



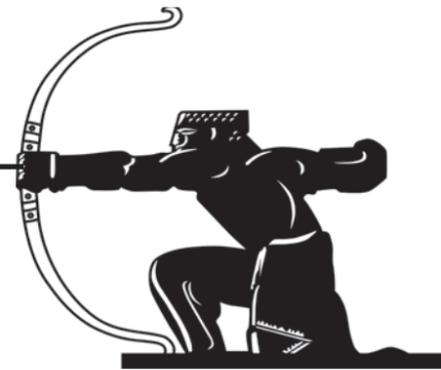
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The Archer

Local News is our Aim



May 2021 No. 325

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

By the way, we are demolishing your homes

By Janet Maitland

Residents of three houses were shocked to find out that their homes are being earmarked for demolition as part of a plan to create more council housing in the area of the Grange estate in East Finchley.

Scores of people living in the Brownswell Road and Tarling Road area have vowed to fight the development plans put forward by Barnet Homes, which would also see the loss of two well-used green spaces and play areas to make room for 40 new homes.

The 21 people living in the houses under threat of demolition off Brownswell Road, one of which is owner occupied, knew nothing about the proposals until last month, despite a community consultation process that began last September. This appears to have been an oversight.

Grange residents were specifically informed in February

that none of their blocks of flats would be demolished. "No one feels secure now," one of the Brownswell householders told *The Archer*. "If they can knock down our houses why wouldn't they demolish others?"

Plan outlined at online meeting

Barnet Homes has put forward an extensive plan to create 100 homes in the Grange estate area. Over 40 would be built on the Brownswell Road play area and on a green space and car park in Tarling Road.

Sixty four more will be built on the Grange itself by adding extra storeys to Oak House and Garden House and constructing



Concerned residents, the homes to be demolished and playing area in Brownswell Road.
Photo Mike Coles

new blocks on Red Lion Hill, Central Avenue and on the High Road side of the estate.

Dozens of residents attended an online meeting on Thursday 15 April where Barnet Homes outlined the plan. Head of Development Meera Bedi admitted that people had been told there would be no demolition before adding: "But then we saw that although two social rented homes on Brownswell Road would be lost, we would achieve a strategic target of 38 affordable homes. The social tenants will be given another Barnet Home and the owner will be bought out and given compensation."

Protect green space

East Finchley councillor Arjun Mittra said he was completely opposed to the demolition of people's homes and building on green spaces. He said: "Of course there's a need to build genuinely affordable homes, but not at the expense



Air Ambulance at Brownswell Road

of valuable green space." – Reaction from residents, turn to page 2.

In this issue

Movies return to the Phoenix

As we went to press the Phoenix Cinema was hoping to re-open on Monday 17 May, showing the Bafta and Golden Globe-nominated *Nomadland*, starring Frances McDormand. Turn to page X

Cash machine robbers foiled

An 80-year-old taxi driver was saved from a robbery by a courageous passer-by outside East Finchley station. Two young men dragged the elderly man from his cab claiming to be plain clothes policemen, then led him to the cash machine in front of the station and demanded £500. Turn to page X

Playground revamp plans

A total of £70,000 has been awarded to improve the play equipment and introduce new features at the popular Market Place Play Area in East Finchley. Turn to page X

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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 – **June: 14 May** **July: 11 June**
August: xx July

The team that prescribes happiness

Social prescribing is not widely known about despite a five-strong team in East Finchley alone. Jenny Thorby, one of the link workers managed by Age UK Barnet, tells us what she does and how social prescribing could be the answer to tackling loneliness.

A 75-year-old man I helped recently hadn't spoken to anyone for nearly a year, apart from the hospital staff, after suffering a stroke. Can you imagine what happens to people when they've had so little social contact for so long?



Social doctor: Jenny Thorby at work as a member of the prescribing link team

This man was referred to me by his doctor and my job was to link him to local services, groups and activities to widen his social connections and help ease his loneliness. When medicine or pills aren't necessarily the answer, doctors are now sending patients to social prescribing link workers like me.

