



Letters to the editor...

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Academy plan is good news

Dear Editor,

I was a little disappointed to read your article on the sale of Stanley Road playing field to the Archer Academy as you seem to imply that this may not be a positive development for the local community.

I have lived in East Finchley for ten years and the topic of Stanley Road and its use by the community appears to have been going on for at least that long. I support the protection of open land and investment in facilities for the community, but given the unmet demand for local school places for East Finchley children and the lack of public or private money to invest in things like community playing fields which I wouldn't foresee changing in the near future, I can only see the positives in this outcome for Stanley Road for East Finchley.

Even before it has opened, the Archer Academy feels like a big success story for East Finchley and it would be good to see it represented more positively in your paper.

Yours faithfully,
Alison Gold,
Huntingdon Road, N2.

Stanley Field concerns will be resolved

Dear Editor,

We are writing regarding your front page article in the March edition on the Stanley Road Field issue. We would like to inform your readers that we believe the Archer Academy will provide the best long-term future for the field. The Academy has the ability to bring in the necessary funding to refurbish the site and provide high quality sports and ancillary facilities. They will also ensure the upkeep and availability of the field, and are in the process of writing a covenant or deed of dedication to guarantee public access in the coming years. Whilst it would be improper for us to comment on specific building plans, as they will be the subject of a future planning application, we are committed to working with residents and the school to ensure that any local concerns can be resolved. The group behind the Archer Academy are local residents and are as keen to secure the future of Stanley Road Playing Field as anyone else; in fact that is why they are making the bid. We are working with them to ensure that local residents and children can continue to access the field and benefit from the new sports facilities now and in the future.

Yours faithfully,
Arjun Mittra, Alison Moore,
Colin Rogers,
East Finchley Ward councillors.

We should celebrate Academy plans

Dear Editor

We greatly value THE ARCHER. We think it is a good local newspaper and are delighted that it is celebrating 20 years of reporting local issues in a balanced and thoughtful way.

We were, however, disappointed to read the lead article in this month's ARCHER (March 2013) regarding the sale of Stanley Field to the Archer Academy. We thought that the tone of the piece was rather disingenuous and feel that it could serve to stir up unnecessary negative feeling and angst.

As the Governing Body of a local Primary School, we are delighted to see the successful culmination of a great deal of hard work and dedication which will benefit not only our local children but also our local community. We wish the Archer Academy every success with its new site and look forward to being able to access the facilities on Stanley Fields which have just been given a new lease of life and a secure future far away from the grip of housing development.

It is disappointing that this article should be published at a time when parents and carers and their children are finding out the results of their applications to secondary schools. At best, it is a stressful and emotional time. An article which casts any doubt over the future of their school premises is irresponsible and potentially damaging to the huge amount of work which has been achieved.

We would like to know who the "many people" are who are asking questions? We note that the group who are "asking questions" and registering concern are the 'supporters of Stanley Fields' and not the 'friends of Stanley Fields'. We feel that the article should have made it clear that they are not the same group – the Friends of Stanley Fields being broadly supportive of this proposal.

Following the meeting called by the Supporters of Stanley Field on the 12 March, we sincerely hope that THE ARCHER will now readily acknowledge that in fact the "many people" asking questions have turned out to be one person, and that the 'Supporters' of Stanley Field is, in fact, one supporter.

The future of this valuable space in our community has long been uncertain. The fact that many of our children have been forced to accept secondary schools which were not their choice has been an issue for a very long time. Both issues are now well on their way to being resolved thanks to the dedication of people in our community. Let us all, including 'THE ARCHER', rejoice in this fact.

Yours faithfully,
Catrin Dillon,
Chair of Governors, Martin Primary School, on behalf of the Governing Body.

Stanley Field support

Dear Editor

I attended the Supporters of Stanley Field meeting on 13 March, as advertised in last month's front page article in THE ARCHER. Far from there being "many people in this community" concerned about the sale of the Stanley Field site to the Archer Academy, there was overwhelming support from the original "Friends of Stanley Field".

Indeed the view of the meeting was that the sale of the site would be a way of safeguarding it from over-development and securing it for community sports use, a great step forward after ten years or so of campaigning by local residents. With the sale including a deed of dedication that protects the future use of the site, insisted upon by The Archer Academy team and Sport EF, with both groups having the "good of the community" at their core, everyone was very happy with the successful outcome for the East Finchley community as a whole.

Yours faithfully,
Helen Drake,
Creighton Avenue, N2.

Stanley Field alarm

Dear Editor,

I was really disappointed by your article in the March issue about the Archer Academy's purchase of Stanley Road. Alarmed by it I attended a meeting of the group that the article endorsed which turned out to be a single individual with no support from the local community.

Stanley Fields area is indeed a precious resource for the community, but at the moment, it is a derelict site with no use to anyone. A week or so before your March issue the Archer Academy has already announced ambitious plans to transform it into state-of-art sports facilities (not to mention a much-needed local secondary school) to be available for use to the whole community.

I could not believe that you have ignored most of the information supplied and available on the subject, and printed an article full of speculation and misinformation, making a wonderful local initiative look suspicious and underhand.

We should be celebrating this development, and helping it in any way we can, constructive criticism included, but not be criticising and condemning it based on speculation and without checking the facts.

Yours faithfully,
Drazen Coric,
Manor Park Road, N2.

The good, the bad and the downright rude

Dear Editor,

One recent Saturday morning, having dropped off some alterations at HR Dry Cleaners in East Finchley, I returned to my car to discover the battery was flat and the car wouldn't start. As I'd left my mobile at home I asked HR Dry Cleaners whether I could use their phone to call the AA.

