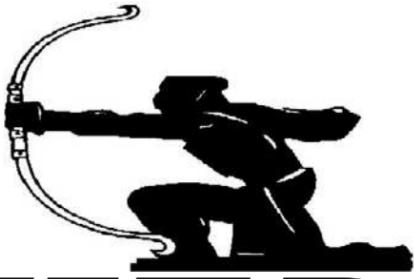




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Martin Primary abandons its academy plan

The controversial plan to turn Martin Primary School into an academy, reported in our December issue, has been scrapped in the face of opposition from parents.

The proposal was that the school in Plane Tree Walk would become part of a multi-academy trust with Northside Primary School in North Finchley and Foulds School in High Barnet, with staff from all three schools playing a part in opening and running a new primary in Mill Hill.

Strong reaction

However, when the plan was announced in October, with a month set aside for consultation, there was a strong and immediate backlash from concerned parents.

They were worried that the ethos of Martin Primary would be damaged by becoming an academy, and that the administration of a new school outside East Finchley would be a huge drain on staff time and an unnecessary distraction in a year when Martin is already undergoing a major expansion programme to turn it into a three-form entry school.

Parents tell us there was a very heated meeting at the school in early December when they were able to voice their concerns in front of headteacher Helen Morrison and the board of governors. Staff were also given the opportunity to vote on the proposal and it is understood that the majority were against it.

Mrs Morrison had made it clear that she saw the academy plan as an exciting opportunity but would not press ahead with it if it did not have the support of parents. Following the consultation period, the school issued a letter to all parents and carers saying the idea was being abandoned.

Relief

Adam Fagan, a former governor at Martin, was one of those who opposed the academy plan. He said there was a feeling of relief now the deal was dead.

"People didn't like being sold something they didn't believe in," he said. "It was felt

that the leadership of the school weren't able to spell out the benefits to Martin Primary. It's one thing to work together with other local schools but another thing altogether to entangle Martin with two schools we didn't know anything about in a multi-academy trust."

Can we fix it? Yes!

A visit to www.barnet.fixmystreet.com resulted in a rapid response with a number of potholes in Cherry Tree Road being filled in within a couple of days. Try this Barnet Council website yourself, it seems to work.



Meet Rufus, our pet of the month. Turn to page 11 for our new regular feature.

Photo by Mike Coles

Pop-up shop for your ideas

East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) is a community project seeking to help residents start up and run projects which they feel would benefit the area and reduce isolation.

So far the team has several interest groups taking shape and would like to meet with you and hear your views. They will be hosting a 'pop-up shop' in the foyer of Finchley Youth Theatre, 142 High Road, on a number of dates this month.

Feel free to drop in to find out more about groups you might want to join, or leave

your ideas for what's needed in the area.

The pop-up shop dates are all week Monday 17 February to Friday 21 February from 10am to 2pm and Monday 24, Tuesday 25 and Thursday 27 February from 2pm to 6pm.

For more information or to ask any questions, go to www.efab.org.uk or call Lisa Smith on 07909 998453.

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Admin/Town Hall	020 8359 2000
Council Tax	020 8359 2608
Recycling & refuse	020 8359 4600
Primary Care Trust	020 8201 4700
Benefits Agency	020 8258 6500
Employment Service	020 8258 3900
Haringey Council	020 8489 0000

Leisure

Alexandra Palace	020 8365 2121
East Finchley Library	020 8359 3815
Muswell Hill Odeon	0870 505 0007
Phoenix Cinema	020 8444 6789
Warner Cinema	020 8446 9933

Transport

Nat. Rail Enquiries	0845 7484950
City Airport	020 7646 0088
Transport for London	0843 222 1234
National Express	08705 808080
Heathrow Airport	0870 000 0123

Hospitals

Barnet General	0845 111 4000
Coppetts Wood	020 8883 9792
Finchley Memorial	020 8349 7500
Oak Lane Clinic	020 8349 7000
Royal Free	020 7794 0500
St Luke's	020 8219 1800
Whittington	020 7272 3070

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Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 7697555
Barndoc	0300 033 3777
Barnet MENCAP	020 8203 6688
Cancer Support	020 8202 2211
Drinkline	0800 917 8282
Drugs Helpline	0800 776600
MIND	020 8343 5700
NHS Direct	0845 4647

OAPs' Advice

Age UK	020 820 35040
Contact (N2)	020 8432 1415

Crime

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Barnet Police	101
CrimeStoppers	0800 555111
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East Finchley Safer	
Neighbourhood Team	020 7161 9014

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Relate	020 8447 8101
RSPCA Inspector	0300 1234 999
RSPCA animal clinic	020 8365 3910
Samaritans	08457 909090
Refuge Crisis Line	0870 599 5443

Always protect your car

By Janet Maitland

Even if your car is locked, alarmed and parked on your driveway, thieves may still try to steal it. A would-be thief tried to steal a car from a driveway in Summerlee Avenue, finding it locked and alarmed but still managing to remove the lock from the driver's side of the car.

This was just one of the 45 cases of actual or attempted motor vehicle thefts that occurred in East Finchley in the last four months of 2013. Thirty two of these cases were theft from vehicles. The other 13 were theft of vehicles.

Car theft is opportunistic. The Safer Neighbourhood Team recommends that you take care of the basics, so even

Man robbed of mobile phone

By Janet Maitland

A man was threatened and robbed as he walked along the footpath between Trinity Road and Manor Park Road.

The robbery took place at about 9.30 in the morning on November 18th. The victim was approached by a man who demanded his phone. When he followed this up with a threat, the victim handed over his phone. The robber is described as a young slim black man, in his early 20s, wearing a black hat and a navy jacket, with a silver 'grill' on one of his teeth.

If you have any information that can help solve this crime, please ring the police on 101 and quote crime reference number 2425480/13.

You can register your phone's IMEI number with your service provider as they will then be able to bar its use across every network, should it be stolen. To find out your IMEI number, tap *#06# into your phone and you can also register it free at www.immobilise.com

if you are only popping into a shop for a few minutes, lock all the doors and windows and don't leave anything valuable in a visible place.

Consider using visible deterrents so that thieves thinking about whether to steal your car can see that it would be difficult even to try. Etch your registration number or Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on all glass surfaces, including head lamps. Consider buying and using a steering wheel lock, and fitting a Thatcham Category 5 Tracking Device.

Also remember that a very common car theft method is to steal your car keys and then your car. So never leave your car keys where they can be seen from windows, or anywhere near your letterbox.

Bin service: "4 in 5 are satisfied"

By Nick Young

More than three months after the introduction of Barnet Council's new recycling collection service, the amount of recyclable material collected has increased significantly, and the council claims that the majority of residents are happy with the scheme.

Since the new service started, the average amount of recyclable material collected every week has been around 537 tonnes, compared with an average of 389 tonnes for the same time of year in 2012.

In a doorstepping campaign conducted by the council between 15 October and 14 December, in which over 40,000 residents were asked for their views on the new service, 81% said that they were very satisfied or quite satisfied with the recent changes to the recycling service. And 98% said that they use the blue bins or recycling sacks.

Recyclable material is taken to the Biffa materials recovery facility in Edmonton for sorting, and from there it is transported to different reprocessors.

Food waste

The council estimates that around 30% of household refuse is food waste. On average, 145 tonnes of food waste are collected from the small brown bins each week, and some house-

holds have requested a second brown bin.

At present, food waste collection only applies to houses and small blocks of flats (those with fewer than five properties), but it is expected that other flats will have this service extended to them in February.

Mark your bike

Local police are working together with Bike Register to reduce the number of thefts of bicycles. If you would like an officer to visit your home and security-mark your pedal cycles for free, please email: Mahmoud.Kassar@met.pnn.police.uk

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The water leak that isn't

By Janet Maitland

Elderly people are being targeted by burglars who get inside their homes by pretending they've been sent to repair a water leak. The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) has warned that this scam is happening right across the borough, with several incidents in East Finchley over the last three months.

