear it was working, but the 'buyer' simply got on it and rode off.

Another man met the suspect in Hanover Road, N15, to sell his Yamaha Y2F R1 and left the engine running while he went to get the log book. When he got back, the bike had gone.

### Check identity

"We strongly advise anyone selling a vehicle privately through a newspaper or online to be cautious," said DC Dave Williams, of Haringey's Motor Vehicle Team. "Ask the potential buyer to bring their driving licence and insurance certificate showing they are insured to drive your vehicle, and then check that the picture on the licence is that of the person you are dealing with and keep a note of their name and address."

## Keep your sat nav safe

By Sergeant Lee Benham



Most car break-ins are smash and grabs and satellite navigation systems are a prime target. Even if you hide your sat nav in the glove compartment or under the seat, you are still at risk.

When thieves see a mount or charger, or even a mark on the windscreen where your device was mounted, they know you've got a sat nav and where it's likely to be hidden.

To reduce the risk of theft, always remove the sat nav, including the cradle, and wipe tell-tale signs off the windscreen. If you have to stop during a trip, lock it away in the car boot or carry it with you, and always take it indoors at the end of the journey.

Keep a record of your serial number and store it separately from the vehicle. Registering it on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) greatly increases the likelihood of catching the thief and recovering your property.

### Protect with a password

The data in most sat navs can also be protected with a unique password known only to the user. Sat nav suppliers have confirmed that, should a device with an installed password be stolen, the only way a thief can access the programme is by returning it to the company. Changing the memory card will not suffice, nor will trying to re-register the unit online. The password effectively renders the sat nav useless to anyone but the owner.

The Safer Neighbourhood office is at 113 East Finchley High Road, N2 8AG. Phone us on 020 7161 9014 or 07887 632767, email [EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk), or talk to the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) you see on patrol.

## New strategy to cut crime on buses

By Janet Maitland

Travelling to Muswell Hill on the 102 bus recently, I had a shock when I suddenly noticed myself on the newly-installed TV on the lower deck. All of London's 8,000 buses are now fitted with CCTV cameras, as part of the Metropolitan Police Transport Operational Command Unit's strategy to drive down crime and the fear of crime.

The strategy involves real police as well as technology. Reassurance Teams now patrol inner London buses, hopping from bus to bus to deter people from fare evasion, pick pocketing and anti-social behaviour. Safer Transport Teams have a similar role in outer London.

"The Reassurance Teams have a vital role to play in detecting and deterring anti-social behaviour and crime on and around the bus network,"

said Steve Burton, Director of Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing. "Their work has already made an impact with positive feedback from the public."

Figures for the first quarter of 2008/09 show that the Reassurance Teams have contributed to a 13.6% decrease in bus crime. The biggest decreases have been in Camden (35.7%), Islington (29.9%), Hackney (25.4%) and Westminster (21.4%).

## Do you want a younger body?

A television production company is looking for people in north London to take part in a second series of the BBC3 show *Make My Body Younger*.

The show is designed to shock young people into changing their dangerously over-indulgent lifestyles. Each week it takes one person and finds out what damage their excessive lifestyle is doing to their looks and body.

To reverse that damage, the contributor must spend several weeks with a dedicated doctor, helping them curb their addiction

to excess and life on the edge.

Production company TwoFour is looking for 18 to 30-year-olds who are living life to excess whether it be alcohol, junk food, weekend drug-taking or simply burning the candle at both ends.

To find out more, call 01752 727 488 for a confidential chat or email: [makemybodyyounger@wofour.co.uk](mailto:makemybodyyounger@wofour.co.uk)



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## Smash but no grab

One of the display windows of Kokos footwear shop at 72 High Road was damaged by a brick on 13 January. Fortunately, nothing was taken, though whether this was because the resulting hole was too high or too small can only be guessed at. However, the perpetrators may well have been put off as the goods on show are firmly secured and there are surveillance cameras in constant operation.



Kokos' broken window. Photo by John Dearing

## Cinema becomes film set for the stars

By David Melsome

There was a buzz of excitement not to mention some disruption for nearby residents when a major movie rolled into town for five days of filming at the Phoenix Cinema.

Actors Dame Judi Dench and Daniel Day Lewis were on set for two days to shoot scenes for the movie *Nine*, which also stars Nicole Kidman and Sophia Loren.

### Auditorium transformed

Around 100 cast and crew effectively took over the cinema in the week before Christmas, transforming the 1910 art deco auditorium into a 1960s Italian studio screening room.

Residents of Baronsmere Road and Fairlawn Avenue were warned by letter that the film crew would be on site. Some were annoyed at losing parking spaces to a large number of huge lorries and trailers; others enjoyed the chance to do some star-spotting.

*Nine* tells the story of film director Guido Contini, played by Day Lewis, and the dramatic relationships he has with his wife, his mistress, his muse, his agent and his mother.

The scenes shot at the Phoenix involved Day Lewis and Dame Judi sitting in a screening room discussing the rushes of his latest film. The film crew

took out rows of seats and built a whole new projector room in the auditorium to get it at the right level for the scenes.

### Signor Contini

Day Lewis, acclaimed last year for his barnstorming performance as an oil prospector in the movie *There Will Be Blood*, is famously intense in his acting techniques, and he was true to form at the Phoenix.

Paul Homer, the cinema's chief executive, said: "You couldn't say hello. You had to call him by his character's name and he spoke to everyone in a thick Italian accent. I found myself just nodding hello to him each morning."

"Judi Dench on the other hand was very down to earth and chatty. She would just sit and have a cup of tea with the crew in between shots."

*Nine* was adapted for the screen by the Oscar-winning Anthony Minghella, a former resident of East Finchley who died suddenly in March last



Photo by chloe004 under creative commons licence at flickr.com

year at the age of 54.

Directed by Rob Marshall, the film is scheduled for a November release in the USA, and possibly a January 2010 release in the UK, fuelling speculation that it is being lined up as a major Oscar contender.

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## Jack Brown in USA

### as cancer returns

By Betti Blatman

Although our update regarding Barnet boy Jack Brown in November was encouraging, unfortunately just before Christmas there was devastating news that the cancer had returned throughout his body. Jack and his mother, Yvonne, flew to Vermont on 10 January where he was due to receive a low dose of chemotherapy to extend his life as long as possible.



