



**Letters to the editor**

**Who's pinched our salt?**

Dear Editor,

These few weeks are the cold days and snow is definitely coming. But I notice, unlike in past years, there are no yellow boxes of salt left in different corners of East Finchley. How come (as the Government said they had oodles of salt for melting ice) this year they are not put out near East End Road and Prospect Place?

I have a suggestion: if the Council gave out small bags of salt to each household for them to spray on the places they need to deal with, then this might help to reduce hazards for everyone and traffic. The only thing is I do not know whether this melting salt is poisonous or harmful to skin?

Yours faithfully,  
Lily Joseph,  
Address supplied.

which, once I went into writing to them, they managed to resolve.

My question to Barnet Council has always been the same: why are we not getting any revenue out of this valuable and prime site? I have asked how much the rent or sale value would be (as I may know of interested parties) but they will not tell me.

I wonder if the bigger picture of linking this site with the library is still in the background? Hopefully this is not the case. However, I would like to know why there is not a workable and enticing offer on the Park House site for the open market to consider so that we as taxpayers and our council get much needed revenue rather than losing money.

Yours faithfully,  
James Elliott,  
Address supplied.

**Park House: why waste this prime site?**

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the recent front page article by Daphne Chamberlain regarding the council questionnaire on how we use Barnet libraries (THE ARCHER, October 2010). This has prompted me to write and remind us all that a few years ago our council had a huge incentive to close our valuable library and replace it with a 'service' inserted into the roof space of an oversized supermarket which was simultaneously proposed on the site of Park House, opposite East Finchley Station.

Given the latest cuts enforced by central government, we will be hard-pushed to save our library this time as it has always been the council's desire to close it. On one of my visits to the library I asked for the questionnaire (thanks to your article). To my surprise I was told by the librarian that they could not put these out on show and that one had to ask for the questionnaire which was in the back office. Strange approach if you are looking for an all-inclusive survey not to advertise the fact you are inviting public/user feedback.

Now for my reason for writing. I have been monitoring the council's strategy for the sale or rent of Park House and periodically speak with the person responsible for the letting/sale of this property. They have stopped trying to sell it on the basis of it being a depressed market. On my every call, they tell me they have an interested tenant, which always happens to be a council department. Strangely, these interested parties never come to fruition. For the last 18 months they have not even had a 'To Let' board on the site. This was rectified recently only because of my persistent questioning

**Be a befriender**

Dear Editor,

The Big Society is in action here in Barnet and Finchley with RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) and their new face-to-face befriending scheme. RSVP volunteers are improving an older person's quality of life by befriending older people in their homes, taking them out or in some cases volunteers inviting the older people to their home.

The aim of the scheme is to personalise care for the older people, giving them a choice about what they want to do. RSVP in Barnet has volunteers doing this much-appreciated service, but still requires more volunteers to cope with the increased demand for such a personalised service. So if you are interested in befriending please contact RSVP on 0203 2344 082 and ask for Mike Barnes (Homeshare Co-ordinator) or email [homeshare@csv.org.uk](mailto:homeshare@csv.org.uk)

Yours faithfully,  
Michael Barnes  
RSVP, Moxon Street, EN5

**Who are you calling older?**

Dear Editor,

As someone who has just begun collecting their pension, I was rather horrified to see the number of references in THE ARCHER to 'older people', referring to those over 50. There was a piece on Barnet's Older Assembly for the over-55s, The Barnet Elderly Asian Foundation's party for the over-50s and an advert for the over-50s tea dance at Christ Church. Personally I am still commuting, working and hope to continue to do so until I am at least 65. I play tennis, go to the gym, travel, have walking holidays, go to galleries, cinema,

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theatres and so on, as do most of my friends. We are all going to have to work until over 65 soon anyway! Wake up, Barnet! We are all fit and living longer. Fifty is the new 40, 60 is the new 50. I do not feel like a senior citizen. In fact, I scarcely feel middle-aged.

Yours faithfully,  
Bridget Chandler,  
Huntingdon Rd, N2.