The way it works is that a workman calls about a 'water leak'. Once inside, he either leaves the door pushed to or left on the latch. While he keeps the householder occupied, another man comes in and looks through the other rooms for things to steal. The householder often doesn't realise anyone else has been inside until some hours later when they find they've been robbed.

The no-leak scam

An elderly lady of 82 was burgled in this way on 15 December at 6.20pm. She answered the door to a man saying he'd been asked to fix a leak in her flat. He distracted her by turning on the taps in the kitchen while she emptied out the cupboard underneath to prevent any water damage. The man then left the property with another man and got into a dark coloured vehicle. When the lady walked into her bedroom she realised that money and belongings had been stolen. Both men are described as between 30 and 40 and approximately

175cms tall.

"I would appeal to anyone who remembers seeing either of these men to contact me on 101 quoting reference number 2427890/13," said Detective Constable Kerry Bonomi.

The real-leak variant

A more elaborate version of this scam happened several times over the summer of 2012. It might resurface. In this version two workmen use the pretence of a water leak to gain entry but they actually cause damage that leads to a real leak. They say they can repair the leak but demand cash upfront to do so.

One 84-year-old resident in Fortis Green fell prey to this trick after one of the men lifted tiles on her roof and then poured water through the hole. She was so alarmed that she went straight to the bank and withdrew the £4,600 the men said they needed.

"We strongly advise not to let anyone into your home unless you know who they are or have booked an appointment," said Jan Lovell of the SNT.

Someone shot my cat

By Sandra Li

My six-month-old kitten Moonshie went out into the garden of our home in Elmshurst Crescent and came in limping. Thinking that she might have jumped and sprained her leg, the following day we took her to the vet and they kept her in for X-rays.

We were all very shocked to find out she had been shot and the pellet was still in her leg. Since then she has had surgery and metal work inserted to try and repair her bones.

She now is on medication and needs cage rest for the next six weeks. I would like people to be made aware of all the pain and stress associated with the misuse of these guns.



Moonshie the kitten, now confined to a cage until her leg heals



Katie Burnetts, Samantha Baines and Harriet Fisher are Vinegar.

Three times a comedy star

Who will be the comedy heroes of tomorrow? If all goes well, one of them could be Harriet Fisher.

Harriet, who lives in Lanchester Road, performs with friends Katie Burnetts and Samantha Baines in a sketch group called Vinegar. They describe their comedy as "intelligent, surreal and dark", taking inspiration from Smack the Pony, French and Saunders, and Nighty Night.

The trio, who all have day jobs, have taken their show to the last three Edinburgh Festivals, gig constantly around London and now have a chance to hit the big time after reaching the final of the New Act of the Year competition.

This long-established talent-finding contest has previously

been a route to stardom for Harry Hill, Eddie Izzard and Simon Pegg, and is well-known as an annual event where agents will be scouting for the next generation of comedy performers.

Vinegar's five minute slot

Harriet, Katie and Samantha's group is one of 15 finalists at the event to be hosted by Arthur Smith at the Bloomsbury Theatre on 26 January, just as we go to press.

They've only got five minutes on stage to make an impact. Harriet says: "We've been through six rounds to get to the final. We're a bit surprised to be here, to be honest. When we came off stage at one of the rounds, all the compere said to us was, 'Bit long, girls, but well done'."

"We hope it will lead to

bigger things for us. Our dream would be to have our own sketch show on TV but mainly we just want to be able to work as actors."

Good luck to all three!

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Request for a better bus service: Brian Pearce

A bus service for our local hospital

Patients are asking for a bus route to be diverted by a short distance to take elderly or infirm people directly to Finchley Memorial Hospital.

Currently, the nearest services are the 263, which heads straight up to North Finchley, or the 382, which turns away from the hospital down Summers Lane.

Brian Pearce, of Richmond Road, is one regular outpatient who would like the 382 to turn down Granville Road to drop and pick up at the hospital, before resuming its journey towards Friern Barnet.

"Most hospitals have a bus route serving them directly but Finchley Memorial doesn't," said Mr Pearce. "For older or disabled visitors and patients, it's a long walk from the main road to the hospital and the same again when you want to catch the bus home.

"All we're asking for is a small diversion to take people straight to the hospital doors. There's plenty of room for a single-decker bus like the 382 to drive into and out of the

hospital car park."

TfL's response

Along with fellow patients, he has taken his request directly to Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer, who made inquiries with Transport for London.

The answer that came back is that the diversion would cost £180,000 "for additional buses and drivers" and that neither TfL nor the NHS was prepared to meet the cost. In addition, the diversion would "add to the journey time of commuters".

Mr Freer offered some hope that the request could be reconsidered if passenger numbers to and from the hospital seem to justify it.

Do you think the bus diversion request is a reasonable one? Write to us here at *THE ARCHER* and we will pass your messages on to Mr Pearce. Our contact details are on page 2.

Alzheimer's: the enemy within

By Diana Cormack

At the G8 Dementia Summit in London last December, leading nations committed to find a cure or an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia by 2025. Prime Minister David Cameron said that the UK government will double funding research from £66million in 2015 to £132million by then.

Ten years ago, after my mother died, I wrote an article which people still comment on. It seems suitable to re-use it following the proposed new plans regarding Alzheimer's.

I lost my mother recently. Looking back, she started to leave us almost imperceptibly at first, but slowly and silently over the years she has been stolen away by an invisible and invincible enemy. Gradually, as its hold tightens, more and more of her has disappeared into its cruel grasp.

The first signs could have been put down to acceptable aspects of growing old, things like forgetting what she was doing or where she was going in the house or losing the thread in a conversation. Things that many of us do anyway! Then she couldn't set the table or manage the shopping on her own or find her way to the toilet. Now all her motherly skills, which we sometimes took for granted, are heartbreakingly limited.

My organised, strong, reliable mum has gone and I am still trying to get used to the fact that I will never see her again. Occasionally I catch a fleeting glimpse of her, like when we have a good chat and maybe share a joke about a past incident. She can remember a lot about the past, but the present often puzzles her.

She was a highly intelligent, articulate and amusing woman who had a way with words. Her letters were wonderful. Sadly, her writing shrank so much it became indecipherable and she can no longer sign our birthday cards. Yet she did write a birthday note to her beloved granddaughter, such is her determination.

Mum is well aware that there is something wrong with her. She realises that the words she wants to say are not the ones which come out of her



ELSIE WARD MCNALLY, WAAF

mouth. She knows that she can no longer dress herself, that she fails to recognise people or sees people who aren't there.

Our mother is no longer there and yet we can still see her sometimes when this distressing disease deigns to loosen its hold for a while. There is no cure for Alzheimer's.

For advice or information telephone 020 7423 3500 or visit www.alzheimers.org.uk

Left: Diana's mum Elsie, one of the first WAAF's in the Second World War.

Support for dementia in Barnet

By Daphne Chamberlain

My mother, like Diana's, suffered with dementia. If you, or someone you are caring for, have this condition, you will know that you need all the support, advice and guidance you can get.

There are different forms of dementia, and sometimes a person with this condition has physical problems and/or other illnesses. People are affected in different ways, and we need to be aware of this.

In future issues we will look more closely into local provision, including Barnet's Advance Advocacy Service, which speaks up for those who have no other voice. We would welcome your input.

In the meantime, this is a run-down on what Barnet Alzheimer's Society is providing.

Dementia advisor

Our local advisor is Alison Evans. Call her on 020 8937 7171 or 07889 603708, or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk. Her brief is to discuss your needs, direct you to support services, and give you information to help make decisions. You can contact her as often or as little as you want.