Jack Brown. Photo by Yvonne Brown

Generous donations have enabled Jack's treatment to continue. Further information is available on [www.jackbrownappeal.org](http://www.jackbrownappeal.org) or send a cheque to The Jack Brown Appeal, c/o The 2 Simple Trust (a registered UK charity 1113954), Enterprise House, 2 The Crest, London NW4 2HN.

## Cecilia Close in darkness

Since the beginning of November 2008, one side of Cecilia Close has been in complete darkness intermittently due to three faulty streetlights. Servite, who manage the Thomas More Estate, have discovered a major underground cable fault that will require the pavement to be dug up to rectify the problem. As a temporary measure they have installed three floodlights to provide lighting for residents.

The faulty streetlights continue working intermittently but, as the floodlights have not yet been switched on, when the faulty streetlights fail there is complete darkness in Cecilia Close. Residents are waiting to hear from Servite when their streetlights will be fully restored.

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# Behind closed doors

By Janet Maitland

**Nine people were arrested in Barnet and seven in Haringey on 25 November as part of the London-wide Operation Athena, which targeted domestic violence. The operation was timed to coincide with White Ribbon Day, a global campaign to challenge violence against women. A total of 293 arrests were made across London.**



Operation Athena: Police target domestic violence on November 25th to coincide with White Ribbon Day, a global campaign to challenge violence against women. Photo courtesy Haringey Police.

This number of arrests on a single day may sound surprisingly high, but police receive a call from the public for assistance for domestic violence every minute of every day in the UK. Domestic violence accounts for between 16% and 25% of all recorded violent crime and for 25% of all murders in London.

"I would like to reassure people that this is something we are working to combat 365 days a year," said Detective Inspector Tony Caetano, of Barnet Police. "If someone has committed a violent crime, we will make every effort to arrest them and bring them to justice."

### Secrecy and fear

Domestic violence is a crime that happens behind closed doors, much of it unreported. Many victims hide the abuse even from friends and family. Public attitudes also contribute to the secrecy protecting the perpetrators. An Amnesty International survey in 2003 found that more people (74%)

would report a person for kicking their dog than for kicking their partner (53%). Fear is known to prevent many women from leaving a violent relationship. Research shows that the greatest risk of serious harm or homicide is at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner. On average, two women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner, around one-third of all female murder victims.

### Free Helpline

The National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247) provides confidential support to adults and children experiencing domestic violence, including access to a place of safety in a refuge. The Helpline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week and calls are free. Interpreters are available for non-English speaking callers. The Helpline can also access the BT Type Talk Service. During 2006/7, the National Domestic Violence Helpline answered an average of 387 calls a day.

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# Lord's and Ladies

By Diana Cormack

**At the end of October I fulfilled a long held ambition, one which was presumably achievable nine years ago only if I had been a cleaning lady. This was to visit the Long Room at Lord's.**

Looking from its windows onto the famous cricket ground brought back memories of watching test matches on TV with my father. A cricket fanatic, he would follow play with the sound turned down and listen to the commentary on the radio.

Dad and I always shared a special bond through our love of sport. However, things might have been different had I then been aware that there were rules banning women from certain areas of male dominated activities, the Long Room at Lord's being one.

### Dining with Ramps

I was there to attend a testimonial dinner for Mark Ramprakash (Middlesex, Surrey and England) who is probably better known nationwide nowadays for winning 2007's *Strictly Come Dancing* competition on BBC1 rather than for scoring a hundred centuries in his cricketing career. (In case you're interested, he is as good looking off screen as on).

There were 73 guests that evening. Six were women and only three of them went on the guided tour, which included the aforementioned Long Room. Perhaps the excitement of seeing both that and Ramps could have proved overwhelming.

Dinner was interesting, being interspersed with various toasts and speeches, plus a question and answer session involving the clutch of cricketers in attendance. An auction and raffle followed, which included various Ramprakash-related objects such as signed books, pictures, equipment and clothing. One of the winners was Councillor John Marshall, Mayor of Barnet, who acquired a Mark Ramprakash lady's T-shirt. Sadly, my offer to photograph him wearing it for *THE ARCHER* was politely declined.

# Online electricity

**A long-established East Finchley business has set up a website to help customers get in touch and find out more about its services.**

East Finchley Electrical, started in 1973, has a shop in the High Road selling electrical goods and carries out electrical work for homes and businesses, as well as offering a facilities management service. The new website can be found at [www.ef-elec.co.uk](http://www.ef-elec.co.uk).



Jane Kessler and her "musical" cakes at the EFAT. Photo by Marian Bunzl

# For the love of music

By Marian Bunzl

**Behind a performance by The Lupo Consort at the East Finchley Arts Festival in October was a very special love story: a lifelong passion for music and musical instruments.**

The concert at All Saints Church, Durham Road, was a memorial for the late Dietrich Kessler, an outstanding violin and viol maker and restorer. He looked after other people's instruments and collected and made his own, often spending many years on detailed study and research in order to achieve the optimum authenticity.

The result was great beauty of sound and craftsmanship. Just to look at one of his delicately ornamented instruments was to know it would sound wonderful.

Jane Kessler, a distinguished cellist for many years, fell in

love with a viola da gamba. The need for help with its care brought her into contact with Dietrich. In time, these two musicians came together, and created a household with, between them, eight children and four cats. They all lived in perfect harmony (except for the cats).

Since his recent death, Dietrich's lovingly restored viols continue to sing. Jane has retired from public performance, but she continues to support music, the arts and the church with cakes. Through her fingers they too are infused with the love of music.

# The story of Finchley's hospital

By Daphne Chamberlain

**If you missed the centenary celebration for Finchley Memorial Hospital in October, you can still catch up on its fascinating history in a new book.**

In 1908 it was called Finchley Cottage Hospital, but an extension, opened in 1922, was designated as a memorial to Finchley people who fell in the First World War.

Reading this book, I was struck by the involvement of the whole community in creating and supporting our hospital. Architects, contractors, builders and labourers were all local people, and vital funds came in through donations and a wide range of sponsored events, including sporting competitions and cinema performances.

