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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURTIERS

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Longer route 'may make service worse'

By Daphne Chamberlain

The 263 bus route has been extended past Archway to Holloway, but are other areas benefiting at the expense of East Finchley, and why was there apparently no proper consultation? MP Rudi Vis and East Finchley Bus Watch are among those asking questions of Transport for London.

There are concerns that, with no extra buses beyond one late night return, the 263 service will be slowed down by traffic congestion in Holloway Road, making frequency and reliability through East Finchley worse than it is now.

Lack of consultation

THE ARCHER understands from Transport for London (TfL) that stakeholders, who include local residents, members of the public, MPs, local authorities and police, should be consulted before any route changes are made. East Finchley Bus Watch were placed on the stakeholders' list in December 2007, but were not consulted about this change, and were "stunned" when TfL's letter announcing the change of route was passed to them by Haringey stakeholders.

In this letter, TfL announced that the extension provides better links between Highgate and Holloway, areas already linked by the 43 service. They also said the current 263 service met demand, although the TfL Users' Committee reported four years ago that the service between East and North Finchley was inadequate.

Hazel Burnett said: "The southern part of the route will be riddled with buses, at the expense of service users at the northern end, who only have the one bus."

Extensions needed

East Finchley Bus Watch has been campaigning for the 17 route to be extended beyond Archway to its original terminus at North Finchley. This would provide another service along the High Road and also a link not only with Holloway but also with King's Cross and London Bridge.

Rudi Vis has reminded TfL that East Finchley has been asking for the past 20 years for a direct bus to the West End and the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, but also for an increased service on the 263 route, particularly on the northern end, where it is the only

public transport available.

THE ARCHER invited TfL to comment but at the time of going to press they had not replied.



Calendar cash: From left to right, THE ARCHER's Diana Cormack, Sheila Armstrong and John Dearing, East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact's Keith John, Photobox's Mark Chapman and THE ARCHER's Daphne Chamberlain. Photo by John Lawrence

Volunteer Daniela is the youngest award winner

By Diana Cormack

In a special ceremony hosted by Middlesex University, Hendon, 17-year-old Daniela Antoinette, of Prospect Ring, became the youngest-ever recorded Barnet Community Volunteer Award winner.

The Barnet Community Volunteer Awards, organised by the Volunteer Centre Barnet, acknowledge volunteers who have carried out more than 100 hours of unpaid work within the last year in the borough.

At the age of 16 Daniela, a student at Fortismere School, committed to supporting the Monday Youth Club which meets at St Mary's Church Hall, 279 High Road (see THE ARCHER, June 2008). She does this in a variety of ways, including doing administrative tasks, basketball coaching, helping to organise visits and social activities and assisting beautician Naomi Bates.

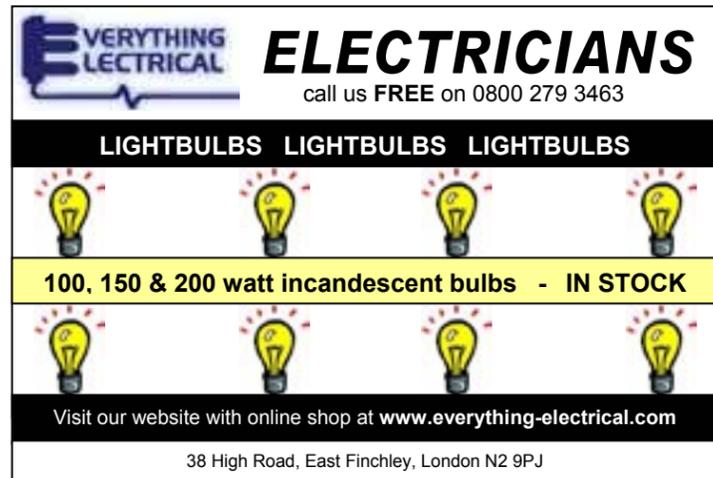
Other workers at the youth club were also presented with award certificates by Barnet's mayor, Councillor John Marshall. He thanked Maureen Clemenson, Maureen Antoinette (Daniela's mother), Mameh Kabba, Nathan Loh and Ricardo Stewart for their efforts in the community and their contribution towards making a difference to the lives of others.

Daniela realises that today's youth are our future. She very much hopes that other young adults will get themselves involved in the rewarding activities which volunteering can offer.

Calendar raises more than

£2,000 for Contact

Thanks to everyone who bought or sold THE ARCHER Calendar 2009. Our readers bought more than 400 calendars and raised more than £2,000 for East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact. Find out how the money will be spent on page 5.



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*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

April issue: 13 March
May issue: 10 April
June issue: 15 May

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Barnet Council:
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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

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MIND 020 8343 5700

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East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team 020 7161 9014

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❖ **Careers advice**, Green Man, Community Centre 020 8883 4916
❖ **Toy library**, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

Attempted burglary at Budgens

By Janet Maitland

There was an attempted burglary at Budgens supermarket at 8pm on Sunday 18 January. Burglars opened a manhole cover in the car park behind the store and cut all the wires, disabling both the CCTV camera and the shop alarm. Telephone lines to the flats in Viceroy Close were also severed.

Fortunately, the company who monitor the burglar alarm system were alerted as soon as their wire was cut and the police were called. However, no one was caught.

Budgens manager Mr R Janakan said: "The burglars were already running away as the police arrived. We think that they must have had a look-out

who contacted them by mobile as soon as they saw the police coming."

A police spokesman said the rear entrance door had been forced but not opened. The police are appealing for witnesses. Anyone with information should call 0300 123 1212 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

11 Abbots Gardens, N2
Single storey side and rear extension

9 Cherry Tree Road, N2
PVCU Conservatory to rear of property

200 East End Road, N2
Demolition of garage and erection of single storey side/rear extension.

18 Fortis Green, N2
Extension to basement area and conversion into living space.

130 High Road, N2
Construction of first floor extension to form a two bedroom flat.

152 High Road, N2
Erection of shop fascia and projecting sign

68 Leicester Road, N2
First floor rear extension.

Haringey

72 Twyford Avenue, N2
Erection of side/rear single storey extension and single storey front extension

67 Twyford Avenue, N2
Erection of side and rear dormer

window and insertion of Velux windows to front, side and rear roof slopes to facilitate a loft conversion

120 Creighton Avenue, N2
Certificate of lawfulness for conversion of garage to study and reduced size garage. Alterations to front elevation.

35 Lynmouth Road, N2
Erection of single storey rear conservatory extension.

16 Greenfield Drive, N2
Tree works to include thinning of crown by 33% and lifting of crown and secondary branches of 1x lime tree.

3 Bancroft Avenue, N2
Erection of rear dormer window with two Velux windows to front elevation and erection of two storey rear extension.

Kendene, 37 The Bishops Avenue, N2

Single storey front extension to existing garages. New glazed wall enclosing front entrance canopy. Construction of new electricity sub-station with new gates to existing boundary fence.

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Contact: Tim Alexander 0208 882-9595.

Jewellery thief jailed

By Janet Maitland

A burglar from East Finchley was sent to prison at Maidstone Crown Court on 23 January after years of stealing jewellery from private houses.

Andrew Macdonald was caught in July in Seabrook, Kent, after his DNA was found at the scene of a crime. Following his arrest, police found two rifles at his home in Claybrook Close, East Finchley.

Macdonald, who asked for 236 offences to be taken into consideration, had stolen more than half a million pounds worth of jewellery, medals and trinkets.

Judge Statman described Macdonald as "a career criminal" and sentenced him to four years for burglary and two for firearms possession.

Macdonald targeted wealthy parts of London such as Hampstead, as well as ordinary homes in Kent. He always operated in daylight, knocking on doors to see if people were in and pretending to be lost if they answered.

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Dexter and George with Sam and Razor. Photo by Diana Cormack

Budgies going cheap

By Diana Cormack

Two brothers in Fortis Green Avenue are looking for a new home for their budgerigars. Six-year-old Dexter and nine-year-old George have had the birds since September 2007. They wanted a pet but thought their garden was unsuitable for a dog, cat or rabbit because it has fake grass. So they chose two male budgies and named them Sam and Razor.

Dexter told *THE ARCHER* that the birds like to watch out of the window and George believes they enjoy music: "When I play my guitar, they look like they're listening to it," he said. But because they are at Tetherdown School in the day and sometimes away on holiday, these obviously caring boys feel bad about leaving the birds on their own. So they are hoping that someone in the locality could give the budgies, complete with

their impressive cage, a warm and loving home.

However, there is one proviso. Dexter and George would like to be able to visit Sam and Razor from time to time, so are hoping for an offer of a home within walking distance of Fortis Green Avenue.