Dementia cafes

These are social and practical sessions for dementia sufferers and their carers. The Finchley cafe meets on the second Wednesday of the month, 2pm-4pm, at the Memorial Hospital, off Granville Road, close to North

Finchley. The meeting this month is on 12 February, with music, dancing, chat, and advice on dealing with stress. For more details, phone 020 8937 7171 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

Carers' Support Group

This meets on the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 7pm at Community Networks, 27 Castle Road, N12 9EE. Just turn up on the night. Note: The bell is difficult to hear in the room used so please keep trying if you get no answer at first.

Singing for the Brain

Every Thursday from 10.30am for two hours at the Eversfield Centre, Eversfield Gardens, Mill Hill, NW7 2AE, you can join in songs of different styles, periods and cultures. Singing helps physical and mental well-being, and you don't need to have sung before. For details, phone 020 8937 7171 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

Carers' Information and Support Programme

This programme runs a series of free workshops. For more information, phone Margaret on 020 8732 6750 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

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Could you volunteer for a safer neighbourhood?

By Janet Maitland

Volunteers are needed for Barnet's new Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) which will be launched in April. SNBs are being set up in every London borough. They are intended to give Londoners a greater voice in policing their communities, an election promise made by Boris Johnson in 2012.

Each SNB will establish local policing priorities, monitor complaints against police officers, and hear and review complaints from victims of crime. They will also have a direct say in identifying Community Pay Back projects, where offenders make amends for their crimes by doing unpaid work in the community.

SNBs will also monitor local confidence in policing, something which made headline news following January's inquest into the police shooting of Mark Duggan, an event which triggered riots across London in 2011.

The new boards will replace existing Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs) which were established after the Scarman Report identified poor relationships between the police and local communities as contributing to the 1981 Brixton riots.

Mayor's statement

Last August, a Police and Crime Committee report called on the Mayor's office to provide clearer guidance for people setting up the SNBs. Joanne McCartney, chair of the committee, said: "Confusion and uncertainty is jeopardizing the good will of the very people

who are most likely to make the new boards a success."

Responding to this criticism, Boris Johnson said last October that it was wrong to prescribe how every SNB should be set up as he did not believe that one size fits all. He also defended the replacement of the CPEGs, saying "At their best, they have [provided] a link between the public and the police, but at their worst they have often become too cosy - with local officers facing little genuine challenge - and too costly."

Once-a-month commitment

The Barnet SNB seeks people who can give a few hours a month to improve community safety in Barnet. They are looking for people of all ages and from all sections of the community to become board members 'including those who may not have been actively involved before, who may be vulnerable or who have been a victim of crime'.

The volunteers will join councillors and other statutory members from the police and council for monthly meetings. For more information email helen.hart@communitybarnet.org.uk or call 020 8364 8400 ext 205.



The Slimming World women with Paddy McGuinness.

Slimmers get taken out by Paddy

It definitely wasn't a case of 'no likey, no lighty' when a group of Slimming World consultants met comedian and TV star Paddy McGuinness at an annual awards ceremony. The team, who run weekly groups in East Finchley, got a chance to cuddle up to the Take Me Out presenter when he co-hosted the Slimming World Awards with the organisation's chair and founder Margaret Miles-Bramwell. Pictured with Paddy are Sara Williams, Dawn Murray, Jackie Toserkani, Jane Howlett and Karen Butler.

Thanks to my High Road hero

One Saturday last December pensioner Pat Brown, of Wilmott Close, had a bad fall in the road near Budgens which temporarily knocked her out. A young man came to her rescue, calling an ambulance and, with a long delay predicted before its arrival, sitting with Pat on a bench and getting her some water.

Because she was shaking with shock, he went into Amy's hardware shop and bought a travel rug to wrap round her. Then he drove her in his car to Finchley Memorial Hospital and explained to them what had happened. He said his name was Dave and gave Pat his mobile number in case she had trouble getting home from the hospital.

Jan Kerr, who runs the Green Man Centre bingo club which Pat attends, told THE ARCHER that she

has recovered now after sporting a huge black eye and suffering bruises to her arm and chest.

Pat believes the young man is local and thinks he is a hero. She was so touched by his kindness and the fact that he would not accept any money for the travel rug that she thought it would be nice to thank him publicly.

Muswell Hill in focus

Are you a keen photographer? Are you a member, or a friend of a member of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association? If so, you have until the end of next month to capture on camera anything unusual, rarely seen, seen from an unusual angle, out of sight or out of the ordinary in Muswell Hill.

First prize is £30, second prize £20, and third prize £10, with a £15 book voucher for the winning entry in the under-16s category. The judges are press photographer Zoe Norfolk, Matt Humphrey, professional photographer at the LOCAL gallery, and website photographer Tony Wells.

Upload your images (maximum of three per entrant) in jpg format to Anthony.wells@btinternet.com. Provide a title for each image, your name, age (if under 17), email address, and phone number. Closing date is 31 March 2014 and winners will be announced on 10 May. Winning entries will be displayed on the association's new website <http://mhfga.org>.

Art on the wall

East Finchley's Sippy Azizollah has an exhibition of some of her work at arts-depot in North Finchley this month.

Sip Art Smile Creations is on the community wall (adjoining the cafe area) from Sunday 2 Feb through to Sunday 23 February. Sippy plans to be there herself every weekend, 12 noon to 4pm.

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Aftab and Farrah Naem with chef Sony. Photo by Mike Coles

Khanakhayae from Majjo's

By Daphne Chamberlain

At last, Majjo's has opened a restaurant in East Finchley. Director Farrah Naem told *THE ARCHER* that they nearly bought the premises (just a couple of doors from their famous takeaway) on two occasions, before taking the plunge. Since opening last November, word has spread so fast that she still has unused publicity leaflets.

Their menus are headed 'Khana khayae', Urdu for 'Come and eat with us'. Farrah's husband, Aftab, told us that the food is in the North Indian tradition, from the province of Punjab, often called 'the bread-basket of the sub-continent'. Everything is freshly cooked, and there is a good selection for both vegetarians and meat-eaters.

I love curries, but for those who don't there is a wide variety of other dishes to choose from.

Naturally, samosas are on the menu. Majjo herself, now

retired, began selling home-cooked samosas to support herself and her two sons, which started her on the road to opening the takeaway in 1984. Another speciality is the poppadoms, which are the lightest and crispest I have tasted. My friend and I also particularly enjoyed the lassi. We chose the sweetened one, which was fresh and uncloying.

Majjo's has been praised by the Evening Standard for contributing to life in East Finchley, received five-star ratings on Trip Advisor and the Barnet

Healthier Catering Award last year, and Majjo herself was nominated as an Asian Woman of Achievement in 1999. Like her, Farrah and Aftab have a professional background.

Farrah is a lecturer, but devotes her energy to controlling the kitchen. She told us, "I would rather go for my passion than my profession." Majjo's Restaurant, 7 Fortis Green, is open 6-10 pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Call 020 8883 4357/1285 or email majjos@hotmail.co.uk for further information.

Yoga to try at home

Viparettā Karani is a legs-up wall pose that is suitable for everyone, as Sunnah Rose of the Rose School of Transformational Yoga explains.

This is a simple and mild inversion which is suitable for everyone. Turning our body upside down has a huge number of benefits including regulating our blood flow, relieving mild back pain and restoring tired feet after a long day. The best part about this pose is it keeps us young and vital. All you need is a wall and cushion or block.

Lie yourself down on the floor and swing your legs up the wall. Try to shuffle your hips and pelvis as near to the wall as you can and straighten your legs as much as is comfortable.

Place your feet on the wall and bend your knees gently which should lift your bottom and lower back slightly off the ground. At this point, place a cushion or block underneath you a few inches away from the wall.