### Community enterprise

It all started in 1904, with a meeting of eight people in a room above the shop of Mr Danby, a North Finchley saddler. Finchley Urban District had no hospital for its 33,000 residents, but many of those residents set about acquiring one in a practical and hard-headed way. No building work began until the necessary money was collected (£5,000 without the site).

The £5,000 was raised by

committees of residents, business people, the Rate Payers' Association and local medical practitioners, with regular payments coming in from the Working Men's Cottage Hospital Fund. Ebenezer Homan then bought the site from the Church Commissioners for £1,000.

In May 1908, the new cottage hospital opened with 20 beds: 10 for men, eight for women, and two for isolation cases. I did wonder about the slightly uneven gender distribution, but this was before women even had the vote.

### Past and future

*Finchley Memorial Hospital* by Dorrell Dressekie takes us through the growth of our local hospital to where it stands today, on the brink of major development. Sponsored by the Friends of the Hospital, with support from Friern Barnet and District Local History Society, it includes a section of personal memories from former patients, and a wealth of information from many sources, including Barnet Archives.



The shutters are down on the Muswell Hill branch of Woolies. Photo by John Lawrence.

## Thoughts on the demise of Woolworths

By Daphne Chamberlain

As a child in the West End, my mother used to go with her own mother to the first London Woolworths in Edgware Road. "Everyone used to call it the 3d and 6d shop," she says. "They didn't have anything that cost more than 6d, so it was well within my mum's purse. We used to walk over from Goodge Street every week."

Last month I joined a sad little crowd buying Woolies' souvenirs at Muswell Hill. "You could still get good bargains in here," said the woman beside me in the queue. "But if you wanted something that was difficult to carry, it was easier to go somewhere you could park," said someone else.

Sippy Azizollah writes: Having worked at the Southgate branch of Woolworths in the 1970s, I am saddened by the closure. When I worked there it was a really busy shop. I remember trying to sneak the odd toffee from the Pick and Mix.

There was a great team spirit there, and very often the manager would come down and work on the checkout if we were short of staff. I bought a great deal of kitchenware and remember trying to find ways of wriggling out of the yearly stock-taking weekend.

I went to the Muswell Hill branch last week, and it felt really hollow. There were two assistants packing up the display units, and when asked how they felt, one was near to tears, and the other said: "Muswell Hill won't feel the same any more."



Sippy collecting in Budgens. Photo by Diana Cormack.

## Charity collection in Budgens

A collection taken in Budgens raised £260 for the charity North London Lupus.

Sippy Azizollah, herself a lupus sufferer, was ably assisted by the manager and staff at the High Road store. Some of them had donated cakes and biscuits for the table of free goodies. Sippy told THE ARCHER: "East Finchley residents are the kindest and most generous people I've ever met. The applause goes to Budgens and all who shop there. They are amazing."

## New home for association

By Daphne Chamberlain  
Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association are delighted with their new venue in Pages Lane.

They will have the privilege of sharing the centrally situated North Bank Community Centre with Muswell Hill's oldest tree - a 300-year-old horse chestnut, measuring 15 to 18 feet around its trunk.

On a human level, North Bank also houses the Whittington antenatal services, groups for parents and children, a Vintage Club for older people, and an information centre.

The next event in the Oak Room will be on Wednesday 18 February at 8pm, when local historians David Dell and Albert Finching will be talking about *Haringey's Hidden Streams*.

For more information about North Bank and its facilities, visit [www.mhmc.org.uk](http://www.mhmc.org.uk), and to find out more about the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, call chairman John Hajdu on 020 8883 8114 or visit [www.mhfga.1to1.org](http://www.mhfga.1to1.org)

## Under new management

By Betti Blatman

Since the closure of the sub-post office in East End Road, the newsagent is now under new management.

An enthusiastic Uma Nathan wants to expand a range of products to suit local residents' requirements and would welcome suggestions.

He intends to stock newspapers and magazines, household items and a full range of stationery, as well as installing a cash machine. The shop will provide free local delivery for OAPs and disabled persons.

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## Concern over Post Office rumour

By Daphne Chamberlain

A rumour that East Finchley Post Office was being considered for closure, with the Muswell Hill Office being kept open at our expense, caused concern last month. Fortunately, it seems to have been a misunderstanding.

Gary L Grange, Post Office Network Senior External Relations Manager, told THE ARCHER that both East Finchley and Muswell Hill "are part of the Post Office Network, and there are currently no plans for this position to change."

MP Rudi Vis's office has also been assured by the national network that there are no plans to close East Finchley. In fact, it is actually scheduled for some refurbishment, but that will be done while the office is open.

Councillor Alison Moore told us: "It's perfectly possible that that is where the idea that it's "on a list" comes from, but rest assured that Rudi and I, along with Andrew and Colin, will be keeping a very close eye on things and would fight any plans to close East Finchley High Road Post Office. It's right at the heart of our community, an anchor to our town centre and a vital facility

for local residents. You only have to stand on our street stall on a Saturday to see just how well used it is, and the picture is no different during the week."

Muswell Hill's MP, Lynne Featherstone, thought it highly unlikely that Crown Post offices would close, but added: "However, I think we must take nothing for granted, and the remaining sub-post offices need watching over."

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## YOUNG ARCHER



Andrew Wilkes, Fred Isaac and Charlie Gould at the end of their Paris Metro challenge.

## Tunnel vision

By John Lawrence

**Two 15-year-old schoolboys set out on a subterranean odyssey to visit every station on the Paris Metro in a single day. Fred Isaac and Charlie Gould were determined to beat the system after just missing out on setting a record for travelling to every stop on the London tube network last year.**

This time, Fred, who lives in Huntingdon Road, and Charlie, of Hampstead Garden Suburb, were triumphant. Having started their quest at 5.31am, they returned to the surface 15 hours and 57 minutes later, having visited all 371 stops.

### Moody on the Metro

Nearly 16 hours on the underground gave them plenty of time for memorable encounters. "One lady rambled at us for ages in French about the Bible. We didn't understand much, so all we could say in return was 'Merci'," said Fred.

