



Letters to the Editor



Shop front uncovered  
Dear Editor,

After seeing the shop sign taken down from the former Moonlight Cafe on the High Road and seeing the very old sign underneath, I wonder how many residents of East Finchley remember buying their first bike, TV, radio, fireworks, Dinky and Corgi toys and Airfix models at Janes and Adams (pictured)? This shop had lovely memories for so many people.

Yours faithfully,  
Margaret Cartwright,  
Leicester Road, N2.

Write to us with your memories of Janes and Adams. The address is on page 2.

No choice on schools  
Dear Editor,

Further to your request for views about secondary schools in East Finchley, it is readily apparent that a local school is urgently needed. We live in N2 and have a nine-year-old daughter; there is no chance that we will be offered a place at a suitable local secondary school given that we are not prepared to pay for private education and object in principle to faith schooling.

Our only option seems to be that we will have to move out of the area which we are very reluctant to do given that we have lived here happily for over 20 years.  
Yours faithfully,  
Tony Manzi and Sharon Richmond,  
Manor Park Road, N2.

Action needed on schools

Dear Editor

My eldest son (I have two boys) will be applying for a secondary school place in a couple of years and I am already worrying about it. We're out of catchment for Fortismere and, being Jewish, Bishop Douglass would not be acceptable to us. Our only option is Christ's College, which is ideal in terms of being local, and means my children could walk to school, but is not ideal as it is a single-sex boys' school, something I am very against as my sons have greatly benefited from being in a mixed gender environment at primary level.

Also, having read the latest Ofsted Report for Christ's College, I am a little concerned about some of the gradings, despite it overall being assessed as good. All I would like is an excellent local, co-educational, non-faith school to which my sons could transfer with their friends, but this ideal, quite common-place in other parts of the country, seems to be something very hard to come by in this part of Barnet.

As I have only sons, I do have at least Christ's College as a back up option. For friends who either have boys and girls, or who have just girls, the situation is pretty dire. I know of several

families who have, reluctantly, been forced to move either to another part of Barnet or out of London completely just because of the inadequate secondary school provision. Something really needs to be done.

Yours faithfully,  
Sarah Cohen,  
Address supplied.

Isobella and MooMoo  
Dear Editor

Thank you for one of the most uplifting photographs I have seen in a long time. The image of Isobella and MooMoo on your last front page was inspirational.

Yours faithfully,  
Hanan Baradon,  
Address supplied.

A taste of the Wild West

By Diana Cormack  
After undergoing extensive redevelopment, the Five Bells on East End Road officially opened to the public on 7 May. The transformed pub is the first in the area with a Flaming Grill and its kitchen now has an authentic chargrill, so the Wild West theme chosen for the opening day's events was particularly suitable.

The celebrations that day were led by Sippy Azizollah, who had been chosen to launch the new premises in recognition of her long-term fundraising for Lupus UK. Sippy has suffered from this disease of the immune system for many years but it has not prevented her from raising thousands of pounds both for this charity and for others, details of which have often been reported in THE ARCHER. With World Lupus Day on 10 May, the grand opening event was used to raise more funds for Lupus UK.

Creatures from the blue lagoon

By John Dearing

Long Lane Pasture's first event of the year was a Pond Life day on 16 April. It was a bright, clear morning and there was a good turnout of people of all ages who came to enjoy the pasture and some of its flora and fauna. On hand to present some of the amphibian inhabitants was a personable young man called Joshua.



Some of the visitors had fun by naming the stars of the show, so we met Justin the Frog, Thomas the Toad and Sydney the Slow Worm (who, incidentally is neither a worm nor a snake, but is a legless

lizard) plus quite a number of newts and tadpoles.

Those of a more reflective nature could enjoy the view from the seat at the top of the bank, or gaze into the water of the pond made blue by the sky.

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Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column. Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



The future for East Finchley schools

By Dr Adam Fagan

As Chair of Governors at a local school in East Finchley for several years, I came to value three things: first, the critical involvement of a dynamic parent body, with amazing intellectual capital and expertise, prepared to work late in the evening and early morning to improve our school and to realise its outstanding potential; secondly, the invaluable intervention and support provided by the Local Authority's inspectors, consultants and School Improvement Partners; and finally, the diversity of our school community, the rich variety of heritage, ethnicity and culture generating a huge commitment to inclusion, participation and excellence. We knew about the "big society" long before David Cameron.

As the types of school in our area change dramatically, parent power, diversity and active involvement in our local schools are seriously under threat. Within five years we will be a community of faith schools, free schools and single-sex academies and the next generation of parents, families and local residents will have far less opportunity to influence education provision in the area.

Notwithstanding the political arguments for or against the changes currently under way, releasing schools from LA control and supervision inevitably diminishes democratic accountability.

In its quest to become an academy, Christ's College (CCF) has committed itself to resisting any change (in particular the possibility of becoming co-ed). The Head and Governors of CCF are indeed correct: as an academy the school leadership will be able to select its governing body and effectively ignore the views and needs of local families in the East Finchley community, such as further discussion about admitting girls or improving sixth form provision.

A similar relationship will exist between East Finchley parents and our new free school Haringey Jewish Primary School. Whatever the merits of another faith school in our community, parent participation and voice will be minimal. Though a commitment has apparently been made to being part of the local community, (and the admissions policy of the HJPS is seemingly quite liberal), such schools limit rather than extend the local educational provision in our area.

Ideological and political concerns aside, the reality of academies and free schools for our community is diminished participation in governing bodies, fewer opportunities to shape the development of our local schools, and restricted choice for the next generation of parents. We have excellent primary schools in East Finchley. This is in large part due to the determination of local parents who became involved in governing bodies. Academies and free schools will not extend choice in East Finchley, they will limit community involvement and take away our power to intervene.

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