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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURTIERS

March 2010 No. 196 **20p**
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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Happy birthday, Geoffrey!

Renowned composer Geoffrey Hanson celebrated his 70th birthday with a special concert at All Saints Church, Durham Road. Read our review on page 10)

Could we take charge of East Finchley?

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local resident Harriet Copperman has a question for East Finchley. In her words: are we fed up enough with Barnet Council to set up our own local council? It can be done, and it only needs 10% of a particular community to set the ball rolling.

Although Barnet would retain overall control, a portion of the Barnet Council tax would go to a local council to provide, maintain or contribute to local resources and services. Since 1997 around 200 new local councils have been created, and recent changes to the law mean that they can now be set up in London too.

The

Gloucestershire model

Harriet, who was brought up in Finchley and has lived in Stokes Court for the past three years, was involved in the establishment of the North London Hospice, for which she was awarded an OBE.

She has observed a local council at work when she lived in a rural community in Gloucestershire. "It served fewer than 1,000 people," she told *THE ARCHER*. "Compare this with Barnet's population of more than 300,000, which is approximately the population of Gloucestershire. So whilst Barnet has one authority, Gloucestershire has a number of town, district and parish councils."

Ending party dominance

She describes herself as deeply frustrated by Barnet's decision to focus resources on six town centres, and what she sees as the corresponding neglect of other areas, including East Finchley.

Truly local councillors, she believes, could really make things happen, rather than suffering the impotence of being a Barnet councillor, where decisions are taken along party lines. In a local setting, each council member's vote carries the same weight. They would also have



much more knowledge and interest in the local issues they were dealing with than a Barnet councillor living on the other side

of the borough.

Further information

Applications to set up a local council can only be made if more than 10% of the area is in favour. There is then a clearly defined process to go through, with a "community governance review".

More information on the subject is available from the National Association of Local Councils www.nalc.gov.uk or www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Create_a_Council/Create_a_council.aspx

Comments or questions would be welcome via *THE ARCHER* or harriem2@btinternet.com

Brace yourself for Northern line shutdown

By David Melsome

Passengers using the Northern line are facing severe disruption over the next 18 months as services are shut down on weekends and early on weekdays to let maintenance work take place.

Saturday 27 March is expected to be the first of 64 weekend closures lasting until October 2011. Then from July, the line will close an hour earlier at 11.30pm on Mondays to Thursdays, meaning the last trains could leave central London around 10.30pm.

Tube Lines say the closures are essential to bring in a new computerised signalling system,

which will eventually increase capacity on the line by 20%.

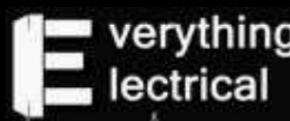
No replacement buses

Weekday commuters are unlikely to be affected by the upgrade work, but it will have a serious impact on people wanting to get home from an evening out in town. Those who wish to use the Northern line on weekends will have to take buses instead. No dedicated rail replacement service is planned.

Transport for London, which has contracted Tube Lines to upgrade the Northern, Jubilee and Piccadilly lines, has not confirmed whether all 64 weekend closures will be allowed. Permission is currently in place for the early closing and for 16 weekend closures. Tube Lines has said it needs all 64 weekend closures if it is to get the job done.



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Haringey Council 020 8489 0000

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East Finchley Library 020 8359 3815
Muswell Hill Odeon 0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema 020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema 020 8446 9933

Transport

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London Transport 020 7222 1234
National Express 08705 808080
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Finchley Memorial 020 8349 7500
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Drugs Helpline 0800 776600
MIND 020 8343 5700
NHS Direct 0845 4647

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

Big Issue sellers

moved on

By Janet Maitland

Two sellers of *The Big Issue* have recently been moved on from the site outside Budgens by officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Team. "We have moved two unauthorised persons away from the area because they did not display a correct ID badge or they were over-zealous in their selling techniques," said Sergeant Andy Matthews.

The Big Issue was set up in 1991 to help solve the problem of homelessness by offering a legitimate alternative to begging. Sellers try to earn a living by buying the magazine for 75p and selling it for £1.50. They are authorised to sell at a specific site, which is displayed on their ID badge. The area just outside Budgens has been an authorised site for *Big Issue* sellers for many years.

Keeping to the rules

"If a regular seller is not at their site, other sellers are allowed to use the pitch, as long as they leave if the seller returns and providing their badge is for London," said a spokesperson for *The Big Issue*. One of the sellers who was moved on had a

badge from Loughton in Essex. The other seller was also moved on as she did not have the correct ID badge.

Before being authorised, sellers have to sign an agreement specifying that they are not allowed to beg while wearing the badge or to "sell in any way associated with begging, including sitting or lying down or using a cup or bowl to collect money".

"Members of the public should not be repeatedly asked or badgered," said Sgt Matthews. "The vast majority of authorised *Big Issue* sellers are polite and cause no problem whatsoever. Unfortunately, some unauthorised persons can spoil this."

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

45 Bedford Road, N2
Single storey side/rear extension following demolition of existing shed.
6A Sedgemere Avenue, N2
Extensions to roof including rear dormer window and installation of roof lights to facilitate a loft conversion.
27-29 Leicester Road, N2
Erection of a two-storey plus rooms in roof semi-detached house at 29 Leicester Road. Addition of associated landscape to the front, and alterations to the side of the existing house at 27 Leicester Road to include the reinstatement of a previously blocked window facing 25 Leicester Road.

Haringey Council

42 Beech Drive, N2
Excavation of basement to create lower ground floor and creation of light wells to front and rear and erection of single storey rear extension.
79 Fordington Road, N6
Erection of rear dormer window including side gable extension, with insertion of two Velux windows to front elevation to facilitate a loft conversion.
16 Shakespeare Gardens, N2
Erection of side dormer window and conversion of roof from hip to gable with insertion of two roof lights.
10 Twyford Avenue, N2
Erection of first floor extension to create en suite bathroom.

Keep burglars out

Age Concern Barnet is inviting older people to come to a free Action against Burglary Roadshow to learn simple tips on how to beat the burglar and stay safe in their homes.

Although older people are no more likely to be victims of burglary than other age groups, the sheer fear of this type of crime can seriously affect their quality of life, says the charity.

The roadshow will feature a performance by the Attic Theatre Company of *Ma Kelly's Doorstep* and information and advice will be available from the community police, trading standards and the fire brigade on the simple actions people can take to feel and be safer in their homes.

Mark Robinson, Chief Officer at Age Concern Barnet, said: "Distraction burglary is a heartless crime, which can have a devastating impact on older people, both emotionally and financially. Simple actions such as using the door chain or having adequate locks fitted on doors and windows can give older people an edge against burglars and bogus callers."

The Action Against Burglary Roadshow will take place at The Heritage Centre, Church End,

Hendon on 11 March at 10.30am. To attend, book a place by phoning Lisa Dubow on 020 8432 1417.

Man dies from drugs overdose

By Janet Maitland

Three people have been arrested following the death of a man from a suspected drugs overdose on 29 January.

Police officers went to an address in East End Road after a call to the emergency services at 7.45am reporting that a 23-year-old man had no pulse and was not breathing. They carried out cardiopulmonary resuscitation until London Ambulance arrived and took over. The man was taken to the Royal Free Hospital where he was pronounced dead. The arrested men have been bailed while enquiries are made.

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Rethink for Cherry Tree Wood pavilion plans

Proposals to bring new life to the derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood have been reworked in the wake of concerns raised by a number of residents. The new plans will go on display in the wood this month, ahead of a potential planning application to Barnet Council.

The original plan to demolish the existing pavilion and replace it with an eco-friendly building housing a café and an upstairs space for the use of local groups, exhibitions and meetings triggered a fierce controversy.

Some people objected that the scheme was out of keeping with the park and would cause disruption to local residents with its evening opening hours. Others feared that it would infringe too heavily on the existing woodland.

Response to consultation

Sally-Anne Wigfield, who runs the existing kiosk in the wood, has now revised her pavilion plans. She says the new plan will keep the existing pavilion building, retaining the roof, and will not affect any of

the surrounding woodland. It will operate on a similar basis to the existing kiosk in that it will not be open outside standard park hours, will be accessible only from existing park entrances and will sell healthy food and snacks, drinks and ice cream.

She said the new idea came out of six months of consultation, discussions at the kiosk, public meetings and one-to-one chats with people. Sally says she has tried to take all comments and concerns into account and is hoping that the new plan will meet all the needs and wishes of the local community.