"It was fascinating to see the difference between the tube and

Metro. The Metro has more leg-room but is far more dirty and seems to be filled with down and outs. People on the tube tend to be quite reclusive while those on the Metro seemed to be moodier."

The boys were accompanied on their journey by Andrew Wilkes, one of their teachers at University College School in Hampstead. They passed the time by listening to their iPods and arguing about League Two football. They support Barnet, while Mr Wilkes is a Bury fan.

### Boost for charities

"It was completely exhausting but was actually great fun and a fantastic way to raise money for the charities," said Charlie.

The trip has raised over £1,500, to be split between Marie Curie Cancer Care, the 'Make a Wish' Foundation, the Equatorial College School in Uganda and Casa Lumini, an orphanage for Romanian children.

It's not too late to sponsor the boys. Please send a cheque made payable to University College School, and marked Community Action for Paris Metro. The address for the school is Frognaal, Hampstead, London NW3 6XH.

So what's next? Having said never again after their attempt on the London tube, their Parisian success is spurring Fred and Charlie to consider taking on the Moscow or Tokyo underground network next.

## School of rock

**Talented young singers, songwriters and musicians aged 13-19 are being given the chance to taste fame at Barnet's Rock School.**

Six bands will be chosen to spend time rehearsing at a professional, well-equipped studio in Barnet. The course will culminate in the acts performing live at a one-off show called a Rock 'n' Roll Circus, when artsdepot is transformed into a rock venue on Friday 27 February.

Visit the Myspace page at [www.myspace.com/barnetrockschool](http://www.myspace.com/barnetrockschool) to get a taster of the acts involved last year and to keep updated with this year's highlights. Anyone interested in taking part should contact [lloyd.gee@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:lloyd.gee@barnet.gov.uk)

### Lucy's Alterations

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## Hope is in the air

**Everyone is invited to take part in a programme of uplifting activities as Hope Week comes to East Finchley Baptist Church. Pastor Simon Dyke said: "With the current financial gloom that has gripped the country recently, we thought hope was a particularly relevant theme."**

Hope Week starts on Saturday 7 February, with church members carrying out a community survey on the High Road. They will ask people what they think the purpose of life is and what their opinions are of the Bible and Jesus. Special assemblies will take place during the week at Holy Trinity and Martin Primary Schools.

On Friday 13 February, The Still Time Band will perform at a live music evening at 7.45pm at the church building on Creighton Avenue. Tickets for drinks, canapés and enter-

tainment are £5 for adults and £3.50 for concessions.

A family fun afternoon at the church from 2-4pm on Saturday 14 February will have a three-legged treasure hunt, hair braiding, face painting, crafts and a bouncy castle for children aged 11 and under. Meanwhile, the adults can relax with tea, coffee and cakes.

A special community service takes place at the Church on Sunday 15 February at 10.30am with a crèche and activities for children and young people.

To find out more about Hope Week, call Simon on 020 8444 0365 or visit [www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk](http://www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk). To buy tickets for the music evening please contact Sarah on 020 8883 1544 or email [eastfinchleybaptistchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:eastfinchleybaptistchurch@yahoo.com).

## Step into the limelight

By Lucy Chamberlin

**The back-street treasure that is the Incognito Theatre is on the lookout for new blood: actors, set designers, directors and back-stage crew, anyone enthusiastic enough to give a few hours of their time and help a very worthy cause.**

"We treat it as a professional theatre," says artistic director Sonja Taylor, who is also Head of Expressive Arts at Highlands School in Enfield. "We're not just a group of luvvies. Everyone gets on really well and pulls together." It is an incredibly fun, sociable crowd and, as publicity officer Will Piper says, the friends you make here are for life.

Despite being voluntary, the group puts on six productions a year, and has won numerous awards in the annual Barnet Drama Festival, most recently for its production of *Breaking the Code*, a play about Alan Turing and the Enigma machine.

### Tight for space

Incognito is the theatre where actor David Jason began his illustrious career, and he remains a patron. He once likened the Incognito stage to acting on television: the defined (and confined) space means dramatic gestures must be kept to a minimum.

The auditorium of the Friern Barnet theatre contains just 60 velveteen seats, taken from a cinema. Backstage, and above stage, not only is there little space, but with ladders to climb and creaking floorboards to contend with, it is a miracle that any cast and crew manage to manoeuvre around, let alone produce their stunning, plays.

Through the dressing rooms is the costume store, with racks of clothes from all eras and in

all sizes hung precisely by Ann Lewis and Carol Belsten. Brave a precarious stairway and you find a little attic room with shelves of props: vases, candlesticks and masks, a bucket of swords in one corner and antique furnishings in another, all laid out neatly by Moira Wallace and set dresser Jose Cronin.

Flats for the set are kept in a shed-like store behind the stage, and larger props and furniture are housed wherever there's room, or returned to the living rooms of cast members and kind donors.

### New foyer and new blood

Incognito's funding comes merely from bums on seats and the actors' annual subscriptions. The group is fundraising for a new foyer, creating space for an extra room for auditions and rehearsals, and hopefully a bar too.

Any help is welcomed, but the group is particularly looking for younger actors in their 20s and 30s. Wednesday night is club night, when John Savage's set-building team and the behind-the-scenes hands get to work. Rehearsals take place on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings for six weeks before each play. Actors can get involved in as many or as few plays as they like per year.

For more information, or to join Incognito, contact the box office on 0791 287 5700 and visit the website [www.incognitotheatre.com](http://www.incognitotheatre.com)



Props and costumes packed tightly in the backstage area of Incognito Theatre. Photo by John Lawrence



# Tai Chi gets the balance right

By Daphne Chamberlain

“Stand like a great mountain, move like a mighty river” is a Tai Chi saying. For older people who have had a stroke, or who have a history of falls, moving and even standing can be a difficult and frightening process.

This is why Barnet’s Ageing Well Project has been running Tai Chi classes since 1999. Scientific research shows that this traditional form of exercise improves balance and flexibility, strengthens muscles, and gives that vital feeling of confidence.

### Gently does it

I visited a class at the Ann Owens Centre, in Oak Lane, set up for people referred from Finchley Memorial’s Falls Clinic. Instructor Richard Selby led a comprehensive course of gentle exercises, mainly performed standing, with chairs to hold on to if necessary, and refreshments and a chat halfway through.