If you think you fit the bill and would like to give the budgies a home, please contact us at *THE ARCHER*. Our contact details are on page 2.

Five year wait for allotments

Demand for allotments has been so high that the East Finchley Allotment Holders' Association has been forced to close its waiting list for new plots.

There are 75 people waiting for an allotment on the site off Plane Tree Walk but only seven became free last year. The average waiting time for a plot is now five years.

The Association says it is unfair to put people on the list and keep them waiting for so long. The list will be closed until January 2010 when the situation will be reviewed.

Direct payment advice

Age Concern Barnet has received funding to employ a benefits adviser, to assist older people and their carers with the new system of Direct Payments.

For information contact Lisa Dubow at Age Concern Barnet on 020 8346 3511 or lisa-finchley.acb@btconnect.com

Jacksons Lane Arts Centre saved

By Caroline Ayre

The future of Jacksons Lane Art Centre did not look bright at the beginning of 2009. After 25 years, the leading arts and community centre in Archway Road, Highgate, was threatened with closure because the Arts Council was considering withdrawing the centre's funding.

However, in a crunch meeting on 10 February, the Arts Council's committee rejected the move and agreed to a further £135,712 over the next financial year.

Jacksons Lane chief executive Kate Sarley said: "I feel ecstatic. It's like Christmas and Easter and Valentine's Day all in one."

Letter campaign

Lynne Featherstone, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, and Liberal Democrat Councillor Rachel Allison joined forces to campaign for the Arts Council England and Haringey Council to come up with the funds needed to ensure the centre's survival. They launched a letter writing campaign urging Haringey Council to give £50,000 to hire a fundraiser in order to satisfy the Arts Council that the centre had a future. Local residents took up the call to arms and flooded the council with letters.

On receiving the news, Councillor Allison said: "This is brilliant news, and we want to thank the hundreds of people who took the time to write in support of Jacksons Lane."

Jacksons Lane now has two years to demonstrate it can deliver a fantastic arts programme for local people. For information on Jacksons Lane's spring programme and events, visit www.jacksonslane.org.uk.



Picturesque Holy Trinity Church in February's snow. Photo by Andrew Louth. See page 6 for more East Finchley snow scenes.

Phone mast alarm bells ring again

By David Melsome

Residents in the Church Lane area are gearing up again to oppose plans to place three mobile phone masts in the bell tower of Holy Trinity Church. They claim the masts would not benefit the community and would look unsightly.

Twenty-six people who attended a meeting of the East Finchley Village Residents' Association on 9 February voted unanimously to continue fighting the plan. "The diocese needs to know that our opinions haven't changed," said association member Caroline Broome.

Chequered history

The Rev Laurence Hill, of Holy Trinity Church, first put forward a proposal to install three mobile phone masts in the Grade II listed building in 2006. It was turned down by Barnet Council and then given permission on appeal by a Government inspector, before being withdrawn shortly before a hearing by the Diocese of London two years ago. The proposal was reactivated in January.

Residents agreed at the meeting to write to the diocese to put forward their objections again. They will then wait to see which way the process goes before deciding their next steps.

The association acknowledged that some residents may approve of the phone mast plan but said it would always be guided by the majority view.

Road safety

Also discussed at the January meeting was the issue of traffic safety in Church Lane. A draft letter was agreed calling on Barnet Council to introduce a 20mph speed limit and to erect electronic warning signs. Councillor Colin Rogers told the meeting the council had agreed in principle to install the signs but the budget had not yet been approved.

East Finchley Village Residents' Association can be contacted at EFVRA@btinternet.com. The next meeting will take place at the Five Bells pub, East End Road, on Monday 30 March at 8pm.

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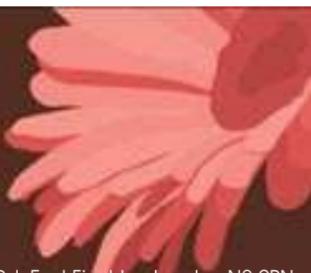
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Your neighbourhood, our beat

By Sergeant Lee Benham



The Safer Neighbourhood Team holds different kinds of meeting for local residents where you can tell us about issues and find out the latest in crime prevention tips and products.

Over the next couple of months the team will be in the following streets so that residents can discuss with us any problems in the immediate area.

Howard Walk, N2: Thursday 19 March, 7 - 8pm

Park Farm Close, N2: Friday 20 March, 7 - 7.30pm

Sylvester Road, N2: Wednesday 29 April, 7 - 8pm

Hampstead Heights, N2: Thursday 30 April, 7 - 7.30pm.

In addition, all East Finchley residents and workers are most welcome to come and meet the team upstairs in East Finchley

Library where it's warm and dry. Pop in for a few minutes or longer; we have some excellent crime prevention leaflets and products to demonstrate and they are free of charge. The next meeting is on Saturday 21 March from 2 - 3pm.

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

Traffic lights danger

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Police are warning of a spate of thefts of handbags and other valuables, snatched from cars while they are stationary at traffic lights. This follows a similar series of thefts from cars parked at the Islington and St Pancras cemetery and on petrol station forecourts.

The thefts have taken place at locations across the borough. Police are advising all motorists to take some simple crime prevention measures.

"When stationary, lock your car doors, and when you leave your vehicle parked, hide away all your valuables including your SatNav," said Detective Inspector Duncan Wood.

If you have been a victim of this type of crime, call police on 0300 123 1212, or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

No limit on donors

The age limit that prevented regular donors from giving blood beyond their 70th birthday has been abolished. As older donors are healthier and fitter nowadays, it was considered safe to remove the upper age limit for donation.

Whether you are young or old, if you want to know more about giving blood, call 01923 486800 or visit www.nhsbt.nhs.uk

Jumping for joy

By Sheila Armstrong

Local school Oak Lodge has just received a lottery grant for £9,000 and will be spending the money on an outdoor trampoline to be used for fun and therapy.

The Awards for All scheme, using money from the Big Lottery Fund, has given a total of £43,000 to other grass roots and voluntary organisations in Barnet, including the Gunnersbury Women's Cricket Club, which plays at Finchley Cricket Club in East End Road.

Rebound therapy

Nearly half of the children at Oak Lodge, a special school in Heath View, off East End Road, are on the autistic spectrum. The school will be able to offer rebound therapy for them, though the trampoline will benefit all Oak Lodge pupils.

Use of the trampoline enables children with a variety of special needs to experience therapeutic

exercise and movement and can even enable physiotherapy to be delivered. Special training for rebound therapy is available in the UK.

Head teacher Lynda Walker told *THE ARCHER* that the lottery grant would cover a substantial part of the cost of the outdoor trampoline and the necessary secure fencing, which will be a total of £18,000 - £20,000.

In addition, staff have been fundraising for the trampoline and have raised £2,500 by, rather appropriately, a sponsored bungee jump. More money is still needed and donations are welcome. These can be sent to the school's charity Hearts of Oak, c/o Oak Lodge School.



Beach bag a long way from home

I Love N2 bags are a common sight on the Northern line and around East Finchley but this one made it all the way to the sunny sands of Coral Bay in Western Australia.

ARCHER contributor Caroline Ayre took it with her on her Australian adventure this winter.

No friend of mine

By Janet Maitland

A warning has been issued by the police and Barnet Trading Standards about fraudsters preying on vulnerable people.

An elderly man told the East Barnet Safer Neighbourhood Team that in early January he was approached in the street by a man who pretended to know him. This man was apparently very plausible, shaking his hand and greeting him like a long lost friend.

They walked back to the elderly man's house, where his "friend" then mentioned cleaning windows before being joined by another man. After they suggested that they could not only clean his windows but also repair the roof and window frames, they disappeared for a while.

On their return, the two men asked for £40 for cleaning the windows and £200 for the repair work, although absolutely no work had been done. The elderly man told them that he didn't hold money or a chequebook and that he would have to get his nephew to come over with the money. At that point they left and didn't come back.

The men are described as white, in their 20s or early 30s, of athletic build and between 5ft 8 and 5ft 10 tall. "If you hear of this happening, call 999," said Paul Hammond, Barnet Boroughwatch.



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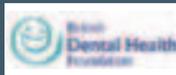
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Rickshaw run for charity

By Diana Cormack

The film *Slumdog Millionaire* may be giving people a certain view of India, but a family from Ringwood Avenue is about to see the country from a different perspective. In April they will be making a motorised rickshaw journey from the mountains of Shillong to the beaches in Goa.