If the link worker helps people tackle these issues and take control of their health, the idea is it'll take pressure off GPs. By improving people's wellbeing, they are less likely to get ill and need a doctor.

How it works

After receiving a referral, the first thing I do is spend time

asking questions, getting to know the person and building a rapport. Admitting to feelings of loneliness can be hard though and it can take a while to tease this out. I find that people say more the second or third time we speak.

It's not just older adults living by themselves experiencing loneliness. I've spoken to mums who are feeling socially isolated. Women with children who have special needs and behavioural difficulties, for instance, have struggled looking after them all day while the schools were closed.

I'm seeing people who've lost their jobs after 10 or 20 years. So I help them navigate the benefits system, and find ways back into employment. We don't support people long term but we want to transition people to a service that will do so.

It is too early to assess how well social prescribing is working in East Finchley, but signs are positive. Studies elsewhere have shown social prescribing has led to improvements in quality of life and emotional and general wellbeing. One study in Shropshire found that visits to the GP went down 40 per cent.

Getting a referral

If you need help, please ask your GP surgery if they have a social prescribing service and request a referral. The service deals with issues including housing, care, benefits, healthy lifestyle, befriending, training, employment, volunteering, social activities and mental health services. For advice and activities for people over 55, check out the Age UK Barnet website www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet

“Where are the children meant to play?”

Janet Maitland spoke to Brownswell Road residents about the plans to demolish their homes and build on the only green space they have (see full story on page 1).

Twenty one people live in the three houses on Brownswell Road that Barnet Homes plans to knock down. They span three generations with ages from three to 74. Six of them have serious health problems or disabilities.

“I'm not going without a fight,” said one householder. “No one feels secure now. If they can knock down our houses why wouldn't they demolish others?”

One house is owner occupied. “We bought the house 23 years ago and 10 of us live here,” said the owner.

Grass or concrete?

People in the Brownswell Road area use its green space all year round for exercising, picnics, games and relaxing. The grassy area is also sometimes used as a landing spot for the London Air Ambulance.

“Where are the children meant to play?” said a registered childminder who has lived on the Brownswell estate for 30 years. “I use the playground every evening after school, as do other childminders.”

“My mother's 84 and she can't get any further than this green,” said a resident from the road. “She can see the kids playing and hear them laughing and it means a lot.”

“There will be 38 new flats just here, where's everyone supposed to park? And what about the trees?” said Katrina Barber, another resident. “We're being encroached by a concrete jungle,” said Eibh-leann McMahon.

Protest grows

Almost 50 people attended an online protest meeting on



Concerned residents, the homes to be demolished and playing area in Brownswell Road. Photo Mike Coles

Wednesday 21 April to discuss how they could oppose the development plans. If you live on The Grange or Brownswell Road and want to join the Residents Association contact grangeandbrownswell@gmail.com

Morgan Saunders, chair of the nearby Tarling Road and Sylvester Road Association, said the separate green space they stood to lose was an asset of community value. “If the plan goes ahead, the council will be in breach of the Barnet Plan 2021-2025 as Tarling Road will become the opposite of clean, safe, family-friendly and healthy,” he said.

A petition opposing the Brownswell Road demolitions and development on the green has been started at www.change.org

(search 'Brownswell') and already has 600 supporters. To see the plans for yourself and give your views go to www.givemyview.com/grangeestate

Station repairs

Repairs are being carried out this month and next at East Finchley station as part of essential maintenance work for the entrance and the canopies on the platform level. Scaffolding is being put up ahead of the concreting work, which is expected to run until 30 June. Rail services will be unaffected.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet Council

129 Abbots Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

10 Ashburnham Close, N2

Non-material amendments to planning permission for single-storey rear extension. Include increase of extension towards boundary and rear.

