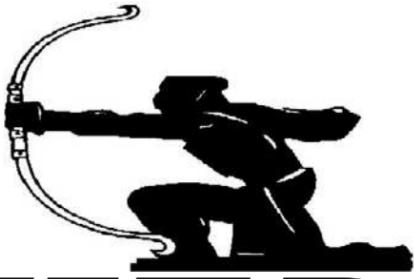




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Burglary hotspots: we're in the top 5!

By Nick Young and Janet Maitland

East Finchley has featured on a list of the top 20 burglary hotspots in the country. In a survey conducted by the price comparison website Moneysupermarket.com, N2 ranked fifth overall on a list of UK postcode areas where homes are most at risk from burglaries.

The list, published on 23 January, was compiled from 3.1million home insurance quotes run through the price comparison service over the previous 12 months, which identified the postcode areas that are the most and least likely to file a burglary claim.

N2 had 34.5 insurance claims per 1,000 households, below neighbouring N10, which had 40.9 claims.

Although the top spot was taken by M21 in Manchester, the list is dominated by London postcodes, with seven out of the top ten being in Greater London.

What burglars want

Kevin Pratt, a home insurance expert with Moneysupermarket.com, said: "Just because somewhere is named a claim hotspot, it doesn't actually mean the area in question is not a nice place to live. Thieves often target areas with wealthy residents and desirable properties where the rewards are

potentially greater or quieter areas where they think there is less risk of being caught red-handed."

Sorting the data

Police statistics are collected on a ward, rather than a postcode, basis. This makes comparisons with police data difficult because N2 includes parts of Fortis Green and Garden Suburb wards as well as all of East Finchley.

Also, police crime rates are based on reported crime per 1,000 people in the population. Moneysupermarket rates are based on the number of theft claims in every 1,000 household home insurance quote enquiries.

East Finchley had 90 residential burglaries in 2013, a crime rate of 5.6 per 1,000 head of population and the lowest rate for five years. Fortis Green had 101, a rate of 7.6, while Garden Suburb had 133, a rate of 8.3. The actual burglary rate in N2 is likely

to be about 7 in 1,000, rather than the Moneysupermarket rate of 34.5.

THE ARCHER is hoping to examine the crime figures in order to publish a more detailed picture of local crime rates in our next issue. Meanwhile, turn to page 2 for the list of the full top 20 hotspots.

Pet of the month

Love your dog, cat, budgie, tortoise, hamster... or snake? Whoever's your best animal friend, make them our Pet of the Month. Send us a photo and tell us about their likes, dislikes, special talents and naughty habits. Email the-archer@line-one.net or write to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

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Patsy Harrington on her Penny-Farthing

Patsy's high on cycling

By Patrizia Schiavottello

Local resident Patsy Harrington has always had an interest in antiques but she went a step further when she decided to purchase her first penny-farthing last year after attending the London Nocturne Race in Smithfield Market.

"I immediately fell in love with the high wheelers with moustache handlebars. They just spelt fun to me," said Patsy.

For six months she has been bravely practising on her old-time bicycle in and around some of the quieter corners of East Finchley, mastering the skills of getting on and off.

"Riding this kind of bike is challenging and requires a lot of control and skill," said Patsy. "It is hard work but I get plenty of support and encouragement from my family, friends and my fellow penny-farthing club members."

She is hoping to become confident enough to take part in a number of races and events around the UK and in the process raise funds for charitable causes close to her heart.



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If you have a story for us, please contact us at the above address. Comments to THE ARCHER may be published unless clearly marked 'Not for publication' within the text.

Copy deadlines – April: 14 March, May: 11 April, June: 16 May

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Councils

Barnet Council:	
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

Health Advice

AIDSline	020 8363 2141
Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 7697555
Barnodoc	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

Emergency	999
Barnet Police	101
CrimeStoppers	0800 555111
Victim Support	0845 303 0900
East Finchley Safer	
Neighbourhood Team	020 7161 9014

Help & Advice

Advice Barnet Project	0844 826 9336
CAB Money Advice	020 8201 7727
Carers' Line	020 8343 9698
Childline	0800 1111
Disability Info Service	020 8446 6935
Gingerbread	020 8445 4227
National Debt Line	0808 808 4000
NSPCC	0800 800500
Rape & Sexual Abuse	020 8683 3300
Relate	020 8447 8101
RSPCA Inspector	0300 1234 999
RSPCA animal clinic	020 8365 3910
Samaritans	08457 909090
Refuge Crisis Line	0870 599 5443

Burglary hotspots

Continued from page 1

Burglary insurance claim rates by postal districts.

Survey by MoneySupermarket.com

Postcode, claims per 1,000 households

1. M21, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, 45.2.
2. SE24, Herne Hill, London, 41.8
3. N10, Muswell Hill, Fortis Green (part), London, 40.9
4. RM8, Dagenham, Becontree, Essex, 35.9
5. N2, East Finchley, Fortis Green (part), Hampstead Garden Suburb (part), London, 34.5
6. L18, Allerton, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, 33.3
7. L22, Waterloo, Liverpool, 32.6
8. N18, Upper Edmonton, London, 32.3
9. UB6, Greenford, Perivale, Middlesex, 30.9
10. SE27, West Norwood, London, 30.5
11. B73, Boldmere, Birmingham, 29.5
12. E8, Hackney Central, Dalston, London Fields, London, 29.4
13. DN2, Intake, Doncaster, 28.7
14. N20, Whetstone, Totteridge, Oakleigh Park, London, 28.0
15. E9, Homerton, Hackney Wick, London, 27.8
16. N11, New Southgate, Friern Barnet, Bounds Green, London, 27.7
17. N16, Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill, London, 27.7
18. LS16, Adel, Leeds, 27.6
19. B24, Erdington, Tyburn, Birmingham, 27.6
20. HP10, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, 27.3

Planning Applications

Barnet Council

113 Abbots Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Two-storey side extension, following demolition of existing projection.

22 Bedford Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Depth 4m. Flat roof maximum height 3.2 m, including parapet wall. At boundary with no.24, 6 m deep, eaves height 2.5m, maximum height 4m at boundary with no.20.

49 Brim Hill, N2

Roof extension, including one rear and one side dormer, to facilitate loft conversion.

5 Durham Road, N2

Single-storey rear conservatory, following demolition of existing conservatory.

68 Durham Road, N2

Side extension to side wall, following demolition of existing structure. Single-storey rear extension with rear window.

Good Shepherd Convent, 61 East End Road, N2

Demolition of two-storey former residential building. Eight detached dwelling-houses with landscaping. New site entrance through existing brick built boundary wall. Curtilage structure to Grade 2 listed villa at

adjacent property (no.63). Listed Building Consent.

105 and 107 High Road, N2

Replacing roof tiles and roof light to both.

111 High Road, N2

Alterations to rear extractor fan.

4 Market Place, N2

Extension to basement.

22 Sylvester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Roof extension, including rear dormer and front roof light, to facilitate loft conversion.

Haringey Council

27 Fordington Road, N6

Converting garage to study.

36 Lauradale Road, N2

Certificate of Lawfulness for conversion of loft space with velux window to front roof slope. Ground floor rear extension.

37 Lynmouth Road, N2

Single-storey detached timber garden outbuilding.

27 Ringwood Avenue, N2

Certificate of Lawfulness for ground floor side extension with parapet flat roof and new rear lights.

5 Twyford Avenue, N2

Two-storey rear / side extension.

29 Western Road, N2

Rear and part side single-storey extension and rear first floor balcony.

