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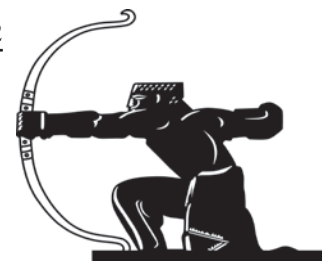
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The Archer

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Janka and Little Volcanoes Science Club at the recent Fun Palace in East Finchley library. Photo Mike Coles



Story time with Carolyn Pickles in the children's library. Photo Alison Roberts

How East Finchley got its library 80 years ago

East Finchley library opened 80 years ago. To mark this occasion, a group of local volunteers have been exploring the archives to uncover its history.

By Emily Burnham

"Books are as necessary to the public as open spaces, baths and health services," said Councillor Herbert Wilmot to the East Finchley Ratepayers Association in January 1938, welcoming the library that was to open nine months later on the High Road, the second purpose-built library in the district after North Finchley opened in 1936.

It is thanks to Cllr Wilmot that we have a historical record.

As chairman of the Public Libraries Committee in 1931, he recalled the first resolution for a library service had come in 1912 from the Finchley branch of the National Women Citizens' Association (NWCA), an outgrowth of the suffrage movement. Headmasters of local schools followed.

Key supporters

In 1925 when Finchley Council voted against the Public Libraries Act, East Finchley ratepayers disagreed and voted that support for libraries should be "an election plank". A couple

called Mr and Mrs Tinkler were key supporters and we can see their foresight when Mr Tinkler is quoted as saying: "A library tends to become a civic centre and what Finchley lacks today is a municipal soul."

Mrs Tinkler was vice-chair of the women's section of the Labour Party. Her name crops up in fundraising events like Christmas fairs at Martin School and raising money for causes such as miners' relief.

A Mrs Timberlake was another key figure. She was the first female councillor in Finchley from 1925, supported by the NWCA. In 1932, when she joined the Libraries Committee, a colleague ceded to her "so she can see the books are suitable for the flappers of the

district".

Once the depression of 1931-32 had passed, in 1935 the Council felt able to increase rates by 3d a year specifically to fund local services in health (Oak Lane Clinic), housing (Red Lion Hill, later The

Grange) and the "municipal soul" of the library.

When East Finchley's library finally opened in October 1938, the headline in The Hendon Times read: *£13,000 Library Opened... A Treasure of Mental Culture.*

Weekend winter fair

East Finchley Open Artists will be holding their Winter Fair over a whole weekend on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 November at the Finchley Youth Centre in the High Road, next door to Tony's Continental.

It's a chance to browse and buy unique ceramics, textiles, paintings, jewellery, photos and more. Entry is free with donations going to the group's chosen charity, Art Against Knives. Doors will be open from 11am to 5pm both days. Find out more at eastfinchleyopen.org.uk.

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Silver screen history

The Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association is hosting an evening exploring the history of the Muswell Hill Odeon.

Cinema historian Jeremy Buck will describe its controversial opening in 1936, the boom years of the 1930s and 40s, the threat of closure in the 1980s and its rebirth as the Everyman.

His talk will be fully illustrated with a selection of images and the Paramount newsreel of the opening night. Everyone is welcome and there is no need to book. It takes place on Thursday 8 November at North Bank, Muswell Hill Methodist Church, Pages Lane, N10, at 7.30pm.

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