Continuing concerns

Whether these revised proposals will allay the fears of some members of the community is yet to be seen. One concern is that such a

development, with its large number of clients, could have an adverse effect on those who have used and enjoyed the playground and surrounding parkland for years; another is the impact any over-utilization might have on the wood itself.

There have been demands for an environmental study to be carried out in the pavilion area and Barnet Council's attitude to conservation has been called into question. Objectors are also worried about what would happen to the proposed building and the regulations governing its use, should it change hands in the future.



Restoration work starts at Phoenix

After more than a year of fundraising, work is starting on the £1 million restoration of the Phoenix Cinema as it approaches its centenary celebrations. Chief executive Paul Homer gives us an update.

We did it. As you read this, the first hard hats will be being donned, the first scaffolding will be being erected, and those yellow health and safety notices will have been pinned up. The builders are here. We're delighted to be ready to restore our lovely but aged building and make it into the cinema that you deserve.

The people of East Finchley have supported the Phoenix for many years and we recognise that some of that support was out of loyalty despite the fact that the sound was a bit rubbish, the seats were uncomfortable and the building was a bit tatty. Over the last ten years or so we've addressed a host of problems, creating a much larger foyer space, re-seating the auditorium and making significant improvements to our projection and technical facilities.

More than loyalty

This restoration project will tackle the numerous remaining issues, creating a landmark building that all of East Finchley and North London can be proud of. Those of us lucky enough to be involved in running the cinema are very proud of the building, its history and all the work we do. This project will enable everyone to share that pride, not out of loyalty, but out of genuine delight in a beautiful cinema with excellent technical facilities, great customer service, a fantastic programme of films and events and a lovely café-bar.

Work schedule

By late August we hope to have the cinema ready for you to see, though there will be some disruption in the next six months. From March to May we'll be open for evenings and weekends only as the builders tackle the exterior of the building in the daytime. Then from June we'll be closed completely for the interior work.

More details can be found on our website where we'll be posting photographs of the work in progress as well as a regular blog about the works. For tickets and information, call our box office on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

Action needed to save allotments

By Sheila Armstrong
The Fortis Green Community Allotments Trust needs to raise more than £30,000 by 31 March to enable it to buy the allotment land it occupies, currently owned by Thames Water. If the money is not raised by that date, the Trust could lose the deal.

Campaigners have fought hard to get this far, persuading Thames Water to remove the land from an auction sale and then convincing the company that they are serious about buying it for themselves.

The trust is appealing for donations to help this good cause, saving much-needed allotment plots where for decades people have grown fruit and vegetables and simply enjoyed the open air.

You can donate online at www.savefortisgreenallotments.com, or you can send a cheque, payable to Fortis Green Community Allotments Trust, to 33 Midhurst Avenue, London N10 3EP. The Trust has said it will undertake to return all donations over £20 if it fails to reach its fundraising target.

Local artist Sarah McMenemy has given a signed limited edition of 100 prints of the allotments to raise funds. Contact info@savefortisgreenallotments.com to find out more about this and other fundraising events.

I might need some stabilisers!

By Diana Cormack

It's not often you come across something this interesting on your way to nursery school, but two and a half-year-old Alex found this penny farthing propped up outside Alan's Records at 218 High Road.

It is owned by Martin Henham Antiques. Martin, who shares the premises with Alan Dobrin, told *THE ARCHER* that the bike, manufactured in 1910, was called "The Ordinary". Sharp-eyed readers may notice that it has no pedals. Sadly, they were stolen a few years ago, along with many other items, when the antiques were put into storage for a short time.

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CCTV footage leads to arrest

By Janet Maitland

A 17-year-old girl has been arrested and charged with attempted robbery at a party that she gatecrashed on Beresford Road in the early hours of Saturday 6 February.

She allegedly threatened party-goers with a knife, demanding cash and mobile phones, and was later seen on CCTV allegedly smashing the window of the Safer Neighbourhood Team office on the High Road. The girl, who cannot be named because of her age, was identified and arrested at 3pm on 8 February. She was also charged with criminal damage.



Mayor of London objects to medical centre

By Janet Maitland

The Mayor of London has raised further objections to a second application to increase the size of a medical centre planned for the site of the former Finchley Manor Garden centre on East End Road.

In September 2008 Barnet Council gave permission, which still stands, to Cloverdale Estates for a medical centre of less than 1,000 square metres. However, the property development company then submitted a further application for a centre of over 2,000 square metres.

Barnet Council refused permission for this last December. Their grounds were that the open character of the land, designated as Metropolitan Open Land, which has similar building restrictions to the Green Belt, would be spoilt, because of the number of enclosed cycling spaces now required as a result of the increase in size. There were also a number of sustainability requirements that had not been met.

Drop in for crime prevention

By Janet Maitland

The Church End Safer Neighbourhood Team has started a new drop-in surgery on the third Wednesday of every month at the Library on Hendon Lane, N3. The next one is on 17 March between 12 noon and 2pm. Pop in if you'd like to raise any issues about local crime, or if you'd like some advice about crime prevention.

The team will continue to run the drop-in surgery at Avenue House on East End Road on the first Wednesday of every month, also between 12 noon and 2pm. For more information, contact the team on 020 8733 5598.

Watch out, scams about

By Janet Maitland

If a man you didn't know knocked at your door asking to borrow £10, would you give it to him?

Probably not. But what if he said he was a neighbour from a few doors along who was trying to rush to hospital as his partner had just gone into labour, but his son was at home with a friend and they needed the money for the electric meter? You probably would, even if you didn't recognise him, particularly if he was well spoken and charming and offered to leave his mobile as security.

The Golders Green and Childs Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team are warning members of the public about a man doing exactly this. He is described as a white male aged 25-30 with dark blonde hair, who has managed successfully to con money off several elderly or vulnerable people. As yet, there are no reports as of this man operating in East Finchley.

Telecoms tricksters

Separately, Barnet Borough Watch is warning people about another door-to-door scam. Two men called on a house in Cecilia Close claiming to be from telecoms companies AOL or TalkTalk. Described as being in their mid-20s, they looked official, wearing plastic cards on lanyards round their necks and holding notebooks. They said they were updating computer systems.

When the victim told them he wasn't interested, the men insisted they had to come in. The victim refused and rang AOL who said that for all updates an email would always be sent in advance. Neighbours also experienced the same trick.

If any of these bogus callers come to your house, dial 999. If you have any information that could help to track them down, call 0300 123 1212.

Sign up for crime alerts

By Sergeant Andy Matthews

We've worked hard on reducing crime in the last year and are pleased that the number of recorded offences in East Finchley has fallen by 6%. But we're committed to making your neighbourhood a safer place to live, work and visit, so there's no room for complacency.

We've set up a new initiative called E-WATCH, which will alert you if an incident such as burglary or vehicle crime has happened on your street or very nearby.

All we need to start this new scheme is your email address, your home address and your name. The addresses will be filed under street name and will only be used to get in touch with you. They will not be passed to any third party.

An added bonus is that a resident or business can use E-

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Protected tree damaged by building work

By Janet Maitland

A giant, ancient cedar tree protected by a tree preservation order has been damaged as a result of building work on the site of the former Thomas More Centre on East End Road.

Janice Wagner, who lives close by, informed THE ARCHER that she saw workmen on a hydraulic lift cutting off four or five lower branches of the tree with a chainsaw on 4 February. She reported this to Barnet Council and Councillor Colin Rogers, who visited the site later that day.

"The site manager told me he had permission to prune the tree, but he couldn't show me anything from the council to prove it," said Janice Wagner. "The architect came to see me later in the day and said that the branches were already broken so they were lopped off. But they were all right before the building work started."

Council action awaited

Cllr. Rogers said the contractors explained they had cut the branches off to make room for the machinery to be used for excavation work to build the underground car park. He added: "But they didn't ask permission

and the council may decide to prosecute."

The planning application for the building states that 'none of the trees will have to be pruned' for the work to be carried out.

A Barnet Council spokesperson said: "We're investigating the matter and will be formally interviewing the developer before deciding what further action is appropriate."

"If the council decides not to prosecute," said Janice Wagner, "I'm worried that the builders will not take enough care when they're excavating and will damage the roots."

The planning application states that the roots of the tree will not be damaged when excavation takes place, because they are already restricted by the wall that runs along the edge of the site. However, as a precaution, sheet piling will be used to support the sides of the hole.

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Dad campaigns for more playgroups

A father is campaigning for more playgroups in East Finchley after being turned away from several local play groups that were full to capacity.

