



Fleur Adcock reads from her latest collection at the Black Gull Bookshop. Photo Mike Coles

A calm voice but no softie

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last month at the Black Gull Bookshop in the High Road, we found out more about poet Fleur Adcock. We were celebrating the launch of her latest collection, called *Hoard*, which contains poems that didn't quite fit with her earlier anthologies.

The first two she shared with us were about East Finchley. Many of the others, though, are set in her native New Zealand and the evening was introduced by Moira Taylor, review editor of New Zealand Studies Network. Moira described Fleur as a calm voice in an increasingly unpredictable world.

A calm voice and a sense of humour, I think, though many poems have a harder edge. Her poems are deceptively easy to

read and relate to. We can find out about her favourite coin, and catch glimpses of her early life resettling in England after her childhood here during the Second World War.

They are not all strictly personal though. There are poems inspired by people she has met, heard about, or have met her family. These include her heroine, Labour politician and people's champion Ellen Wilkinson. Herbert Morrison

makes a surprise (to me) appearance here.

Black Gull is not the easiest venue for a reading, but congratulations to whoever thought of putting the speaker in a more central position. It was really much easier for everyone to hear and see.

Hoard is well worth reading. It has a Poetry Book Society Special Commendation, and is published by Bloodaxe Books. ISBN 978-1-78037-396-6.

Library entry problems

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It said security staff were there to provide additional reassurance during self-service opening hours. It is not clear whether they will still be used after the transition.

Children and many vulnerable people are the losers under the new system. We have now

been told that reception classes from Martin Primary School no longer visit, though they greatly valued their library time before.

Number crunching

The number of registered PIN readers in Barnet seems to vary all the time. Last month we reported the figure being quoted was 15,000, then 11,000, now one of our readers reports he has heard 17,000. Before the restructure of the library service in the borough, the figure was more than 186,000.

Staffed hours at East Finchley Library are 9am to 12.30pm

on Monday, 2pm to 8pm on Wednesday, 2pm to 5pm on Thursday and 9am to 12.30pm on Saturday. Outside those hours you need to have a registered PIN number to gain entry. In staffed hours you can pick up a simple form at the library to register.

Campaign group Save Barnet Libraries is still presenting the case for a reversal of Barnet's library restructuring by the Culture Secretary. Your opinions are vital. Contact www.savebarnetlibraries.org or call 07794 634290.



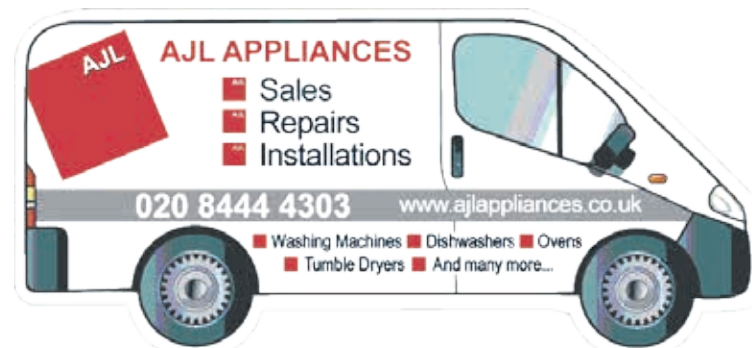
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High Road police base to close as Met bids to cut costs

The community policing team office on the High Road in East Finchley is marked for closure as part of a London-wide rethink of crime reporting and police resources.

The Metropolitan Police plans to further reduce the number of police stations and front counters in order to save £8million a year in the face of Government funding cuts.

At the same time, it is developing its online and telephone services which people can use to report crime and get advice around the clock. During 2016, eight per cent of crime was reported at police front counters and 70% by phone. Currently nine per cent of crimes are reported online but that number is expected to grow rapidly.

High Barnet front counter's last day will be on 14 December and East Finchley's office will close as soon as alternative accommodation can be found for the three teams of officers based there. Our nearest front counter will be in Colindale.

Jan Lovell, of the East

Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, said police buildings were often underused and expensive to maintain. She outlined the ways that members of the public can still contact the police.

"We're aware that you may want to talk to a police officer or attend a police station," she said. "A 24-hour front counter will be available in each borough and your local neighbourhood team will also hold a weekly community contact session.

"Your neighbourhood policing team are on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley. You can also visit www.met.police.uk, enter your postcode and receive the latest policing information for your area.

"If you need to report a crime as an emergency, call 999. If it's not an emergency visit www.met.police.uk, tweet @MetCC or call 101."

Mary's a wonder woman

Many congratulations to Mary Otumahana for being honoured as the New Entrepreneur Mind Of the Year 2017 by national social enterprise organisation BBI.

Mary is the founder of lifestyle brand and music studio Prodigies of Nature and community interest company The RecordShop. She runs music events and workshops and also performs her own fusion of hip hop, grit pop and funk as WondrWomN.

Mary, who grew up and still lives in East Finchley, has built a talent network of more than 300 aspiring artists, partnering with big-hitting organisations like The National Lottery, London Youth Support Trust and The Prince's Trust. Find out more at www.prodigiesofnature.com and www.therecshop.co.uk.



Making a difference: Mary Otumahana

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