Roll your lower back down

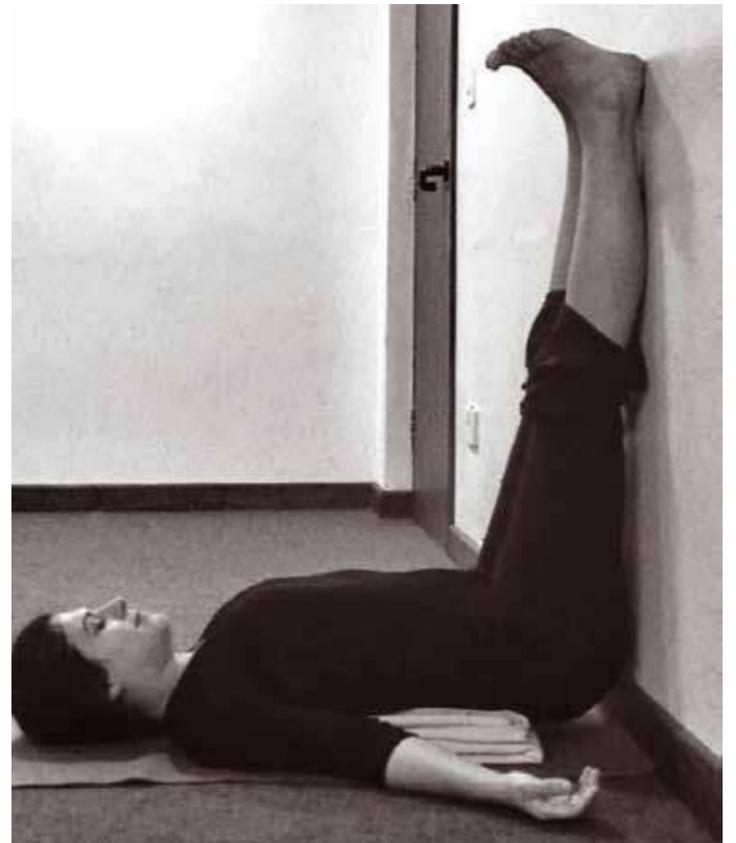
to rest on the cushion. Your pelvis and tailbone should slightly dip over the edge nearest to the wall.

Straighten your legs again as comfortably as you can.

Gently close your eyes, breathe in and out through your nose and surrender to the softness of the pose.

To get the most from this pose stay like this for at least 10 minutes but if you want to stay longer that is fine. You could put on some of your favourite music and just allow yourself to let go of any worries or fears. Find out more at www.stretchingpeople.co.uk

In our report last month on Mother and daughter mindfulness the email address to reach Sallie Rose was printed incorrectly. The correct address is sallie@meditationow.co.uk. We apologise for the error.



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Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy, on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

Experienced singers are always welcome.

Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

Perspective on parking

Barnet Council is carrying out a review of parking in the borough. To this end it has hired Alpha Research Limited, an independent agency, to run a series of informal group discussions.

Local residents and businesses from across the borough have been invited to talk about the way the service is run and how it could be improved to meet their needs.

Alpha Research will present a general written report to the Council who will subsequently make a summary of it available to the public.

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My Marathon for a friend

Michael Michaeloudis of Lynmouth Road, is training hard for this year's London Marathon. Here he describes his heart-felt reason for taking part:



Michael Michaeloudis trains for his marathon charity run. Photo Mike Coles

As the result of a manoeuvre which was incorrectly performed on him, he unfortunately suffered significant injuries, becoming paralysed from the neck down. Nikhil had only recently turned 25 when he had this accident. After emergency surgery and months spent in hospital in Cardiff, he was then fortunate enough to become a resident at a Leonard Cheshire (Greenacres, Birmingham) home, so that he could be closer to his family. He has been a resident there for several years now and they have done a fantastic job in caring for him.

I will be running the London Marathon this April to raise as much money as I can for Leonard Cheshire. All the proceeds raised will be going to their Greenacres home. Nikhil did not wake up that morning thinking he would have an accident which would affect the rest of this life, but this is the reality that can happen to any of us at any time. Leonard Cheshire Disability does a fantastic job picking up the pieces afterwards. Please donate as much or as little as you can by visiting: www.justgiving.com/michael-michaeloudis

On 27 November 2009, a close friend of mine, Nikhil Bali (also known as Nik Dutt) was involved in a wrestling accident. Nik was a keen amateur wrestler and still enjoys watching wrestling to this day. He was and remains well respected and loved by all. Nobody has ever had a bad word to say about him.

Nikhil was not due to wrestle that day, but being the kind of person he is and with his enthusiasm for wrestling, he agreed to help out at the last minute. The decision he took that day turned out to be a life-changing one.



The Aladdin panto at the Green Man Community Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Pantomime time for young and old

Strawberry Vale residents of all ages thoroughly enjoyed a post-Christmas pantomime in the Green Man Community Centre. Two impressive performances of *Aladdin* were put on by Chaplin's Television Ltd Touring Pantomime Company of Ilford. The event was organised by the Green Man Management Group.

Help children learn to read

Was one of your New Year's resolutions this year to do something rewarding and that makes a real difference to your local community? If so, you might consider volunteering as a Beanstalk reading helper, to help primary school children in your area learn to read.

Reading is essential in today's world. Unfortunately many children struggle to learn to read for all sorts of reasons. One in seven children in England left primary school in 2013 behind in their reading and one in six adults in the UK has a reading level below that expected of an eleven-year-old.

Beanstalk is a national charity that gives one-to-one literacy support to children in primary schools with pupils who have fallen behind with their reading. The local branch covers the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Camden, Haringey and Enfield, and currently has 178 volunteers helping 534 children. It always needs more volunteers to help even more children in 2014. The charity gives a two-day training course and carries out a DBS check.

Help Jack to climb

Each Beanstalk reading helper works with three children and sees each child for two 30 minute sessions a week, during term-time, for a whole year. Together, they read, play and talk. With Beanstalk's support the child's approach to learning and enjoying reading is often transformed.

By becoming a reading helper, you will give a child the one-to-one attention they need to build their confidence and help them catch up with their reading. You will give them a chance to learn at their own pace and adapt your sessions to suit them.

Volunteering as a Beanstalk reading helper is extremely rewarding, makes a lasting difference to children's lives and is a great way to give something back to your local community. Why not make a different kind of resolution this year?

To find out more, call Harriet Watson on 020 7372 7523 or visit www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk/reading-helpers

Two new playgrounds for Strawberry Vale

Youngsters at Strawberry Vale have two new play areas to enjoy in 2014. Opened just before Christmas, one has equipment suitable for the very young and the other for the primary and young secondary school age range. Managed by the Peabody Trust and installed by Gingko, the project was voted for by tenants last year with funding coming from the North Circular Road compensation fund.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Could you be a star this summer? Photo by Kris Rich

Pop Circus is coming to town

Talent Time Performing Arts, based at The Bull Theatre in Barnet, is looking for performers of all ages to take part in a spectacular production featuring iconic pop hits set under the big top!

The entire show will be sung live with hits from Britney Spears, Miley Cyrus, Lily Allen, Little Mix, Emeli Sande, Take That and Queen. It will feature a variety of dance styles, giving a chance to work with expert choreographers working in jazz, commercial and

contemporary.

Do you sing, dance or play an instrument and want to take part? Call Talent Time on 07904 771980 or email info@talenttimetheatre.com. You can also find Talent Time on Facebook and Twitter and at www.talenttimetheatre.com

A pair of Valentines

By Diana Cormack

My grandmother used to say that birds chose their mates on St Valentine's Day and flew away to build a nest together. Apparently some birds do pair off around the middle of February, so this coupling has become linked with St Valentine. According to legend, a man called Valentine was martyred by the Romans around 14th February sometime during the third century AD.