Patricia Rybarczyk, a 25-year-old estate agent, has described this as "a last family holiday". It could well strain family relationships, for the vehicle is only meant to carry three but Patricia's parents Yvonne and Jacob, and her brother Michael, will accompany her on the 3,000 mile trek.

Their objective is to raise £2,000 for charity, the beneficiaries being the British Heart Foundation, in memory of actor Mike Reid, and Frank Water Projects, which helps developing countries to provide clean, safe drinking water facilities.

Prior to the rickshaw run, Patricia is organising two fund raising events which take place this month. A fancy dress 1980s Aerobic session will be held at the Jacksons Lane Centre, Archway Road, N6, from 1 - 2pm on Sunday 8 March and a Guitar Hero competition at the Royal British Legion, Muswell Hill Road, N10, from 8.30 - 10pm on Tuesday 17 March. Entry fees of £5 are payable via www.justgiving.co.uk/red-hot-chilli. Donations can also be made on this site and details accessed about the whole venture.

East Finchley Baptist Church

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Visitors always welcome



Calendar raises over £2,000 for Contact

THE ARCHER Calendar 2009 raised an amazing £2,088 for East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact. The money will be used to help the charity in its vital work with elderly, disabled and isolated people in our community.

THE ARCHER's treasurer John Dearing and other members of the team handed over a cheque to Keith John, Contact's co-ordinator. They were joined by Mark Chapman, of Photobox.co.uk, who generously printed the calendar free of charge.

"Without the generous support of local people, Contact simply wouldn't be able to operate," said Keith. "As we try to offer a helping hand to local residents, we rely enormously on people's generosity and on the kindness and dedication of volunteers."

Contact's crucial work

Contact was set up in 1985 to help vulnerable or isolated people in and around Finchley and offers a range of services to its clients. Through Contact, people can get help with their gardening, have volunteer help with transport and odd jobs, be visited at home by a regular befriender, or be taken by mini bus to a local supermarket for help with their shopping.

Contact also runs two lunch clubs, both offering wholesome food at a very reasonable cost. One lunch club is designed in particular for Muslim women and offers good halal food.

You can find out more about how Contact can help you, or

about how you can become a volunteer, by phoning Keith on 020 8444 1162 or by emailing Contact on efncontact@dsl.pipex.com

Thanks also to everyone who bought a calendar and to everyone who contributed photos. Start saving your photographs because we're already planning *THE ARCHER* Calendar 2010. Look out for more details later in the year.

East Finchley Neighbourhood CONTACT



Offering a helping hand

THE ARCHER team would like to say a special thank you to these shops and outlets, who volunteered to sell the calendar: *Black Gull Bookshop, Budgens, Casa Pepe, Cherry Tree Gift Shop, Coral's the Chemist, Culture Vultures, Denise Blake, East Finchley Clinic, East Finchley Electrical, Kokos, Lazooli, Lazy Sally Café, Phoenix Cinema, Tony's Continental, 2 Destino, the EFO Art Fair and Holy Trinity School Fair.*

On trial for their lives

By Ann Bronkhorst

Last winter we outlined the so-called 'babyfarming' case, which made East Finchley notorious. Amelia Sach, of Hertford Road, and Annie Walters, from Islington, were tried at the Old Bailey in January 1903, found guilty of infanticide and hanged at Holloway a month later. Now you can read the court proceedings on the Old Bailey website.

The case was described in two articles (*THE ARCHER*, November 2007 and February 2008), which drew largely on published material and newspaper archives. The transcript on the website provides fascinating detail about the trial itself, including cross-examination of witnesses and references to local people and places.

The final part of the transcript consists of a long statement by Annie Walters. Strangely, its uneducated use of English and its naivety make it

quite touching to read. Annie's own voice, about to be silenced on the gallows, comes through to us a century later.

To read the transcript, go to www.oldbaileyonline.org and put in the name Sach and the year 1903.



The Method are hoping to make it big

Follow this Method for success

By Adam Castledine

Fortismere school indie rockers Jonny Wickham, Jamie McGowan, Oscar Barany, Felix Pocock and Connor Weinstein followed many a young teenager's dream at the beginning of the year when they formed a band.

Not content with simply having the added kudos of being in a band, they have tackled that most difficult of next steps; they are good and they are a roaring, or should that be rocking, success.

Influenced by such luminaries as The Smiths, The Libertines and Led Zeppelin, The Method are clearly a young, progressive, alternative group with a sound that looks to encompass musical styles ranging from grunge to Blues.

"We don't like the music in the charts," says keyboardist Felix, and their music is certainly a departure from the stereotype associated with 14-year-old boys. McFly this is not.

On the rise

Not content with entering a Live and Unsigned competition recently as the contest's youngest band, The Method went ahead and won. Playing their own compositions, the band is moving on to the regional final at the Beck Theatre in Hayes on 29 March before a possible nationwide final in Portsmouth this June.

Their meteoric rise to regional fame is almost fright-

ening, but The Method remain proud local students. They aim to put on a local gig towards the beginning of March as they continue to work on their material.

Check out tracks such as 'AVID' and 'Little Timmy'

as well as their latest gig information via their web page, www.myspace.com/methmeth42. Do not let their youth prejudice your judgement of their music. The Method are a raw, relevant and infectious local product.

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Fun in the snow in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo by John Dearing

Winter wonderland

Thanks to everyone who sent us photos of their neighbourhood in the snow. Here are a couple of the best.

Two days of heavy snow at the start of February kept children off school and some people away from work. The snowman count in Cherry Tree Wood was in double figures. Then we faced a week of icy pavements as freezing temperatures kept the thaw at bay. Thank goodness spring is on its way.



No one was going anywhere in Manor Park Road when at least six inches of snow fell overnight. Photo by Andrew Louth

Ricky Gervais: Work in Progress

By John Lawrence

Ricky Gervais came to artsdepot in North Finchley back in January to try out some new material. For three nights he tested out what got laughs and what didn't, ahead of a major tour later in the year.

Judging from the last night, when I was there, his material had plenty more hits than misses. Animals and their behaviour have always been one of his favourite topics. This time round was no exception when he skillfully debunked the Noah's ark

story and played a hilarious riff on spiders.

Knowing the audience

Comedy, said Gervais, should be offensive, or it's not funny, and comedians should not be cowed into being bland. He didn't mention the names of his good friend Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand, but he clearly had them in mind.

But, he added, you need to know your audience. For example, one gag that had his mates in stitches over a drink turned to extreme bad taste when he told

it to a group of elderly relatives over a meal. To tell the story, he had to tell the (extremely offensive) joke. The reaction it got from the artsdepot audience was 70% shock, 30% laughter. Job done.

Gervais says on his blog that he's enjoying doing stand-up comedy much more these days and doesn't fret about every person enjoying every line. At this warm-up gig, he certainly seemed to be very relaxed on stage: dressed down, not hampering every joke to death, and managing to appear effortlessly funny for just short of an hour. Bodes well for later in the year.

Aladdin's cave

By Sheila Armstrong

A valuable asset to the community around Church Lane is John Omar, who has had his shoe repair shop at the end of Manor Park Road for more than 20 years. You never know what you'll find in there until you visit him. He can mend and has mended most sorts of shoes in that time, including 40-year-old shoes that had fallen to pieces: major surgery was needed, he told THE ARCHER. And he can even mend trainers.

Other useful things he does are mending bags or luggage, making new handles, stretching shoes, cutting keys, replacing zips or buckles on bags or shoes, and patching things. Shoe repairers or cobblers have heavy weight sewing machines so if you have a repair problem go to him; he's a problem solver. He also stocks laces, belts, shoe polish.

His friendly helpful service is between 12pm to 7pm from Monday to Saturday. He can be contacted on 07956 329150. Not surprisingly, he often asks to be paid before he starts work. "It's amazing how many people intend to, but don't, collect their repairs," he said. "But if you are willing to pay I'm willing to work."

Bird-watching in the wood

From Sue Corson and the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

At the time of writing it is National Nest Box Week. Eagle-eyed locals may already have spotted some in Cherry Tree Wood, which will be added to over the coming year when the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood hold sessions enabling people to join in the making and placing of nest boxes. These will provide safe breeding sites for the many native and migrant birds to be found there.

See them and hear them

Early spring before the trees come into full leaf is a good time to see native birds, when they will be in full song prior to the breeding season. The birds are usually in either the middle or upper canopy of the Wood, except for the wren, which will be close to the ground and has an unmistakably loud voice for such a tiny bird.

The greater spotted woodpecker has been heard in action

since mid-January. Other birds seen in the Wood in the past year have included blackbird, jay, crow, magpie, long tailed tit, blue tit, mistle thrush, song thrush, green woodpecker, starling, dunnock, robin, chaffinch, nuthatch, little owl, pied wagtail, wood pigeon (and feral pigeon), goldcrest, goldfinch and greenfinch. Many of these birds have successfully reared their young in the Wood.