**Lovely lights**

Dear Editor,

On behalf of Martin Primary School, I would like to thank the council for every year putting up Christmas lights. We think they light up the whole of East Finchley High Road and give a warm feeling that Christmas is near. We especially like the Santas outside our school.

Yours faithfully,  
James Dillon  
Year 5, Martin Primary School

**Stanley Field update**

Dear Editor,

As predicted by Daphne Chamberlain in December's edition, Stanley Road Playing Field is effectively up for sale. Barnet Council's Cabinet Resources Committee, at its meeting on 30 November, did indeed declare the site "surplus to its requirements" and agreed that "the disposal of the freehold interest be advertised on the open market to seek details of proposed schemes and initial bids".

Apparently, the committee also agreed to give local interest groups and residents six months to put forward concrete proposals for the playing field. Whether this means the council will not take action on any other plans that may emerge from outside the area until the conclusion of the six-month period is unclear.

The position of the Finchley Community Development Trust (FCDT) is unchanged: given the comparative lack of green open spaces in East Finchley, the Stanley Road site should be retained for sporting and recreational use. Council officers themselves admit East Finchley has "notable deficiencies in playing pitch provision".

As Daphne reported, the FCDT is working closely with a group that includes Steve Selwood, an ex-Derbyshire batsman, who is currently head coach at Finchley Cricket Club. While much work remains to be done, the plan is put an indoor facility on part of the site, together with two external multi-sport pitches. The indoor centre would have cricket lanes, facilities for football, badminton and other sports as well as changing rooms and a cafe.

Both the FCDT and Steve want to work closely with local residents. As Steve has said: "It is about creating something with a business in mind, but with residents on board every step of the way." Please feel free to contact me at the FCDT with your comments and opinions (020 8883 4916; [robertson@btconnect.com](mailto:robertson@btconnect.com)).

Yours faithfully  
Rob Robertson  
Finchley Community Development Trust

**Review: The Finchley Choral Society**

By Ken Carter

The Finchley Choral Society gave us three of the six parts of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*: the birth of Jesus, the angels' appearance to the shepherds in the fields and their consequent journey to the manger in adoration of the holy wonder-child. This was on a cold Saturday at the HGS Free Church on 4 December.

Vigorously and briskly, Grace Rossiter animated the performers. The choir was rich in altos, well-provided-for in sopranos, sufficiently stocked with basses and rather short on tenors. To everyone's credit, the outcome was a much more unified sound than these proportions would imply. The massed voices were most agreeable and the small orchestra made a gallant sound.

The soloists were pleasurable, too. Particularly com-

manding was Jonathan Saunders' bass. His rich voice rang out with authority and secure depth. Juliet Fraser, soprano, and Stephen Jeffes, tenor, ran him pretty close with skilled, clear, vibrato-less diction, while Catherine Hopper, mezzo-soprano, held her notes purely and agreeably.

Altogether, the smaller forces and zesty tempos displayed Bach to better effect than larger forces were likely to have done.

**Is this a record?**

By Rosemary Coates, writing in The Finchley Society newsletter.

My grandparents, Edwin and Rose Cattle, who lived most if not all of their married life in Leopold Road, had six children: Leo, who died in 1899, Walter, who died in 1917, Harold, who died in 1976, Cecil and Harry, who both died in 1987, and Ruby, who died in 2010.

This means that their children died in three different centuries. If not a record, at least a very unusual occurrence.

Footnote from Daphne Chamberlain: Ruby Cattle, who was also a Finchley Soci-

ety member, was an ARCHER reader who helped us with information about the history of Strawberry Vale. She also contributed to The Finchley Society's book, *Finchley Remembered*.

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Royal British Legion  
Muswell Hill Rd  
7.30pm  
George Tel: 07906 067667

**Tuesday**  
**Woodside Park**  
Woodside Park Club  
Southover, N12  
9.30am

**Wednesday**  
**East Finchley**  
East Finchley Methodist Church  
197 High Rd  
(opposite Creighton Ave)  
9.30am, 5pm and 7pm  
Natalie: 07889 252548

**Finchley**  
Finchley Methodist Church  
(corner of Essex Park)  
Ballards Lane, N3  
7.00pm  
Karen: 07813 095266

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