It is so long ago that no one really knows the truth, but there are two stories about Valentine. One has him as a priest who was jailed for disobeying the emperor's orders not to marry Roman soldiers to their girl friends. The emperor thought unmarried men made better soldiers, but Valentine disagreed with this rule and continued to marry couples in secret. When he was discovered, Valentine would not admit he was wrong and was thrown into prison, where he died.

Another story tells of a Valentine who was imprisoned because he refused to give up his Christian beliefs. The jailer's daughter was very kind to Valentine and, the night before he was put to death, he wrote her a letter of thanks which he signed simply as "Your Valentine".

Valentine was made a saint and, when the Christians came to Britain, they found a Roman fertility feast was celebrated around the time of St Valentine's Day. The festivities included young men and women drawing lots to find a partner, so the Christians merged the two events. This produced a special day when people could show their feelings for each other.

THE ARCHER needs volunteer distributors for: Strawberry Vale (3 rounds)

Distribution takes place once a month. A typical round takes 30-45 mins to deliver. Please contact 020 8883 0433 or the-archer@lineone.net for details

Archer deliverer for the high jump

By Daphne Chamberlain

Readers of Neale Close and Denison Close, your Archer deliverer is taking to the sky. Stroma Leith, who lives in Neale Close, has booked a parachute jump for North London Hospice. The sky won't be a new experience for her. She has held a private pilot's licence for 25 years, but this will be her first jump.

The big day will be 4 May, when she gets her first training, meets her tandem partner for the first time, and then takes off.

With a history of horse-riding and jumping, skiing and judo to blue belt standard, Stroma has always been active, but says that the last really scary thing she did was to Go Ape in Windsor Great Park with members of her family a month after her 70th birthday.

She said: "It meant climbing ladders up tall pine trees and performing various tasks such as scrambling over scrambling nets and walking over wobbly swinging logs 50 feet up in the air, with the most scary bit

being the zip-wire to the ground in between each set of tasks! I couldn't chicken out with young family members at my tail!"

Stroma has always wanted to try a parachute jump, and sees it as a good way to raise funds for the hospice. She said: "I think that the hospice movement does such a fabulous job and I want to help support my local one. Also, my mum died in a hospice in Scotland."

She needs to raise £395. Her website for online donations is www.doitforcharity.com/stroma or cheques can be made out to the North London Hospice, and if people are happy to say if they are taxpayers and

supply their address this adds 25% to any donation.



Stroma Leith



Make friends with a book.

A reading group with a difference

By Daphne Chamberlain

Do you fancy trying a Get into Reading Group? You wouldn't have to buy or borrow the book being discussed. You wouldn't read it beforehand. You wouldn't even have to read it when you're there. You could just listen if you like.

As a bookworm member of a traditional reading group elsewhere, I was keen to investigate. We were each given a printout of a short story, which the group leader started to read aloud. Then he stopped, inviting us to discuss what we'd heard so far. After which, someone else volunteered to read the next bit. We discussed that, and then another person carried on with the reading. And so on.

Nobody had to say anything unless they wanted to, but in fact everyone did. It wasn't heavy. It wasn't literary analysis or like being back at school. It was a group of us enjoying the story and appreciating what we each had to say. Actually, there was more attention to the story than in many traditional reading group sessions, and nobody who hadn't finished it!

Sharing the pleasure

The idea originated in the English Literature department of Liverpool University. The founder had found "salvation through books", and wanted to share that pleasure. Group leader Paul Higgins outlined the

situation in Barnet. Four groups meet in community centres and six in Jewish care settings, and there are one-to-one sessions in some care homes. An initial grant from Barnet in 2011 lasted for one year, and financial support has since come from a private donor, though Barnet have awarded a grant to work with people with dementia.

Volunteers (19 at present) are

trained to select reading material and to lead discussions. The East Finchley group meets in the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, from 11am to 12.30pm on Fridays, from 10 January. Meetings are drop-in and open to everyone in the community, of all ages and backgrounds. I will certainly be going again. It was fun. For more information, call Paul Higgins on 07985 718744.

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Bletchley circles and the Cube

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Bletchley Circle, the fictional drama about four former codebreakers turned crimebusters, has returned to our screens. On a Bletchley Park website somebody asked whether such a strong bond between these women would have been likely. The answer was no. Many codebreakers who have encountered each other later in life had worked there at the same time, but never met.

People working in one room didn't know what their neighbours in the next room were doing. What historians say does ring true about the drama, though, is the strength of common experience, and how these women can share with each other what they are not allowed to share with anyone else, even their closest families.

Winston Churchill called Bletchley Park the goose that laid many eggs but never cackled, but now the veil of secrecy has been partly lifted. The Bletchley Oral Archive Project is gathering first-hand memories in a race against time.

Could you contribute, or do you know someone else who could? Bletchley Park had outposts at Eastcote and Stanmore, and much of the practical work

operating these machines was done by Wrens.

Contact www.bletchley-park.org.uk if you can add anything, however small, to the extraordinary story which we are hearing at last.

And what about the Cube?

A spacecraft measuring 10x10x10 cm and weighing less than 1kg is sending messages to the National Radio Centre at Bletchley Park. Launched in Russia last November, it transmits data about its position, temperature, atmospheric conditions and battery performance to monitoring stations around the world. Working with schools and colleges, it's intended to educate and inspire children and teenagers "for many years to come".



The Fire Service attending a fire at Viceroy Close in the centre of East Finchley. Photo by John Dearing

Flat fire

A man was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation after an electrical fault started a fire in a first floor flat in Viceroy Close on the High Road.

The fire service was called to Viceroy Close at 1.30 pm on 13 December. "Two firefighters rushed up the stairs with a fire hose," said John Dearing who lives in the same building. "I saw a young man wander out of the burning flat onto the balcony walkway looking dazed. The fire had already spread to what looked like a pile of brown paper just outside the flat which was burning quite fiercely."

An ambulance was called while the fire fighters controlled the fire. The 30-year-old man was treated at the scene and then taken to Whittington hospital as a precautionary measure.

The fire service reports that 5% of the five roomed flat was damaged by the blaze. "The fire fighters told me that there was no danger to the rest of the building," said John Dearing. "Then about an hour after the incident, a senior fire fighter from our local station called at the flats offering free smoke alarms and fitted two in my flat."

The fire service can provide anyone with a free fire safety

check of their home; you don't have to have been affected by a fire. The visit includes a free smoke alarm(s) which is installed for you. To arrange a visit, call 08000 28 44 28 or go to <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/SmokeAlarms.asp>



Grace Guia and Bohus Trulik display their cakes at Delicia. Photo Mike Coles

Let them continue to eat cake

By Diana Cormack

One of the cake stalls which drew a lot of attention at the East Finchley Christmas Festival belonged to Delicia of Fortis Green. This café-restaurant opened in late October at 4-5 Cheapside, where The Emporium Tea Rooms used to be.

Cake lovers will be pleased to learn that cakes still play a big part there, the eye-catching ones being Portuguese, freshly made daily in another part of London. Those on offer at the festival came in an impressive range of shapes and styles. The

adjoining stall displayed various breads baked by a Japanese lady from Muswell Hill who makes them for Delicia to sell on Saturday mornings.

The café aims to become part of the local community and is already a meeting place for clubs and societies, with a Saturday Club, Neighbourhood Watch, Italian and German language groups and a Scrabble Club in the pipeline.

Weekday mornings start with coffee being available from 7.30am and food from

9am (Saturdays from 8am). Chef Bob told *THE ARCHER* that the emphasis is on fresh food, with everything home made, even the salad dressings and the chips.

Delicia is child-friendly, with a special menu for youngsters along with an inviting play area. Children's parties can be arranged whilst celebrating adults can book dinner in the evening and bring their own bottles. For more information or to make a booking call 07879 816 420.

