



## Finchley's secret spaces

By Daphne Chamberlain

**In September, The Finchley Society held its annual East Finchley outreach meeting in Martin School, where Mike Gee told us tales of some lesser-known green spaces.**

He started with the first of two intended Finchley sports centres. That was what the Glebelands, stretching between the High Road, the North Circular and Friern Barnet, were meant to be. Part of the 86 acres is now the Leisure Centre, with eight acres swallowed up into parking spaces. The original Lido has shrunk into a small indoor pool, but there are bona fide ponds in the big nature reserve beyond. Here you can also find the last remnant of an isolation hospital, which became a British Legion building, a Scout hut and a multi-model railway centre.

Regal Drive, N11, leads to 14 acres of the old Friern Barnet Hospital site, open to the public. Here, you might come across a fancy green bridge. It once spanned an ornamental lake in the hospital grounds. Not so secret is Bethune Park, a neighbour of better-known

Friary Park. This is a conservation area, open on three sides, where people live as well.

Nearer home, the Aquarius Archery grounds at the end of Southern Road are set over 10 million gallons of 17-foot deep water. There were tennis courts there until 1966, but records of the club and the existing archery centre were lost in the recent arson attack reported in this paper. Apparently, a sizeable section of the reservoir grounds is in danger of being sold to developers.

Other slides included the continuously pumping cascade of water in the St Marylebone Garden of Remembrance and the sound-blocking Garden of Hope built over the North Circular. The other intended Sports Centre? Stanley Road Playing Field, of course, and Sport East Finchley's Roger Chapman warned us not to expect an outcome there until next year.



## Optician's warning on children's eye health

**Optometrist David Hillel Burns is warning schools of the risks faced by children whose eye conditions are not picked up early enough.**

David, who has 40 years of experience as an optician, says that one in ten children in the UK has an undetected vision problem but only 50% of children ever have an eye examination. This could have a serious impact on their success at school, he warns.

To increase awareness of eye health, David, an NHS specialist whose practice is on East Finchley High Road, is giving talks to local schools about vision and eye care.

He said: "Poor vision can make children frustrated or bored in school, because they can't see the board or read a book easily. All children should have their eyes tested from their second birthday onwards. They needn't be able to read. Many parents aren't aware they can protect their child's sight and that it is free."

Signs to watch for that might indicate your child has an eye condition include an eye turning inward, outward, upward or downward frequently; red eyes or eye lids; frequent rubbing of the eyes; and sitting very close to the television.

## A vanished watering hole

**The George Inn was once a busy pub at the centre of life in Market Place, the old pig-trading centre of East Finchley, as shown in Barnet Council's archive photo dating from the mid-Victorian years. Pig drovers would sell animals to London's butchers or to local farmers from here.**

The George was rebuilt in the 1890s and survived until 2001 when it was demolished and replaced by the housing block that stands there now. These then-and-now shots come from the council's Past and Present project, which allows smartphone users to download images at the location in question, from QR codes posted on lampposts.



Closing time: the final days of the Dick Turpin in Long Lane.

## Another pub bites the dust

**So, farewell to the Dick Turpin. The Long Lane pub has finally succumbed to the demolition squad after standing empty for two years. Another name to add to the list of vanished East Finchley pubs, which includes The Red Lion on Red Lion Hill, The George in Market Place and the Duke of Cambridge in Park Road. The site of the Dick**

**Turpin is to be occupied by flats. Photo by Martin Addison.**

## Coffee and cake

**A coffee morning and sale at an East Finchley home in October raised money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. The morning was hosted by Sarah Reavley, whose godson Jake has CF.**

"This is a very exciting time for the Trust," Sarah said. "This year has seen the start of a trial of a gene therapy product that will hopefully provide an effective, life-saving treatment in years to come. Our sale helped to inform people and was great fun." As well as cakes, there was clothing by Captain Tortue, Their Nibs and Alison Dishington, relaxation products from Holistic Silk and crafts from Dandy Lion Days; all of whom made donations to the Trust. The sale was supported by lots of parents from Coldfall

Primary School and their friends. Cystic Fibrosis is one of the UK's most common life-threatening inherited diseases, affecting more than 9,000 people in the UK. It affects the internal organs, especially the lungs and digestive system, by clogging them with thick sticky mucus that can make it hard to breathe and digest food. The UK CF Gene Therapy Consortium is concentrating on replacing the faulty gene in a patient's lungs with a normal gene. For more information, see [www.cftrust.org.uk](http://www.cftrust.org.uk)

## Carers can take a break

**A new service has been set up allowing GPs to issue prescriptions to carers to help them take a short break.**

The Carers Health Break Prescription service is being run by Barnet Carers Centre with financial support from Barnet Council and the NHS. The aim is to help people whose role in caring for a relative or friend is having a negative impact on their health or their ability to have a life outside of caring. People seeking support will need to visit their GP who can then issue them with a prescription for support. This can be redeemed at Barnet Carers Centre, where staff will discuss with the carer the kind of break which best suits their needs and situation.

Barnet Carers Centre already provides peer support groups, training, a telephone helpline and outings. For more information, visit [www.barnet-carers.org](http://www.barnet-carers.org)

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