Adam Porter, who runs his own Dads' Club for fathers looking after children, said he has witnessed many parents, carers and their children being refused entry to playgroups, both church and nursery-based.

Adam, of Leslie Road, said: "This is particularly concerning when the weather is cold and there is a lack of indoor play facilities in our area. These groups are vital for the community. Many parents, especially single parents, feel isolated and these groups connect them to the community, providing them with support.

"They are also essential to the development of pre-school

children as they are able to play and socialise with other children, which in turn prepares them for school."

Playgroup petition

Adam has started a petition entitled 'We need more playgroups in East Finchley'. More than 100 people have already signed and he expects much more support in coming weeks. He plans to present the petition to Barnet Council and various local businesses in order to gain active support.



Adam and his son Dylan

Practising what he preaches, Adam has started running a new playgroup at a Sure Start Children's Centre in the grounds of Highgate Primary School, every Wednesday from 9am-12pm.

Adam says it is designed to encourage fathers with children to become more involved in playing with their children. Mums are of course welcome too. For more information, go to <http://thedadsclublondon.blogspot.com/>

Church Lane traffic campaign gathers speed

By Caroline Broome

The first East Finchley Village Residents Association meeting of 2010 opened with the largest turnout of members to date. In addition to regular members, we welcomed several new local residents as well as guest speaker PCSO Sam Hedger from the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The main agenda item was Church Lane traffic control problems. In response to requests made by chair Bob Owens on behalf of EFVRA, Barnet Council conducted traffic surveys in Church Lane over a four-day period in December 2009. An increase in average speed to 29.5mph, from 22mph in a previous survey, proved that traffic is getting faster. The maximum recorded speed was 56mph.

Cars are also continuing to drive over the railway bridge the wrong way, particularly during rush hour, making a fatal accident increasingly likely. Several local residents have reported vehicle confrontations at the bridge. EFVRA is planning a meeting with police and Barnet Council to discuss these concerns.

PCSO Hedger reported that in response to requests by EFVRA, a police presence was arranged on Church Lane at the bridge between 7am and 10.30am one morning in early January. Further surveillance of this nature is planned.

PCSO Hedger also said he would liaise with Barnet Council regarding reduction or clearance of obstacles such as overgrown plant displays at the Church Lane junction with King Street, in order to improve visibility for pedestrians.

Marking property

An initiative that the Safer Neighbourhood Team is hoping to instigate more widely in N2 is the "Smart Water" Scheme, similar to the old Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This involves the marking of personal property for identification. If stolen it can be matched with DNA prints, leading to 100% conviction rates. Police are piloting the scheme in Abbots Gardens, and then extending it to the county roads, while advertising it in the area to deter burglars.

Contact EFVRA at east.finchley.village.residents.association@virginmedia.com. The next EFVRA meeting will be held at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2 on 22 March at 8pm.

Bogus police officer

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Police have been informed that a man posing as a police officer has been knocking on doors in Hendon.

He claims to be doing a survey and is carrying leaflets with the words Colindale Police on them, but has no form of identification. If you are approached by this man, or have seen any such leaflets, please contact the police on 0300 123 1212, or contact Paul Hammond from Boroughwatch at Paul.Hammond@Barnet.gov.uk

One for your diary...

This year's East Finchley Community Festival takes place in Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 20 June.

An excellent line-up of music, entertainment, food, drink and fun activities is promised. Could someone book the sunshine?

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Olivia 19 months, Adam 5months, Elliot 15 months with their mums who come from Poland, Italy and England.

New baby group is born

By Diana Cormack

Last June, a much-needed toddler group opened at East Finchley Methodist Church on the High Road. EFM Toddlers works on a first-come, first-served basis and has proved so popular that not all those who turn up for the 9.30am start on Thursdays can get in.

For the lucky ones who do, an increasing number of games and toys are available, the most recent being a travel-cot ball pit and a variety of play mats. A climbing frame is on order.

Organisers Linda Askew and Chris Fairclough paid tribute to the minister Michael Giles for this abundance of activities. "He is fully supportive of what we are doing and makes no charge for our use of the hall," they told THE ARCHER, "so the money we take can go towards providing things the group needs."

Baby club

One recent acquisition is a nappy changing unit, which

should prove beneficial to the next phase planned. On 4 March a group specifically for babies from 0 to walking age is starting. Like the toddler group, it will be open to all faiths and will give new mothers the opportunity to socialise and get advice and support with any problems they might have. It will also give adults a chance to relax while the little ones play, helped by a ban on the presence of older siblings.

The baby club will run on Thursday afternoons between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. For more information on both groups call Linda on 07905 102 721.

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The power of pilates

By Fay Sanders

A new business has opened its doors in Church Lane and its fully-equipped studio has been piquing the interest of local residents. Pilates Nation group founder Alison Goodman says: "People have been popping their heads in and asking what it's all about. Several sign up, while others just call by to welcome me to the community."

In full view of the main window lies a giant, bed-shaped contraption, curiously named the 'Cadillac', decked with a bewildering array of paraphernalia. Further into the studio, rows of 'towers' (the apparatus) and 'mats' (for floor exercises) stretch into the main room where classes take place.

Alison put your *ARCHER* representatives through their paces in a series of carefully explained exercises, which were surprisingly challenging for two physically fit girls in their early 30s.

Improved strength, stability and flexibility, better posture, flatter stomach,



Alison Goodman with the 'Cadillac'. Photo by Fay Sanders

stress relief, as well as relief from joint and back problems are just some of the many proven benefits of the practice invented by German-born Joseph Hubertus Pilates in the early 1900s.

Meeting different needs
"Everyone's needs are different," explained Alison. "Three years ago I worked with a client suffering from a brain tumour, who had lost the feeling in one side of his body." She is considering putting on a special class for men, whose needs are different to those of women. "Men tend to be less flexible than women, but have greater physical strength," she said.

For more information, visit www.pilatesnation.co.uk or telephone 020 8444 5244.

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Fortis Green junction: changes ahead

Our article last month on Barnet Council's proposed alterations to the junction of High Road, Fortis Green and East End Road provoked a flurry of letters and comment from *ARCHER* readers.

Many remain to be convinced that reducing the size of the pavement outside Domino's Pizza, removing the Fortis Green pedestrian island and removing guard rails on all corners of the junction will improve pedestrian safety.

Others called on the council to use this opportunity finally to introduce a right-turn traffic

Junction bollards were there for a reason

Dear Editor,

Regarding the report in *THE ARCHER* about proposals for safety improvements at the junction of High Road N2 with Fortis Green and East End Road, I have lived in East Finchley for 35 years so know the junction and its physical limitations well. I have spent some time in the past discussing problems with council traffic engineers. I hope the information below will be helpful.

The article says the council is proposing to remove the steel bollards from both sides of Fortis Green. The reason the bollards were put there was to stop pavement parking on both sides. Motorists had a regular habit of parking on the pavement to visit businesses.

At a later stage the bollards were extended towards Fairlawn Avenue to stop motorists driving on the pavement to get into the left turn lane when the lane was partially blocked by stationary traffic in the right hand lane.

I hope the other measures proposed will make improvements. The problem of heavy vehicles turning at the Domino's Pizza corner is long standing (the traffic signals have been demolished many times and the pavement continuously damaged). All pedestrians using this junction will be concerned with moving the kerb line. How much pavement are they proposing to remove?

Yours faithfully,
Peter Hale
Springcroft Avenue, N2.

Junction traffic should be filtered

Dear Editor,

The one most obvious improvement not listed in the proposals for improving the junction of the High Road, East End Road and Fortis Green is the installation of a filter traffic light for the traffic going north on the High Road and turning right into Fortis Green. This would certainly improve the flow of traffic at that point.

I would also question the wisdom of removing the guard-rails on the corners of the junction. If the kerb lines are being moved back, the guard-rails should be replaced on the new corners as this is a safety factor for pedestrians.

Yours faithfully,
Joyce Arram
Summerlee Gardens, N2

light filter arrow for northbound traffic turning into Fortis Green, and to increase the time given for pedestrians to negotiate the junction.

In correspondence seen by *THE ARCHER*, Barnet Council has promised to review the junction's signal operations in the next financial year. They will investigate the possibility

Not enough time to cross

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the informative article in the February issue regarding the High Road and Fortis Green junction. I have noted the list of the proposed changes, which seem appropriate.

I am disappointed that there is no mention of altering the duration of the green traffic lights for pedestrians. At present the green lights are too short in duration for pedestrians to cross the roads.

Yours faithfully,
Natasha Butler,
Leicester Road, N2.