Don't put your home at risk

Following the burglaries in Sedgemere Avenue and Trinity Road, East Finchley's Safer Neighbourhood Team have issued some new crime prevention advice.

"Door chains are not normally effective because they can so easily be broken," said Sarah Undrell, an officer from the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), who called at every house on Trinity Road the day after the burglaries to warn residents to be vigilant.

"The burglars probably didn't break the chains as they didn't want to make a noise. Using a Chubb lock is a much better deterrent. People worry about locking their Chubb locks at night in case of a fire, but it's just a question of taking your house keys to bed."

To reduce the risk of burglary, the SNT ask you to consider this advice:

Use time switches when your property is unoccupied. Fit an alarm. Install a tamper-proof security light using low wattage bulbs.

Make sure that the boundary at the front of your property is no higher than four feet or burglars will be able to use it as a screen. At the back and side of your property, boundaries should be higher, ideally six foot, with trellis on top, to prevent anyone climbing over them. Lock away gardening tools out of sight as these can be used to break in.

Ground floor and easily accessible windows should have multi-locking locks with shoot bolts into the frame. Fit sash windows with key operated sash stoppers. Keep valuable items such as laptops out of sight when you're out. Register valuables for free at www.immobilise.com

Any questions?

Are you interested in debating local affairs? The news from Friern Barnet Community Library is that their fundraising Any Questions evenings on the third Friday of every month are developing a following.

Appearing at this month's meeting are: Roger Tichborne, author of The Barnet Eye blog; Helen Michael from Cafe Buzz; Cllr Brian Coleman, former Barnet Mayor and Greater London Assembly member; Cllr Kath McGuirk, former Chair of Barnet's Libraries and Arts Committee. Chair will be Barbara Jacobson, Chair of

BAPS.

Any Questions is at 7.30 pm on Friday 21 March, Friern Barnet Library, Friern Barnet Road, N11 3DS. £5 at the door.

Questions are welcome either on the night or in advance to keith.martin18@btinternet.com. To find out more about the library visit www.friernbar-netlibrary.org.

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Red faces over blue movie filmed at the Phoenix

You never know what goes on behind closed doors and managers at the Phoenix Cinema certainly didn't when they hired out their auditorium to a film crew... who turned out to be filming a porn movie.

The clip, which was posted on a pornography website, features a clothed woman performing a sex act on an undressed man as she is watched by a group of cheering women, also clothed.



Phoenix executive director Elizabeth Taylor-Mead

Embarrassed Phoenix trustees have promised to review their hiring guidelines in the light of the incident. The cinema's new executive director Elizabeth Taylor-Mead told *THE ARCHER* it happened about seven years ago.

She said: "I suppose every business has disgruntled former

employees with an axe to grind. I expect it was a bad judgement call on someone's part but it was a long time ago, at least two management administrations back."

In the Ham and High newspaper, actress and trustee Maureen Lipman said the cinema had taken the film crew on trust and she predicted that East Finchley was unlikely to become the porn capital of Europe.

"I'm going to try to get the film actually," she joked. "I hope the Phoenix was looking majestic. Although I'd like to know which seat this went on in, because I don't want to sit there."

Charlie Johnson, the man behind the camera on the day, said there had been no subversive tactics and his crew always told people what they were.

"We don't go around lying to people," he said. "You have paid for a booking and people know what you are using it for. It is all legal."



An air ambulance lands in Taunton Drive to tend to the stabbing victim. Photo by Paul Dearing

Man stabbed outside corner shop

By Janet Maitland

Police are appealing for witnesses following the stabbing of a young man outside a corner shop in broad daylight on Saturday 1 February.

The victim was inside the shop on the corner of Long Lane and New Trinity Road at about 1.15pm when he got into an argument with another man. They both left the shop and the altercation continued on the pavement.

Two other men arrived and then one of the three men stabbed the victim in the stomach. He staggered to a nearby house for help while the men made off along Long Lane.

The ambulance service sent a helicopter, which landed in Taunton Drive at about 1.30pm. The 19-year-old victim was treated at the scene and then taken to hospital by road, accompanied by the doctor from the air ambulance. His injury was not life threatening and he has since been discharged.

Police cordoned off the shop and closed part of Long Lane for several hours. The manager of

the shop declined to make any comment to *THE ARCHER* about the assault.

The police would like to hear from anyone with information about this incident. If you can help, call 020 8358 0578. Alternatively, call 101. To remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Do front gardens matter?

The Finchley Society is staging a Do Front Gardens Matter? discussion evening with a panel of experts to field your questions and stimulate a lively debate. There'll be time for general discussion, too.

A recent survey of Finchley found that 65% of all our front gardens had disappeared under concrete or block paving. Front garden paving in the borough is now roughly 30 times the size of Victoria Park.

The hard standings cause many environmental problems including flooding, increased water and air pollution, more noise and dirt and so on.

There are now more than 150,000 cars in Barnet, more than 10 times the number we had in 1958. Where do we do put all these cars? Can front gardens and cars coexist? Do we care about the loss of greenery?

If you have any views or questions, do come along for what promises to be an interesting and stimulating discussion evening.

The discussion takes place at Stephens House (formerly

Avenue House) in East End Road on Thursday 27 March from 7.30pm. You can submit specific questions or queries in writing by 15 March to Mike Gee, 32 Long Lane, London N3 2PU, email: mikegee1968@gmail.com

Seed and plant swap

Another great East Finchley community event is becoming established! Now in its third year, the Seed and Plant Swap Day sees people exchanging all sorts of flower and vegetable seeds and a diverse range of plants. The event also became a social hub with many residents staying last year for the full period to discuss gardening and gain expert advice from their neighbours.

The East Finchley Community Trust will be staging the event on Sunday 13 April at Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, High Road N2 9JP (by the Library) from 2pm to 3.30pm. Bring all your surplus plants and seeds and swap them. No entrance charge. No money changes hands.

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Another year for Ann Owens

By Daphne Chamberlain

Finally, we have some official information about the future of Ann Owens Centre. It will continue to provide traditional day centre services for senior citizens, including transport and lunch, until the end of March 2015.

Already operating for only two days a week, these were originally scheduled to end this month, but Age UK say they have been sufficiently "touched by letters and words from clients, carers and volunteers" to allow another year to help in the transfer to new neighbourhood services. No day centre staff will be made redundant.

Age UK's Mark Robinson told *THE ARCHER* that he recognised that what traditional day centre users valued was meeting up socially, but many clients need transport, and Barnet Council funding for this was stopped a year ago. During the coming year, Age UK will have to work at fundraising, and will welcome any help and suggestions.

Barnet Council says that its new borough-wide plan is to extend activity groups, courses and services, to offer more choice locally. These activities, advertised for "older people", include tai chi, dance, computer tuition, reading and gardening clubs, falls prevention, etc, as

well as lunch clubs and coffee mornings. More than 20 new activities and 17 new locations have been introduced since last April, reaching more than 1,000 additional people.

THE ARCHER asked whether there is any analysis of people using the new activities, some of which are already running at Ann Owens. Barnet said that Age UK was monitoring the profile of people using the services, to make sure a cross section of the population is catered for, and that services were spread across the borough.

A spokesman said: "We recognise that our most frail residents will still need transport to activities. People attending the Fremantle day centres at present are entitled to transport provided by Barnet Council as part of their care package. There is also a wide range of help with transport available including dial-a-ride, Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component, blue badges, and transport support from the council for people with substantial and critical needs."