Bishops Corner, The Bishops Avenue, N2

Implementation of planning permission for demolition of existing two-storey dwelling and garage, and construction of two-storey dwelling including basement and rooms in roof space, to provide eight self-contained residential units. Associated cycle and refuse storage and car ramp.

28 Brackenbury Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front rooflights.

30 Durham Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and three front rooflights. 176 East End Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear and

side dormer windows and two front rooflights, following removal of existing side extension. Rooftop extension involving rear dormer window and three front rooflights. Three front rooflights. Conversion of garage into habitable space. Replacement of garage door with window. New front porch.

Flat 1 Elmwood Court, 18 Elm Gardens, N2

Single-storey conservatory.

12 - 18 High Road, N2

Non-material amendments to planning permission for two four-storey buildings, including removal of four windows (two on the first floor and two on the second floor), and reduced size of four windows in Block A south elevation.

31 Howard Walk, N2

Replacement of existing rear windows and door with two windows and one door. Installation of one side window, and refurbishment of attic.

426 Long Lane, N2

Installation of air conditioning unit

to side elevation.

28 Manor Park Road, N2

Single-storey rear lower ground floor extension.

7 New Trinity Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front and one side rooflights.

3 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension

51 Sylvester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension

Haringey Council

193 Creighton Avenue, N2

Erection of single-storey side and rear extension with a part first-floor side extension

7 Twyford Avenue, N2

Erection of a single-storey rear and rear-side extension with three side windows. Loft conversion with rear and side roof dormers.

74 Twyford Avenue, N2

Erection of side and rear dormer, installation of one front and one side rooflight, erection of single storey side and rear extension, increase in size of porch and alterations to front garden.



Phoenix set to reopen with secure finances

By David Gritten

As we went to press the Phoenix Cinema was hoping to re-open on Monday 17 May, showing the Bafta and Golden Globe-nominated *Nomadland*, starring Frances McDormand. Check www.phoenixcinema.co.uk for times.

After a hugely difficult couple of years its staff and trustees are now looking forward to a stable, even prosperous future thanks to two sizeable grants from the government's Culture Recovery Fund.

With the spread of Covid-19 in March last year, the Phoenix had to close for nine months, re-opening briefly in December for four days before shutting down again. All this happened against a long-standing background of financial uncertainty.

Financial boost

Alison Gold, chair of the Phoenix trustees, says: "We're in a better financial position now than for some years." As we reported in October, East Finchley residents Alex Kleiner

and Michelle McDowall have made a substantial private donation. Then in December the Phoenix was awarded £126,000 from government via the British Film Institute. More good news came last month when the cinema won another grant of £138,000 directly from the Culture Recovery Fund. Alison noted that this latest grant is for reserves to support the Phoenix when it re-opens "as trading is expected to be uncertain for a while."

Fresh look for foyer

In anticipation of its re-opening, she explains that work has been going on to upgrade its foyer, to make it more welcoming as part of a refreshed and



The Phoenix team ready to go. Photo Mike Coles

reinvoigorated venue.

There will also be a new emphasis on serving first-class food and drink, sourced wherever possible from local suppliers. "Finally, fresh popcorn!" says Alison. "This also helps the cinema to start earning revenue beyond ticket sales."

Link with Rio cinema

Making the cinema sustainable in the future will also help it to remain independent.

A 2018 initiative by ex-board members for the Curzon cinema chain to take over the Phoenix was fiercely opposed by audiences and staff and ultimately abandoned.

Still, it has now entered into a partnership with the Rio cinema in Dalston, not in the sense that one cinema would take over the other, but to pool resources and thus help cut their overheads.

Staff at the Phoenix are

delighted by the progress being made. Operations manager Ewelina Sadlowska enthused: "I can't wait for us to open again, because this building is wonderful, it's loved. We want to make sure our audiences appreciate it. There's been such sadness among us but now something positive will happen." Keep an eye on the cinema and its website www.phoenixcinema.co.uk for a confirmed reopening date.