A bridge would be better

Dear Editor,

Thanks for highlighting the changes proposed at the junction of Fortis Green and the High Road, which I use several times daily. In my opinion, these combine to raise the danger level to pedestrians at this crossing by a significant degree. On my first reading of the proposals, I was fully expecting the inclusion of a footbridge, so dangerous does it all seem.

Yours faithfully,
Prem Stasopoulos,
Diploma Avenue, N2.

Don't miss this chance

Dear Editor,

While changing this junction so radically (for the better as far as I can tell) no doubt at considerable expense and with considerable disruption, please can we incorporate a small but enormously important change to the traffic light sequencing at the crossroads to incorporate a short but hugely effective right-turn filter for traffic heading north up the High Road? For years, drivers have had to wait patiently for two or three cars at best (or one bus) to turn right at each light sequence.

I know every motorist I have ever asked about this agrees. It has infuriated locals like myself for years. We even have to take ridiculous measures like u-turning and going past the junction then to turn right down the narrow county roads just to avoid the usual minimum of five or six changes of light.

This is an opportunity to help bus passengers and motorists no end, yet at marginal cost. Please let's not miss it.

Yours faithfully,
John Mcknight,
Fortis Green, N2

of a right-turn arrow and will assess the adequacy of crossing times for pedestrians.

Meanwhile, in a *Letters Special*, here is a selection of your comments and reaction to the council's plans. You can write to us at *THE ARCHER*, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or email the-archer@lineone.net

Junction changes will threaten safety

Dear Editor,

I am very worried about the changes planned for the junction between the High Road and Fortis Green. The pavement is already very narrow coming to Domino's Pizza from Fortis Green. I have three children under six years old so removing the guard-rails at such a busy junction seems criminal to me. The more space, the faster the vehicles go.

The trouble for pedestrians is that the crossing time is not currently long enough, which is a safety hazard for toddlers and pre-schoolers, disabled or older people. If pedestrian safety is the reason for these changes, they have been very poorly planned.

How about making the crossing time longer for pedestrians, keeping the guard-rails and having a safe crossing from one side of Fortis Green to the other before the junction so that people in Fortis Green feel they can safely go shopping?

If this becomes more unsafe, then people will have to revert to using their cars to go shopping which I don't think is the right thing for the area or the environment.

Yours faithfully,
Isabelle Roberts
Address supplied.

Filter required

Dear Editor,

Having just read about the proposals for the improvements to the crossroad at Fortis Green and High Road, in all this proposed work and dislocation the vital thing that is missing is a filter light to help northbound traffic on the High Road to turn into Fortis Green.

It would be of great help in easing the traffic jams and long waits there. This suggestion has been brought up at numerous public meetings since Baronsmere Road was closed to northbound traffic. I hope Barnet Council will now give this serious consideration.

Yours faithfully,
Stanley Price,
Address supplied.

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



Plea for help from mugging victim

By Janet Maitland

A woman who was mugged and badly injured while walking home has issued a warning to others and a plea for help from witnesses to the attack.

As she walked down Devon Rise, off Brim Hill, at about 6.30pm on 22 January, Patricia Leonard heard a car stop a few yards behind her and then the sound of running feet. "I didn't turn round," said Patricia. "I'd walked all the way back from Muswell Hill with heavy shopping and was concentrating on getting home. The last thing on my mind was that I was about to be mugged."

Violent attack

Her shopping bags were suddenly grabbed from behind and she fell to the pavement, breaking two bones in her left hand and tearing the tendons in her side. Her attacker snatched her handbag, ran back to his car and drove off.

"I was lying on the pavement shouting for help with all my shopping scattered everywhere, but there was no one around," said Patricia. "I couldn't call the police till I got home as my mobile was in my bag. I had my keys in my pocket, which was just as well as my driving

licence with my address on it was also in the bag."

The mugger was a tall, white, 'bulky' man wearing a green hooded top that covered most of his face. He was driving a dark coloured old estate car with roof bars that ran widthways. Patricia was wearing a hooded pale grey raincoat and black trousers.

Pocket safety

"If anyone saw what happened, please get in touch with the police," said Patricia. "The hospital now thinks I may also have broken a bone on my right side and I've been in a lot of pain. I'm going to start carrying my mobile in my pocket as well as my keys, and I'd advise everyone to do the same."

Detective Sergeant Andy Grievesaid: "This is a particularly nasty robbery where the victim sustained quite serious injuries. If you have any information about the attack, please call 0300 123 1212. If you want to remain anonymous, ring Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."



Party entertainers: - from left: An Hongzhen, Yu Xzaohuz and Chang Yuyuan - with Mandarin teacher Wu Shu Jyun. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain.

Xin niàn kuái lé

By Daphne Chamberlain

Chinese readers, please excuse what you are about to read! If anyone, like me, automatically linked the Chinese for Happy New Year with Kung Hoi Fat Choi, that's only partly right. It's the Cantonese version. In Mandarin, it is Xin niàn kuái lé.

As I discovered at last month's New Year party at The Institute, a group of East Finchley's English speakers can manage not only this, but at least ten sentences in conversational Mandarin. They all agreed that learning this subject was a lot of fun. So was the party, which had a real family atmosphere.

The youngest guest was 15-month-old Chinese-born Leah, while some of the English students were more than 70 years older, but enjoying the mental stimulus of learning Mandarin. They have actually found it easier than expected. Using our Roman alphabet helps, but they all agreed that the humour and enthusiasm of class teacher Wu Shu Jyun has a lot to do with

it too.

Indicating the raffle prizes, Ms Wu laughed: "Everyone knows how to say two bottles of wine." Two students who visit China from time to time vouched for the success of her travel-friendly approach.

Guests enjoyed home-cooked refreshments, kicking the shuttlecock, picking up as many things as possible with

chopsticks, and demonstrations of Tai Chi, fan-dancing, and playing a traditional two-stringed bowed instrument. The tune played was one for happy occasions; the middle part sounded very Chinese, but the beginning and end reminded me of party music on an Irish fiddle, which seemed appropriate as the Year of the Tiger bounded in for this international gathering.

Festival clash with playground plans

The plans to install an adventure playground in Cherry Tree Wood that we reported in our last issue are good news for youngsters and families in the park but could create a major headache for organisers of the East Finchley Community Festival.

Barnet Council will shortly be installing new climbing and play equipment on the grass outside the current fenced-off playground. This area of land is a major entry and exit point for festival-goers and is close to the traditional site of the festival's main music stage.

Festival organisers are worried that the new playground will force a complete rethink of layout arrangements for the

event, to be held this year on Sunday 20 June. They also have concerns over health and safety if access routes are blocked.

As we went to press, festival representatives told *THE ARCHER* that efforts were being made to get an urgent meeting with council officers and councillors on site, to see if alternatives that would assist the festival could be worked out.

Firewalk for Hospice

North London Hospice is holding its first firewalk to raise funds for specialist patient care. Those with a burning ambition to firewalk can hot-foot it across five metres of smouldering coals, measuring more than 800 degrees, all in the name of charity.

The firewalk will be held at the Five Bells Pub, East End Road, N2, on Saturday 8 May. Its large garden is an ideal venue for such an event and the hospice hopes to attract dozens of walkers, along with family and friends to cheer them on.

Azey Siddiqui, community fundraiser, said: "It's fundraising with a difference and also allows those who are unable to run or cycle any distance to take part in a major fundraising event."

The brave participants will

be given an hour's motivational talk beforehand to fire them up for the walk. Spectators will be entertained by live band Metal Detectors while they wait to cheer on their friends.

Registration is £30 with no minimum sponsorship, although participants are of course encouraged to raise as much money as possible.

For further information or a registration form please contact Azey at North London Hospice on 020 8446 2288 or asiddiqui@northlondonhospice.co.uk

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6th Finchley Cubs enjoying themselves at camp.

Calling all Cubs

By Sarah Leaman

Are you worried that your child spends too much time in front of a screen and would rather they were outside doing something more interesting? Have you thought about them joining a Cub troop?

According to one Cub, "the best thing about Cubs is the games we play and learning all about science for our Science badge". However, nearly 80 years of scouting history at Avenue House in East End Road are under threat following the 6th Finchley troop's struggle to find new members.

The 6th Finchley has met in the hut at Avenue House since 1932. A plaque commemorates its opening as a scout headquarters by Reverend Stewart Bernays, the Rector of Finchley, on 20 February that year.

