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Letters to the editor

I am aware that there are people who oppose the project and we have always tried to listen to their concerns and engage with them. Unfortunately, it is turning something that I felt so enthused and passionate about into something that can be quite upsetting.

I felt it was time I put the record straight so I invite anyone to go to our website to read the full story of the pavilion project, its objectives and where we currently stand in the planning process. Please visit www.foctwpavilion.org.uk

Yours faithfully, Sally-Anne Wigfield, Friends of CTW Pavilion

What do you think of the plans for Cherry Tree Wood pavilion? Please let us know by emailing the-archer@lineone.net or writing to THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA

Post Office queuing Dear Editor,

I am writing to highlight the growing problem at the East Finchley Post Office. I have just left after having been in the queue for 35 minutes. They have closed all of our local branches and have left us clambering for service in one central hub. The queue wrapped around four or five times and there were only three people on the counter (one giving out travel money).

I complained to the manager only to be told he could not help his staff on the till as he was not trained, "cash management was not his skill" and he had no control over the hiring of temps or overtime.

Yours faithfully, Sofia Gradoni, Address supplied.

New life for playground Dear Editor,

A couple of years ago, I started a public petition to upgrade the playground at Taring Road estate to modern safety standards, so that children can once again play there. Whether or not my petition had anything to do with this, I am told that Barnet Council are finally showing an interest in the playground.

My proposal is to give the refurbished playground a jungle theme, which proved a popular suggestion when I asked families living nearby. The main feature of the site, the concrete hill with the slide and tunnel, would be incorporated into this, along with animal-shaped bins and sculptures the kids could climb on, both of which have been used in parks in Barnet. Suggestions from children include tree swings and pictures of animals on the shock absorber.

The original proposal was to plant creepers over the fence as a 'shield' from the main road, and to add to the jungle feel. Following talks about security in a secluded area, I now suggest leaving the fences facing the car park and the houses behind uncovered, and including picnic tables near the gates for parents or guardians of kids playing here. The fence bordering the main road and the new flowerbed, however, would still have vines planted there.

I'd be interested to know what anyone else thinks of the plans. Would anyone like to add any suggestions? If so, please feel free to contact me using the ARCHER's details on page 2.

Yours faithfully Jake Eiseman-Renyard, Fortis Green, N2.

Cherry Tree Wood pavilion: the full story Dear Editor,

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to all those people who have emailed me and written letters of support and kind offers of help to shape the Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion project. I would also like to thank the members of our Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion committee for their on-going support and giving up so much of their time last year.

Girl about East Finchley Home, James

By Fay Sanders

Ok, so orientation's never been my forte. Some say it's because I'm left-handed, others say it's because I'm blonde. I prefer the left-handed theory. When my cousin James drove from St Albans to visit me for the first time, I was determined to give him a good flavour of the area. We ambled towards Muswell Hill, where I took him for lunch in the Crocodile Café.

As we walked back towards my flat, I decided I should show him more of East Finchley. I'd already been living here a few months, but what with working long hours and often being away at weekends, I'd scarcely had time to explore properly myself.

So, instead of walking directly to my home off East End Road, we cut off to the right after Budgens. From there, we meandered through little twittens and pathways between houses.

James wasn't so keen a walker as me, and I sensed his mounting impatience to go back to the flat so I conceded that maybe I could discover East Finchley another time on my own.

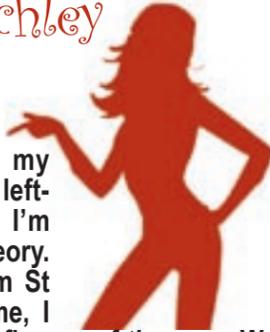
Losing our way

Then it dawned on me that I didn't actually know where home was! We had turned so many times and the streets looked so similar. After encountering the same street for the second or third time, James twigged that we were lost and I couldn't keep up the pretence any longer. He was surprisingly good-natured about the whole episode, especially when the first spots of rain began to fall.

Losing face

I realised I had to get us back home soon, so seized my opportunity as we passed a gaggle of people coming out of the Windsor Castle pub. "Excuse me," I called out. "Does anyone know where East End Road is?" With a mixture of delight and humiliation I heard the response: "Yes, of course, where do you need to go exactly?"

I paused, thinking how to answer that question without losing face, and then decided I couldn't. "My home," I mumbled sheepishly, which was met by a roar of laughter. At least I'd caused amusement, not only to a group of strangers, but also to my poor cousin. Within minutes we were back on East End Road and I decided I would definitely embark upon my next mission to explore the area alone.



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January at the Phoenix

By the Phoenix Cinema's Paul Homer A new year at the Phoenix and one that we hope will bring a major change to your local cinema. The Phoenix is special because it is a charity run by the people, for the people. It really is your cinema, and we are trying to make it wonderful again for you to enjoy for many years to come. We still need to raise the final few thousands of pounds, however, to realise the project, so if you've yet to donate please ask at the cinema or go to www.justgiving.com/phoenix-cinema.

We are now in the middle of the awards season with the Baftas, Golden Globes and Oscars all happening in the next few weeks. An adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's The Road, which plays at the Phoenix from 8 January, is sure to be among the top nominations. The last film to be adapted from another McCarthy novel, No Country for Old Men, was rightly lauded as one of the best films of the year. We expect The Road, a harrowing tale of a father and son walking towards the coast in a post-apocalyptic America, to be in the same league.

The end of the month sees master filmmaker Jacques Audiard's new film The Prophet at the Phoenix from 22 January.

Winner of the Grand Jury prize at Cannes, this is exhilarating filmmaking about a prisoner who defies the conventional power structure in a modern French prison.

To close the month, for one screening only we have one of the greatest films of all time, Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather, in a digitally restored version on Sunday 24 January at 1.30pm. Marlon Brando and Al Pacino give career-defining performances in this epic tale of family values and organised crime. We're making you an offer you can't refuse.

Our box office is on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

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