Clean as you cycle

By Daphne Chamberlain
This is not about cleaning your bike. It's about your bike cleaning the streets.

This is the idea: a chemical reaction between elements in a lithium-ion battery, water and surrounding carbon dioxide produces oxygen. At the same time, a filter traps dust and air pollution particles, and the rider moves through cleansed, oxygen-rich air.

The APB (Air-Purifier Bike), designed in Thailand by Lightfog Creative and Design Company, has won a Red Dot Design award, but don't rush out to buy one yet. The prototype is still to be completed.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Deep freeze

As we drown in the latest flood, as your average banker watches his Porsche float down the Thames and the stockbroker belt becomes the stockbroker lifebelt, it's time to think about the cold. Why? Because once upon a time you'd have worried about ice, not floods, so cast a fond look back to a time when you could walk up the Thames from Chelsea to the City without getting your feet wet. Yes, welcome to the big freeze, welcome to the frost fair, welcome to a time when a banker really could walk on water.

Back when men were men and codpieces weren't something you bought from the chippy, the Thames made a habit of freezing over in London. It did it over 20 times between 1400 and 1820. Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth both skated on it, fairs were held on it and even if the river only froze for a couple of days, it was still long enough for people to take their elephants for walks across it. During the last one in 1814 they set up a full scale fairground and a printing press, roasted oxen and got seriously decadent as only the debauched Londoner can.

Lots of reasons are given for the big freeze, not all of them sensible. It seems that one of Iceland's more incontinent volcanos erupting and belching out ash and magma in 1783 played a supporting role. The main players could have been a bunch of Pacific volcanos led by Mount Rinjani getting over excited in the 13th century and ushering in a mini ice age. Either that or it was sunspots or something out of a Terry Pratchett novel. Anyway, things got colder, Greenland stopped being inhabited, oranges stopped growing in northern China and winemaking stopped in England. Which, if you've drunk some of the more dubious products of Chateau North Circular, was no bad thing.

So, why did it stop? Was it because of the Victorian global warming, or because the volcanos got bored? In London it was down to London Bridge. Back in the days when it had 19 arches and the river was wide and sluggish, it didn't take much to freeze it over. But when they pulled the old bridge down and built the embankment the Thames began to flow too fast for it to freeze anywhere outside of a B Movie. Pity really, because I'd love to see Boris try skating across the Thames.

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- **East Finchley Flyers running club**, Tuesdays 7pm at the tube station, 7k run and socialising. Nick 07593 367134.
- **Finchley & Hornsey Ramblers Group** Call Vivien 8883 8190
- **Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club**, Summers Lane N12. New and experienced bowlers welcome.
- **Keep fit for the Retired** on Wednesdays, Christ Church N12. Call Bridie 8883 5269
- **Muswell Hill Bowling Club**, Kings Ave, N10. New & experienced bowlers welcome. Tel: 8883 0433.
- **Pilates** in East Finchley, qualified teacher. Contact Dee on 8883 7029
- **Pilates class** Weds 3.30 & 7pm at Ann Owens Ctr, N2. Call Penny 8444 2882.
- **Pilates Beginners Classes** Tue 9.30-10.30am, Holy Trinity Church Hall. Michelle 07767 804 564
- **Tai Chi** class at EF Methodist Ch, Weds 1pm. James 8883 3308 or james@taiji.co.uk
- **Tennis club** with four clay courts off Southern Road. Call 8883 7723.
- **Yoga, breathing & relaxation**. Weekly drop-in classes - N3, N6, N10. Phone Judy on 07956 375607.
- **Yoga**, pregnancy yoga, meditation classes. Call Sunnah 07941 321 772 www.stretchingpeople.co.uk.

Music, Dance & Creative Arts

- **Art Classes**. Call Henry on 8888 5133.
- **Ballroom Dance Classes**, Wednesday eves for beginners & improvers. St Mary's Church Hall, N3. 8444 0280.
- **Ballroom & Latin American Dance Classes** - beginners & improvers. Wed & Fri eve, Bishop Douglass Sch. 8207 2323.
- **Creative writing classes** in informal, friendly atmosphere. Tel Sallie Rose 020 8444 7217.
- **East Finchley Writers Group**, Weds at the Old White Lion. Contact Carola 8883 5808 or Lillian 8444 1793.
- **East Finchley Poetry Writing Workshops**. Monthly on Saturdays. Contact Dennis Evans 8346 9528.
- **Ladies Keep Fit** Class for over 50s. Tues 10.30-11.30am at Tetherdown Hall. Sheila 8444 0084.
- **Memory Lane Singing Club** - friendly singing club meets every Friday in Finchley. Call Valerie 8458 4508.
- **Over 50s Tea Dance** at Christ Church, North Finchley. Every Weds, 1pm. 020 8444 0280.
- **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards La. Call 8888 4412.
- **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** Contact Caroline Egan 8340 2706
- **Traditional music at TOC**, Highgate Hill, on 1st & 3rd Tues each month from 8.30pm. Free. All musicians welcome 07958 282898.

Clubs & Social

- **Bingo evening**, 8pm Sundays, at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2.
- **Bingo Club** Mondays 7-9 pm, Green Man Centre, Contact: Jan 8815 5452
- **Contact Lunch Club** Tuesdays at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book.
- **French conversation** in small friendly group with native speaker. 8444 9395.
- **Friends of Cherry Tree Wood** www.cherrytreewood.co.uk or 8883 7544.
- **Haringey Recorded Music Society** informal meetings locally. Call David Moldon on 8361 1696.
- **Muslim Ladies Lunch Club** 1st & 3rd Weds, Ann Owen Ctr., Oak La. Call 8432 1415 to book.
- **North London Bridge Club**, Muswell Hill. Contact 8348 3495
- **Bridge Club**, every Saturday 1.30-4pm, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. Contact Ray Tiano 07944 562180.
- **Jewish Friendship Club** for over 60s, Tues 1-3 pm at Muswell Hill Synagogue, Tetherdown. Anita 8886 6140.
- **Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge**, contact 8883 4390
- **Youth Club** at Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale every Tues in termtime. Ages 8-13, £1 entry.



Freyde Sayers and Daniel Kohn in *The Vackees*.

The children's war

Garden Suburb Theatre will be performing *The Vackees* this month, a touching musical for the whole family set at the start of the Second World War.

It tells the story of Kip, an East End boy, who is evacuated to a small village in Somerset with some of his friends. The villagers resent being "invaded" and tension builds as the evacuees try to adapt to country life.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the evacuation programme Operation Pied Piper so this production is a timely and accessible reminder of that time, focusing on the children's experiences. It

contains many beautiful and moving songs, with music by well-known composer Carl Davis.

The play runs at The Lund Theatre at University College School, Hampstead, from Tuesday 18 to Saturday 22 February at 7.30pm, with a matinee at 2.30pm on the Saturday. Tickets cost £12 (£9 concessions) and are available from www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk or by ringing 020 7723 6609.

Music plays on at Raglan... for now

The much-loved Raglan Hotel on Queens Avenue, Muswell Hill, has been sold to property developers and as yet its future is undecided.

Local events organiser Cecilia Holmes fears the loss of the venue from September for her acclaimed music nights.

"It is easy to promote people to come along to my music nights as everyone in Muswell Hill knows the Raglan; they

are sad to hear it may be developed into flats," said Cecilia.

Her music nights are held in one of the Raglan's spacious rooms where a polished piano is available to be tinkled by musicians and singers who can turn up and jam.

The music event was originally started by Les Aldrich



Music venue: The Raglan Hotel

music shop in Muswell Hill and the piano is loaned for free from Hornsey firm London Pianos. There is a bar until 11pm and entry is free. Go along and enjoy the music nights before The Raglan ship sails.

For details of the next dates contact Cecilia on 07533 750400.