The number of Cubs has fallen to just eight this year after the families of several former members moved out of the area. That number is unsustainably low for a troop, and makes it difficult for scout leaders to arrange outside activities, including its annual camp.

Ideal for activities

Peter Blayney, Akela for 6th Finchley, said: "It would be a real shame if we cannot attract more members. It's an ideal location, particularly in summer, when we are able to make full use of the beautiful park at Avenue House."

The Cubs can complete activities for up to 20 badges, including Air Activities, centred round a visit to the RAF Museum at Hendon. The annual cub camp takes place near Watford, and includes archery and rock climbing.

Anyone interested in joining should drop in to the hut for the regular Monday evening meetings between 6.30pm and 8pm. The age range is six to eight for Beavers, eight to 11 for Cubs and 11 to 14 for Scouts. Beavers meet at 5.30-6.30pm and Cubs at 6.45-8pm, both on Mondays.

Easter Services in East Finchley

East Finchley Baptist Church

Good Friday, 2 April: 10.30am, Combined Good Friday Communion Service, with Wilton Community Church Coppetts Road. Easter Sunday, 4 April: 10.30am, Easter All-Ages Together service (creche provided).

All Saints Parish Church

Palm Sunday, 28 March: 10am, Solemn Mass with Blessing of Palms, Procession and Sung Passion. Maundy Thursday, 1 April: 8pm, Mass of the Lord's Supper and Watch until Midnight. Good Friday, 2 April: 3pm, Sung Celebration of the Lord's Passion. Holy Saturday, 3 April: 8pm, The Easter Vigil. Easter Day, 4 April: 10am Parish Mass of Easter Day.

St Mary's Catholic Church

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, 28 March: Blessing of palms and procession before each Mass, 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon. Monday of Holy Week, 29 March: 10am, Mass with Morning Prayer, 7.30pm, Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconcili-

ation. Tuesday of Holy Week, 30 March: 10am, Mass with Morning Prayer. Wednesday of Holy Week, 31 March: 10am, Liturgy of the Word & Holy Communion. Maundy Thursday, 1 April: 8pm, Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, followed by watching at the Altar of Repose until 10.30pm. Good Friday, 2 April: 3pm, Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 7.30pm, Stations of the Cross. Holy Saturday, 3 April: 8pm, The Easter Vigil. Easter Sunday, 4 April: Mass at 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon.

East Finchley Methodist Church

Maundy Thursday, 1 April: 8pm, Maundy Thursday United Service (at Ballards Lane Methodist Church) Holy Communion. Good Friday, 2 April: 10.30am, Reflections on the Cross. Easter Sunday, 4 April: 10.30am, Easter Day Celebration Service: Holy Communion, crèche, Easter egg hunt, refreshments.

Holy Trinity Church

Sorry, no information available at time of going to press.

YOUNG ARCHER

School pupils help the children of Haiti

By Julia Bramson

Moved by the plight of children whose lives have been shattered by the earthquake in Haiti, many of our schools have gone all out to raise money. Manorside Primary School in Squires Lane, for example, had a target of £1,000 to be raised for aid charity UNICEF and every class proposed their own fundraising activity.

Reception was one of the first classes to launch their initiative by selling cakes, scones and pizza. Year 1 held a book, DVD and games sale on two afternoons, managing to recycle as well as raise money. Year 2 sold bookmarks and customized T-shirts with a unique design for the bargain price of 50p.

Year 3 offered the chance to win a jar of sweets AND a teddy bear for the closest estimate of sweets in the jar. A very successful penalty shoot-out involving children vs. teachers was organized by Year 4. The Year 6 raffle and cake sale was also a huge success.

One week before half term, the school had raised over £1,050, and that was before Year 5's non-uniform day that will raise £1 per child and, better still, £5 for every



non-participating teacher.

Commenting on how this fundraising effort had surpassed all others during his time at the school, headteacher Steve Hilborne said: "The children have led this, not

the teachers. The response of each class is fantastic, and that's not to mention those who have gone round door-to-door to their neighbours collecting money, or donating their pocket money."

Choral masterpieces and a choral disaster-piece

By Marian Bunzl

Rehearsals are under way for the North London Chorus's next concert, a trio of Baroque masterpieces accompanied by a small ensemble of specialist period instrumentalists.

The central work is Handel's astonishing work of choral virtuosity *Dixit Dominus*. The concert opens with an undeservedly little-known mass by JS Bach, the *Lutheran Mass in F Major*, and includes three extracts from Buxtehude's exquisite *Passiontide cantata Membra Jesu Nostris*.

The concert takes place on Saturday 20 March at 7.30pm at St. James Church, Muswell Hill, N10. Tickets are available on 020 8351 8774; from Les Aldrich Music Shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, N10; and on the evening at the door. Visit www.northlondonchorus.org.uk.

Meanwhile, I would like to share with you a meditation on the dark night of the soul that comes to all choral societies, particularly at their final rehearsal, by which time the choir has lost the plot and the musical director has lost the will to live. Ladies and gentlemen, I present *Black Thursday*, to the tune of *My Way*.

And now, the concert's nigh, and we have reached the final practice.

Theave a heavy sigh, and curse and screech, because the fact is I tried, I even cried, and sank my pride, in every which way But you, dear choir, will not do it my way.

You forgot all that I taught, the blooming lot has left your senses.

You sing in all the rests and you breathe when what I said is Sing through and don't boom out, when what I want is molto dolce. I pray, I say Oy Vey, don't sing it your way.

Sometimes you disagree with speed or key while I'm directing But I'm the boss and I get cross when you don't follow my correcting.

I'm not in a good mood, in fact I'm in a very bad way.

Oh please, on bended knees, just do it my way.

At last, the concert's come, the church is full, I raise my baton.

Tomysurprise, I see your eyes, they are on me with full attention.

And at the last amen, when from the hall, the cheers rise skyway,

Dear Choir, I love you all, you did it MY WAY.

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- ❖ EF National Childbirth Trust contact Ruby Yang or Patrizia Canwell at eastfinchleynct@googlemail.com
- ❖ Newstead Parent & Toddler Group, Thurs 9-12-30, Green Man Ctr. Sajni 8359 3460.
- ❖ Old Barn pre-school club, contact 8349 4613/1961
- ❖ Parent & Toddler Group, Green Man Centre, Julia 8444 2276
- ❖ Stepping Stones, interactive play session for under 3's. Karen 07957 278860.

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Easter Day

10.00 am Parish Mass of Easter Day

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Something to talk

about

By Fay Sanders

Tucked away at the top end of East Finchley High Road is a bustling new business enterprise. Speakers Corner specialises in finding presenters and celebrities for anything from after-dinner or conference speaking to jetting away on a private plane for an extravagant birthday weekend. Many a famous name has set foot in the East Finchley offices, including motivational speaker John Peters, the former RAF pilot who was captured and tortured by the Iraqis in the first Gulf War. "We like to test out new speakers in our offices at least a couple of times a month," said co-owner Nick Gold.

Other celebrities, such as political commentator John Sergeant, comedian Michael McIntyre or the One Show presenters are also in constant contact with the company.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most popular celebrities currently being hired are economists and business speakers. Speakers Corner's clients range from blue chip companies to event organisers to private requests. The likes of BBC business editor Robert Peston were named by Gold as being much in demand at the moment to help clients understand their companies.

On a more light-hearted note, anyone from pop stars or famous chefs can be hired to perform at private functions. Madeleine Fisher, a market research analyst living in East Finchley, recently returned from a lavish weekend organised by Speakers Corner in the south of France for her cousin's 21st birthday. They were whisked away by private jets to be joined by chef James Martin to prepare culinary delights at a top French restaurant.

The next big stars of tomorrow in terms of public speaking are, in Gold's opinion, Virgin radio presenter Christian O'Connell, who tells how he got David Cameron to swear on air, and motivational speaker and conductor Charles Hazlewood, who gets suited and booted business men to sing away their inhibitions.

Film expert takes seat as Phoenix patron

By Diana Cormack

The Phoenix welcomed home one of its most loyal fans when leading film critic Mark Kermode visited to talk about and sign copies of his latest book *It's Only a Movie*. Mark began by underlining his long association with the cinema, pointing out the seat he used to occupy as a schoolboy when he lived locally.



Mark makes his mark. Photo by Diana Cormack

He went on to entertain the capacity audience in his own inimitable fashion, including tales of his childhood, a variety of stories about his life and work as a journalist, presenter and writer, followed by a question and answer session.