Thanks for all your ideas!

East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) ran a volunteer-led 'pop-up' info shop from 17-27 February in the foyer of the Finchley Youth Theatre (pictured above). Around 10-15 local people attended each day to share their ideas on what they would like to see happening in East Finchley.

The sessions helped to showcase some of the projects already up and running, such as IT training groups, sharing cooking skills and a gardening project, and many people put their names down to join them.

Some new project ideas suggested by residents included a discussion group for social interaction and a bridge club. EFAB volunteers plan to take these projects forward along with their existing groups.

If you would like to find out more, please visit www.efab.org.uk, call Lisa on 07909 998453 or email us@efab.org.uk. Updates on EFAB can also be found on Twitter @eastfinchleyab or on its Facebook page: 'eastfinchleyab'.

Three burglaries in one road

By Janet Maitland

Residents of Sedgemere Avenue have been subjected to three burglaries in the last few months, two of them through the front door.

The first of these was on 12 November when burglars forced open the front door of an unoccupied property at about five o'clock in the afternoon. A witness saw a man running from the smashed open door and getting into an old grey car with a driver.

The suspect was described as a white man, of slim build and wearing dark sportswear and a black beanie hat. The driver was also a white man, wearing the same kind of hat.

Burglars also broke in

through a front door on 17 January sometime between 11.30am and 6.30pm. Police think a screwdriver or a jemmy was used to force it open. A camera and several pieces of costume jewelry were stolen.

On 21 January burglars broke into another property by climbing over a back garden gate and forcing open a sash window into a bedroom. Several electronic items were stolen.

If you have any information about any of these crimes,

please ring the police on 101, or contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) on 020 7161 9014. If you want to remain anonymous, call 0800 555 111.

Trinity too

Also back in November, there was one burglary and two attempted burglaries in one night in nearby Trinity Road. All the burglaries occurred between 11.30pm and 10.30am. The residents were asleep in two of the houses; the third was unoccupied.

New service for Jewish LGBT young people

Jewish 16-21 year olds who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or think they might be (Questioning), now have a culturally sensitive and confidential service.

The service will be provided by experienced volunteers and will offer social events, programmes on social and cultural issues and a secret Facebook group as well as information and guidance.

Karen Lewis, Chair of the Steering Group, says, "This is

an exciting and well overdue project. We are providing activities and guidance for young people and showing them that it is possible to be both Jewish and LGBTQ."

Young people who want to find out more should email sam@jglg.org.uk

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



Mistake forces Post Office to extend consultation

By John Lawrence

The public consultation over the move of East Finchley's Crown Post Office to a High Road shop has been extended to March after postal bosses admitted they got it wrong.

People have been given an extra four weeks until 11 March to have their say after the first consultation ending on 6 January omitted vital information about how the new Post Office would function at office equipment store UOE.

Access to raised platform

The Post Office said: "Our previous letter did not explain that the new Post Office would be located on a raised platform to the rear of the premises in 120 High Road, N29ED, where it will utilise existing storage space.

"Access to this area would be via two steps with a handrail and a customer platform lift. The customer platform lift is widely used in retail outlets and is designed to be fully accessible for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs."

The missing information would seem to be important as one of the declared aims of the consultation was to gather people's views on the accessibility and layout of the new premises.

Residents can give their view by going online at www.postofficeviews.co.uk, by post to FREEPOST Your Comments, Post Office Ltd, by email to comments@postoffice.co.uk, via the Customer Helpline on 08457 223344. Quote branch code 003004 on all submissions.

Union response

Meanwhile, the Communication Workers Union is keeping up its opposition to the move, which will see UOE operate the Post Office on a franchise basis, with the existing premises in Viceroy

Parade being sold off.

The branch manager and seven staff who currently work at the Post Office will be redeployed or leave the company on voluntary redundancy terms.

As we reported in our January issue, the union has handed a petition containing over 1,350 signatures to the Post Office, claiming the loss of East Finchley's Crown Post Office as part of a programme of closing 18 branches across London will have a detrimental effect on local communities.

Huw Davies, a C.W.U. representative for Crown Office counter staff in the Greater London area, said: "It is most regrettable that the Post Office failed to get its original consultation right. We are asking all residents of East Finchley to voice their opposition to the Post Office's plans before the further consultation ends on 11 March."

Track works

The East Finchley branch of the Northern line will be closed again for track maintenance over the weekend of Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 April.



Adam Hills opens the new charity shop in Muswell Hill.

Charity shop declared open

International stand-up comic and TV presenter Adam Hills, star of Channel 4's *The Last Leg*, was in Muswell Hill Broadway on Monday 10 February.

Surrounded by young pupils from The London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy, Adam cut a ribbon and officially declared the charity's fifth shop open.

Adam spent time chatting

with the children, their parents and staff before donating a tie and an autographed pair of trainers for sale in the shop. He then accompanied pupils back to the centre for a guided tour.

"It was really exciting to have Adam come and meet the

kids and witness all the fantastic work that takes place here," said Natasha Byrne, mum of Flynn, 8, a pupil at the school. "Adam's support is invaluable."

The shop at 112 Muswell Hill Broadway is now open for business.

Storm trees to be replaced

Hundreds of trees that line the borough's streets were damaged during recent storms and are to be replaced. Barnet Council aims to plant 750 trees of different species over the next few months, including Chinese privet, flowering cherry and birch. The project will cost around £150,000 and is being funded by the council's Priority Projects Fund.



Closed: The Alexandra in Fortis Green. Photo by Mike Coles

Alexandra shuts down

The Alexandra pub on Fortis Green, opposite the Clissold Arms, is changing hands. Readers reported at the start of February that the pumps had gone and the pub had been cleared out, and it currently stands empty. Others were passing on the night of the closing party.

The Alexandra was put on the market and sold almost immediately. The guide price was £950,000. Property consultants James A Baker, who

handled the sale, were unable to say if the Alexandra would continue as a pub under the new owners.



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Family fun day at Stephens House. Photo Mike Coles

Stephens House looks to the future

By Ann Bronkhorst

In its new three-year development project, funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Avenue House is making some changes, starting with its name. The Victorian villa, gardens and outbuildings in East End Road, left by Henry 'Inky' Stephens to the public in 1918, will be known as Stephens House and Gardens.

The new name helps to emphasise the distinctive history of Stephens House by highlighting its remarkable donor, whose life and work are explored in a small on-site museum, The Stephens Collection.

'Inky' Stephens, a stationery and ink manufacturer, bought Avenue House in 1874; later it would serve as a hospital in both World Wars. Records of those times are sketchy and any information about 'RAF Hospital, Finchley' would be welcomed by the Trust.

Garden restoration

Another name to rediscover is that of Robert Marnock, a Victorian garden designer who was responsible for the fine landscaped gardens, now (like six of the buildings) listed. With an arboretum and many rare specimen trees the gardens are already delightful but will benefit from restoration of Marnock's original design, including clearer vistas.

Paths and signing, too, are to be improved but during all this work the gardens will remain open to the public, and free. A user-friendly 'Little Book of Leaves' maps the whole space and each special tree.

Local families who visit the gardens regularly can look forward to improvements to the playground and to refreshment facilities, with a new café/bistro in the Stables and a kiosk closer to the playground.