Phoenix finds a friend in east London

By David Gritten

These past few weeks, a group of Phoenix staff have been concentrating on upgrading the building's interior in an attempt to make it more striking and approachable to visitors.



The East Finchley team have a friendly advisor in Oliver Meek, executive director of the Rio in Dalston, an attractive, independent Art Deco cinema, not unlike the Phoenix.

He jumped at the chance to form a partnership, seeing an opportunity for both venues to take advantage of economies of scale: "We could get a bit more influence with distributors, and share data," he says. "Hopefully we can channel our efforts together and both be stronger as a result. Why should the big cinema chains have all the benefits? There's now only a handful of cinemas in London left with buildings like these."

To alter ... or not

Many of the proposed changes to the Phoenix will

focus on the foyer. "It has hot, bright downlighting, and it doesn't feel very warm," says Oliver. "For me, a cinema's somewhere you go to be cosy and in the dark. We can create moods, make the place feel warmer."

But everyone concerned with the alterations inside the building insists that the Phoenix's magnificent auditorium will stay virtually untouched. "It's beautiful, that's the thing," Oliver says. "You can't create something like that again. But we want to enhance everything around it."

Second screen dreams

There's another item on the mind of Alison Gold, chair of the Phoenix trustees: the long-term ambition for the Phoenix

to have a second screen. "That would be a big thing," she says. "We're wondering if it might be possible to fit something in what is now the café area. If so, it would be transformative." Oliver oversaw a second screen project at the Rio and says: "It gave us 20,000 more admissions a year. So that was really major."

Equally important is getting Phoenix audiences to support and make use of a vastly improved bar. Alison and Oliver agree that could be a huge income source. There's a long list of objectives, but by year's end the Phoenix might finally look prepared for an exciting, brand new era.

"Yes," says Alison. "I think it can be."



Burglary at station shop

By Janet Maitland

The newsagent at East Finchley station was broken into and burgled sometime during the early hours of Monday 12 April. The smashed window and ransacked shop were discovered when staff arrived at 6.30am.

A local man walking through Cherry Tree Wood spotted a discarded cash till drawer on the ground. He said: "When I got to the station I saw the busted-in window, put two and two together and told the guy from the shop I'd seen the drawer with all the stuff strewn around. I told him I'd go back and make sure no one disturbed it. So I went back and waited till the owner came and took it."

British Transport Police confirmed they were called to East Finchley station following reports of criminal damage and burglary of a shop.

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Good Samaritan rescues man, 80, from robbery

By Janet Maitland and Josef Grostern

An 80-year-old taxi driver was saved from a robbery by a courageous passer-by outside East Finchley station. Two young men dragged the elderly man from his cab claiming to be plain clothes policemen, then led him to the cash machine in front of the station and demanded £500.

James, 46, a local resident who was playing with his two-year-old daughter on the steps outside the McDonald's building, saw it happening and managed to distract the youths away from the taxi driver while calling the police.

He told *The Archer*: "It was bizarre because these incidents happen at night in secluded areas, but it was 11.30 in the morning and hundreds of people were around." Another taxi driver wanted to help but couldn't stop his cab in the traffic. He later corroborated James's statement to the police.

James initially called his wife and tried to stare down the youths in the hope it would scare them off, but one of them left the taxi driver to intimidate him, shouting and pushing him even though he was clutching

his daughter to his chest.

"I screamed 'Somebody call the police!' but nobody helped. Then the second guy leaves the elderly man and they both circle me but I get my phone and call the police and as soon as they know the police are coming they run away."

Police call for witnesses

Police responded to reports of a robbery in progress at 11.41am on Thursday 1 April. There were no arrests and enquiries continue. Witnesses are asked to call police on 101 and quote CAD 2996/01 April. It is not yet known if the station CCTV captured images.

The robbers are described as well built, about 5ft 10ins tall, with facial hair and wearing black track suits with a white detail. One was between 20 and 24, the other between 19 and 21.

Calls to make alleyway to station safer

By Janet Maitland

Residents are calling for Barnet Council to install CCTV on the alleyway behind the tube to make it safer.