Green parakeets feed there and migrant summer visitors include the chiffchaff (so named because of its song) and the black-cap (which has a very beautiful song). A frequent summer visitor is the redwing, which arrives in flocks of forty or more.

Keep your eyes open for announcements about nest box making and visit www.cherrytreewood.co.uk for other information.

Welcome to the wagtail

By Ann Bronkhorst

Have you almost tripped over a small bird with a long tail darting along the pavement in the High Road, behaving like that vanished Londoner, the sparrow? Our smart little visitor is a pied wagtail.

Helping it to thrive through the winter are several local shopkeepers and business folk who are charmed by this dapper little grey, black and white bird.

Carol, at Budgens, often sees it behind the store. Across the High Road, Mark (of fish shop Scott's) provides tiny scraps of fresh fish whenever it appears. And Paul at Poseidon's Fish Restaurant is cultivating a new customer: he feeds it at around 9am most mornings on the corner of Lincoln Road. The bird comes close to his hand and seems unafraid.

Down at the tube station the two stallholders regularly see

not one but two wagtails, one smaller than the other and with more white markings. Sid, who runs the coffee stall, slips the birds flakes of croissants.

So several sharp operators may be working the High Road, or just one with a mate or buddy. According to the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds, pied wagtails are "adaptable opportunists" and are increasingly seen in city centres. Some even come over here from the continent for the winter. To find out more about these elegant little



Keeping watch on his patch of pavement.

Photo by Diana Cormack

birds, visit www.rspb.org or the British Trust for Ornithology at www.bto.org.

A charm of goldfinches

By Peter Murphy

I moved to East Finchley 25 years ago, a city boy from Liverpool with no country lore. Little did I imagine that one day I would witness a most unusual natural phenomenon: a flock of over 100 goldfinches feeding and roosting in my north-facing, East Finchley suburban garden.

This may not be an unusual sight in the countryside, but it is a phenomenon so unusual in the city that the RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology were thrilled to the point of envy.

It all started last autumn when I put up a feeder containing Nyjer seeds; half an hour later I looked out of the window and saw a goldfinch stuffing his face. I quickly discovered that the bird books are wrong: goldfinches much prefer sunflower hearts. As soon as I gave them the choice of grub the numbers doubled. It was the most magical and

thrilling sight of my life.

Then one day, shortly before Christmas, I noticed an even more amazing phenomenon. At exactly 3.30pm, the lime trees at the bottom of my garden were stuffed full with the silhouettes of at least 100 goldfinches. Suddenly the collective noun 'charm' seemed far too coy; this was a 'stadium' of goldfinches.

I watched and listened with fascination until at about 4.30pm they took to the air, performed an aerial ballet and then dived into the laurel tree next door to roost for the night. I invested in a pair of cheap binoculars and now I'm a dedicated bird watcher for life.

Bird bounty

I have seen, and learned to recognise, more birds in my garden over the last six months than in my entire 53 years. I've seen chaffinches, gold crests, jays, magpies, starlings, dunnocks, rooks, siskins, blue tits, great tits, long tailed tits, all three native woodpeckers, wagtails, robins, blackbirds, and a flock of parakeets.

You may live in the suburbs, but if you put out a range of seeds and look out of your window, you will be amazed at what comes to your garden and your life will change immeasurably for the better. One other tip, don't keep cats as pets.

Tackling chlamydia

By Janet Maitland

Barnet PCT has sent letters to all 16-24 year olds encouraging them to take a chlamydia test if they are sexually active. Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection. Approximately one in 10 people under the age of 25 who have had a test are infected, but most do not know they have it.

If caught early, the disease is easily treated with antibiotics. If not treated, chlamydia can cause serious health problems such as infertility.

Getting a test done is straightforward. Self-testing kits, which you use in private at home, are available from many pharmacies and GPs. A testing pack can also be requested online and sent to you at home in discreet packaging.

To find out where to pick up a

pack or have one sent to you, go to www.bu21.org.uk or call 020 8447 3590 or 020 8447 3544. You can also call if you want to have a confidential chat with a health professional before taking a test.

It is recommended that a sexually active person should have a test every year, or each time they have a new sexual partner. If you have never had any sexual activity then you are not at risk and do not need to get tested.



Zayne's endurance challenge

East Finchley Territorial Army Officer Captain Zayne Crow is currently undergoing rigorous training to compete in one of the world's toughest long-distance running races, the 2009 Marathon des Sables, in aid of Help for Heroes.

This gruelling and demanding six-day endurance race sets off on 26 March and will see her running 151 miles (243km) in intense heat across the Sahara Desert in Morocco through rugged terrain, over rough tracks, stony ground and sand dunes.

The Marathon des Sables is heralded as the toughest footrace on the planet with runners covering the equivalent to five and a half regular marathons during the six-day period, in temperatures up to 120°F. In addition to the extreme mental and physical stamina required to undertake such a challenge, the competitors will also have to carry everything needed for the duration on their backs in a rucksack (food, clothes, medical kit, sleeping bag, etc).

Marathon veteran

South African born Captain Crow, 33, is no stranger to long-distance running competitions, having already successfully completed 19 marathons and two ultra distance marathons (52 miles) before signing up for this next challenge.

Captain Crow has high hopes that her preparation will stand her in good stead to finish the Marathon des Sables.

"I am feeling really strong and looking forward to this race. Because of the extreme temperatures and the weight I'll be carrying, it will be an immense challenge but I've put in lots of miles already and in terms of physical and mental fitness I'm now in peak condition. Obviously my main aim is to complete the course and cross

the finish line".

When she is not running, Captain Crow is a Recovery Sister at the King Edward VII Hospital in London and has been a member of the Ter-

ritorial Army for five years. You can sponsor efforts on behalf of the armed forces charity Help for Heroes by going to www.justgiving.com/zaynecrow.



Captain Zayne Crow will run 151 miles in six days.

Playgroup may be priced out of its home

By Diana Cormack

After more than a quarter of a century of providing young children and their carers with an opportunity to meet, play and learn together, the Parent and Toddler Group which meets at St Mary's RC Church is in danger of disappearing.

This year the group has halved its sessions and now meets only on Tuesday mornings from 9.30 - 11.30am, a disappointment to those for whom such gatherings can be important. As well as being a centre of support and help for adults, playgroups contribute greatly to a child's speech, mental and physical development through shared activities which extend social skills.

Hire charge rising

The group has the use of two large halls owned by St Mary's, with plenty of space for the children to play as well as storage for their equipment. It is run by Rebecca Weston, who told *THE ARCHER* that they are facing a problem over payment. Not long before Christmas she was informed that the hiring charge was to rise from

£30 to £50 per session.

Parish priest Father Tony said: "A charge of £50 will bring the Parent and Toddler group in line with the Monday Club. This does not seem an unreasonable charge for the use of two large halls, the kitchen and other facilities. The January gas bill was £1,200."

Rebecca said that at present there are about 30 playgroup users who pay as and when they attend. Payment for one child is £2.50; for two it is £4, which includes a drink and fruit.

In the summer months, however, contributions drop when the good weather attracts people to parks and other outdoor facilities. Rebecca feels this could lead to the playgroup being closed during that time of year and fears for its future.

Fabulous Finchley on foot

Paul Baker, a City of London guide, has been leading tours around the borough of Barnet since 2004. The walks have elicited a lot of interest from Barnet residents and beyond the borough.

His latest is 'Fabulous Finchley'. It takes a leisurely stroll down East End Road and through 1,000 years of history, finishing at East Finchley tube. Along the way, walkers will learn more about the famous sites of Finchley: St Mary's Church, The Manor House, Avenue House and Christ's College.

There will also be fascinating stories about some of the famous people who have lived in Finchley, ranging from Harry Beck, designer of the London tube map, to Richard Cromwell, son of the famous Oliver. And

the stories of two infamous murders will be told.

Paul will also ask why the air in Finchley attracts so many world famous comedians. Eric Morecambe, Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan all lived for many years in the area. The walk will take place on Sunday 22 March, starting at Finchley Central tube station (Ballards Lane exit) at 11am, and lasting about two hours. The cost is £7, under 12s £3. The walk will be repeated on Sundays 28 June and 13 September at 2pm. For further details, contact Paul on 020 8440 6805.

Blitz mentality in a power cut

By Peter Murphy

At least 44 houses in Fortis Green were left without power for 23 hours on Monday 9 February. The power went off without warning at 11am and didn't come on again until 10am the following day. This was part of a much larger power cut throughout London.