The plans for the house and gardens, and the new name, were announced on 7 February and were followed on 9 February by a Fun Day, with children's activities, a traditional Sunday lunch and information about the whole project. If you missed the Fun Day, try the website: www.stephenshouseandgardens.com or contact info@stephenshouseandgardens.com

The Clock Struck War

To mark the centenary of the First World War, Mardibooks has just published an anthology of 23 short stories featuring one from East Finchley author Alex Pearl. The Clock Struck War is available on Amazon as an ebook and from www.mardibooks.com

Keep your ears open for this scam

By Janet Maitland
One Saturday in January, a local woman answered the phone to a man claiming to be a police officer from Holborn fraud squad. He told her that a woman had tried to use a copy of her card to buy a £2,000 watch in a London store, but as she hadn't been able to answer the security questions, she'd been arrested.

When the victim asked how she could be sure of his identity, the 'police officer' gave her his warrant number and told her to call 999. She did this and the identity was confirmed.

"I didn't realise he'd kept the line open and I was speaking to an accomplice," said the victim. "So when he asked me if I'd help them, I said 'Well, tell me about it'."

Secrecy

The accomplice told her they suspected a bank employee was involved, and asked her to go to Victoria Street with her cards and driving licence to meet a plain clothes police officer. She was told not to talk to anyone about it because it was an undercover operation. Now worried, she asked for a uniformed policeman to accompany her. She was refused and told she would be paid for her help. Now suspicious, the victim rang a family member who advised her it was a scam.

"They made me worry I'd been robbed, then played on my relief that I hadn't been," said the victim. "They knew my name and my bank. They told me they didn't want my card details. They exploited my willingness to help. They tried to isolate me. My advice would be to always check out such callers by using another phone, or put the phone down and then wait a few minutes before calling."

Loss of confidence

On 17 January, Sanni Alom, 22, was sentenced to six months in prison for carrying out a similar scam which defrauded an 86-year-old woman out of £5,000. The judge noted that the victim had also lost all her confidence and would not talk to anyone outside her close family, including the police.

"There are many variations of this scam," said Detective Superintendent Mark Strugnell. "If you receive one of these calls, never divulge your bank details and end the call immediately."

What's happening to house prices?

Every day or week seems to bring a fresh report on house prices and the property market in London or across Britain. But what is the situation more locally? Jeremy Leaf, whose estate agent business is based on the High Road, gives an East Finchley perspective.

Many local people seem to think that, over a period of the last five years, now is the best time to move.

As far as we were concerned recovery in the property market began in earnest in the early part of 2013 prompted by improved customer confidence and better access to mortgages at lower rates, particularly for first-time buyers.

But now the market in East Finchley really seems to be taking off. We registered approximately double the number of potential buyers last month compared with a year ago.

As a result, our local office has already sold a number of properties for at least 10% more than they would have done only a few months ago and in many instances achieving above the asking price.

But is it a sellers' market?

Apparently, 4 out of 5 sellers are buyers, so if you're looking in East Finchley there's not a great deal of choice, although many are forced to move out of the area or are downsizing.

Lettings started the year with a bang, like sales. Supply of property to let can't keep up with demand so rents are reaching record highs.

Whether buying or renting, most are attracted to the area by our well known schools,



Moving market: Jeremy Leaf

excellent range of local shops and restaurants, great City/West End transport links as well as village-like community spirit.

Whatever the reason, moving to East Finchley is certainly high on the agenda for many at the moment!

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Visitors always welcome



BBC reporter Mike Thomson landing in Darfur. Photo Ed Prendeville

Shocking voices from an unreported world

By Neil McNaughton

A hushed audience at East Finchley Methodist Church heard some of the personal stories behind the headlines from some of the world's most troubled spots when award-winning BBC journalist Mike Thomson, a local resident, presented a talk on his recent experiences.

His BBC executive wife, Jane Ray, also helped place the stories into the context of our own lives and beliefs in a talk called *Despatches from an unreported world*, as stories like these so rarely make the news agenda.

Personal stories

Mike began with a shocking and moving account of what happened to Zawadi Morgane, who lost 25 members of her family in a massacre in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A taped recording of her voice moved everyone who heard it; the story of the killings, the death of most of her children and her own experience of multiple rape were deeply shocking.

Mike also described the increasing incidence of kidnapping of Eritrean refugees in Sinai. The audience listened to the terrified voice of a victim, pleading for his ransom to be paid.

Modern holocausts

The talk was to commemorate Holocaust Day on 27 February. Mike reported that the Holocaust was not just a single historical phenomenon; such horrors continue to occur

all over the world and many of them still go largely unreported.

In Burma, for example, a systematic campaign is under way to eliminate the minority Rohingya people. They have had their land confiscated and are suffering systematic persecution. Such examples of ethnic cleansing are indeed modern holocausts, but how many of us have heard about them, Mike and Jane asked.

Despite these horrific stories

there is a message of hope. Mike, who often keeps in touch with the people he meets on his journeys, told us that Zawadi was now looking after her one remaining daughter, Reponse, and that she had received enough aid for Reponse to attend school and for her to set up a small dress-making business.

The Eritrean kidnap victim was ultimately released, though he still lives in fear. But, for many, hope is all they have.

Support for carers

By Daphne Chamberlain

Here's what's available to carers at Barnet Carers Centre, Global House, 303 Ballards Lane, N12 8NP.

Mental Health Carers Peer Support Group

6.00-8.00pm. First Monday of every month. Free.

Carers Peer Support Group

1.30 -3.00pm. Every Friday. Free.

Cherry Lodge Cancer Carers Peer Support Group

Second Monday of each month. Free.

Arts and Crafts

Noon-3pm. Every Tuesday. Free.

Carers Get Together

10.30-12.30pm. Every Thursday. Free.

Legal Advice Drop In Surgery

10.00-12.00 noon. Second Monday of each month. Free.

Welfare Benefits Surgery

10.00-12.00 noon. Thursday fortnightly. Call to book appointment. Free.

Film Night

6.00-8.30pm. First Wednesday of each month. £1.50. Call to book.

Relaxation Evening

6.30-8.30pm. Third Wednesday of each month. Call to book. £5.50 for treatment and buffet.

Relaxation Evening with Spiritual Healing

6.30-8.30pm. Third Wednesday of each month. Call to book. £5.50 for treatment and buffet.

Relaxation Day

10.00am-3.00pm. First Friday of each month. Call to book. £8.50 for treatment and lunch.

Gentle Yoga and Relaxation

10.00-11.30am. Second Friday of each month. Call to book. £2.00 per session.

Telephone help lines

020 8343 9698 for Adult Carers.

020 8432 2092 for Young Carers and Siblings

020 8432 2091 for Community Home and Support Services

Daily Drop In

Talk through problems and concerns confidentially. 9.00am-8.15pm, Monday to Thursday. 9.00am-4.30pm, Friday.

Carers' Breaks Fund

Funds for breaks or help towards cost of essential equipment. Contact to check eligibility.

Counselling

Available in non-judgemental, confidential setting. £12.00 per session for 12 sessions.

Fresher air

A project is to be launched to improve air quality in North Finchley, one of Barnet's busiest town centres. A package of different measures will be introduced including a bicycle hire scheme, electric vehicle charging points and cycle stands.

The project comes after Barnet Council won a share in £300,000 worth of grants from the Mayor of London's Air

Quality Fund. The aim will also be to encourage more parents and pupils to leave their cars at home when travelling to school.

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YOUNG ARCHER



Coldfall Primary's year 3 and 4 gymnastics squads with their coach Stel Ekkeshis

Jumping gymnasts!

By Josie Dobrin

Two gymnastics teams from Coldfall Primary School got through to the medals at the Haringey Schools Competition early in February.