“It’s very relaxing,” said Bob, a former Army man, recovering from a stroke and a walking advertisement for Tai Chi’s success. “It really does improve balance and concentration.”

Members can keep attending for as long as they like, though, as they gain in confidence, they may want to move on to general classes elsewhere in the borough. Anyone needing transport can use Age Concern’s buses, with mileage and drivers provided by Friern Barnet Voluntary Care for the Elderly.

Richard is a qualified Tai Chi instructor and his assistant for this class is Deborah Cura, the Ageing Well Coordinator. Tai Chi is just one of several exercise classes held at the Ann Owens Centre. For details of these, or if you would like to



Instructor Richard Selby with Agnes Reeve. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain.

help as a volunteer instructor, please contact Deborah on 020 8455 0542 (Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays).

**Wanted: Catwoman (or man)**  
Volunteers are urgently needed to help in the Animal Aid and Advice charity shop at 48 High Road, close to the Phoenix Cinema. Founded in 1971, Animal Aid and Advice receives no state funding and relies on sales from donated goods to raise money for its work. Proceeds go towards the care of unwanted cats.

This involves visiting prospective homes, fostering cats and kittens before they go to their new homes, the trapping of shy and feral felines and visits to the vet. There are also the necessary upkeep and administration costs.

As well as wanting people who can spare the time to serve in the shop, Animal Aid and

Advice is looking for a driver to give regular help with veterinary visits for the cats. You need your own vehicle but petrol costs will be refunded.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Sally at the shop or call 020 8444 6290. Opening hours are 10am-4.30pm Monday to Friday, and 10am - 5pm on Saturday and most Sundays.

# Obituary: Bernadette

## Mary Stephens

By Helen Craig-Stephens

Mum was born in Ireland in 1937. At the age of 17 she became a nun, but after nine years she decided to leave and had to get a dispensation from the Pope.

She met my father, the actor PG Stephens, a year later. They married and came to London where, without any previous formal qualifications, she succeeded in qualifying as a teacher. Teaching was her life and she became Head of Department at Our Lady of Lourdes, Bow Lane. Unfortunately she had to retire early due to disability.

When she retired she certainly didn’t “hang up her hat” at home in Cherry Tree Road. She worked tirelessly, helping to organise parts of the East Finchley Community Festival and working in the local North London Hospice charity shop. Her grandchildren became a major focus in her life. She spent many hours with them, taking them out on trips and just being with me. Eight years ago, she developed Parkinson’s and

battled with severe disability right up to her death at the end of December 2008.

The last year of her life was spent in a nursing home where she was bed ridden and had to be fed through a tube in her stomach. Despite being unable to move, hardly able to speak and with failing eyesight her spirits remained surprisingly high and she never lost her sense of humour.

Mum was dignified and supportive of me right up to the end. Sadly, aspiration pneumonia took her from us. But as somebody said recently: “Her spirit has been released from her body and lives on.”

I would like to thank all who attended her funeral at the Marylebone Cemetery, East End Road. It was a beautiful tribute to a special mother.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### The day the music died

I didn’t have a Chevy to drive to the levee, I didn’t even know what a levee was, but I was old enough to listen to the radio and could work out who Don McLean was singing about. And now it’s 50 years since that plane crashed in the snow outside Clear Lake Iowa, 50 years since the music died and 38 years since *American Pie* gave me a complete history of rock’n’roll in eight and a half minutes.

Why Buddy Holly? Why did anyone reckon that his death, together with Richie Valens and the Big Bopper marked the death of music? Elvis was still there, well serving in the army actually. Chuck Berry and Little Richard were still stirring up a thrill and Eddie Cochran had got the *Summertime Blues*, so rock’n’roll wasn’t dead, it was just that a plane had crashed in the snow, in the Midwest.

Thing is, Buddy Holly was different, and it wasn’t just the Fender Stratocaster and the thick glasses. It wasn’t that he came from Lubbock in Texas not Memphis or Chicago. What was different was that he was the future. This was where rock’n’roll met pop, met country music, met a different tradition and became something new. Just listen to *Not Fade Away* or *That’ll be the Day* and you’ll see what I mean.

Buddy arrived on the scene in 1957, just after Elvis and six years before the Beatles rewrote the rules again. Buddy did something most of the other rockers either didn’t or couldn’t do: he wrote his own songs. He then played on them, arranged them and produced them. He multi-tracked and over dubbed, he put strings in places no one had ever put them before and produced the kind of pop song that made you wish you had that vision.

If he had lived he might have used up the space The Beatles came to occupy, he could have been the first serious guitar hero, he could have headlined Woodstock. OK so he might have ended up in a Las Vegas lounge in a sequined jump suit like Elvis, but he never got the chance.

They say that to be a real icon you must not grow old, you must die early, leave a good looking corpse and enough of a back catalogue to let people dream about what you’d have done next. And Buddy Holly was only 22 the day the music died.

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- ❖ **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
- ❖ **WoodWalk**, 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. Call Sunnah 07941 321 772 or see [www.stretchingpeople.co.uk](http://www.stretchingpeople.co.uk).
- ❖ **Yoga course**, N2, starts 13 Jan. Call Laura 8346 8198 for info pack.