Apparently, the situation was so severe the EDF Energy Network Centre couldn't cope. Instead of a recorded message saying "We apologise for your loss of power and we're doing everything we can to restore it," customers heard: "Due to the adverse weather conditions we are getting a lot of calls and we would like you to know that,

as safety is important to us, it's taking a lot longer." Make of that what you will.

Candles and compensation

When it became apparent that we were in for the long haul, the blitz mentality kicked in and neighbours who had never spoken (and may never speak again) showed concern for each other. Needless to say, according to a well-known universal law, neither Amy's or Budgens had packs of cheap household candles in stock. It might come as a pleasant

surprise to those who were without power for longer than 18 hours to know that EDF will be contacting them in the next couple of weeks with an application form for compensation of £50.

I phoned EDF and asked if they were prepared to compensate for loss of earnings incurred by those freelancers who worked from home. I was told that the £50 was a good will gesture and not in any way an admission of responsibility and that they were not prepared to compensate for loss of earnings.

Professional couple with young child seek two bedroom flat in N2 or N10 with wood floors, gas central heating and outside space. Contact Andrew on 020 7518 3453 after 6 pm.



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YOUNG ARCHER

Young Sophie sings her way to a scholarship

Sophie Burbidge, of Summerlee Gardens, is the youngest person to win the coveted Charlotte Coleman Scholarship award at the New London Performing Arts Centre.

Eight-year-old Sophie is in Year 3 at St. James' Church of England School, Muswell Hill, and has been singing since she was two.

Singing and performing are in her genes; Sophie's maternal grandmother studied classical singing at the Guildhall School of Music and became a performer. Her great-grandmother Marjorie Kelsh (née Ramsden) was a singer and dancer and cousin to 1930s actress Peggy Thorpe-Bates.

The Charlotte Coleman Scholarship was set up in memory of the *Four Weddings and a Funeral* actress who sadly died in 2001 aged 33 from an asthma attack. Charlotte's mother Ann Beach and her sister Lisa Coleman presented the trophy.



Sophie with her award. Photo by Diana Cormack

Smiles all round

Sophie said: "I chose to sing *Thank You for the Music* by Abba because I already knew it and it is one of my favourites. I was standing on my own on the big black stage under a glimmering spotlight as if I were a fairy. As I sang I could see the audience smiling at me and waving their arms in time to the music.

"Mummy and I were in the car outside Midhurst Butchers when the school principal, tele-

phoned and said I had won the award. Mummy screamed with delight. I was very, very happy to get the award and for the rest of the day I had a big smile on my face. It means I get free classes for a whole year."

Sophie will be taking classes in dance (jazz, tap and ballet), piano, singing and acting. She is also rehearsing *Les Miserables* for a performance at RADA at the end of March. It looks like it's going to be a very exciting year.

An hour of oblivion

By Lucy Chamberlin

What would you do if, on the night the clocks went back, you had the whole hour to spend exactly as you chose, and afterwards nobody would remember a thing?

This is the subject of *The Hour*, a short story that won third prize (£50) in the Happenstance Press Story Competition, and was written by East Finchley's Hannah Eisen-Renyard, who has also written for *THE ARCHER*.

Hannah, 22, was a great fan of student pranks at university, where she studied creative writing. Her story centres on a man called Brian who is trying to take a lifetime's revenge in one hour by playing pranks on anyone who has ever caused him offence.

Taking in the nuisance neighbour, a date who once stood him up, a nasty man on the bus and his greedy boss, the story's pace is speedy, its phrases evoking the purpose of protagonist Brian in his race with the clock.

Cold callers caught

It is a fanciful tale with a clever idea behind it, and is

based only on Hannah's imagination, with a bit of mentoring from her housemate. Although she has never had the guts to carry out any of these pranks herself, she does admit to having a 'petty streak'. Once when she worked for a cold calling company she signed up all its managers to receive cold calls themselves.

Currently working as an editorial assistant, Hannah writes poetry for *Fuselit* magazine, and also has a couple of novels under her belt which, she firmly insists, will never be published. *The Hour* was originally penned for a university module, and afterwards submitted as one of 400 entries to the Happenstance competition, judged by short story author Susie Maguire. Hannah continues to write creatively in her spare time. See an extract from her story at www.happenstancepress.com

Love yourself to love others

Relationship expert Elizabeth Green runs courses on how to get on with those you love. To see parents and children apologize and forgive each other, she says, can be very moving.

Born in Croydon, Elizabeth moved to East Finchley when she was eight years old and, except for a brief spell when she met her husband, has lived here ever since. She has three children, Simon, 24, Georgia, 20, and Jacob, 18.

Her Trusting Love course teaches ten ways to improve your communication, practices such as apology, forgiveness, listening with compassion, handling upsets responsibly and acknowledgement.

The secret, says Elizabeth, who has also written a dating column for the *Jewish Chronicle*, is to learn to love yourself first and always to speak from the heart.

"I've apologised many times to my kids. Yes, we still fight but underneath we know that we truly love each other," she says. "Do you want the bad news about all those people around you you've been trying to change? They never will. The only person you can change is yourself."

Elizabeth believes that once people start to love themselves, those around them will start to change as well because they

will respond positively to their more open behaviour.

The Trusting Love course is offered for everyone aged 14 and above. For more details, contact Elizabeth on 020 8444 6362.

Professor of choice

Bob Owens, Professor of English Literature at The Open University and East Finchley resident, has been honoured for his work *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*.

Professor Owens's book was given the accolade of 'Outstanding Academic Title' by Choice, the review journal of the American Library Association.

The Novels brings to completion the 44-volume edition of *The Works of Daniel Defoe*, of which Professor Owens is joint General Editor. His next project is to complete an edition of the 1611 Authorised King James Version of *The Gospels* for publication by Oxford University Press.

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Temporary library closure

East Finchley Library, 226 High Road, is currently closed for redecoration. It is due to reopen on Thursday 12 March.

Visit www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries for library information.

Bucketload of help

Back on Christmas Eve, Sippy Azizollah put on her Santa Claus gear and set off to take up a collection in aid of the North London Hospice. Her four-hour stint took place in Budgens, next to a table of snacks provided courtesy of the store.

Once again, Sippy found the generosity of local shoppers astounding. "Some people even went home to get more money to fill my bucket," she told *THE ARCHER*. The final total was £230.

Sippy would like to thank those who donated as well as the manager and staff at Budgens

for all their help, particularly Tannaz Kapadia, who kept her supplied with mugs of tea and refreshed the collection bucket too.

Budgens also organised a Christmas Hamper raffle, the proceeds of which went to the East Finchley Community Trust.

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Experience that doesn't go to waste

By Diana Cormack

The expertise and experience of older people is being put to good use in an innovative and beneficial way. Prime Thinkers was set up two years ago as a voluntary, non-profit making group with charitable aims. Now 20 problem solvers, idea developers, concept testers and creative thinkers aged over 55 pass on their wealth of knowledge and raise money for Kith and Kids, which supports families living with disability.

A group of eight to 10 thinkers meets monthly in a Muswell Hill café with a variety of advice seekers who may be from companies, voluntary agencies or start-ups. The presenters are given ten minutes to air their problems or ideas. Fifteen minutes of brain storming and debate follow.

After this, everyone participates in a gloves-off discussion lasting 20 minutes, with a final session of evaluating and coming up with the best possible solutions.

Presentations are observed and notes are taken as a spur for further action. The meetings are relaxed and informal, with everyone round the table given time to have their say. A chairperson is there to keep order and ensure adherence to the basic rules of the group. Each presenter

donates £100 to Kith and Kids, with further agreed donations for any subsequent consultation.

Praise for scheme

Maurice Collins, of Beech Drive, N2, told THE ARCHER that more than 30 companies and businesses had sought help from Prime Thinkers over the last year, having heard about them through personal contacts and networks and in the national press. The scheme was short listed as one of the best social innovations for 2008 by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and The Guardian newspaper.

If any aspect of this interests you, email mauricecollins@msn.com or phone 07796 991 140 for more information.

Rosy future for horticultural society

Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society is celebrating its centenary this year with an enhanced programme of events. Marjorie Harris tells us more. One hundred years ago, just before 20 May 1909, the redoubtable Dame Henrietta Barnett put up posters in the fledgling Hampstead Garden Suburb, inviting residents to a meeting at The Institute to discuss "the Objects and Rules of the Horticultural Society".