One team won the overall silver medal and the other won the bronze medal. There were also two individual medals for Coldfall participants Oliver West, who got the Gold for best individual boy, and Theo Macaulay who won

Bronze for best individual boy. Theo, seven, said: "Before the gymnastics competition started I felt excited and also nervous. When it was happening I was nervous as well. Then when the people were presenting the medals and I stood up to collect

one I felt proud of myself."

The teams were coached along the way by the school's sports instructor Stel Ekkeshis.

Come climb a tree

Throughout this month the Great Big Tree Climbing Company will be at Ally Pally, where you can join in the fun learning to climb a tree. Two highly skilled, friendly instructors will teach you how to enter the tree's canopy using ropes, knots and karabiners, with a maximum of seven in a group. You will be securely attached with a harness as you enjoy the exciting and exhilarating trip through the tree to the top.

The adventure doesn't end there though, because those brave enough to do so can take a

zip wire back down! For details call 020 8365 2121 or visit www.alexandrapalace.com

Ukulele fun

There are still places available in a brand new after-school club for youngsters wanting to play the ukulele.

There's a weekly club for children aged six to ten in Colney Hatch Lane, Muswell Hill, from 4.15pm to 5.15pm on Wednesdays, run by experienced player Margie Gianni. For more details, phone Margie on 07909 439513 or visit <http://margiegianni.wix.com/ukeclub>

Next steps for Big Local

Grange Big Local is organising the recruitment of Resident Ambassadors to help spread the word about Big Local to family, friends, neighbours and community networks. Organisers say it is a great opportunity to play a role in building community links and helping residents take part in deciding how the £1million should be spent.

They are planning two workshops for people interested in training for this role. The first is due to be held on 13 March from 6.30pm to 8pm at a local venue to be confirmed. If you are interested visit www.grangebiglocal.com.

A resident panel for the Grange Big Local project has also appointed a consultants group called Mobilise Public to support volunteers in getting the £1million project off

the ground.

Big Local aims to find ideas that will improve the environment and life generally for people living in and around the Grange Estate.

Mobilise will help to shape relationships between citizens and public services to ensure the project runs smoothly. They will be paid from a start-up fund that is separate from the £1million available to spend on residents' ideas.



The art winners put their work on show.

Picture perfect

Grange Big Local has announced the winners of its youth art competition. The winning designs are by Sophia Mandi, 13, a pupil at Bishop Douglass, and sisters Hazefa Kausar, eight, Jaleha Kausar, six, and Javeria Kausar, five, from Martin Primary.

The competition was judged by Dinah Beamish, a musician and member of Grange Big Local and Caitlin Smail, an art therapist, graphic designer and artist who displays at East Finchley Open Artists. Each of the children has won £20 in vouchers.

Baby jumble is back

Baby Jumble returns to Holy Trinity Church hall on Saturday 15 March from 2-4pm, giving a chance for parents to book a stall and sell their unwanted but good-quality baby and children's items. Sellers get to keep their profits. The first event last September was a huge success.

Tables are £22 (with some £18 early bird tables available on www.babyjumble.com) and entrance is £2.50 per family, with 25% going to Noah's Ark Children's Hospice. There is also a 'leave behind' service where sellers are welcome to donate any leftover items to Noah's Ark Children's Hospice at the end of the sale.

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- ⊙ **Dads' Club:** Get-togethers for dads looking after young children in East Finchley. Adam 07957 441435.
- ⊙ **EF National Childbirth Trust** contact Ruby Yang or Patrizia Canwell at east-finchleynct@googlemail.com
- ⊙ **Muswell Hill Toy Library** story time, singalong and other events. 8444 0244/ 8489 8774, www.muswellhilltoylibrary.com
- ⊙ **Parent & Toddler Group.** Green Man Centre, Sajni 8359 3460/Julia 8444 2276
- ⊙ **Phoenix Cinema activities.** Bringing up baby screenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from box office on 020 8444 6789.
- ⊙ **Stepping Stones.** interactive play for under 3s. Tues 10am, East Finchley Baptist Church. Liz 07836 284538.
- ⊙ **Teddy Bears' Music.** singing for 0-3s in Holy Trinity Church, N2; Thurs 9.45am & 10.45am. Camilla 07900 988149.

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Artist has a brush with disaster

By Diana Cormack

At the end of January local artist Jon Astrop was devastated to discover that the white van which contained his entire collection of paintings had disappeared. When he is not running pop-up exhibitions Jon keeps his collection, valued at an estimated £20,000, in the van.



Jon Astrop: Glad to have his paintings back

He was staying at a friend's house in School Way, North Finchley and had a very rude awakening when he realised that the vehicle had been stolen overnight.

As well as informing the local police, Jon contacted the media (including THE ARCHER) and the story was carried on local TV news bulletins and teletext listings. A policeman in Newham, east London, saw a BBC London appeal and checked the vehicle's registration on the Automatic Number Plate Recognition system which showed it had been in the Woodford Green area. Police officers subsequently discovered the van and removed it to the Charlton car pound for safe keeping.

Jon told THE ARCHER he was absolutely ecstatic to get the van and his 70 hand paintings back. During the two days it was missing he had gone from the lowest point possible to feeling as though he had won the lottery. "Happy endings are the best ones," said Jon. Now he is putting his mind to security matters.

A taste of N2

Lucy Cormack moved from Cherry Tree Road, East Finchley, to Melbourne four years ago. Although half a world away, she has discovered that she is not that far from N2. She is pictured at the N2 Extreme Gelato store which opened in Melbourne recently. It originated in Sydney and presumably gets its name from the fact that much of the amazing variety of ice cream and frozen yoghurt made there contains liquid nitrogen.



N2 mugshot. Photo Victor Wong

Are you getting enough Vitamin D?

By Christian Di Giorgio

Do you suffer joint pain and stiff and achy muscles? It could be a result of low vitamin D levels. It is estimated that 50% of UK adults and 90% of British South Asians are vitamin D deficient. These high figures could be a consequence of our climate.

Though some vitamin D is available through the diet (cod liver oil, oily fish such as salmon and mackerel and eggs), by far the best way to get adequate amounts of vitamin D is via sunlight. In the UK this means being out in the sun in the middle of the day between April and October.

To find out whether there is enough sunlight for your body to synthesise vitamin D, look for your shadow: if it's shorter than you are then you are good to go! Clouds do reduce exposure of the required UVB rays but remember it's the UVA rays that can cause cancer and early skin ageing, so make sure you have good sun protection on if you intend to get more than the required 15-20 minute fix.

Important to many conditions

Vitamin D deficiency does not only affect the health of bones and teeth. New research has discovered special vitamin D receptors throughout the body, suggesting a much broader role than previously thought, one more akin to a hormone than a vitamin.

Strong links are being established between vitamin D deficiency and colorectal cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke and depression. It is now also recognised as an increasingly potent anti-oxidant with a capacity to help fight common infections such as cold and flu.

Perhaps most significantly

of all, even after adjusting for age, gender, race and body mass index, several studies have linked low vitamin D to a doubling in the risk of cognitive dysfunction. Vitamin D has been shown to stimulate the clearance of plaques in the brain, one of the key features of Alzheimer's disease.

To find out if you are vitamin

D deficient you will need to go to your doctor and get a blood test. Also vitamin D can be toxic when taken to excess so only consider supplementation on advice from your GP.