Truffled Lobster Risotto

By Allison Goodings

Is it possible to have too much of a good thing? Well, quite possibly. If you're looking for an excuse to celebrate this February, and lobster and truffle are some of your favourite things, then this is the recipe for you!

Cooked lobsters can be bought from Scott's Fishmongers (High Road), and truffle oil can be found in many supermarkets. Serves 2, adapted from *Bon Appetit*, January 1998

Ingredients

- 1 cooked whole lobster
- 600ml chicken stock (fresh or cube)
- 2 tbsp. truffle oil
- 1 chopped carrot
- 2 chopped shallots
- 150g Arborio rice
- 2 tbsp. brandy
- 2 tbsp. double cream
- 2 tbsp. chopped chives



Method

- Remove lobster meat from shells. Cut meat into 1/2-inch pieces.
- Break shells into large pieces. Roast for 15 minutes at 220C on a baking sheet. Pulverize shells with 250ml chicken stock in blender or food processor until finely chopped. Strain through fine sieve. Reserve lobster stock.
- Bring the rest of the chicken stock to a simmer. Heat 1tbsp of truffle oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add carrots and shallots; sauté for two minutes. Add rice; stir for two minutes. Add brandy; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until brandy is absorbed, stirring constantly, for two minutes.
- Add lobster broth and 1/2 of chicken stock. Simmer until rice is tender and creamy, adding remaining broth by ladleful as needed and stirring often, about 20 minutes.
- Add lobster meat and cream; stir until heated through. Stir in remaining truffle oil, chives and seasoning.

What's On... E-mail your listings to: the-archer@lineone.net

Sunday 9 February

• **Free music concert at East Finchley Methodist Church**, High Road, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm. Young Artists Entertain... Prize winners from the Guildhall School of Music perform solos and chamber music including Handel, Grieg, Bruch, Dvorak, Rachmaninov and Debussy. Free admission; collection in aid of World Vision UK Syrian Crisis Appeal. Easy access for people with disabilities.

Tuesday 18 February

• **Slide Show "Church End to East End"**, a circular tour from Church End to East Finchley, 7.30pm at Trinity Church Centre, Nether Street, N12 7NN. Details from mikegee1968@gmail.com or 020 8346 5503.

Tuesday 18 February to Saturday 22 February

• The children's war: **Garden Suburb Theatre will perform *The Vackees***, a musical about wartime evacuation, at The Lund Theatre at University College School, Hampstead at 7.30pm; matinee at 2.30pm on the Saturday. Tickets £12 (£9 concessions) available from www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk or by phoning 020 7723 6609.

• **Peut - Etre Theatre present *The Tin Soldier*** at Jacksons Lane Arts Centre, Highgate. A newly-minted tin soldier stands on a single leg. Nearby is a paper ballerina, also standing on one leg, and the soldier falls in love... Live music, dance and a beautiful story combine in this enchanting show. Ages 3+. Tickets £10.95. Family & Friends Ticket £48 (5 people). Booking: www.jacksonslane.org.uk/whats-on/event/2014/the-tin-soldier/

• **Jay Rayner: A Greedy Man in a Hungry World**. Restaurant critic and BBC One

Show reporter Jay Rayner combines hardnosed reporting with witty memoir to take you on a journey through the world's edible landscape, Jacksons Lane Arts Centre, Highgate, 9pm. Tickets £16 / £14. Booking: www.jacksonslane.org.uk/whats-on/event/2014/a-greedy-man-in-a-hungry-world/

Thursday 27 February

• **Ally Pally Prison Camp**: illustrated, multi-voice presentation, combining letters, photos, paintings and poems, from Maggie Butt for The Finchley Society. From 1915 to 1919 Alexandra Palace housed 3,000 civilian internees, mostly of German origin but locked up as "enemy aliens". Many had grown up in England, had English wives and children, or owned businesses here. 2.30pm (please note time) at Avenue House, East End Road, N3 3QE. Everyone welcome; £2 admission for non-members.

Friday 28 February

• **Alan Davies, Little Victories**; Following his long-awaited return to stand up, Alan Davies (QI and Jonathan Creek) previews his highly anticipated follow-up show, *Little Victories*. Davies' virtuoso story-telling and whip-smart funny bones make this a show not to be missed, 8pm, Jacksons Lane Arts Centre, Highgate. Tickets £16 / £14. Booking: www.jacksonslane.org.uk/whats-on/event/2014/alan-davies-little-victories/

Tuesdays until 1 April

• **Adult evening courses in ceramics**; learn the earliest forming methods of making and decorating pottery as well as an introduction to throwing pots on the potter's wheel. Six-week course £72 or drop-in classes £12, Community Focus, artsdepot, North Finchley. For further details contact 020 8369 5483 or email admin@communityfocus.co.uk



Letters



Parking madness

Dear Editor,

How's this for a Barnet Council special? The first sign is the normal one, meaning that parking is restricted subject to payment during the hours of 8am to 6.30pm. The next sign, with the extra notice on top with a red circle (but without a Blue Parking Sign) means:

- There is no parking allowed between 6 and 8 am (except in a bay where the yellow line does not extend and here parking is allowed)
- Parking is permitted when paid for from 8am to 6.30 pm - the usual rule
- Parking is allowed between 6.30 pm and 8pm both where there is a yellow line and where there is no yellow line
- There is no parking allowed between 8 pm and 10 pm (except in the bay where there is no yellow line) The yellow line runs for three car spaces, but not for the fourth. So easy to understand, and recently appearing in a place in Finchley Central where I have been parking in the evening for years. Guess who got caught by wardens who just happened to be there at 8.10pm! Eric Pickles, the government Minister, says that parking should relate to control of traffic and parking matters, and not just be for raising general revenue. Barnet Council recently lost a court battle for violating this rule. I have asked Barnet Council why this rule applies, but only to this small section of road and not elsewhere, and why at such odd hours, and await the reply with interest.

Yours faithfully,
Barry White,
By email

Our Post Office

Archer reader David Tupman copied us in on this letter sent to Post Office franchise project manager Sally Buchanan during the recent public consultation over changes to the service in East Finchley.

You asked for comments on the

proposals to move the Post Office in East Finchley to a new location. I was not able to use your questionnaire via postofficereviews.co.uk.

Here are the points I wish to make.

1. You are changing the status of a Crown post Office and essentially creating some new counters in a local business known as UOE. This seems a retrograde step.
2. The new location is much smaller than the current post office in Viceroy Parade. This will have implications for access and queues.
3. There will be loss of amenity if you do not have an external cash machine.
4. You have not mentioned the location of the post collection boxes (currently there are two outside boxes in Viceroy Parade with 24 hour access). You are surely not expecting customers to cross the A1000 to post their mail?
5. You have not mentioned the lack of disabled parking outside UOE. The disabled bay outside the current office is clearly convenient.
6. There is no mention of innovation in your services as you go into 'modernisation' mode. For example, a 'fast queue' could help those wanting to weigh an airmail letter and buy a stamp. I don't think the Post Office does itself any favours when customers have to wait 25 minutes, as I did on 2 December 2013, simply to spent £1.20.

Finally, I believe you would have had much more support for your plans if you were considering UOE running the Post Office within Viceroy Parade. That way you would have:

- (a) fully accessible premises with an automatic door
- (b) a cash machine currently in place
- (c) 2 Royal Mail post boxes available 24 hours a day
- (d) sufficient space in the shop for customers to queue and amenities to adapt.

Yours sincerely,
David Tupman,
Leicester Road, N2

Electric frustration

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the small announcement in The Archer, directed at owners of electric cars. It imparted the welcome news that Barnet Council was contemplating installing parking/charging points in the near future.

The announcement asked for owners of electric cars to suggest places where they would like to see these points installed. An email address was provided.