Last October a girl was subjected to a serious sexual assault while walking home from school along The Causeway. Five months later in March, police responded to reports of a man allegedly exposing himself to another girl in exactly the same spot.

During the arrest the officers suffered non-life-threatening injuries and the man was charged with assaulting an emergency worker, causing actual bodily harm and an act of outraging public decency.

"Surely it's time the council takes responsibility for ensuring the safety of its residents as this is a well-known danger spot so it's hard to understand why no action has been taken yet," local resident David Blakeney told us. "My daughter is 16 and her natural walk home from the tube is the back entrance of the tube, so of course this is a major concern for my family."

A Causeway resident said: "This is really worrying, not just for those of us living here, but also for the many people who use this path throughout the day." Another added: "Gangs of youths congregate on the footpath as they know they can't be seen." East Finchley councillor Arjun Mittra said: "The last time there was an incident here, the council refused to install CCTV or look at the lighting and merely trimmed back some foliage, but I hope this time they listen. It's disappointing that things have to happen before Barnet ever take action."

Petition

Residents have started a petition for CCTV and better lighting, which you can find at: www.38degrees.org/t/bcxxxxxx

Council response

A Barnet Council spokesperson told us that its Community Safety Team was working with East Finchley Neighbourhood Police Team to assess crime prevention options for



The scene of recent incidents in The Causeway. Photo Mike Coles

The Causeway, adding: "The possibility of CCTV deployments will be considered as part of this assessment."

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS
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Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

Reporting crime

Social media is an excellent way of sharing news and often folk want to share unpleasant experiences to make others aware and be safe. Sadly these posts can occasionally snowball, gathering all kinds of rumours and things that have happened in a much broader time frame or a different area.

So I'd like to remind everyone to please report any crimes, anti-social behaviour or worrying suspicious behaviour directly to the police at the time of the incident before posting on social media and, when you post, adding that police are aware. This will help ensure we have the correct facts and can give you our best service.

Contact police online at www.met.police.uk and follow the links or phone 101 or 999 in an emergency. The Safer

Neighbourhood Team is here to support in East Finchley and we are happy to respond, but we are not a 24/7 team, so please report crime centrally as above.

Securing your home

To all our relief we are coming out of lockdown. It's been a year like no other and that's true for crime too, so burglaries have been much lower than the average over the last six months. Burglaries may increase as we leave our homes more, so here are some top tips:

After fitting good locks on doors and windows, alarms are a good investment, and make sure you always turn them on, and double lock your doors and windows, even for a short outing.

When you're out or away, make your home look occupied by time switches on lights and radios. Ask someone to keep an eye on your home, moving bins back onto your property, clearing mail etc. Fit a high side gate with sturdy locks and fit a trellis on top lined with Prikka Strip, the same as fences. Keep bins away from side gates.

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Cash to improve much-used playground

By John Lawrence

A total of £70,000 has been awarded to improve the play equipment and introduce new features at the popular Market Place Play Area in East Finchley.

The money was granted, £30,000 from Barnet Council and £40,000 from the Grange Big Local project, after a group of parents and local councillor Alison Moore raised their concerns about the Play Area's poor layout and some of its ageing gear.

The Friends of Market Place Playground organised a survey asking parents how they thought it could be improved and the 340 responses will be used to set the goals for the refurbishment project. Top of the wish list are better equipment, more planting and natural features, and more social seating.

Samantha Haycock, from the Friends group, said: We

their sacrifices of the past year."

Next steps: creating a landscaping and design brief in conjunction with Barnet Council and then deciding when the improvement works can be done. Samantha said the project team will be sure to consult with the community as they go.

"We have many sometimes conflicting views to consider and it is important for us that key groups like teenagers, immediate residents and those with disabilities and additional needs have input," she said.

Could you help?