Christian Di Giorgio is osteopath at Nicky Sharpe Osteopathy in East End Road, Tel: 020 8815 0433

Honk, the musical

Finchley and Friern Barnet Operatic Society will be presenting Honk! The Ugly Duckling Musical at the Intimate Theatre, Palmers Green, N13 4DH, from 1-5 April. Performances take place at 7.30pm with a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm. Tickets priced £12-13 (concessions available) can be bought from the box office on 020 8482 6923 or www.ticketsource.co.uk/ffbos

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KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

It's not only rock'n'roll

Back when rock was younger and Justin Bieber was just a bad idea, no one thought about rock'n'roll as a career opportunity. There were no rock schools or teen pop star colleges, you just picked up your guitar and annoyed the neighbours. It was live fast, drive fast, take drugs, and hope your corpse didn't look too bad.

In the post-modern digital age no one who wants to be a real star and be interviewed by Ant'n'Dec does anything as dumb as form a band, play gigs, get drunk and live the life. No way! Today's stars like Jessie J, Katy B, Katie Melua, Kate Nash and Adele all went to the pop stars' Eton, the BRIT School. Yes, they all went to Croydon, it's just that they weren't the Dudes, they were the clean-cut poppets looking for a fulfilling career in music. And me, I'm getting fed up with them, because I want real rock'n'roll degeneracy and I want it now.

The lowlights of the Bieber brat's activities have been throwing eggs at next door's house, doing a little racing in the posh streets of LA and arguing with a limo driver. That's not wild, rebellious youth, I want the real deal. I want the glory days of Keith Moon, Keith Richards and John Bonham. They knew how to take it to the limit.

Moon didn't chuck a few eggs, he got his hands on explosives and blew up his hotel room. That was the encore; he'd started by emptying the contents of the room out of the window from the tenth floor. He didn't do a bit of speeding; he drove a Cadillac into a swimming pool. There was a man who knew how to lose entire weekends.

Keith Richards went several better; he had a complete lost decade. When he wrote his autobiography he had to ring people up to make sure he had actually been as out to lunch as he thought he'd been. They assured him he'd been worse.

John Bonham was another one who knew the meaning of excess. He decided to test drive his new Harley in the hotel corridors, on the seventh floor. The only problem was getting it in the lift. No one has ever said don't look at Justin or One Direction. They said that about Bonham. On one tour journalists were told not to "make eye contact with Mr Bonham" for their own safety. Now that's rock'n'roll as it should be: loud, dangerous and slightly deranged.



Regular Events

Sport & Fitness

- **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.
- **Come and sing!** All welcome, Thursdays 10.15am-12 noon, nr Finchley Central tube. Contact Maxann 8371 9479.
- **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.
- **Muswell Hill after school ukulele club**, Wednesdays 4.15-5.15pm, ages 6-10. Contact Margie 07909 439513.
- **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.



Sippy with her work at the Arts Depot. Photo by Diana Cormack

The future is bright

By Daphne Chamberlain

Sippy Azizollah told us she really appreciated having 90 of her pictures exhibited at artsdepot last month. She told us, "They were beautifully displayed. The events manager said how lovely it was to look at such a bright wall."

Brightness is very much one of Sippy's trademarks. She loves colour, and in recent years has expanded her range. At the opening of her show, I heard lots of admiring comments about the way she works with stickers, sequins and feathers.

Pleasantly surprised by the number she sold, she said, "I

really enjoyed going in to the exhibition. It was lovely to hear kids saying things like 'Ooh look, Mummy, there's a butterfly!' It's so important for me to be with people."

She had special thanks for the artsdepot staff, especially events hire manager Fay Davies.

Phoenix Cinema in March

By Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, executive director at the Phoenix

Poet Emily Dickinson described March as "the month of expectation" and so the Phoenix Cinema offers a month of great expectations on the big screen, starting with the adaptation of Markus Zusak's celebrated novel *The Book Thief*. Newcomer Sophie Nélisse steals not only the books but the screen too from veteran actors Geoffrey Rush and Emily Watson.

Wes Anderson, whose quirky hits include *Rushmore* and *Moonrise Kingdom*, is a cinematic March hare. This month we present his latest, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, an elegant screwball caper starring Jude Law, Ralph Fiennes and a divine Tilda Swinton.

For fashionistas and the people who love them, French biopic *Yves Saint Laurent* portrays the man who built a couture empire against the background of Swinging Sixties.

Cinematic tastes leaning more towards a moonwalk than the catwalk? We're sure you'll be tempted by Scarlett Johansson as an alien seductress in Jonathan Glazer's audacious thriller *Under the Skin*.

Screen Arts continue to thrive in East Finchley. Join us for exciting transmissions of *War Horse* from the National Theatre, *Marco Spada* from the Bolshoi Ballet, and two gems from the Metropolitan Opera: Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Massenet's *Werther*.

The Phoenix hosts weekly Bringing Up Baby screenings of recent films for parents and carers with infants on Wednesdays, Toddler Time activities and films on Tuesdays, and Kids Club on Saturdays, all low cost and entertaining, rain or shine.

So be like March: come in like a lion, go out like a lamb. See you at the movies! Find out more at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or phone the box office on 020 8444 6789.

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

Sunday 9 March

• **Free music concert**, East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, opposite Creighton Avenue, 7.30pm. Celebrating the life and work of Bryan Fairfax, a wonderfully varied programme performed by his friends will include works by Mozart, Bach, Debussy and Beethoven. Free admission, collection in aid of North London Hospice. Venue accessible to people with disabilities.

Wednesday 12 March

• **Career Detox Workshop**: 7pm - 9pm, North Finchley. Thinking of career change or unhappy in your current job? Discover what you need from work to achieve career happiness. Places £30, limited so early booking essential. For more info contact sarah@careertree.org.uk or visit www.careertree.org.uk

careertree.org.uk

Wednesday 12 March to Sunday 20 March

• **Upstairs at the Gatehouse**, Highgate, presents *Murderer*, a thriller by Anthony Schaffer. Box office 020 8340 3488.

Friday 14 March

• **Jazz Evening**: Caroline Morgan on vocals & Robertson piano. Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, 9-11pm, tickets £5 from 020 8444 4224.

Saturday 15 March

• **Baby Jumble** at Holy Trinity Church hall, 2-4pm. Buy and sell good quality children's items. Tables £22 (some £18 early bird tables available on www.babyjumble.com). Entrance £2.50 per family, with 25% going to local charity, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.

• **North London Chorus** and Meridian Sinfonia with conductor Murray Hipkin

Art class with a difference

By Daphne Chamberlain

Many artists say that hands are the hardest things to draw. Then again, the whole thing of drawing a person wearing clothes rather than clothes wearing the person is a bit of a challenge. If you agree, you could be interested in an art class with a difference.

Tutor Mari I'Anson has worked as a fashion illustrator and editor, and is a prolific watercolour artist. Many of her paintings record her extensive travels abroad, including her time as artist-in-residence at schools in Singapore and Bangkok. The people in those paintings seem very real.

Her new class combines life drawing with fashion and costume. A model will demonstrate how different fabrics look when draped over the body. Garments will be different each week.

The classes are for all abilities. Just bring a drawing board

and A3 paper, medium soft pencils, coloured crayons and an eraser. As soon as you feel confident, you can move on to watercolour or oils.

Classes will be held at The Art Stables, 80 East End Road (see below). Initially, there will be a five week course, starting on 26 February, but you can join at any time. If the first course is successful, Mari will run further classes after Easter. Once again, you can either enroll for a course or drop in, phoning beforehand on 020 8346 7011. You can also contact Mari on mari.artist@uwclub.net.