Unfortunately the emails I tried to send did not go through and, to add insult to injury, the same email address was to be found on the Barnet Council website. I wonder how many other owners of electric cars were similarly frustrated?

Yours faithfully,
Maria Barry,
Address supplied

We contacted Barnet Council and they told us the officer for whom the email address was given no longer works at the council. They have stopped collecting suggestions from electric car drivers but don't let that stop you contacting the Roads department if you have a specific point to make. Telephone the council on 020 8359 2000 or email first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net.

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be printed. Contact details can be withheld on request at publication. We reserve the right to abridge letters for reasons of space.

My nights on fire watch
Dear Editor,

I am writing to thank you very much for sending *The Archer* to me each month. It is much appreciated. I was born in Long Lane, East Finchley, in 1919, so I am now 94 years old. I lived in Long Lane until 1971, when I moved to Norfolk for my late husband's health.

I remember the North Circular Road being built in 1927. Before that it was all a big field with the Old Barn at the end, before the High Road.

I read with interest in a past issue about the foxes in St Pancras Cemetery. When the air raids were on, the petrol tankers from Squires Lane barracks were put in that cemetery in case an incendiary bomb fell near them, and of course I did a good stint on fire watch. We did two hours on, four hours off, most of them a lot of fun, walking the streets to make sure nobody had left lights on.

I also did fire fighting, three of us ladies in a team. Our training place was at the bomb site in the High Road, opposite the Black Bess Café. A Mr Westbrook lived in Long Lane and did all the coordination of the fire watching. Not all bad, we had some laughs and I often wonder if any of the others are still alive.

Whilst I am writing I must say what a good job you volunteers are doing with this local paper. I'll say good luck and thank you all.

Yours faithfully,
Dolly Underhay,
Watton, Norfolk.

Pet of the month: Rufus

By Sheila Armstrong
Not only were the Kinks brought up in Denmark Terrace, Fortis Green, but a very handsome dog called Rufus can also lay claim to the same home.



Jemima and her pet dog Rufus
Photo Mike Coles

Jemima Peterson had always had a secret wish for a dog and in September 2012 her wish came true after she'd dropped a few small hints. The winningly attractive Rufus started life in Ireland, was rescued by the Welsh charity Many Tears Animal Rescue, then fostered in Wiltshire which is where the Peterson family first met him.

He was a young and rather thin boxer collie cross (does that make him a bollie or a coxer?) and ready at that point to embrace his new family and a new future. The family passed the charity's home test so to everyone's delight he was able to come back with them to East Finchley.

Rufus has already graduated from the Good Citizen Dog Scheme in Finsbury run by dog trainer Sue Evans, who has run Alpha Dog Training since 1994. She also does Puppy Parties at various local vets. Contact Sue on 020 8809 6762.

Don't forget our local dog rehoming charity All Dogs Matter on www.alldogsmatter.co.uk if you are looking for a dog. Homing a dog which might be homeless for a variety of reasons can be very rewarding.

RUFUS:

Character: Intelligent, gentle and tolerant.
Likes: Walks in Cherry Tree, Coldfall or Highgate Woods and as far afield as Trent Park, usually with his owners and sometimes with Tom, his dog walker.
Best friends: A ferret that lives nearby, and Frodo the cat next door.
Talents: Picking plums from the tree in the garden.
Favourite food: Carrots and rice.
Have you got a pet of the month? Send us a photo and tell us about them, including their likes, dislikes, talents and favourite food. Email us at the-archer@lineone.net or post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

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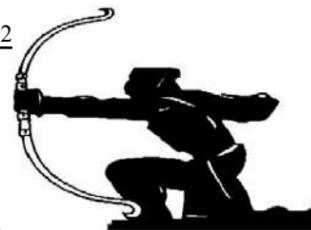


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Coldfall Woods in flood. Main photo by Adam Justice-Mills

Lake appears in Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

In early January, as heavy rain fell night and day and road run-off swelled the stream, the inevitable result was a lake in Coldfall Wood.

The seasonal pond became larger and deeper than any local residents could recall. Between 6 and 7 January the water level rose about one foot overnight, almost obscuring the long footbridge and noticeboard.

A small drain should take the water underneath Muswell Hill Playing Fields to join the stream in Islington Cemetery but was overwhelmed by the unusual volume of water. Several small springs had emerged in the wood, too, contributing streamlets that in some cases appear on old maps.

The fanciful name sometimes given to the seasonal pond, The Everglades, for once seems appropriate. One Friend of Coldfall Wood suggested that the notice board (if still visible) should advertise boat trips!

Horses return to Coldfall

By Ann Bronkhorst

If you see a large horse in Coldfall Wood this month your eyes aren't deceiving you and you haven't time-travelled back a few centuries. It will be there as a working animal, less destructive to woodland than machines and brought in to extract timber during a new programme of felling and coppicing.

The work was scheduled to start in late January, after the completion of similar work in Queen's Wood, and to continue through February. The aim is to coppice some hornbeam trees in one area of Coldfall Wood, and to take out a few trees, mostly oaks and hornbeams, each side of the east-west path through the wood, broadening it so that it becomes more like a woodland ride.

By letting in more light along that central pathway the now crowded trees will benefit.

Coldfall charcoal

The horse will pull away most of the felled branchwood towards Creighton Avenue; some will be stacked for access from the field.

Haringey's Conservation Officer Ian Holt has planned the project and has the support of the Friends of Coldfall Wood. A Haringey-based coppicing business will do much of the work assisted by Countryside Management students from Capel Manor College, with Hawthorn Heavy Horses supplying a key member of the team.

People may want to see the horse at work but there will be health and safety issues and at times parts of the wood, such as the central entrance from Creighton Avenue and the ride itself, will be closed. Look out for notices in and near Coldfall explaining Haringey's plans and advising the public.

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.

Goodbye, Cherry Tree Wood...

By Harriet Copperman

.... and hello, Cherry Tree Park? It is some months since I was in Cherry Tree Wood (CTW) and I was shocked but not surprised by the changes I saw. Whilst the saying 'Use it or lose it' may be appropriate for our High Road shops, it would seem to be 'Use it and lose it' for CTW.

It is wonderful that we have this remnant of ancient woodland on our doorstep for the young, old and four-legged creatures to use and enjoy. However what is deeply shocking is that whilst there are mature trees still standing, most of the wooded area is carpeted by leaves rather than regenerative undergrowth. Although a dense canopy of leaves may reduce the light and therefore the ability of the undergrowth to survive, it is more likely that the increasing use for recreational purposes is mostly to blame for the lack of undergrowth.

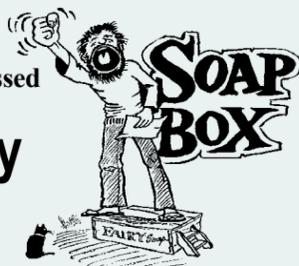
This results in a decreasing number of young saplings being able to grow and thrive to replace dead and dying trees and gradually greater areas are becoming available just for playing football.

It is debatable whether or not Barnet Council has a deliberate policy of neglecting CTW, so that eventually all they'll have to do is mow the grass and maintain the tarmac pathways, but there is a relatively simple and inexpensive solution which the council is either ignorant of, or unwilling to apply.

The usual way to manage woodland is by coppicing (cutting down) a few dense areas of trees and using the cut wood to form a restrictive fence around the area to keep out humans and dogs. This management scheme can be seen in Highgate Wood, which is organised by the Corporation of London.

For many years the 'Friends of Cherry Tree Wood' battled with Barnet to try to maintain some of the integrity of the woodland area, but I believe the group may have disbanded, faced with very little support or interest from the Council.

So, do we want our children and grandchildren to be able to learn about trees, flowers, birds and fungi and other aspects of the natural world, in a safe local environment, or do we want just a park and playground in East Finchley, in which to kick a football?



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