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  - ❖ **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 0208 444 7217
  - ❖ **Drama Classes** for 11-14 year olds. Mondays at 6.30pm. Contact Carolyn on 07905 481682
  - ❖ **East Finchley Writers Group**, Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Carola 8883 5808 or Lilian 8444 1793.
  - ❖ **East Finchley Poetry Writing Workshops.** Monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
  - ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club: Live jazz on Mon 2 & 16 Feb** at 8.15pm, 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.
  - ❖ **Salsa lessons** Mondays, EF Methodist Church. Call Ronnie Raul 07958 605 773 [e:ronnieraul@rocketmail.com](mailto:ronnieraul@rocketmail.com)
  - ❖ **Street Dance** every Tuesday at Old Barn for children of various ages Contact Lorna 07976 203669.
  - ❖ **SwampRock** Louisiana Dance Club. Live music events. Contact Carole Lareman 8810 7454 or [www.swamprock.org.uk](http://www.swamprock.org.uk).
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  - ❖ **Traditional Music** in the Alexandra pub, Church Lane from 8.30pm on the last Thursday of every month.
- ### CLUBS & SOCIAL
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  - ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn. Contact 8349 4613
  - ❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** [www.cherrytreewood.co.uk](http://www.cherrytreewood.co.uk) or 8883 7544.
  - ❖ **Highgate Film Society**, call 8340 3343 or email: [admin@hlsi.net](mailto:admin@hlsi.net).
  - ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
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Three sisters 1992 © Vardi Kahana

## One family, many stories

By Betti Blatman

**Vardi Kahana is an Israeli photographer who combines art with taking portraits of well-known people for a top Israeli daily newspaper's weekend magazine. Her new exhibition One Family, at artsdepot in North Finchley, documents four generations of a Jewish family focusing on three sisters: Vardi's mother Rivka Kahana, with Leah and Esther.**

The sisters bear consecutive numbers on their forearms showing the order in which they were lined up and tattooed in Auschwitz after arriving from Hungary aged 15, 18 and 22. Today all three sisters, now in their 80s, live in Israel. One has 31 grandchildren, and two have 35 great-grandchildren each.

### Kaleidoscope

In her family images, Vardi tries to portray second and third generations coming together but also growing apart. Her project is not judgmental and there are Jewish, Christian and Muslim members of the family. There are relatives ranging from ultra-Orthodox to those living in settlements on the West Bank whilst others live on a kibbutz,

in cities or the upper class area of Caesarea.

There is a photo of her parents taken on the eve of her father's operation. The operation was successful but sadly her father died the next day.

Vardi says: "This is the story of one family. It is the entire Jewish-Israeli narrative embodied in a single family. To the big questions of Jewish-Israeli identity the photographs of my family provide a kaleidoscope of answers."

The exhibition runs until 15 March and admission is free. The gallery is open 12 - 4 pm daily, and until 8pm on performance evenings. Telephone artsdepot on 020 8369 5454, or visit [www.vardikahana.com](http://www.vardikahana.com)

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## February at the Phoenix

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer

**What a January we had! So many of you came to see *Slumdog Millionaire* and you all seemed to enjoy it. *Che* and *Milk* were also very popular with our audiences. The treats continue in February.**

First up is *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, and everyone's delighted that Woody Allen has got his spark back with his best film for years. Penelope Cruz leads the stellar cast including Scarlett Johansson and Javier Bardem. With Barcelona as the steamy backdrop for this tale of romance and passion, the film is a delight. As a reminder of how great Woody Allen used to be we're playing *Crimes and Misdemeanours* together with *Broadway Danny Rose* on Sunday 15 February.

Ernesto Guevara returns to the Phoenix on 20 February for *Che: Guerilla*. Picking up where the first part ended the film follows the revolutionary as he attempts to overthrow the Bolivian government. Benicio Del Toro's performance is again exceptional as the character he seems born to play.

Closing the month we have the Palme D'Or winning film from Cannes. *The Class* is

described by the Phoenix's programmer as the most deserving Palme D'Or winner of all time. As a teacher in a Parisian school, Francois Begaudeau uses unusual methods to engage his diverse students. The film presents issues of religion, culture and ethics in modern day France.

Other highlights this month include our continuing opera season with *Lucia Di Lammermoor* on 7 February. We have a special weekend of the Belgian Film Festival from 5-8 February, including the new film from the Dardenne Brothers. We also have a special visit from Adolf Berger on whose memoirs the film *The Counterfeiters* was based. We're playing the film with Adolf talking about his experiences in the concentration camp to coincide with the first publication in English of his autobiography.

Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 and our website is [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk)

## What's On...

E-mail your listings to:  
[the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net)

### Thursday 5 February:

• **Belgian Film Festival** at the Phoenix Cinema, High Road, N2. London premiere of *Moscow, Belgium* (15) at 6.30pm. Award-winning comedy-drama following Matty, a 41-year-old mother of three whose art-teacher husband is going through a midlife-crisis and Johnny, a 29-year-old truck driver who takes an improbable interest in her after their vehicles collide. Followed by Q&A with director Christophe Van Rompaey and lead actor Jurgen Delnaet. Complimentary Vedett extra blond beer provided with every ticket. Tickets £8 / £6 concessions. Box office 020 8444 6789

### Saturday 7 February:

• **Barn Dance**, St Mary's Catholic Church, 279 High Road, N2. 7.30 - 11pm.

### Sunday 8 February:

• **Guided walk** with Paul Baker: *The Battle of Barnet*. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road, Barnet, at 11am. Phone 020 8440 6805 for reservations.

• **Belgian Film Festival** at the Phoenix Cinema, High Road, N2: *Girl 'Meisje'* (18), 2pm; comedy short *Administrators* (12A), 4.10pm; *The Silence of Lorna* (15), 4.15pm. Tickets £8 / £6 concessions. Box office 020 8444 6789.

### Tuesday 10 February:

• **Israeli elections**: hear from Stephen Pollard, Hagai Segal, Mark Goldberg and Daniella Peled as the Israeli election results come in; 7pm, Hampstead Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4QP. Price: £10. Tickets and information from the Jewish Community Centre for London: 020 7431 9866, [www.jcclondon.org.uk](http://www.jcclondon.org.uk).

### Saturday 14 February:

• **Valentine's Day walk**: poems by Keats, D.H. Lawrence, Tagore and others, read at venues associated with them or their loves. Meet outside Hampstead tube station at 2pm; price £10. Advance booking recommended. For details call Pavement Pounders on 020 8340 7178 or email [pavementpounders@gmail.com](mailto:pavementpounders@gmail.com)

### Wednesday 18 to Saturday 21 February:

• Mathew Dickinson Productions in association with St John's Church, Friern Barnet, present *Oliver Twist*, a new adaptation for the stage, directed by Mathew Dickinson. Featuring a cast of 50 in a promenade performance where the venue (a magnificent Victorian gothic church) will be turned into a huge stage for just one week. St John's Church, Friern Barnet Road, Friern Barnet, evenings 7.30pm and Saturday matinee 2.30pm. Adults £10, Children and OAPs £6. Box Office: 020 8368 3927

### Sunday 22 February:

• **Guided walk** with Paul Baker: *Barnet Ghosts*. Meet at High Barnet tube station at 7.30pm. Phone 020 8440 6805 for reservations.