Hidden art and fitness classes open to all

The old stables in the grounds of the Sternberg Centre in East End Road have been transformed into a new arts space called The Art Stables. A variety of art classes and workshops as well as Hatha and Iyengar yoga are on offer.

The Art Stables offers a bright and airy space where painting, drawing, music, performance, Pilates and yoga can take place for all ages and sections of the community. Organisers say interaction with local schools, colleges and other interested institutions will create a vibrant activity centre.

Anyone is welcome to go along any time for a cup of tea and a chat about the courses. Students are enrolled throughout the year and currently on offer are classes in oil painting, acrylics, watercolour & pastels, portrait painting, life drawing, clay modelling, papier mache, Ipad art, after school and weekend kids clubs, photography and Hatha and Iyengar yoga.

For further information contact: The Art Stables, c/o The Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY, visit www.artstables.co.uk, telephone 020 3302 5525 or email: info@artstables.co.uk



The Art Stables in the Sternberg Centre

Hatha yoga for all

'Yoga with Julia' is offering taster classes for £5. Classes are suitable for all abilities and take place in The Art Stables at 9-10.30am on Mondays or in Maples Close N3 on Thursday mornings.

Julia also offers prenatal and restorative yoga. For details see www.facebook.com/finchleyyogawithjulia or contact julia on 07961 381425 or juliadavis@talktalk.net.

Bring a friend and, if your friend signs up too, you'll receive a free class.

perform Psalms and Prayers in settings by Bernstein, Mendelssohn and Schubert, 7.30 pm, St. James' Church, Muswell Hill, N10 3DB. Ticketline 0203 468 1213

Saturday 22 March

• Celebration Press invites you to an evening of poetry and music in aid of Cherry Lodge Cancer Care at 7.30pm at East Finchley Methodist Church, High Road, N2 (opposite Creighton Avenue). Dennis Evans will be reading from his new collection First the Silence with music by Sarah Majid & friend. Admission: £10 (includes a copy of First the Silence).

Sunday 23 March

• **Soulful Laziness** duo featuring Rossano Gabrielli play soul music from the 60s, 70s, 80s & 90s at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green

from 8pm.

Saturday 29 March

• **In the Footsteps of the Famous in High Barnet**: guided walk, with City of London guide Paul Baker. Meet High Barnet tube station at 2.30pm for a look at the famous and the infamous who have lived in High Barnet and Monken Hadley. Contact Paul on 020 8440 6805 or visit www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net

Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 April

• **Finchley & Friern Barnet Operatic Society perform Honk!** The Ugly Duckling Musical at The Intimate Theatre, Palmers Green, N13 4DH, 7.30pm; Saturday matinee 2.30pm. Box office: 0208 482 6923 or www.ticketsource.co.uk/ffbos. Tickets £12/13 (concessions £10).



Letters

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.

Keep going, Archer

Dear Editor,

The Archer is the only newspaper available to me that carries good news and information about our community that makes me feel better for reading it.

Living as we do in a '24-hour news' society, much of what passes for news is either speculation or scandal with subjects flogged to death to fill in the gaps. The only good news allowed is either a royal wedding or a royal baby.

So keep going The Archer, so that we aren't driven barmy by the media!

Yours faithfully,

Verity Smith

Sutton Road, N10.

He was shaking the door...

Dear Editor,

In light of the recent burglaries in Sedgemere Avenue, N2, and the recent newsletter that was given out about the crime in the street, I want to report an old Chinese food delivery man who was banging on my neighbour's door on Friday 31 January.

He was insisting that someone had ordered a takeaway, only the neighbours had moved out two days beforehand and there was a 'to let' sign up outside the property.

This was no ordinary delivery man, as his hand was inside their letterbox and he was physically shaking the whole door as if to check if the Chubb lock had been put on. He wasn't double parked and it was heavy rain that night and he casually walked off. This incident was reported to the police.

Yours faithfully,

Name and address supplied.

Hospital hard to access

Dear Editor,

I fully support Brian Pearce's request for a bus service which drops regular patients at the entrance to the new Finchley Memorial Hospital and hopefully picks them up again later.

I have also struggled to walk the long distance from the 263 only service from East Finchley when I visited the new hospital building soon after a heart operation to find out whether or not they would still be having a hearing-aid clinic.

Obviously one can arrange hospital transport, taxis or drive but as we get older this becomes more difficult, expensive and time-wasting.

Pedestrians have been ignored as the distance from the bus stops is greater than with the old hospital entrances which were nearer to the main road.

I don't think that Dial-A-Ride Buses are allowed to use hospital car parks so one needs a regular normal bus service on which one can travel independently in our own time.

Basically this area has been ignored as far as bus travel is concerned between Archway and Barnet so that overcrowding occurs to shopping areas also. There were originally three routes which had direct services without the necessity of changing buses.

Yours faithfully,

Jeanne Wray,

Address supplied.



The lazy brown fox...

Dear Editor,

Here is something you don't see every day! I opened my bedroom curtains on 22 January and was astounded by this sight from a neighbour's back garden. At first I thought it was the usual ginger cat that sits there, then on closer inspection I could see it was a fox. I picked up my camera and went down to the balcony, as I opened the door he/she looked up and I clicked. About half an hour later the sun had come out and it was still there, on top of the shed, so I went back down to the balcony and clicked again. The fox lay there all day up until 4ish in the afternoon. People came and went from next door garden and from my house, and the fox just stayed. Amazing!! Just thought you would like to see it. It certainly cheered me up for the day.

Yours faithfully,

Rhona Bower,

Market Place, N2.

Yes, we need a bus!

Dear Editor,

I was most interested to read your article concerning direct buses to Finchley Memorial Hospital (*THE ARCHER*, February 2014). I have recently had a total hip replacement and so cannot walk very far without assistance and have to take taxis now to FMH as there is no direct bus, which is costing me a fortune! I absolutely agree there should be a direct bus. I pay the council £140 per year to be able to park outside my own house so why don't they use that revenue to actually help us?

Yours faithfully,

Cecilia Boosey,

Address supplied.

Recycling bags are a right old mess

Dear Editor,

We have been trying since 16 January to get new recycle bin bags from Barnet Council. At first we were told it would be a week to 10 days and we had a reference number (phone call number one). Then that got lost when we were told we had used too many bags, despite us explaining that it had been the season of Christmas packaging and parties (phone call number two).

Then we were told we could not use ordinary bin bags or put the recycling material in the dust bin (phone call number three). Then someone on the other end admitted it was a big mess and Barnet could not possibly deliver all the bags people needed in good time (phone call number four).

Solution: When the recycling team pick up the full bags on Thursdays in our neighbourhood

(but not from our house because we don't have any!) could they not carry around a supply of new ones for those in need? Householders could put up a red flag or some such if they needed a new supply. Might save man hours, avoid chaos, prevent the pile-up of materials to be recycled in our garden as we wait and wait...???

Yours faithfully,

Mary Poulter,

Address supplied.

My cat was shot too

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Sandra Li's article in the February edition of *THE ARCHER* entitled Someone Shot My Cat. Our cat was similarly shot with an air gun last July. Unfortunately she was not so lucky as the pellet ricochet in her abdomen caused internal damage and we had to have her put down. It was the most despicable of crimes, utterly heartless, pointless and cruel.

The police created a case number but told us that there was little hope of catching the perpetrator, as there were no witnesses, no CCTV images and no evidence. It had rained heavily that night, so our cat's tracks were washed away.