The team would welcome support and skills from anyone with fundraising, landscaping, design or project management



Retiring - Evelyn Davies

Head retires after 25 years

By Ewan Marshall

After 25 years of exceptional service to the community, Evelyn Davies is retiring as headteacher from Coldfall Primary School. She describes the school as her life's work and something she has cared for like one of her children.

Under her leadership, Coldfall has been transformed from a small one-form entry school, listed by the Department for Education as one of the 100 worst schools nationally, into a large thriving institution that has achieved three successive 'Outstanding' judgements from Ofsted.

Amongst her most memorable moments are the musical performances that took the children of Coldfall to perform at prestigious venues such as the Barbican, Wigmore Hall and even the O2 Arena.

Of course, running a primary school is not without its challenges too and Mrs Davies notes that the infestations of Canada geese on the school

field and the unwelcome visit of a rat, nicknamed Trevor, to her bathroom were not part of her headteacher's training.

Mrs Davies postponed her retirement for a year to provide stability and guidance through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic but now she has decided that it is finally time to move on and spend more time with her family.

The children of Coldfall Primary celebrated Mrs Davies's contribution by decorating the entire school with portraits, poems and stories inspired by her. Staff presented her with a special silver locket, engraved with the school logo, so that she can always have Coldfall next to her heart.



The Market place playground. Photo Mike Coles

are delighted to have this demonstration of confidence in Market Place Playground and the Friends group from the council and GBL. In doing this they have committed to making Market Place a space to be proud of and to delivering our children the high quality play environment they deserve after

skills. They are also looking for someone with expertise in the not-for-profit legal and business affairs sector to help them shape a constitution and manage the funds. To get in touch, email friendsofmarketplace@gmail.com or find the group on Facebook and Twitter.

Pasture re-opens

Long Lane Pasture, close to Finchley Fire Station on Long Lane, N3, is open again on a daily basis for the spring and summer.

Volunteers have mown the paths and generally tidied up after a long, wet winter. Visitors are asked to keep dogs on a short lead and to make sure children stay on the paths while new grasses and spring flowers are establishing themselves. Please also take all rubbish home with you and do not bring barbecues.

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The night the bombs fell on East Finchley

Mike Coles tells the story of the night 80 years ago when German bombs brought death and destruction to Woodside Avenue and Fortis Green, and uncovers a startlingly vivid letter from an eye-witness that reveals the quiet courage of the people on the ground.

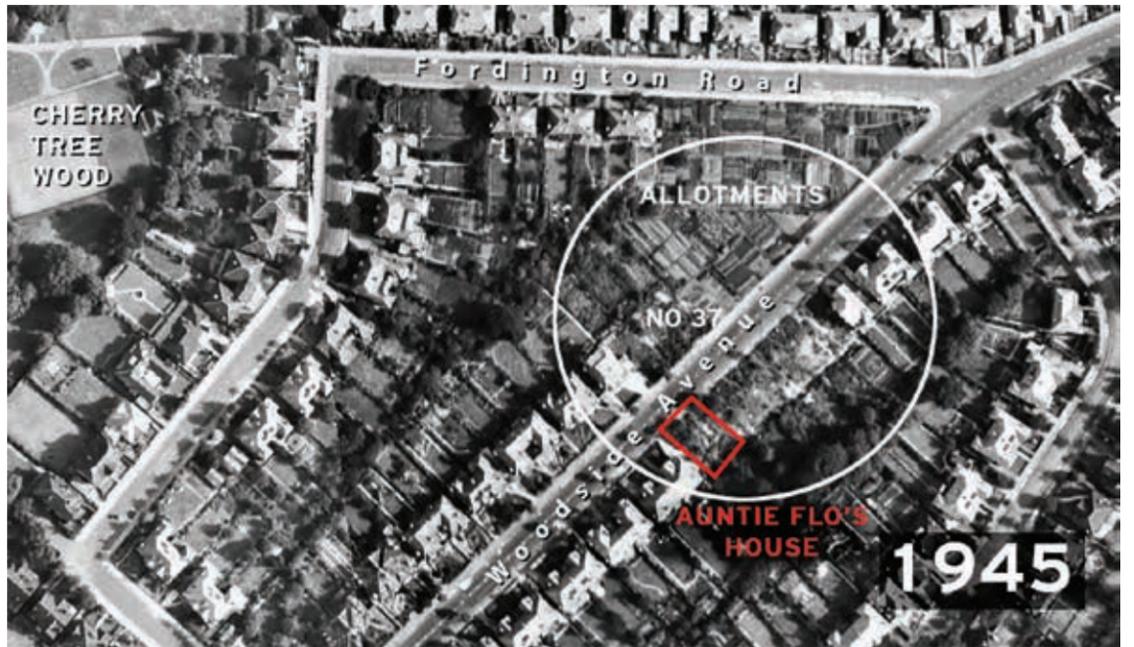
Walking around a leafy East Finchley today on a sunny May day, even in a pandemic, it's hard to imagine what it was like 80 years ago. When we look back to May 1941, we imagine it in black and white, but of course the daffodils were out and the trees were blossoming then, just as they are today.