The girl at the counter was truly sympathetic and understanding and before I could call the AA one of her colleagues asked if the car was manual as he would be happy to push start it. Unfortunately it wasn't, so then the tailor, Sam, suggested the local petrol station may have some jump leads (they'd run out), or the local electricians (they were closed) and he would jump start the car for me.

Unsuccessful, I returned to HR Dry Cleaners to call the AA but they insisted on asking their neighbours if they had jump leads. Finally, the corner shop, Onur Food and Wine, came up trumps and Sam, the tailor, came back triumphant. He pushed my car so as to make space for his car close to mine. I stood in the spot vacated to hold it for him.

While I was awaiting his return a Smart car, emblazoned with the name of a fitness company which I shall not give so as to not compromise their reputation, nipped into the space! Before he'd turned off his engine I explained the situation to him and asked if he'd mind parking on the other side of my car where there was ample space. However, he refused (!) stating the traffic as the cause.

This was a young, fit man who couldn't make a very small gesture. Frankly if he couldn't manage the traffic he shouldn't be driving. He then entered the beauty salon next to the cleaners and spent his time there watching, pointing through the window and generally amusing himself. Meanwhile poor Sam returned,

saw what had happened and had to drive on, park further away, return to my car, push it yet again, go back to collect his car, park it by mine and finally jump start it.

I went into the beauty salon to remonstrate with the young man and show him how some people are so helpful. His response was to say: "You're not my mother." All I can say is thank goodness, as I would have been thoroughly ashamed if I were. It is also incredible that somebody who works in the area would have so little concern about the impression he makes when his company name is there for all to see. I certainly won't be using his service! On the other hand Sam point blank refused any thanks from me and said he couldn't ask it of a client. What a contrast of behaviours.

Yours faithfully,
Debbie Cass,
Holyoake Walk, N2.

On being 20...

Dear Editor,

Kindly oblige by accepting our congratulation to the whole ARCHER team on your 20th anniversary. Our heartfelt thanks for your kindness. Words cannot express our thanks for what you do.

Yours faithfully,
Mr and Mrs Patel,
High Road, N2.

Ash trees will recover

Dear Editor,

As the owner of 2.4 acres of ancient woodland in south west Kent, which I manage as a nature reserve, I am obviously making every effort to be informed with regard to *chalara fraxinea*, or ash dieback disease, and thought I might add to Ann Bronkhorst's excellent article (THE ARCHER, March 2013).

Obviously the practice of importing trees and tree products with minimal control (and "growing on" British seedlings in Eastern Europe, which allows the trees to be sold as British sourced, yet cuts costs) have been hugely contributory to the spread of this fungus. The fact that the symptoms were thought to be from a similar but less virulent pathogen also meant that the danger was not recognised for months. Not very reassuring!

But that said, the disease is carried on microscopic fungal spores and, sooner or later, would have arrived on the wind anyway. I suspect that, given that the worst infections seem to be in parts of Scandinavia and Poland, these cold east and north-east winds which we've been experiencing will increase the incidence of infection. We shall see.

I recently attended the SYLVA conference at Oxford University, where there was an excellent presentation by Dr David Boshier, a forest geneticist with Earth Trust. He explained that within the gene pool of all ash trees there is resistance to the chalara. For example, in Denmark, two to ten per cent of ash trees show good resistance and survive.

This is actually a relatively high incidence, and given the prolific seed production of ash and the high germination rate of those seeds, I would predict that the recovery of the ash, even if it is truly blighted by chalara, will occur within our lifetimes. It is very different from

the elms where most of the trees were propagated from suckers or cuttings, making them clones with the same genetic makeup. The outbreeding ash has a far better potential for recovery in the long term. I certainly hope that I am right.

Yours faithfully,
Linda Dolata (volunteer guide at Kew Gardens)
Leopold Road, N2

Memories from our pages

Dear Editor,

I often receive THE ARCHER via my cousin who lived in East Finchley and is now here in Australia. My family lived in East Finchley, Church End and North Finchley.

It is interesting to read of some of my places mentioned in your pages. At one time, Avenue House, where we played as kids on the swings. Giant strides, and we were convinced we could smell ink from Inky Stephens' house.

On one occasion, Manorside School gave a display of Eurythmics dancing and I recall we were in Greek costume, barefoot and pranced out from behind the trees to Miss Makin's piano.

The Lido was mentioned in one of your issues and I gather it was what we called the Olympic baths. Hot holidays, sport by the pools. First the baby pool, where we young ones were given swimming lessons, and the fountain, sitting on the side enjoying the cool splash.

The 'Rough Lots', as we knew it, was walked every day to and from school in the morning, noon and home time. Blackberry eating in summer, sliding on slippery ice in winter. I read an article in which the London people would make their way to the Common at East Finchley to get away from the plague.

So as you can see, a trip down memory lane from Australia when I receive THE ARCHER.

Yours faithfully,
Eileen McKelligel, nee Smith,
Cleveland, Australia.

My feathered visitors

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the report from Nick Young (THE ARCHER, March 2013). He may like to know that my garden in Eastern Road is full of siskins and redpolls at the moment. The redpolls arrive usually before Christmas and the siskins usually as soon as there is some very cold weather and have been with me over the winter for the past four years, a delightful addition to the garden as they grow brighter and brighter into their spring colours. They are both due to leave soon as the days grow longer.

Yours faithfully,
Fenella Reed,
Eastern Road, N2.