The police say that many such crimes go unreported, as often the animal crawls under a hedge and cannot be found afterwards. We live in the Suburb, close to Elmshurst Crescent, where Sandra's cat was harmed. Could it have been the same person who harmed both cats?

Yours faithfully,

Anne Sklar

Address supplied.

Poorer service for years to come

Dear Editor,

The Mayor's plans to close all London Underground ticket offices and cut 950 staff are a big mistake. His broken pledge to keep ticket offices open has led to strikes and if Boris Johnson gets his way, passengers face disruption and a poorer service for years to come.

Closing ticket offices which are only used by 3 per cent of passengers does not sound much of a problem, but this translates to over 100,000 people a day needing assistance to sort out issues which machines can't solve.

Ticket offices provide a reassuring focus point where you know you can find someone, somebody to help disabled or elderly passengers down to the platform, to take charge in an emergency, to offer directions or help victims of crime.

Whilst there is some merit to the

argument that using new technology can make staff more accessible, the Mayor's plans combine ticket office closures with a huge reduction in employees. Fewer staff will be in each station and when they are wandering about, we may, or may not, be lucky enough to bump into them.

With record numbers using the tube and a massive predicted increase in passenger numbers these cuts to staffing are unnecessary, unsafe and unworkable.

Yours faithfully,

Darren Johnson,

Green Party Member of the London Assembly

Can we fix it? No!

Dear Editor

The front page headline of the February 2014 edition of *THE ARCHER* suggests the Barnet Council FixMyStreet website works. My experience would suggest the opposite.

In August 2013 I submitted a request via this website for removal

of litter. Barnet Council did not fix my street.

In November 2013 I resubmitted the litter removal request and highlighted the additional problem of leaves that were causing the pavement to become slippery and blocking the drains. Barnet Council did not fix my street.

In early January 2014 I gave up on the website and rang the council to ask them to clear the street of litter and leaves. I am still waiting for Barnet Council to fix my street.

Yours faithfully,

Frances Buckingham

Elmfield Road, N2.



Local dogs meet up for a Sunday walk on Hampstead Heath with All Dogs Matter. Photo Mike Coles

Dogs having their day

By Sheila Armstrong

The sound of wolf-like howls is not what you might expect on a Sunday morning outside Hampstead Heath station. On 16 February it was howling from Huskies, not wolves, that heralded the start of the 4th All Dogs Matter Valentine's Charity Walk. In a gap between the rain storms our local charity for abandoned and rescued dogs and their friends, canine and human, turned out for an exceptionally pleasant sunny walk. The event raised nearly £1,000.

Meeting at the Garden Pub in South End Green lots of friendly and excited dogs, many rescued and rehomed by ADM, were keen to get going. But first there were friends to be greeted, noses to be rubbed, news to be exchanged and cake to be sampled. And after registration with Ira, who runs ADM, the doggy procession started across the Heath in high spirits.

Fostering and rehoming

126,000 stray dogs were handled by local authorities in 2011. But between April 2012 and March 2013, the numbers collected across the country fell to just under 112,000, according to The Dogs Trust.

All Dogs Matter rehome 250 dogs a year, many from council dog pounds in North London. And their newsletter reminds all local dog lovers that ADM urgently needs foster carers to help look after unwanted and abandoned dogs while they await a permanent home. It's the best gift they can ever get: you are giving them a chance for new life and for a new

forever home! You can be a fosterer even if you have your own dogs or children. Children must be at least 8 years old and above. ADM will carefully match the dogs with the right foster homes.

For more information please contact the charity at www.alldogsmatter.co.uk or info@alldogsmatter.co.uk

Open mic nights

The relaxed, friendly music nights at The Raglan Hotel in Queens Avenue, Muswell Hill, are proving a hit.

Organiser Cecilia Holmes is pleased with audience attendance and participation. "We like people to join in with song, no more excuses to stay home on a Monday night," she says.

Entry to the event is free. If you fancy a sing song, can play contemporary, classical or jazz music or if you write and perform your own material contact Cecilia on 07533750400.



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Roy and Joe get down to some hard work

In spite of rain and mud two horses, with their master Matt, worked steadily in Coldfall Wood through most of last month. Sometimes we'd see Roy the Suffolk Punch, shown here, sometimes Joe the glossy black Shire horse.

Each had his admirers (home-going schoolchildren especially) but neither stood around posing as there was serious log-hauling and woodland work to be done in the newly-coppiced area and the east-west ride (see last month's ARCHER).



Roy the horse tucks into breakfast before his days work.



Roy with his master, Matt in Coldfall Wood. Photos by Mike Coles

Smell of fresh bread

By Nick Young

A new company has recently started delivering artisan-baked bread to houses in East Finchley, Muswell Hill and Hampstead Garden Suburb. Its name is Poppy & Rye, and it aims to deliver a variety of high-quality bread products to your doorstep on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

You may have seen them at the East Finchley Christmas Festival – but you'd have had to be quick, as they'd sold out by midday.

Robert Paul, one of the founders of Poppy & Rye, explained the company's philosophy to THE ARCHER: "It's surprisingly difficult to get your hands on fresh, handmade, baked goods delivered to your door," he said. "We bake into the early hours, delivering straight from our oven to your door, to ensure you receive a wonderfully fresh morning delivery."

Collaborating with the

award-winning Bread Factory, one of London's leading artisan bakeries which is renowned for using natural ingredients and no artificial preservatives, Poppy & Rye already has "hundreds" of customers who receive their orders "straight out of the oven" via an old-fashioned delivery van. "We've been amazed by the warm response and interest in Poppy & Rye," said Robert, who added that he has plans to expand the service to cover other parts of London.

For more details, visit the company's website: www.poppyandrye.co.uk

Psalms and prayers

By Marian Bunzl

North London Chorus's forthcoming concert is an eclectic collection of works based on psalms and prayers.

We will perform Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, commissioned for the 1965 Festival at Chichester Cathedral, the texts taken from the Book of Psalms, sung in the original Hebrew; Korngold's Passover Psalm; Schubert's dramatic setting of Miriam's Song of Victory; and Mendelssohn's much-loved Hear My Prayer.

These diverse and wonderful works disprove the old adage: it truly is the Lord, not the Devil, who has the best tunes.

We are also truly blessed in our soloists, our patroness, the international opera singer Janice Kelly, and Adrian Rolet, head chorister at St. Margaret's Westminster. (The Lord also has the best singers!)

The concert takes place at St James' Church, Muswell Hill, on Saturday 15 March at 7.30 pm. Tickets available from 0203 468 1213 and from St James Bookshop and Les Aldrich Music Shop, 98 Fortis Green Road, Muswell Hill.

So...

... I was cycling along Spaniards Road on the way home from work late one night at the end of February. Dark, cold, no one else on the road.

Suddenly I was aware of a presence alongside me and glanced to my right to find a policeman was keeping pace with me on his motorbike. Was I being pulled up for some offence? No, in fact I found myself in a rather jolly conversation.

We both kept one eye on the road and shouted across at each other as we rode.

The officer, well wrapped-up I have to say, sympathised with me on the problems of finding good enough gloves to keep your hands warm in winter's wind chill.

He was a cyclist himself, he said, and knew this part of London well. Then he left me with something to think about.

Spaniards Road being long and straight, he said, meant it was probably the only road in north London where a rider could break the 20mph speed limit. With that enigmatic remark he wished me a safe ride home and accelerated off.

Naturally, as his red lights vanished into the distance, I pressed hard on the pedals and tried to do just that.

David Melsome

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