It must have been a successful meeting, because a few weeks later the society held its very first flower show in a marquee on Central Square on August Bank Holiday. Visiting the show cost 3d for non-members and there were eight classes for members to enter. During that first season, several gardens were open to the public, not bad for an area which had been mostly farmland up to two years before.

The year ahead

By contrast, in 2009 there are 77 classes for members to enter in the society's June show and 99 in the September show. Throughout the year there will be many celebratory events, including special competitions, outings, talks, a band, a Centenary Apple Hunt, a Garden Buddy Scheme, plant sales, open gardens and much more.

On 18 July, the Grand Opening of a new community flowerbed on Willifield Way, NW11, and a Festival of Roses in Fellowship House will take place. As well as our own open gardens event on 21 June, of which 50% of the proceeds will go to the NW Support Group of the North London Hospice, the gardens of 11 members will be open under the National Gar-

dens Scheme.

Society membership costs only £5 per adult (£7.50 per household, children under 18 free). To join, telephone 020 8455 7334, or to find out more about the society's history and activities visit www.hortsoc.co.uk.

First event of the spring

On 21 March, the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor John Marshall, will open the special Centenary Spring Show at the Free Church Hall, Northway, NW11. The show will feature an exhibition of Horticultural Society and gardening memorabilia over the last 100 years. Everyone is welcome and non-members pay just £1.00, excellent value when compared to that first 3d in 1909.



Photo shop: Faiza and Kashif Zaidi in their new photo print studio. Photo by John Lawrence

Green machine

Kashif and Faiza Zaidi have opened a new photographic service at KF Computers and Imaging in the High Road. Their Fuji digital printing machines use green technology to produce prints without the heavy use of chemicals.

The printing studio now occupies half of the shop and includes individual kiosks for printing photos from digital cameras along with a giant printer capable of producing professional quality poster prints.

Mr and Mrs Zaidi have refocused their business around photographic and optical goods but still offer their popular laptop and PC sale, repair and upgrade services.

Do you remember the last London Olympics?

Did you take part in or attend the 1948 Olympic Games in London? Organisers of this year's East End Film Festival want to host a cross-generational event exploring the world of London during the 1948 Olympics.

They are looking for anyone who was an athlete, official or spectator, or who was involved in any other way, and who still lives in London. The idea is to create a short film about their experiences, which they are hoping to make the focus of the Festival's 1948 street party this summer.

The East End Film Festival is held annually in Brick Lane. It is eight days and nights of film-focused music and arts. If you, or anyone you know, had any involvement in the 1948 Olympics and would like to take part, please e-mail Aglaia Gelpke at: Aglaia.Gelpke@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Intelligent design? Hardly.

Before Darwin it was easy. God got up one Monday morning and decided to do something useful for a change. By Saturday he'd created an entire universe complete with stars, planets, seas, continents, plants, animals and even man. Not bad for a week's work, so he took Sunday off, probably to do the gardening. Darwin made it all a bit difficult because science and gods don't mix too well and evolution is about science.

Evolution says we all evolved from single celled organisms that crawled out of the slime, evolved, evolved again, became extinct, fossilised themselves, got dug up and stuck in museums. Those that missed out on the extinction bit kept on evolving until they got to us. This took a couple of billion years and couldn't be done between breakfast on Monday and the time the pubs shut on Saturday night. It's science and I don't argue with science.

But somewhere out there bibles are being waved in the weird conviction that God did it all in six days. What about dinosaurs? These wackos claim that such is the sheer genius of the Almighty that he created the fossils to look 65 million years old when he'd actually made them on the Friday just before going down the pub and left them lying around as a bit of joke. If you believe that one, you'll believe in advertising next.

These guys have answers for everything. Remind them that science proves dinosaurs are millions of years old so God can't have knocked the whole thing up in an afternoon 4,500 years ago and guess what, they've an answer for that as well. They claim God did it in six days, but this wasn't the only one; he'd had a couple of goes first and not liked the results. Makes it sound like some garden makeover programme: "Tonight at nine on Make Yourself a New Garden with Alan Titchmarsh, we help God solve the problem of gigantic reptiles eating the tomatoes and help him transform the Garden of Eden into a family friendly adventure playground." Intelligent design? More like no intelligence, no design.

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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
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **Yoga course**, N2, starts 13 Jan. Call Laura 8346 8198 for info pack.

MUSIC, DANCE & CREATIVE ARTS

- ❖ **Art Classes**. For info call Henry on 8888 5133.
- ❖ **Ballroom Dance Classes**, Wednesday eves for beginners & improvers. St Mary's Church Hall, N3. 8444 0280.
- ❖ **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners and Improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.
- ❖ **Club Dramatika** drama club for kids. Call 8883 7110.
- ❖ **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 0208 444 7217
- ❖ **Drama Classes** for 11-18 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** 16 & 30 March 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.
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Tap Dance** for children at Old Barn on Mondays, Call 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 8883 7544.
- ❖ **Highgate Film Society**, call 8340 3343 or email: admin@hfsi.net.
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- ❖ **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tuesdays 1-3pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Call Anita Shaw 8886 6140.
- ❖ **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.

The only show in town

By Daphne Chamberlain

"I'm very happy and honoured you chose to come here rather than go to Washington DC". "Here" was the Royal College of Nursing in Cavendish Square, and that was Shirla Philogene's light-hearted welcome to guests at the launch of her autobiography *Between Two Worlds*. It took place, of course, on Barack Obama's inauguration day, which the RCN's Chair of Council described as very fitting. Like other distinguished speakers, she saw the book as a real piece of social history.

Shirla herself, the girl from the Caribbean island of St Vincent who rose right to the top of her profession, explained that one reason for writing her autobiography was to provide more documentation on "old-style" nursing. She drew ripples of laughter from her audience when describing the rigid rules of making a bed and settling a patient in it, and then adding, "But if the patient was more comfortable lying another way, I let them do so".

Successive speakers praised Shirla for her fresh ideas, organisational and communication skills and sense of humour. Also

for the surprise up her sleeve, her gift of writing, particularly noticeable in her lyrical descriptions of her childhood.

Shirla, who has lived in East Finchley for many years, thanked the East Finchley Writers Group and the writers' circle formed by clients at the LA Fitness Club for their encouragement.

Between Two Worlds, reviewed in *THE ARCHER* last month, is published by Author House (ISBN 978-1-4389-1155-7), and is also available through Amazon. Please visit www.authorhouse.co.uk for further information.

Hot and spicy

By Betti Blatman

There was an electrifying blend of Gypsy music from the Balkans and Eastern Europe, along with a few classical and jazz tunes, when Paprika Balkanicus played at The Red Hedgehog in Archway Road, Highgate.

On a very cold evening their performance was definitely hot and spicy. Paprika Balkanicus was formed in London in late 2006 and comprises Bogdan Vacarescu (Romania) on violin, Vlad Jovic (Serbia) on guitar, Jozef Secnik (Slovenia) on bass, and Milos Milivojevic (Serbia) and Zivorad Nikolic (Serbia) both on accordion.

Whilst the bass player interweaves amusing dialogue between tunes, I was mesmerised by the violinist's tantalising performance of my favourite *Skylark vs Tarentella*. It was breathtaking to watch the incredible speed and technical mastery on his violin whilst his

feet stomped rhythmically.

In the finale of the band's version of *Brazil*, the audience was enticed and encouraged to sing along and dance until exhausted, accompanied by foot stomping and hand clapping, creating an unforgettable experience.

You can catch them for free on 17 April at 12pm at the Royal Albert Hall in the Ignite Series, Café Consort, Door 12, Kensington Gore, South Kensington.

There's a £5 discount if you present a copy of *THE ARCHER* when attending an event at *The Red Hedgehog*. Visit www.theredhedgehog.co.uk or telephone 020 8348 5050.

March at the Phoenix

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer

By the time you read this we will have submitted our final stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the major grant for our Centenary Restoration Project, which we plan to start in January 2010. We'll know if we've been successful in early June and will tell you about it then. So March is a time for us to relax a little and enjoy the great films and events playing this month.

March starts with a great festival, now in its third year at the Phoenix, the UK Cypriot Film Festival. Running for the weekend of 6 - 8 March there's a selection of films from Cyprus, which again prove that it punches above its cinematic weight. The festival opens with *Trust Me* by Andrew Kazamia.

To celebrate submitting the HLF application we're having a wine tasting on the evening of 11 March. If you buy a ticket to the early evening show you can taste a selection of wines on sale at the Phoenix, courtesy of our wine merchants Corney & Barrow.

One of my favourite films of 2007 was Kelly Reichardt's *Old Joy*. So I'm delighted that her new film *Wendy & Lucy* is playing from 13 March. A simple tale

of a young female drifter and her canine companion, the film has a calm contemplative quality that is rare in cinema and marks Reichardt as a distinctive voice.

