



In the chair: Ozzie looks after a customer in his shop in Church Lane. Photo Mike Coles.

Ozzie sharpens up for new hours

Ozzie Akalin has been cutting hair at his barber shop in Church Lane, N2, for more than seven years and he's starting this new year by expanding his booming business in more ways than one.

His Barbers in the Village shop will now open on Mondays, taking it to a six-days-a-week operation, and Ozzie will also be joined by a fellow barber on Saturdays and other busy days.

"I'm really grateful to all my loyal customers," said Ozzie. "At first I thought I'd be tucked away here on Church Lane but people come back regularly and I get a surprising amount of passing

trade as it's a busy road. Now the time has come for me to put a lot more into the shop."

Ozzie's door will be open on Monday-Friday 9am-7pm and on Saturdays from 8am-6pm.

How hospice found a new home

By Mary O'Toole

Last month's edition of *The Archer* gave the exciting news that at long last building work has started on Noah's Ark Children's Hospice. The article reported that the site chosen to be its home was on a nature reserve and I thought readers might like to know how it was chosen.

I have been a Trustee for Noah's Ark for over 10 years and helped in the search for somewhere to build. More than 40 sites had been rejected as unsuitable or far too expensive for a charity to buy. You can imagine my excitement when I saw a piece in a local newspaper saying that the Borough of Barnet wanted to sell the lease on the nature reserve in Byng Road, High Barnet.

Some of you may remember my daughter Helen buzzing

around East Finchley in her wheelchair. I had accompanied Helen when her class from Holy Trinity School spent an afternoon there learning about trees, wildlife and pond dipping.

The right place

I knew at once that this peaceful place would be right for families to relax and for their children to experience the excitement Helen felt on her visit. Schools will continue to be offered visits led by an inspiring teacher and the reserve will

be maintained by volunteers, including my husband Charlie.

It has been a long journey to obtain permission to build and to raise enough money to start. Our public appeal aims to provide funds to finish the Ark and to employ the staff needed to open.

Helen did not live to see the Ark built in the wonderful setting she helped to find, but with your help it will not be too late for other children. For more information visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk.

Letters

Speed signs not enough

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see you bringing attention to the issue of speeding on Church Lane (*The Archer*, November 2017) and then impressed that Barnet Council took the matter seriously by painting some prominent 20mph signs on the road itself.

My feeling is that Church Lane needs even more speed signage before it can be considered safe. The problem is that it's used as a cut-through from East End Road to the High Road and probably has a high proportion of users who don't know the road and its tricky bridge and awkward bend.

On top of that, it's the only 20mph road in the area so by the time drivers realise they shouldn't be doing 30mph it's too late.

An even better solution would be to reduce all roads in East Finchley to 20mph to make them all safer. I often see people barrelling down Long Lane at unreasonable speeds and I know from friends that the same happens in Leopold Road and Leslie Road.

Yours faithfully,
Claire Finnemore,
Long Lane, N2.

End of a hard year

Dear Editor,

Here's a nice story for you. I was in Maddens last night with my wife when an older chap shuffled over with his Guinness and asked if he could take a seat at our table. He looked very tired but managed a smile. He said he'd spent most of the day in the pub because it was so warm.

We chatted. He had been an electrician. He lost his wife this year and he had suffered a stroke too. He struggled with recall. Then, out of nowhere, he announced that his favourite writer is Oscar Wilde and recited word perfect the first few and closing verses of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. He had tears in his eyes... and I did too.

Yours faithfully,
Mel Glass,
Address supplied.

Housing prospects

Dear Editor,

I have sympathy with the people whose homes are to be demolished to make way for a new tower block in Prospect Ring, East Finchley (*The Archer*, past issues). I assume, however, that they will be offered new accommodation and not be left homeless.

What I can't understand is the opposition of other residents to new flats for people who need them. Young people and families are desperately short of affordable

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homes in London and we need to be considering every available plot of land for building them.

East Finchley and London in general will gradually choke to a stop unless we can find space for the teachers, firefighters, nurses and whatever of the future, and we need to be doing something about it now.

A new tower block in Prospect Ring may change the views that the current residents have out of their windows but I'm sure they will adjust. After all, where would they be living now if people in the past had opposed tower blocks in Prospect Ring?

Yours faithfully,
Joan Merritt,
East End Road, N2.

Cycle spares

Dear Editor,

If any of your readers are sorting out their garage or shed and find some unwanted older cycle parts or tools in good condition, please can I ask them to consider donating them to the UK's National Cycle Museum, Llandrindod Wells.

The museum is the UK's main cycle museum, displaying over 250 cycles spanning 200 years of cycle history. We are very lucky to have a museum of national importance during the bicentenary year of the bicycle.

It is run as a charity and to help raise funds it will be selling surplus cycle spares on Saturday 3 March. The store manager there is Steve Griffith, who lives in Finchley and visits mid-Wales frequently.

He would be very grateful to hear from anyone who has cycle spares. Steve can be reached on 07740 923 630 or email griffith531@hotmail.com. Find out more about the museum at www.cyclemuseum.org.uk. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Freda Davies,
National Cycle Museum trustee and volunteer.

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www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk

Visitors always welcome