The difference is that then we had been at war for 18 months and the Blitz had been going on for eight months, every night raining death and destruction from the sky. We know now that the night of 10-11 May was effectively the last night of the German bombing campaign, which had failed to cow London or do the economic damage the Nazis had hoped for. Instead they were turning their attention to Russia and the Eastern Front.

Wembley at 5.30pm they were unaware of the urgent news from RAF Intelligence at Harrow on the Hill.

The Luftwaffe used intersecting radio beams to help their bombers navigate; pilots followed one beam and when it intersected with another the plane was over the target. The RAF detected that the beams had been turned on and were centred over London. With a full moon, and an exceptionally low tide to hamper fire fighters, a big raid was likely.

And so it proved. Sirens began wailing at 11.02pm and the bombing started immediately, continuing through the night until the all-clear sounded at 5.57am. It was the heaviest, most destructive, and most prolonged raid of the Blitz. In



This RAF photo from 1945 shows the bombed houses had not been rebuilt. Photo Imperial War Museum



The bomb site today. Photo Mike Coles

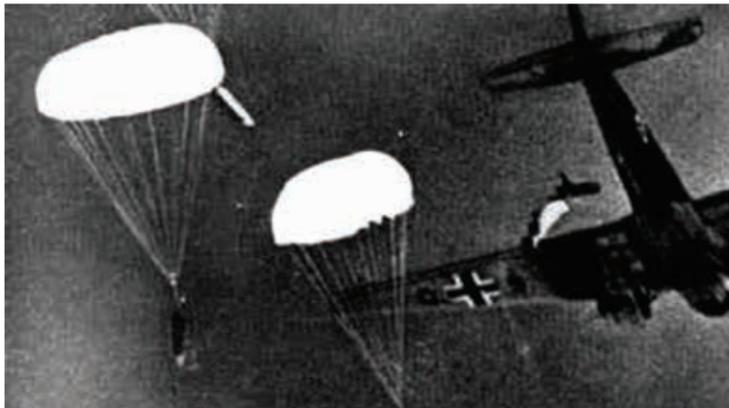
Cup Final weekend

Saturday 10 May 1941 began in East Finchley like any other day in the Blitz. Londoners had been resilient but were now very weary. However, there was a bit of optimism. A week earlier the government had introduced double summertime, which suddenly gave everyone two extra hours of daylight in the evening. The Rex Cinema (now the Phoenix) was still showing films, The Old White Lion pub in the High Road and the George pub (now demolished) in Market Place were still open and beer was not rationed.

In the afternoon the FA Cup Final was on at Wembley and men left the pub early to get home to listen on the radio: Arsenal were playing Preston. It was reportedly not a great game and ended as a draw.