This event was part of a countrywide promotion of his book and proceeds for the evening were donated to the Phoenix

restoration fund. Work is due to begin on Britain's oldest continuously operating cinema in its centenary year. It seems fitting that at this particular time in the life of the Phoenix, Mark has accepted the offer to become a patron of his "favourite cinema".

To help the Phoenix Restoration Project, go to www.justgiving.com/phoenix-cinema

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Escape to the country

As your bus grinds to a halt in the latest ice storm and Big Blond Boris blames it on bendy buses or the wrong type of passenger the temptation kicks in: why not quit the city, go native, escape to the country? Time to put centuries of progress into reverse.

Back when the only central heating was a fire in the middle of your hut, everyone lived in the country. Towns were small, smelt worse and had nastier diseases than the country. You couldn't head for the towns anyway, not in feudal England where you were owned by the lord of the manor.

Five centuries of plagues, wars and a shift away from growing sheep and towards making things changed that. So, why do people now want to leave the warmth and comfort of urban life to move to some uncivilised corner of the country where it's not just the sheep that are inbred? Maybe they've been watching too much TV?

The TV country is a weird place. Take the county of Midsomer, a place with a murder rate to make

the more dangerous bits of Chicago seem like a peace camp. A place where people are in and out of each other's houses with each other's husbands or wives or family silver. This is somewhere the ladies who lunch have an up-close and personal relationship with the gardener until their husbands find out or their love rival poisons him with toxic mushrooms. The less said about coffee mornings the better, especially after someone hired a male stripper. A bit like *Shameless*, but in a twin-set-and-pearls, shopping-at-Waitrose way.

And then there's the smell. The country smells, not of diesel or kebabs or the local curry house, those wonderful aromas that make the city such a fabulous experience, but of manure. Trust me, the country stinks, you are hit by the vile smell of farmyards, animals and dung everywhere. The only way to avoid it is to go to the pub where the locals are outnumbered by urbanites moaning about how they want to escape back to the city, but can't afford the house prices. So trust me on this one: if God had meant us to live in the country he'd never have given us the Northern line. Or then again...



Martin Harris from GOSH collects the cheque from Brian and his quiz assistant Rita. Photo courtesy The Old White Lion.

Quiz night fundraiser at The Old White Lion

For the second year running, the regular Tuesday night quiz at The Old White Lion became a fundraiser for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Organiser and quizmaster Brian Hooper was determined to top last year's total of £1,050 and, helped by an amazing array of raffle prizes generously donated by local businesses, he was able to do just that. Thanks to them and to customers and staff at the pub next to East Finchley tube station, GOSH received a cheque for the magnificent sum of £1,550.

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- ❖ **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- ❖ **Keep fit for the Retired** on Wednesdays, Christ Church N12. Call Bridie 8883 5269
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 1178.
- ❖ **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029
- ❖ **Pilates class** Weds 3.30 & 7pm at Ann Owens Ctr, N2. Call Penny Hill 8444 2882.
- ❖ **Tae Kwon Do** for children & adults at Finchley Lido Mon & Fri 7-9pm 07949 612 706
- ❖ **Tai Chi class** at East Finchley Methodist Ch, Weds at 1pm. Call James Drewe 8883 3308 or james@taiji.co.uk
- ❖ **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8883 7723.
- ❖ **Yoga, breathing & relaxation.** Weekly drop-in classes - N3, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 07956 375607.
- ❖ **Yoga, pregnancy yoga, meditation** classes. Call Sunnah 07941 321 772 or see www.stretchingpeople.co.uk.

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.
- ❖ **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- ❖ **Drama Classes** for 11-15 year olds. Mondays 6.30-8pm. Contact Dominic Conway 0777 284 3958
- ❖ **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 15 & 29 Mar at 8.15pm**, Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **SwampRock** Louisiana Dance Club. Live music. Contact 07957 344 724 or www.swamprock.org.uk.
- ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- ❖ **Traditional music** at EF Constitutional Club on 2nd Monday each month from 8.30 pm. Free to join in or just listen.

CLUBS & SOCIAL

(See p8 for Parent & Toddler Clubs)

- ❖ **Bingo evening, 8pm Sundays**, at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2.
- ❖ **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5452
- ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **Finchley & District Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian 8444 3251
- ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** on Weds afternoons, call 7722 6209.
- ❖ **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or 8883 7544.
- ❖ **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Moldon on 8361 1696.
- ❖ **LGBT?** 1st Weds every month in a local pub. Welcoming atmosphere. Email efinchleylgbt@hotmail.com
- ❖ **Muslim Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- ❖ **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- ❖ **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tuesdays 1-3 pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Call Anita Shaw 8886 6140.
- ❖ **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390
- ❖ **Probus Lunch Club** for retired professionals. Call John 8883 8114.

A celebration in music

By Ken Carter

Born 70 years ago, organist and composer Geoffrey Hanson came to All Saints Church in 1987 where he founded the East Finchley Arts Festival ten years later. He had formed the London Ripieno Society in 1962 and was appointed a professor at Trinity College of Music.

On Saturday 6 February, these achievements came together in a glorious concert, followed by champagne and birthday cake.

The core of the celebration was Hanson's own *Piano Concerto No 2* and his *Five Nocturnes for Tenor and Chamber Orchestra*. Both had refinement and quality of composition, rare features in present-day scoring. The piano concerto displayed intriguing fragments of what might be to come, sliding into a larghetto of night music and concluding with a modest rampage.

Rimantas Vingras played with nimble skill, quiet wit and real affection. Ian Priestley sang the *Five Nocturnes* with beguiling

ease and elegance. An equally fine birthday present was the precise musicality of the London Mozart Players, giving splendid witness to their long-standing association with Hanson, alert to rippling changes of idiom, in which the richness of the whole English tradition seemed present, while purveying a distinctive individual voice.

Flanking these, were an Overture and the Anthem *Zadok the Priest* in a stately performance that allowed Handel's glory to shine in splendour and the sweeter *Mass in G* from Schubert, ending with a melting *Agnus Dei* from Pauline Wetherall and Richard Winch.

Haringey Recorded Music Society still going strong

By Diana Cormack

The HRMS was founded in 1946 by W.B. Stevenson, later Chief Librarian of Haringey, and two colleagues. For many years meetings were held in the Muswell Hill Junior Library and other venues. Eminent local musicians including Jennifer Bate, Howard Shelley, Ian Wallace and Derek Hammond Stroud have given outstanding recorded recitals for the society. One current member has been connected with the HRMS for 50 years.

Current organiser David Moldon told *THE ARCHER* he first gave a programme in the early 1970s when he was the Music Librarian of Haringey. Nowadays the group meets eight times a year in members' homes in East Finchley and Muswell Hill on Wednesday evenings. Classical and light classical music recordings are played (sometimes videos and DVDs are included) with a speaker giving a little background information.

At their last gathering, members enjoyed a wide-ranging selection of Russian music. Future

events are as follows: March 10, Recent Trade Releases by Simon Briggs and Mark Rumbelow; April 7, A Personal Choice by Graham Summers; May 12, "W" is For ... by Dennis Evans; June 2, AGM/ My Favourite Music 11 by John Sparrow.

Meetings are informal and friendly. There is an annual subscription of £5 (but the first meeting is free for new members) and a charge of £1 per meeting for interval refreshments. If you are interested in the HRMS, call 020 8361 1696 for further details.

Angie's got the A factor

By Lucy Chamberlin

Local singing talent Angie A has aced the audition stage of national music competition Live and Unsigned. On 28 January, the spirited soul artist battled hundreds of other contestants and wowed the judges to win a place in the regional final at the Beck Theatre, Hayes, on Sunday 28 March.



Live and Unsigned is the largest UK music competition for unsigned original artists and bands, with all acts con-

tending for a place in the Live and Unsigned Festival at the O2 Centre in London. Events director Chris Grayston said: "This competition is worlds apart from *X Factor* and other TV talent contests: we're all about originality, live ability and credibility." As well as touring and media opportunities, the overall winner is also awarded a management and recording contract with Future Music, and £30,000 to release a single.

Angie A is holding Soulful Singing workshops at Jacksons Lane Theatre in Highgate; the next ones take place on Sundays 21 March and 11 April. If you would like to attend either these or the Live and Unsigned regional final, contact Angie at infoanj@yahoo.co.uk. For more about Angie and her music, see her MySpace page at www.myspace.com/langiea.

Two musical threesomes

By Ken Carter

The East Finchley Methodist Church's 2010 season opened in splendour on St Valentine's Day. Marina Solarek (violin), leader of the NLSO, dominated the proceedings. She began solo: Bach's Partita in D minor was vibrant and briskly phrased. Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante K. 364 brought in Bryan Fairfax (viola) and Caroline Soresby (piano).

