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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Don't let it close! Patients plead for GP surgery

A number of readers have got in touch with us to express their concerns at plans to close the GP surgery at 91 High Road, N2.

Patients received letters at the start of August informing them that the surgery, home to three GPs, will shut soon after 14 December. They were invited to send comments to NHS DIRECT by the start of September ahead of a final decision being made.

The surgery itself was collecting names in an attempt to show the level of local support for its services. Existing patients are likely to be transferred to other surgeries in the area, although this is not guaranteed.

One reader told us: "It is the most wonderful surgery and the two receptionists, Maxine and Maggie, are delightful and have worked there for over 20 years. So apart from the 3,500 patients who are likely to have to join another practice the two sisters could effectively lose their jobs. People like that don't exist anymore and it will be devastating to lose our surgery."

"I have two young kids and cannot see how I can walk or take the bus to an alternative surgery if they are sick. I am sure there are other people's stories that are sadder than mine."

Another reader said: "They are at the heart of East Finchley and we cannot let them close."

The news of the consultation came through just as we were going to press on this edition. We hope to find out more from the surgery itself in time for our next issue.



A young passenger enjoys a button welcome at the tube station. Photo Mike Coles

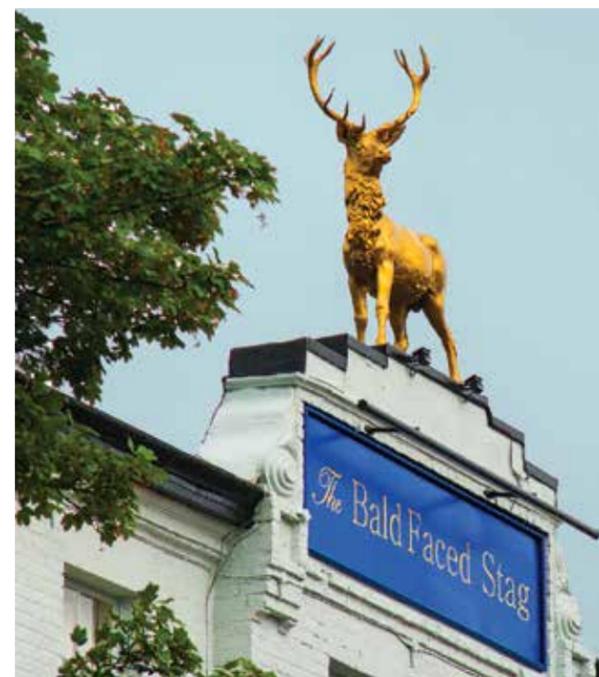
Welcome that's cute as a button

By Diana Cormack

A special handmade greeting has been hanging on the wall as part of the annual plant display and competition at the tube station. It is a mosaic made out of 1,700 buttons carefully sewn on by Gill Steiner to say "Welcome to East Finchley". Gill had the idea for this some time ago but shelved her plans when it seemed permission would be needed from such bodies as English Heritage along with those in charge of the Northern line.

However, station employee Nino Rocha Santos, who looks after the plants, encouraged Gill to finish the mosaic in time for the Station in Bloom competition judging in July. He keeps a careful eye on it and says the work is a big hit with children. The wall hanging, near the High Road entrance, is proving popular all round and many people stop to have their photo taken beside it.

Gill hopes her mosaic can become a permanent feature, framed and in a suitable place at the station. She told *The Archer*: "The sign is dedicated to all the lovely people of East Finchley who make it such a special place; very many people who show kindness, enterprise and initiative. Thank you to the volunteers who compile *The Archer* every month for telling us the stories behind all those considerate actions. I think it may be unique for an underground station to have a welcome sign."



...and one of our most famous residents is looking resplendent in a new coat of gold paint.

The statue on the top of the Bald Faced Stag has been smartened up as part of the pub's refurbishment.

The new golden Bald Faced Stag. Photo Mike Coles



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