Paolo Sorrentino, who so delighted Phoenix audiences with *The Family Friend* and *The Consequences of Love*, has made a biopic of legendary Italian politician Giulio Andreotti who has been Prime Minister no less than seven times and has been linked to various mafia-related scandals. It's a film of great insight into this powerful and Machiavellian man.

All this plus more Met Opera, more great silent films and more wonderful double bills. See you in the back row. Telephone our box office on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

What's On...

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

Saturday 7 March

• **Wingate & Finchley Football Club vs Cheshunt**, 3pm kick off; Wingate & Finchley Football Club, The Harry Abrahams Stadium, Summers Lane, London, N12. Telephone 020 8446 2217 or visit www.wingatefinchley.com

Sunday 8 March

• **The Institute Spring Fair** at the Institute Arts Centre, Beaumont Close, N2 (behind tube station) from 11am to 4pm: table-top sale of crafts, gifts, jewellery, handbags, pictures, books and ceramics etc. Admission £1 only, children under 12 FREE. To book a table (£25) call Mimi Iten on 020 8829 4135.

Tuesday 10 March

• **Wingate & Finchley Football Club vs Maldon Town**, 7.45pm kick off; Wingate & Finchley Football Club. See 7 March for details.

Saturday 14 March to Sunday 19 April

• **Cooking with Elvis**, by Lee Hall; a dark comedy set in a dysfunctional Geordie household about one family and its tortoise torn apart by the aftermath of a terrible car accident. **Upstairs at the Gatehouse**, Highgate Village, N6, Tuesday to Saturday 8pm, Sunday 4pm. Box office 020 8340 3488 or www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com

Sunday 15 March

• **An Afternoon of Chicago Bridge** with the Institute; competition with prizes, 2.45pm onwards at The Tea House, Northway, NW11 6PB. Tickets £5.
• **The Battle of Barnet guided walk** with Paul Baker, City of London guide. Meet at junction of Great North Rd and Hadley Green Road at 11am. Telephone 020 8440 6805 for details.

Thursday 19 March

• **Pecha Kucha** is a creative presentation form: a diverse group of people describe what home means to them using 20 images, each shown for 20 seconds; 8pm. **Upstairs at The Magdala**, 2a South Hill Park, London NW3 2SB. Price £5. Tickets and information: 020 7431 9866; Jewish Community Centre for London, www.jcclondon.org.uk

Saturday 21 March

• **The Animal Aid and Advice** shop is holding a **Jumble Sale** at the Loraine Community Hall, Holloway Road, opposite the Coronet public house from 2.30 - 4.30pm. Entrance fee 40p. Refreshments available.
• **North London Chorus** in concert at St James' Church, Muswell Hill, 7.30pm; **Beethoven's overture Coriolan** and his spiritual and musical masterpiece the **Missa Solemnis**. Soprano Sally Silver, mezzo Fiona Murphy, tenor Michael Bracegirdle and bass John Molloy. Retiring collection for St. James' organ fund. Tickets £18, £13 (concs

£11) and £8 (concs £6). Ticketline 020 8444 2142 and from Les Aldrich music shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, N10, and at the door.

• **Wingate & Finchley Football Club vs Tilbury**, 3pm kick off; Wingate & Finchley Football Club, see 7 March for details.

Sunday 22 March

• **Fabulous Finchley**, a guided walk through 1,000 years of the history of Finchley Central and East Finchley with Paul Baker, City of London guide. Meet outside Finchley Central tube (Ballards Lane exit) at 11am. Telephone 020 8440 6805 for details.

Thursday 26 March

• **The Finchley Society** hosts a talk by Terence Atkins, **John Bejerman - an enthusiast's view**; 2.30pm at Avenue House, East End Road, N3. Telephone 020 8346 7812 for details. Non-members very welcome (admission £2).

Saturday 28 March

• **Buffet supper concert**, All Saints' Church, Durham Road, N2. London **Ripieno Singers**, Instrumental Ensemble and soloists. Music by Scarlatti, Purcell, Pachelbel and Bach. 7.30pm. Tickets: Concert and supper £15, pre-booked only by Friday 27 March. Concert: £10 (at the door) Bookings and information 020 8444 9214.

Sunday 5 April

• Free concert at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2, 7.30pm. **Amici del Arte Present "Wine, Women and Song"**, a wide-ranging programme of popular vocal classics. Free admission, with collection for charity. Fully accessible to disabled people.

Until August

• **Painting, poetry and film**: a celebration of the work of French poets **Rimbaud and Verlaine** organised by local painter Phil Diggle in a variety of venues until August. Phone 07711 689159 for information.

What's on at artsdepot, North Finchley

Laurence Clark, Friday 6 March, 8pm. **Tsivi Sharatt**, Sunday 8 March, 1pm. **Barnet School's Dance Festival**, Monday 9 - Friday 13 March. **Kidz Take Control**, Saturday 14 March, 7.30pm. **The Magic Tombolinos**, Sunday 15 March, 1pm. **Gallery Talk: Landscapes**, Tuesday 17 March, 7pm. **Fame, The Musical**, Wednesday 18 - Saturday 21 March, 7.30pm and Saturday 2.30pm. **John Hegley - Beyond Our Kennel**, Sunday 22 March, 8pm. **Gallery Talk: Still Life**, Tuesday 24 March, 7pm. **Pagrag Dance Company**, Thursday 26 March, 8pm. **Folk in the Foyer**, Friday 27 March, 8.30pm. **Twisted Folk**, Saturday 28 March, 5.30pm. **Artsdepot Showcase**, Sunday 29 March, 1pm.

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



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

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

Pigeons should not be persecuted

Dear Editor,

I feel I need to respond to your Soapbox (THE ARCHER, February 2009). Not for the first time have I read a piece in the local paper about the supposed 'problem' of feeding the pigeons at the junction of East End and the High Road. I walk that way frequently and can't see why the few pigeons that collect there can generate so much odium.

Like most animals, pigeons are selective in what they eat, given the choice. But they spend much of the time scratching around for what they can get. Admittedly, there are some ignorant and irresponsible people who put food down there that the pigeons will not touch. If Mr P clears this away then he is performing a service. But it seems from what he writes that his mission in life is to rid the area of pigeons altogether.

I should point out that pigeons 'clean' the pavements of half-eaten sandwiches, baguettes, buns and the like, discarded by thoughtless individuals, that would otherwise attract rats. Also, as regards any health risk the pigeons might pose, are they any more of a hazard than the spittle, vomit and other bodily waste that some people deposit on the pavements? If our crusader is so concerned for 'the children and elderly who are most at risk' perhaps he might like to clean this up also.

Pigeons have served us well enough in the past during wartime. Now we have no more use for them than they are classed as vermin. Perhaps this gentleman should learn to adopt a more tolerant and compassionate attitude towards these birds. He might not think so, but they have to live too.

Yours faithfully
Thomas McCann,
Hobbs Green, N2

Pigeons are a pest

Dear Editor

I concur with your correspondent, Chris Paul (Soap Box, THE ARCHER, February 2009). The pigeons that infest Pigeon Corner are filthy, disease-ridden vermin. It's a shame that these days it is not considered politically correct to exterminate them. However, to encourage them by feeding them, in direct contravention of the law, is not acceptable, especially as it does attract rats. I have seen them there, eating the food left by these misguided people.

Specifically, there are (at least) three people who regularly do this. One of them often leaves bread on the low wall, and then urinates on it! This is presumably designed

Letters to the Editor

to enhance the pigeons' culinary experience, but it does nothing for me, nor any other unfortunate passers-by.

The second collects bread from the bins behind Budgens and makes offerings in various parts of East Finchley, including here. I have remonstrated with them, apparently to no avail.

The third turns up in a car, jumps out and leaves a pile of neatly cut pieces of bread by the salt bin, then jumps back in and drives off. I have never been close enough to get its registration, but if I do, I will most certainly report them to the authorities.

I have heard it said that the mess we leave (litter, chewing gum, and other unmentionable substances) is far worse than that left by the pigeons. Maybe, but that does not excuse either the pigeons, or the people who feed them. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Yours faithfully,
John Dearing
Address supplied

Puddiford or Puddifoot?

Dear Editor,

In an ongoing search into my family history, I stumbled across a September 2005 edition of THE ARCHER containing a letter from Gwendolen Dale, of Leopold Road, N2, in which she talks of the Puddifoot family. My great-great-grandfather was a Joseph Puddeford (or possibly Puddiford), born about 1820, who was a policeman in Limehouse in the East End and later had a grocer's shop. He was married to a Mary F, who we know to have been born in Finchley, and they had eight children: Emily my great-grandmother, Louisa, Charles, Amelia, Ellen, Mary Joseph and Harry.