Fairfax's style-sensitive, softly-modulated viola contrasted tellingly with Solarek's striking brilliance. Brahms's 3rd Violin Sonata was a show-stopper. From Solarek and Soresby both, this was energetic, tuneful and compelling, forward-moving and vital. Over-pedalling rendered Fauré's *Nocturne Op 108* rather fuzzy.

On 27 January at the Red Hedgehog in Highgate, the

Lawson Trio sparked. Fenella Humphreys (violin), Annabelle Humson (piano) and Rebecca Knight (cello) delighted with their sweeping, often romantic vigour in Schubert's *Notturmo*, Rachmaninov's *Trio Élégiaque* and Piers Hellawell's *Trio 'Etruscan' Games*. Haydn's *Trio No 38*, dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter, the virtuoso pianist Haydn encountered in London, was brilliant, witty and incisive.

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

What's On...

Sunday 7 March:

- **Hooray for Hendon:** guided walk through 1,000 years from the Domesday Book to Hendon Aerodrome and beyond. Meet at Hendon Central tube station at 11am. Phone Paul Baker on 020 8440 6805

Monday 8 March to Saturday 13 March:

- Beautifully hand-stitched, colourful banners based on prayers from scripture will be exhibited at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road. The collection is designed and produced by artist Jacqui Frost for the **Cathedral Exhibitions** project. Passers-by welcome on Monday from 2pm-3pm, Wednesday from 10.30am-12 noon and Saturday from 2.30pm-4pm.

Friday 12 March

- **Barnet Ghosts**, a ghoulish guided walk through High Barnet and Monken Hadley. Meet at High Barnet tube station booking office at 7.30pm. Phone Paul Baker on 020 8440 6805.

Sunday 14 March

- **Home and Exile: Photography Exhibition**, organised by the Jewish Community Centre for London, 2pm-5pm, Clifton Interiors, 168 Regents Park Road, Primrose Hill, London

NW1 8XN. Price: £5 to enter your photograph. Tickets and information: 020 7431 9866.

- **Music at East Finchley Methodist Church**, High Road. Classical guitarist Christopher Evesham performs South American, Baroque and contemporary music, 7.30pm. Free admission with collection for Cancer Research UK. Venue fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Thursday 18 March

- **The Henrietta Barnett School Literary Society** presents an evening with **Ann Widdecombe MP**, author of *An Act of Peace*, *The Clematis Tree*, *An Act of Treachery* and *Father Figure*. Starts 7.30pm. Tickets £5, book at 020 8209 9730.

Saturday 20 March

- **North London Chorus** performs a trio of **Baroque masterpieces by Handel, JS Bach and Buxtehude** at St James Church, Muswell Hill, 7.30pm. Ticketline is 020 8351 8774. Tickets also available from Les Aldrich Music Shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, N10, and on the evening, at the door. www.northlondonchorus.org.uk
- **Finchley Choral Society** performs *Durufle, Poulenc, Fauré, Laloux, Villlette & Casals*, 7.45pm at Hampstead

Garden Suburb Free Church, London, NW11 7AG. Tickets: £13/£10 aisles. Children free. Available from FCS Box Office 020 7263 3358, on the door and from Les Aldrich Music, 98 Fortis Green Road, London N10 3HN. www.finchleychoral.org.uk

Sunday 21 March

- **Fabulous Finchley: guided walk through 1,000 years of history.** Meet at Finchley Central tube (Ballards Lane exit) at 11am. Walk finishes at East Finchley tube. Phone Paul Baker on 020 8440 6805.

Coldfall Wood: guided walk led by veteran botanist and conservation expert David Bevan. Starts 2.0. For details, contact info@coldfallwoods.co.uk or www.coldfallwoods.co.uk

Friday 26 March to Sunday 28 March

- **East Finchley Open Photography Group** show *"Trans > Form"*, with 16 photographers exhibiting in four houses in East Finchley. Details: www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk

Thursday 25 March

- **The Finchley Society** hosts a talk by Brenda Cole on *Liquid History: London and the Thames*. 2.30 pm, Avenue House, East End Road, N3. 020 8346 7812. Admission £2. Non-

members very welcome.

Saturday 27 March

- **Hampstead Chamber Choir** performs *Victoria Requiem* and *Pergolesi Stabat Mater*, Hampstead Parish Church, NW3 6UU, 7.30pm. Tickets £10 (concessions £8). www.hampsteadchamberchoir.org

Sunday 28 March

- **Battle of Barnet: guided walk** exploring the famous battlefield of 1471. Meet at junction of Great North Road and Hadley Green Road at 11am. Phone Paul Baker on 020 8440 6805.

What's on at artsdepot in March

- **Worn to be Wild** exhibition: Friday 5 March to Sunday 18 April, 12pm-4pm. **Sunday Buzz**, free lunchtime music, **Club Do Choro**: Sunday 7 March, 1pm. **Word of Honor**: Sunday 7 March, 7.30pm. **Tally Ho!**: Saturday 13 March, 6pm-11pm. **BalletBoyz, The Talent**: Thursday 18 March, 8pm. **Stompin' at The Savoy**: Saturday 20 March, 7.30pm. **Moon Fool**: Thursday 25 March, 2pm & 7.30pm. **The Pete Firman Magic Show**: Saturday 27 March, 8pm. **Sunday Buzz**, free lunchtime music, **The Joys of Singing**: Sunday 28 March, 1pm.



Letters to the editor

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.

Chris Lowe

Dear Editor

We would like to say how much we appreciated all the cards and messages from kind friends and neighbours after Chris's sudden death on 1 February. Thank you all.

From Marian and Jean Lowe, Brighton Road, N2.

One more vacancy to fill
Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for your article on page 3 of January's ARCHER that found new volunteer trustees for East Finchley Advice Service (EFAS). Eleven suitable applicants contacted us, from whom we have offered trusteeship to two. Others have offered ad hoc advice and resources.

Three lawyers applied and one of these has already begun to volunteer for our alternate Tuesday evening legal surgeries. What a wealth of human resources in East Finchley, generous enough to volunteer their services for the benefit of the local community.

We are grateful to THE ARCHER and to all those who have shown an interest in EFAS. A further post has now become vacant, that of volunteer treasurer. Any takers, please contact us on 020 8444 6265 or visit us at 42 Church Lane, N2.

Yours faithfully,
Ruby Joseph,
Manager, EFAS.

Compromise on pavilion plan?

Dear Editor,

Cherry Tree Wood is a huge part of our community, so it is not surprising so many people have written to you with their concerns about the business plans for the pavilion spearheaded by Sally-Anne Wigfield.

For many, these proposals are already provided for in abundance on

the High Street. The plans are hardly moderate, and if successful will leave Cherry Tree Wood with a pavilion larger than in Highgate Woods.

The original plans, an ultra modern two storey design with a flat roof and barmy ideas such as late nights, a new gate and a mobile-phone free room (has anyone ever heard a phone in the woods?) and a second storey for 'parties and classes', did not help much either.

In February, Sally was asked by a local resident for more of a compromise, a smaller single storey venture, with equal space given to a cafe and a separate conservation facility (similar to the wildlife hut in Highgate Woods). This was flatly refused, as was any input into the new plans whatsoever (save for viewing them again soon outside the pavilion before they are formally submitted to Barnet Council).

This seems wrong when public money is being sought for the venture and it is claimed to be 'for the community'. Most people are very much looking forward to the new playground for eight to 13-year-olds as this fits in with the open space (metropolitan open land is the equivalent to greenbelt).

Sally's plans for the pavilion are very egocentric and do not fit in. If you too are concerned about the proposals, or are interested in more of a compromise, there is a group of residents that you can email at weloven2@yahoo.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied.

It wasn't all bad

Dear Editor,

In the February 2010 issue, my Soapbox painted an unremittingly black picture of our experience of attending the local planning committee meeting, and, indeed, it was most unpleasant. However, I omitted to say that without the help and support of one of our ward councillors, Colin Rogers, a member of this committee, it would have been awful. He met us before the meeting and explained in plain terms how the meeting would be run, and what we should do and say to make our case as effectively as possible. Thank you, Colin.

Yours faithfully,
John Dearing
Address supplied.

Autistic children get Rotary support

By Cos Pratsides
The Rotary Club of Islington, Highgate and Muswell Hill collected over £4,540 from their Christmas collections. They pulled their Santa Sleigh through the streets on six evenings and stood in Highgate High Street most of one Saturday.