• **A unique feature-length documentary** inspired by one of the most fundamental and controversial of human rights, *Freedom of Expression*, followed by a discussion led by the film-maker; 7pm, Phoenix Theatre, London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, 94-96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX. Price: £5. Jewish Community Centre for London, call 020 7431 9866 for tickets and information or see [www.jcclondon.org.uk](http://www.jcclondon.org.uk).

### Sunday 8 March

• **Free music concert** at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2; *Hermitage String Quintet play Elgar and Beethoven*. Free admission with collection for charity; 7.30pm. This venue is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

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Letters to the Editor

Why we need a park keeper Dear Editor,

It's not just to help keep vandalism at night to a minimum that we need a park keeper in Cherry Tree Wood. I'm sure the gates are locked properly each evening, but we need the presence of a park keeper during the day for various reasons.

I have reported a number of incidents that I have either witnessed myself or reported on behalf of members of the public in the last 18 months since occupying the kiosk. Incidents such as fires being lit in the woods, the park keeper's hut smashed up and set on fire, tiles from the roof of the hut ripped off and smashed onto the tennis court, playground equipment being damaged, an attempt to break into the kiosk, homeless people drinking cans of beer in the children's playground (whilst the kids are in there playing), threats of violence from people with mental health problems, a dog viciously turning on and attacking two people recently and a child bitten by a squirrel.

I don't mind reporting or helping out when these incidents occur, but I'm there to run the service of a café and would much rather spend my time and energy doing just that. The presence of a park keeper offers reassurance and peace of mind, knowing somebody is there caring not only about the upkeep and maintenance of the park but also the welfare and safety of the people that use it.

The government make a lot of noise about health and safety issues in public areas, so why take away the service of our park keeper, the key person that helps keep health and safety issues in order? During summer, especially on the weekends and after exceptional weather, the bins are overflowing with rubbish, making the park an eyesore and attracting vermin. On a couple of occasions the bins weren't emptied until mid-week, which is unacceptable.

If the reason for removing the park keeper was to cut costs, would calling out the fire brigade, police, ambulance and third party contractors to repair damage carried out by vandals really cost much less?

Yours faithfully, Sally-Anne Wigfield Lazy Sally Café, Cherry Tree Wood.

Train of thought

Dear Editor,

With reference to Jake Eiseman-Renyard's letter about ghostly train services in last month's issue, the facts are correct in as much as a steam railway (LNER) did once run from East Finchley to Finsbury Park and then King's Cross. This was via Highgate, Crouch End and Stroud Green, and the route is now the Parkland Walk.

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In addition, a branch line ran from Alexandra Palace to Highgate.

Then came the "new" works in the 1930s, which envisaged a much bigger Northern line by extending the tube and by electrifying the old steam lines. It also envisaged an extended line north from Mill Hill East via Edgware to Bushy Heath.

Preparatory electrification work took place, including a new surface station at Highgate, to one of Charles Holden's designs, to allow an interchange between the Ally Pally branch and the East Finchley line, all surface track.

The underground came in July 1939. East Finchley station was rebuilt and that's why there were four platforms to serve the overground and underground lines. New tube services were announced from Bushey Heath and Ally Pally running in 1940 and 1941 respectively.

The war meant that the works were put on hold and after 1945 nothing happened because of austerity. Then in 1954 the whole of the Northern line "new works" were abandoned by the Tory government as they thought traffic would not grow because the population in London would decline (and in any case, we could all go by car if we had one). Goods trains carried on using the tracks from East Finchley until 1964. As for ghost trains, I think these particular ones may be an urban myth.

Name and address supplied

Pavement paradise

Dear Editor,

I have lived in Lucas Gardens for nearly three years and I walk up and down Long Lane most days on my way to the tube or the shops. During that time, Long Lane has felt to me like a poor cousin to the other main residential roads in East Finchley.

There have always been a lot of broken paving stones, some of them quite dangerous or at least guaranteed to give your shoes a soaking if they're harbouring a puddle of water underneath. Cars that are driven across the pavements to park in front gardens and driveways were probably the cause of most of these broken stones.

Then there was the tree culling work a year or two back, which uprooted a number of the larger trees on Long Lane and replaced their stumps with unsightly squares of black tarmac.

The good news, however, is that Long Lane has recently had some of its pride restored. For some months at the end of last year, workmen went the length of the road in N2 anyway and installed brand new paving stones on both sides.

There are dropped kerbs in front of all the driveways to let the cars across and also sloping kerbs on the corners of side roads to make it easier for prams and wheelchairs to negotiate. Long Lane looks smarter and tidier

and is much easier for pedestrians to get up and down.

All this was accomplished with the minimum of disruption by the workmen, who incidentally had to do their hard labour in some pretty icy conditions. So thanks to them for getting the work done, and to Barnet Council, who get plenty of criticism in the press but deserve some praise when they get it right.

Yours faithfully, Catherine Douglas, Lucas Gardens, N2

Full up and fed up

Dear Editor,

I would like to add our misery saga to your story reported in the January issue (Recycling in a stink). Our green bins in Chandos Road have not been cleared since Christmas and they are now up to the brim, causing a health hazard.

Repeated telephone calls have been made by various neighbours and they have been fed various stories by the Refuse Collection Customer Care Service. One neighbour was told that the bins would be cleared on Saturday 10 January. When they were not, I phoned on Monday 12 January and was told that the backlog was due to Christmas and the New Year and the bins would be cleared the following Saturday.

What Barnet Council failed to appreciate was that over Christmas people's bins would be fuller than normal times, and if they had only advised us earlier that recycling would be suspended for up to four weeks, we would have bagged our green waste and put it in the regular black bins. Instead, they even advised us to put out the Christmas trees as well.

There was a positive outcome on Tuesday 13 January when operatives came later in the day and emptied our green bins at last. It was lucky that none of us had taken our bins back in on the advice of the Customer Care Service, who said they would not be collected until Saturday 17 January.