Emily married my great-grandfather William Wild and they lived in Heywood and Heap in Lancashire. There is a family story that Emily, or possibly her mother Mary, was Spanish and that she was, at some point, a matron in an asylum but there is no solid evidence and like many family stories it may have no foundation whatsoever. As Ms Dale says, the name Puddifoot and its derivatives are unusual and rare and possibly linked and therefore I hope that there may be some connection or that someone might recognise one.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Wild,
Cheltenham.

Do you recognise any of the names or connections in Michael's letter? Write to us at THE ARCHER and we'll pass your message on to him.

Milk of human kindness

Dear Editor,

I felt moved to write this letter commending Barnet Council for the concern shown during the recent snowfall on 1 February. On 2 February, I answered my intercom and was informed that as the refuse collectors were unable to perform their duties, they were visiting the elderly to help clear their paths. As mine had already been cleared by my neighbour, the bin man then said he would leave two pints of milk on my doorstep.

I wonder how many of the elderly were in receipt of this generosity? At what age is one considered to be elderly these days (I do have a Freedom Pass)? Anyway, hats off to Barnet for the kind thought.

Sonia Singham,
Leslie Road, N2

Mass appeal

Dear Editor,

As a local resident, could I just put in a word for Father Tony at St Mary's Catholic Church in the High Road. As a child of a Polish father and Irish mother, I was always going to be a Roman Catholic, but I did have some years when I stopped attending Mass.

A combination of the Polish Pope and the death of my parents brought me back, but I always hankered after the beautiful sung Latin Mass of my childhood.

For any wavering Catholics who would also like to hear the traditional sounds again, please try the 12pm Mass at St. Mary's. Father Tony is the most wonderful priest. He gives a sermon which explains the readings of the day and makes them relevant, coming down off the altar and speaking as if to friends.

He makes time to greet each person at the start and the finish of the Mass, and I feel that he is someone who is completely dedicated to his calling and to his parish. I have found the Latin Mass, but I have also found a fantastic priest.

Yours faithfully,
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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.



Not so classy: a blogger's view

Archer reader Andrew "Ampers" Taylor runs ampers.blogspot.com. Here's his personal take on the great class divide and who really are the "common people".

The problem with Britain is it concerns itself too much with class: the aristocracy, middle upper class, lower upper class, upper middle class, middle middle class, lower middle class, upper working class, middle working class and lower working class. It is a real nightmare.

It all started over a couple of thousand years ago with just working classes. Everyone was a peasant roaming the land, surviving as best they could. Then over the centuries some peasants gave themselves airs and graces and, in addition, when one tribe conquered another, the leaders of the conquering tribe would set themselves up a notch or two. This was how the aristocracy was born.

A thousand years ago, the aristocracy and their hangers-on referred to themselves as upper classes. As the centuries flew by more of the working classes did a little better for themselves and the middle classes were born. Most of this happened around the Industrial Revolution. By the 20th century, the middle classes were the working classes who had done better for themselves through trade.

This brings me to "common people". Common people are those the BBC and ITV seem to cater for. These are not just working class, they also include middle and upper class people. These are people with no real pride in themselves or their community. Those, for example, who either collapse in front of the box every evening or wander down to the pub, rather than help their community and neighbours. I think of people who have an inner pride in themselves as decent people, and those who don't have this inner pride as common people.

Nobody should be proud of being working class, middle class, or upper class. All this does is to create division among us. Everyone needs to develop an inner pride in themselves and then in their community. If they create inner pride in themselves, they will endeavour to build up their community.

Times are going to get hard for everyone. Those living in a tightly-knit community will have the best chance of surviving. Get to know your neighbour, invite them for morning coffee or evening drinks. Organise and take part in neighbourhood watches. Get your neighbours involved in keeping an eye on your house when you are away. Help the organisations within your community.

These are just a few suggestions of how members of a close community can help each other. Nothing here costs money (apart from coffee or a glass of wine). Involve your neighbours and take part yourself. This will help all of us to take pride in our community.

Jennie Mann
63a Church Lane
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Life after the bomb

In last month's issue, David Smith told the story of the 1944 bombing of Abbots Gardens that killed five people and injured many others. One resident, Maysel Houghton, was at her stove when the bomb fell and the explosion robbed her of her sight. Here, her friend June Grieve recalls how Maysel overcame her disability and went on to enjoy a happy life.

I had the pleasure of knowing Maysel Houghton in the 1980s when I gave her lifts by car to church on Sunday mornings and I shall never forget her. At the time of the bombing, she was a young woman who was recently married. Her husband had the house at 107 Abbots Gardens rebuilt in exactly the same style as the one they lost.

On meeting Maysel, you noticed her dress sense, wearing clothes in coordinated colours, her make-up and her lovely smile. The attention to detail in her appearance, and her knowledge of the layout of the world around her, were the result of her retaining her visual memory. She had favourite colours for her clothes and plants in her garden, and always checked with others that they were right.

When out and about, her main concern was always the welfare of those who were guiding her and it was hard to believe she was blind. Walking through the garden in the summer, she would ask which flowers were in bloom, touching them and taking in their fragrance. She associated many of the plants with the person who gave them to her.

Driving around Finchley, she wanted to know if anything had changed so that she could update it in her mind.

Maysel's kitchen was organised with precision to find any ingredient she needed. Seeing

her cook an evening meal once, a visitor once remarked with surprise that she was making gravy. Her reply was: "I like gravy".

She did admit once that one day a bottle of cough mixture was left in the kitchen and some of it ended up in the gravy. Visitors to her house who moved things around and didn't put them back before leaving were neither useful nor popular.

She spoke often of happy times when she went to a dancing class for blind and sighted people in Finchley. Maysel also enjoyed knitting, using instructions in Braille. The only part she could not do was sewing the garment together at the end.

Talking books gave her pleasure, especially the talking newspaper every week that gave her all the local news.

All those who met her remember her lively mind, which she kept until she died in 2002. We are glad that she touched our lives and gave us an example of how a tragedy can be overcome.

Dancing with the professionals

By Tracy Quirke

Congratulations to Bishop Douglass pupils King Appiagyei, Paul Matevicius and Auws Al-Gaboury, who performed in the curtain raiser show as part of Matthew Bourne's performance of Edward Scissorhands at Sadler's Wells theatre in January.

Bishop Douglass pupils have been participating in Street Dance sessions as part of their partnership with Sadler's Wells for over two years.

The three boys, all in Year 9, worked intensively for four days in collaboration with pro-

fessional dancers and choreographers as part of the production and performed on stage before the penultimate show.

The students will be performing in the Barnet Dance Festival at artsdepot on Tuesday 10 March.

Story time

The Church Farm House Museum in Hendon is on the lookout for children's stories with a local connection for an exhibition to be held this summer.

The Children's Writers and Artists display, running from 23 May to 27 September, will feature famous writers and illustrators who have lived and worked in the borough. The Museum is now asking residents to come forward with any material they would be prepared to loan the exhibition or to suggest a particular published writer or artist they would like to see included.

Authors such as Oliver Postgate the creator of Bagpuss, Anthony Buckeridge, the writer of the Jennings stories, and Sydney and Betty Hulme-Beaman, creators of the hit TV and radio Toytown series are all former Barnet residents.

To contact the Church Farmhouse Museum, telephone 020 8359 3942 or email gerrard.roots@barnet.gov.uk.

Sunshine on a cloudy day

By Sheila Armstrong

The Noble Sage's private view on 11 February of The Beating Heart of Kerala heralded a show full of the strong colours of the Kerala sunshine from six contrasting artists.

Jana Manuelpillai, owner of the contemporary Indian art gallery on Fortis Green, has been planning to bring the up-and-coming artists of Kerala to East Finchley for some time. Personally known to all the artists, he has been able to seek out Kerala's best over the last two years.

It was a great turnout for the evening showing, and Jana gave a guided tour of the exhibition, artist by artist, from the Rousseau-like Murali Nagapuzha, to the colourful Pradeep Puthoor. Using both biros and gel pens, S Ravi Shankar and T R Upendranath provide a monochrome contrast, as does the more cerebral A S Sajith's response to modern life. The exhibition also included sculpture by Ashok Patel.

The usual informative and well-produced catalogue accompanied the exhibition.



Bishop Douglass students King Appiagyei (right) and Paul Matevicius (left) on stage at Sadler's Wells. Photo by Tracy Quirke.

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