



## THE ARCHER at 20: Archie speaks



For more than 70 years, Archie has looked down on East Finchley from his vantage point atop the station. David Tupman spoke to him about the 20th anniversary of the newspaper named after him.

- The Archer:** All hail to the great one! The patron of East Finchley's favourite newspaper speaks.
- Archie:** Greetings to you all. I'm 72, you know. And, yes, it was in recognition of many years of public service that your founders decided in 1993 to place my name on the masthead.
- The Archer:** And how do you regard *THE ARCHER*'s 20-year contribution?
- Archie:** Have you seen the local commercial rivals? You're head and shoulders above them, covering all human life in N2. And you're run entirely by volunteers!
- The Archer:** Well, we've certainly come a long way since the days of black and white photographs. February 2013 is our 231<sup>st</sup> edition.
- Archie:** *THE ARCHER* began when the group Meat Loaf had pop chart success. John Major was prime minister and launched his 'Back to Basics' campaign. You can say what you like about his policies; he always wore lovely grey suits.
- The Archer:** Yes, the 1990s were difficult days. Sometimes it was touch and go if we could go to print. We often got on our knees and prayed and thanked God that we were still on our feet.
- Archie:** You were a forerunner of what current politicians call The Big Society.
- The Archer:** Yes, indeed. We didn't think of slogans except a meaningful strap-line that said 'local news is our aim'. It was dreamt up in the former Welch's Ale House over a bag of pork scratchings.
- Archie:** I guess *THE ARCHER* has chronicled many changes in East Finchley?
- The Archer:** I should say so Archie. It's classic Dickens: the best of times and the worst of times.
- Archie:** I lived through the Second World War, so I'm a half glass full chap. What do you regard as the best?
- The Archer:** There are so many choose from. The campaign against Waitrose. Colour photographs in 2009. Helping to restore the Phoenix cinema to its current glory. The festivals in Cherry Tree Wood. Take your pick.
- Archie:** And the worst thing?
- The Archer:** That perennial favourite providing endless copy: traffic and parking.
- Archie:** So I'll sign off with a heartfelt well done to everyone in East Finchley for producing, delivering and reading *THE ARCHER*.

## Big Dig is back

A community food-growing project at Vale Farm allotments is looking for new volunteers, preferably with some gardening experience, to join a small but fun group growing seasonal food.

Anyone who's interested can join in with the group's Big Dig Day on Saturday 16 March from 11am to 4pm at the allotments off Tarling Road, N2.

On the day, they'll be getting ready for the new growing season, digging over open beds, planting, building a cold frame and making bean teepees.

The group currently runs a garden with six raised beds, four open beds, a small orchard, a greenhouse, a shed and a relaxation area. Volunteers are asked to bring a fork and gloves if possible. To find out more visit [www.bigdig.org.uk/london](http://www.bigdig.org.uk/london) or email Sally at [valefarmproject@gmail.com](mailto:valefarmproject@gmail.com).

## Fun guy and naked ladies delivering

### THE ARCHER

For some time, Linda Dolata has been delivering *THE ARCHER* to a certain avenue in East Finchley, and has usually found herself muttering away as she does so. Here, she shares some of her 'tongue-in-cheek' thoughts. **Thank you to the lovely people with centrally placed letterboxes, and no steps. To others, if you hear muttered curses aimed at your door, it is me going up steps and then bending right down to the letter box at the base of the door.**

As I do so, my shirt becomes untucked, and my delivery bag slips off my shoulder... Grrr... but I would probably pay a lot of money at a gym to do something similar, so no real complaints.

Then there are the spring-loaded letter boxes that do their best to amputate fingertips, and the ones that have draught excluders at the back so that the paper squidges up against it instead of sliding through.

Contrary to expectation, I like the two dogs who have lain in wait for *The Archer* over the years. One, a terrier, used to have a real fight with the paper, growling and shaking it from side to side until he had subdued it. I confess I used to sacrifice the first paper just for the spectacle, and then tuck a second one into the door furniture. The other dog (now moved), was a large handsome one who used to thrust his head through a small cat flap at the base of the door, and grin (as dogs do) at me. He was lovely, and I miss him. Finally, I ought to explain the fun guy and naked ladies that I saw very clearly on last month's delivery round. The fungi was a large mushroom-type fruiting body, probably on the site of a tree stump, on someone's front lawn. The Naked Ladies, also in a front garden, are the name given to the autumn crocus, *Colchicum*, because the beautiful violet flowers arrive without any accompanying leaves.

Can you spare 30-45 minutes each month to deliver *THE ARCHER*? Email us at [the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net) or telephone us on 0800 612 0748.

## THE ARCHER at 20: what do you think?

*THE ARCHER* is celebrating 20 years at the heart of East Finchley. The newspaper has changed in many ways since 1993 but is still the volunteer-led community newspaper it set out to be from the start.

Do you have any memories of *THE ARCHER* over the years? Please get in touch and we'll feature your recollections in future issues.

And what do you think of *THE ARCHER* in 2013? Have you got any suggestions or new ideas for the paper in our anniversary year? We'd value your thoughts on new things we could be covering and, although we can't promise to put everything into action, we'll certainly consider all ideas to help make the newspaper the best it possibly can be for the next 20 years.

### How to get in touch:

- Email us at [the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net)
- Phone us and leave a message on 0800 612 0748
- Find TheArcherN2 on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/TheArcherN2](http://www.facebook.com/TheArcherN2)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/TheArcherN2](http://www.twitter.com/TheArcherN2))
- Write to us at The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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