Yours faithfully, Manjula Mitra Chandos Road, N2.

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Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Pigeon pest problem threatens our health

By Chris Paul

I was shocked to discover that contact with pigeon mess can lead to salmonella, severe respiratory illnesses, skin diseases and the potentially fatal psittacosis, particularly amongst children and the elderly. Food left for pigeons also attracts rats that carry their own range of diseases.

It's for this reason that, as a resident of East Finchley near the junction of East End Road and the High Road, I am deeply concerned at the state of the pavement there. It has long been a playground for pigeons, owing to the mass of food that is dumped there for them. It's worth mentioning that the dropping of food in a public place is a criminal offence under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

The "Don't feed the pigeons" sign nearby is laughably small, faded and placed so high it's barely noticeable. I have posted polite notices on the wall where most of the food is dumped but they have been removed. I constantly clear away bread from the area myself but can't carry on alone.

I am therefore calling on all residents to keep an eye out for people dropping food in this area. Remind them that what they are doing is not only a health hazard but also a criminal offence.

If you know where these people live, report them to Barnet council's street enforcement officer on (020) 8359 4600. This problem is easily solved if we act as a community. If we don't, we are failing the children and elderly who are most at risk from disease and illness caused by these vermin.

Do you agree with Chris? How can Pigeon Corner be cleaned up, or perhaps the birds don't bother you? Send us your views to the-archer@lineone.net or The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.



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Photo courtesy of Alan Philogene

## Between two worlds

By Daphne Chamberlain

This is the story of Shirla Philogene, long-time East Finchley resident. Starting in the Caribbean island of St Vincent, it describes how a little girl who ran past her local hospital holding her nose, in case she caught something, was awarded an MBE for services to nursing leadership.

As a student nurse, she survived a frosty reception in training in Essex, going on to become a Queen's Nurse, NHS manager, and Head of the Nursing Service in the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association.

She worked with SSAFA in Germany and Hong Kong, where she developed a health promotion service for the families of Gurkha soldiers, while rising from Honorary Colonel to Honorary Brigadier (though always refusing to wear uniform).

In 1998, Shirla was included in a list of 50 women who have made a significant contribution to the work of the NHS.

### Changing worlds

In her autobiography, poetic descriptions of the St Vincent of her childhood and its array of characters contrast with the account of her developing career in England. At first, she did indeed feel caught, but then realised that both her worlds were changing. The St Vincent she knew as a child no longer exists, but neither does the England of the 1950s.

Reading this book and talking to Shirla reminded me of folk tale characters, setting out

on a journey with the seeds of their own success within them. In Shirla's case, I would say these were determination, flexibility, and knowing the right time to move on.

She says she has always hated bureaucracy, but has obviously found her way round it to help people. The young girl who originally wanted to become a deaconess is now a pillar of our local Methodist church.

### From nursing to writing

She also belongs to the East Finchley Writers Group, and was one of their contributors at the recent East Finchley Arts Festival. Many readers will enjoy *Between Two Worlds*, a book of memories, comments and photographs, published by Author House, ISBN 978-1-4389-1155-7 (sc) and also available through Amazon. Call 08001974150 or visit www.authorhouse.co.uk for further information.

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For details please call 020 8883 0433 or email the-archer@lineone.net

## The shed that Ian built

Sue Baderman is a plot holder at East Finchley Allotments, off Plane Tree Walk. Here she describes how one act of kindness has stayed with her through the years.

About 18 years ago, I arrived back on my plot after a short holiday to find NO SHED, just a small pile of blackened metal and a handful of ornaments from some silly plimsolls.

We had inherited a very ordinary off-the-peg shed with the plot, no character, but useful. Now, nothing. I went to my old friend Ian and his

neighbour Jack for comfort, saying: "That's it. I'm never coming back."

A few weeks later I did go back, very half-heartedly,

to pick apples and damsons, and there was A SHED. Not a B&Q special but a quirky, handsome one, built entirely of other people's cast-offs, completely recycled and, to me, perfect.

When I opened the door, the inside was furnished too. There was a shelf with apples beautifully arranged on it, a bright green painted table, a handmade stool and assorted secondhand and homemade tools. There was also a large chocolate box picture of a cat on the wall. I don't really like cats, except this one, who makes me smile every time I open the door.

To say I was overwhelmed is an understatement, but the most revealing thing was realising how much pleasure Ian and his accomplice Jack had had in building it for me.

I love my shed. Nothing has changed over the years except for a few leaks in the roof and some more fixtures and fittings, but to me it embodies all the best things about our allotments, the help and friendship of your neighbours and the working together when you most need it.

There was a second building added a few years later, again a complete surprise. It's a sort of greenhouse or potting shed complete with a leaded light window and wood block floor from a skip. I love that too.



Community Focus Open Exhibition 1st prize winner, Sachin Meghani with Judith Taylor, CF Tutor,

## Boundless creativity

Community Focus, the arts organisation based on level 2 at artsdepot, North Finchley, ran its second annual open exhibition showing the work of 100 local artists and CF students in a range of mediums.

The vibrant work exemplified the range of art created within the CF organisation. Sachin Meghani won First Prize, Mohammed Rahman and Janet Bagley were runners-up, and the People's Choice winner was Nadia Dada.

In the CF gallery until Friday 20 February is Spectrum, an exhibition of work by Syed Jamal.

While CF is dedicated to empowering vulnerable members of the community, it also champions individuals to develop powerful expression through specialised courses with high quality teaching, including, drama for radio, creative writing, Photoshop, IT, portraiture, acrylic painting, watercolour and drumming.

### Design a poster

CF welcomes entries for a Disability Action in Barnet Poster Competition. All you need to do is draw, paint or photograph a picture using the theme of 'disability'. The winning image will be used in Barnet's new poster and displayed all over the borough.

Please submit your artwork on a sheet of A3 paper with a completed enrolment form, which you can download from the CF website www.communityfocus.co.uk. The closing date is Tuesday 17 February.

Future projects include CF's first playwriting competition to create a new play on the theme

of 30. The deadline is 6 March 2009 and the judging panel will include representatives from Channel 4, Empire and Private Eye. More details on the website.

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