



Love it or hate it - this was 2008

Do we need another supermarket in East Finchley? Will two new medical centres be good or bad for our health? And did you feel the earthquake? All questions that got us talking in 2008. Here's our round-up of the most memorable moments from the last 12 months.

• January

Actor Mackenzie Crook is pictured behind the controls of a tube train at East Finchley station, filming scenes for the British comedy movie *3 and Out*. The film is released later in the spring to mixed reviews.

A car crashes into two gardens in Church Lane, demolishing walls, gates and shrubs, and leading to calls from residents for better speed controls along this busy route.

Barnet Council leader Mike Freer brings one of his first 'Leader Listeners' road shows to Bishop Douglass School where he discusses local issues with residents from a polling district in the East End Road area.

The recently amalgamated Martin Primary School celebrates its official opening with a special assembly for children, staff and governors.

Teenagers Fred Isaac, of Huntingdon Road, and Charlie Gould, from Hampstead Garden Suburb, attempt to visit every station on the London Underground network in one day. They manage a bottom-numbing 251 stops out of 268 in 18 hours and 35 minutes but just miss out on the record set by two Swedes in 2006.



Tree falls on car (February). Photo by John Dearing

• February

High winds batter the area; a man and woman are injured when a tree falls on their car in a driveway on the Great North Road.

A proposal to replace a single house in Aylmer Road provokes fierce opposition from residents who say the plan will destroy the character of their area and threaten their privacy.

The future of the former Finchley Manor Garden Centre in East End Road remains uncertain. Proposals to convert it into a medical centre are turned down and a strip of land on part of the site is put up for sale.

Bishop Douglass School becomes the first Barnet School to offer children and adults the chance to learn Portuguese.

• March

People protest at proposals to close two Post Offices in East End Road and at the northern end of the High Road, near Strawberry Vale, as part of a national cost-cutting plan.

East Finchley Farmers' Market struggles to attract stallholders at its first Sunday outing of the year at Martin School. A French market held along the High Road near the tube station is more successful.

East Finchley feels the effects of an earthquake which sends tremors across Britain. Residents in some areas of N2 experience the shaking while others feel nothing.

More than 1,400 fundraisers wrap up warm for the Big Fun Walk in aid of the North London Hospice. The eight-mile route takes them from East Finchley station through London's parks to Westminster.



Crowds at the festival (June). Photo by John Lawrence

• June

Plans to turn Finchley Memorial Hospital in North Finchley into a major new healthcare centre offering GP services and pharmacy dispensing raise fears that doctors' surgeries and pharmacists in East Finchley will be badly affected.

Two Post Offices in East End Road and High Road, North Finchley, are shut down despite customers' protests.

High winds die away and sunshine takes their place to make the East Finchley Community Festival in Cherry Tree Wood one of the busiest ever.

Six friends set out from East Finchley on a 10,000-mile journey by jeep to Mongolia to raise money for a children's charity there.

• July

Traders warn that a Barnet Council decision to tax them for use of the pavement outside their premises will threaten their businesses and change the image of East Finchley for the worse.

It's the end of an era at Martin Primary School when headteacher Maggie Driscoll retires after 10 years in the post and more than 30 years in teaching.

Plans are unveiled to transform the derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood into a new community facility featuring a café and an upstairs space for exhibitions, public meetings and fitness groups.

East Finchley Festival master of ceremonies Antigua Joe is badly injured in a street attack in Torquay. The 56-year-old singer, whose real name is Conrad Joseph, later makes a full recovery.

Local artists open their homes and studios over two weekends for the East Finchley Open summer event.



Floods in Bedford Road (August). Photo by Sam Clarke

• August

Local GPs and pharmacists are surprised to learn that Finchley Manor Garden Centre in East End Road could be turned into another polyclinic to add to the one already

planned alongside the site of Finchley Memorial Hospital.

The proposal to turn Stag Court in the High Road into a supermarket is turned down.

Stanley Field sees football action once again when young people from the Monday Club hold a mini sports day.

A wild and wet summer is topped off when residents in Bedford Road are forced out in their wellies to unblock flooding drains after a sudden downpour.

• September

Residents in the Church Lane area set up the East Finchley Village Residents' Association to campaign for action on local issues and to run social events.

East Finchley triathlete Nino Baglioni attempts to travel from London to Paris entirely under his own steam. The run through Kent and the cycle through France go to plan but the swim across the Channel is called off due to bad weather.

Haringey Council calls a meeting to discuss the future development of Muswell Hill playing fields, adjoining Coldfall Wood. Houses will not be built on the land but the existing play and leisure facilities need improvement.

Cherry Tree Wood plays host to its second festival of the year, this time the Muswell Hill Festival and Donkey Derby.

Arsenal goalkeeper Manuel Almunia, cricket commentator Henry Blofeld and local poet Fleur Adcock are three famous names to appear at special events at the Phoenix Cinema.

• October

Barnet Council gives planning permission for a polyclinic on the site of the Finchley Manor Garden Centre, East End Road. The decision surprises many local people and businesses but is not opposed by the Barnet Primary Care Trust despite its own plans for building a polyclinic alongside the site of the current Finchley Memorial Hospital in North Finchley.



The French market (November)

East Finchley Library celebrates its 70th birthday. After more than 20 years trading in the High Road, popular Chinese restaurant Mandarin closes down with a message from William, the owner, saying: "I shall miss the chatter and the stories we have

shared."

East Finchley farmers' market organizer Wayne Atkinson announces with regret that the monthly market has been discontinued after seeing many of his

producers and suppliers drop out.

Around 100 men, women and children clad in their underwear walk through East Finchley to raise money for destitute asylum seekers.



Underwear walk (October)

November

After rejection by Barnet Council earlier in the year, controversial plans for a new supermarket at Stag Court go to appeal, meaning the proposal could still go ahead.

Hundreds of residents in Strawberry Vale find themselves without cooking facilities thanks to a major fault in their gas supply. Replacement electric cookers are said to be impractical and very expensive to run.

The French market makes a successful second visit to East Finchley with food and craft stalls lighting up part of the High Road.

Residents receive blue boxes from Barnet Council as kerbside recycling collections start for plastic bottles and cardboard.

The East Finchley Open artists hold their annual Winter Fair at Martin Primary School.

THE ARCHER Calendar 2009 goes on sale!

• December

The Phoenix Cinema launches a fundraising campaign to raise £280,000 towards the bill for restoring the 100-year-old building. Plans include a complete renovation of the 1910 auditorium and the addition of a glass-fronted café at the front of the cinema.

Barnet Council announces that kerbside recycling rates have soared since the introduction of blue boxes in November but some residents complain that their boxes are not being emptied on time, and others say that the lid-less design of the boxes makes them unsightly and prone to water-logging.

Fifteen-year-old Alice Donachie, of Hertford Road, becomes a London under-18 female fencing champion and looks forward to competing in a national championship in January.

If you have a story you think The Archer should know about in 2009, please get in touch. You can reach us by email at the-archer@lineone.net, by telephone on 08717 334465 or by post at THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London, N2 8JA.