In the old days, Santa used to ride in his sleigh but in these days of Health & Safety he had to walk while ringing his bell. The Santa Sleigh was festooned with flashing lights and the sound system blasted out carols non-stop. It was quite a sight to see, especially when it got stuck being towed around some tight corners.

The Club's own Charity Trust matches the money collected, so the grand total for distribution this year is £9,080. All the money is distributed to local charities for specific projects, and once again TreeHouse School is included.

The TreeHouse School for autistic children is the President's chosen charity this year and the Club is making a special effort to raise even more money for them.

Team up for quiz night

The Club's annual quiz, for teams of between four and eight, is on Thursday 18 March at the TreeHouse School hall. Tickets are £12.50 each including raffles and a hot supper prepared by Rotarians and their wives. If you'd like to support TreeHouse and have a fun evening, contact the club secretary on 01707 654360.

Help for Haiti

The Rotary Club of Islington, Highgate and Muswell Hill is East Finchley's local Rotary Club. Members meet every Wednesday at Highgate Golf Club. Rotary is all about Fellowship and supporting the local community, with a care for international needs as well. For example, the Club has just paid for three Shelter Boxes to go to Haiti. Anybody interested in learning more about Rotary can contact the club secretary.

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.



Blooming roadworks

By Noah Style

Over the last month it has been impossible, more so for us than for Tom Cruise, to get anywhere without being delayed by roadworks. They seem to be everywhere, multiplying by the day like bacteria, causing problems for everyone, even pedestrians. Walking to school becomes a pain, as half the time we are walking in the road.

All I hear from my mum is "Blooming roadworks this", "Blooming roadworks that". Parents doing the school run, or those with hectic after-school rotas for clubs find it hell, and being late for one thing causes a domino effect, making them late for the next.

However, some people just don't change. Ever had that adrenalin rush when you charge down the road with bags to catch the bus? It's great, until the bus driver pulls out of the bay, even though he's just seen you dash 400-odd metres. Well, these road works don't seem to be having any effect on them.

Just last week I charged for the bus with my saxophone and school bag and missed it by a matter of milliseconds. Thankfully though, another came a couple of minutes later. I hopped on it and noticed the driver staring at something. Following his gaze, I saw he was watching a lady in high heels running for his bus. As I sat down, he pulled away. I looked out of the window and allowed myself to chuckle inside as the lady was now out of breath and without a bus. But where did we go? Not far: about 150 metres further down the road, where we then waited for far too long, due to temporary traffic lights.

The irony of it all was that the lady in the high heels walked casually past our halted bus and across the traffic lights, where she picked up the bus I had missed just before.

Girl about East Finchley

Slipped discs really hurt

By Fay Sanders

I made my way home with a spring in my step. I was shaking off my nasty cold, work had been productive and the weekend was near. Rounding the corner into Elmhurst Avenue, I stopped in my tracks, blinking in disbelief. My dinky little Clio, always so reassuringly there, was nowhere to be seen.

I rushed home and dialled 999. The operator politely told me to phone a company called Trace, which tracks cars that have been towed away. Was my car properly registered? Did I have a parking permit? Was my tax disc up-to-date? I answered yes on all counts.

I'd registered it when I'd inherited it from my late grandmother last year. After four months' kerfuffle with Barnet Council I was finally in possession of a permit and I was pretty sure the tax disc was up-to-date or I'd have received a reminder, right?

Wrong. The chap at Trace said my Clio had been towed away to a Tottenham car pound at 10am for failing to display a current disc. Crestfallen, I hastily paid for a tax disc online, before realising it would take five working days to arrive and by then I'd be on a business trip abroad. The police rang to confirm the whereabouts of my car and warned I'd be charged for every day my car was detained at the pound.

The next morning brought fresh hope. DVLA informed me I could get a disc from the post office without a form. Another call to the car pound and I discovered I could save an extra £200 by arriving before 10am.

Just in time

I charged out of my door, almost knocking over a local policeman who had come to question me about a smashed car incident in my street. "Can't talk, have to collect my car from the pound," I gabbled. As I ran off I realised it sounded a tad suspicious, given the circumstances. "I don't know anything, try asking the neighbours," I shouted back to the stunned copper.

After paying another £190 for a second tax disc, I made it to the car pound with one minute to spare. As I drove back to East Finchley, I hoped the policeman wouldn't be back for further questioning.



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How to get your book into print

They say everyone has a book inside them, but even if you turn that great idea into reality how do you get anyone to read it? Local author Jeff Robson has some advice.

After many years of research and days off spent in front of the keyboard I had what I felt was a publishable novel. I diligently ploughed through the publisher listings in the Writers' And Artists' Yearbook, to no avail.

Then, when a friend suggested I get an agent first, I turned to that section. This yielded a second drawerful of rejection letters and left the opus no nearer the Waterstones' shelves. I was still convinced there was a market for my book, a combination of World War Two yarn and Cold War espionage thriller.

Self-publishing

By this time, I had met Mindy Gibbins-Klein, a St Alban's-based 'book midwife' who has worked with many businesses and individuals in the East Finchley area. She suggested I self-publish. On her advice I decided to go with Authorhouse, an American firm with a strong UK presence, who have published over 40,000 authors. They offered a range of packages which included distributing to Amazon and other online retailers, as well as the Waterstones branch in Gower Street.

Then things really started to happen. I found myself select-



Jeff Robson has self-published his first novel. Photo by Jonathan Evans
ing images for cover design, seeing printer's galleys and writing the wording for a marketing kit. The process took the best part of a year, mainly due to my constant revisions.

Marketing

It's been hard work, and a real learning experience, but great fun too. The book is now on sale and the marketing campaign (a job in itself) has just begun. I hope it will be successful, but the main thing is that it's out there and people can judge for themselves. After all these years that's a great feeling.

'*Racing To Armageddon*', by J.V Robson is on sale now, available from Amazon and other online retailers, as well as direct from the Authorhouse site at www.authorhouse.co.uk. To find out more about the book go to www.racingtoarmageddon.co.uk

Striking photos go on show

The East Finchley Open group of artists has many photographers amongst its 50 members. This year 16 of them are showing their work within a series of EFO exhibitions entitled *Trans>Form*.

Brigitt Angst employs images of the natural world in her visual playground. Adam Justice-Mills memorises and comments on social spaces and Peter Kyte's focus is on the ability of the camera to freeze time for the ever-changing natural phenomena and colours of plants and trees.

In contrast, David Godny is a "photographic hunter", capturing rare and fleeting wild beasts in natural motion. David Waller uses his old photographs and physically transforms them into new, original artworks, whilst Francesca Albin makes photography transform dolls into mysterious beings with human features.

Karen Fraser is showing the mystery of places and plants growing and Jane Higgison is re-inventing her own realities, blurring the boundary between photography and abstract art.

The exhibition opens in four houses on the weekend of 26 to 28 March (Friday evening and Saturday/Sunday 12-6pm). The



Brigitt Angst's *TongueDuo* will be one of the photos on show. Photo courtesy EFO.

houses are all within walking distance of each other: 27 and 34 Church Lane, 269 Creighton Avenue and 21 Beech Drive, and all have free parking out-

side. There is also a book of images of the show, available from the venues and online. For more details of the show visit www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk.

Council abandons warden changes

Barnet Council's plans to end the residential warden service in sheltered accommodation have been abandoned in the wake of a High Court judgement.

Barnet was proposing to scrap residential wardens in favour of a floating service in which wardens would be based off-site, a plan that caused huge concern amongst elderly and disabled residents who feared for their safety and security.

In December, Judge Milwyn

Jarman ruled that the council had failed to consider properly the impact on disabled people of removing in-house wardens. Barnet Council originally announced that it was considering appealing against the ruling but has now withdrawn from that course of action. Sheltered housing residents have greeted this decision with jubilation.

Judgement accepted

Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council, said: "We have considered whether or not to appeal the High Court judgement on our plans for the sheltered housing warden service and have decided that it would not be appropriate to do so. In deciding what is right for Barnet we are aware that another council has been given leave to appeal. "In making the original judgement, Judge Jarman accepted that Barnet had carried out a 'robust and substantial' consultation that indeed 'went beyond consultation and amounted to the sort of involvement envisaged'. He noted that the council's policy had been further developed in response to consultation. However we have to accept that on a legal point, though not on policy itself, the council has been found to be remiss."

Councillor Hillan said she would recommend that the full cost of residential wardens and their accommodation be reinstated into the 2010/11 council budget.

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