As the fans were leaving

total, 541 bombers came, some on two sorties, and 505 reached the main target, the docks and



Parachute mines being dropped over London. Photo Imperial War Museum

Where the bombs fell

Anyone interested in finding out where bombs fell in London during the Second World War can use the interactive maps at bombsight.org. This fascinating website allows you to focus on any area of the city to see the number and type of bombs that dropped there during the Blitz between October 1940 and June 1941.

The city-wide view showing every bomb is a startling sight in itself, bringing home the scale of the nightly terror that Londoners had to suffer, and more locally the maps pinpoint bombs that fell in East Finchley in the High Road, Huntingdon Road and King Street, among others.

central London. Nearly 1,500 Londoners were killed and 100,000 houses destroyed.

A small survivor

It's unlikely that Woodside Avenue, just 150 metres from Cherry Tree Wood, would have been a target but lost bombers frequently dropped their bombs anywhere. So it was that a parachute mine, designed to explode at rooftop height with devastating effect, landed on Woodside Avenue near the allotments at the junction with Fordington Road. Another bomb had dropped on Fortis Green at the junction of Leaside Avenue just a couple of minutes earlier, probably from the same plane.

In the official listing of Civilian War Dead, Edith Amy Smith, aged 50, of 37 Woodside Avenue, N10, was killed in

the incident. Her son Ronald Horace William Smith, 19, died later at the Hornsey Central Hospital.

After the incident, a tortoise was found alive in a bomb crater in Woodside Avenue, possibly a pet of the Smiths. The animal was taken in and cared for by

a neighbour until they moved away and the new owner, who still lives there, took over its care. The tortoise, called Adolf in honour of his survival, hibernates every year and the good news is that, 80 years on, Adolf has just woken up for the summer of 2021.



Adolf the tortoise in 2018, still living in Woodside Avenue.

Photo Mike Coles

Carey's war memorabilia

By Diana Cormack

When Carey and David Miller moved into their home on Woodside Avenue more than 40 years ago they took over care of Adolf the tortoise. He had been found shell-shocked in a crater resulting from the parachute mine that dropped nearby in 1941.

Years later a sort-out in their loft revealed other survivors from the Second World War in the form of protective helmets and gas masks. One of the helmets was German, which could be related to the fact that

the previous occupants of the house were German. If only Adolf could speak!

Please call 020 8883 6315 if you would like to see, have or purchase any of the war memorabilia.



Some of the memorabilia Photo Mike Coles

East Finchley Baptist Church

We meet each Sunday for worship at 10.30 am. If you would like to join us please go to our website for further details. All welcome.

For more information please contact the Church Office
Email: office@eastfinchleybc.org.uk
www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk



My dearest Peggy...

Eighty years on, courtesy of This England magazine and Gill Steiner, we can experience the intense terror of the bombing night thanks to a surviving letter from Florence Hardy, who was living in Woodside Avenue. 'Auntie Flo' kept in touch with her niece Eileen, known as Peggy, who had travelled to South Africa to work as a children's nurse, and these extracts from a letter she wrote on 16 May, five days after the bomb, are vivid testimony to what the people of East Finchley and London as a whole were forced to endure.

Woodside Avenue,
Friday 16th May 1941

My dearest Peggy...

It happened on Saturday night (May 10th/11th). Auntie Kate was sleeping here that night as I was alone. Well, the siren moaned about 11pm but we decided to get into bed, dressed of course, and hope for the best. We listened to what seemed like hundreds of planes going over and there was intense gunfire. Suddenly about 12.30am there was a violent crash (Leaside and Fortis Green) which we knew must be a bomb not far away. The house seemed to quiver and we were nearly shot out of bed. I rushed to the front door to see if there were any incendiaries in the front, while Kate dashed upstairs to see if our roof was on fire. I couldn't see anything in front except the flashes of shells bursting and the glow of a great fire far away in the London direction.

I came in and shut the door and called to Kate to come down as there were so many planes going over. At that instant there was another sickening crash, the house seemed to rock, the front door and the back door were wrenched off, nearly all the windows crashed, tiles on the roof were broken and sliding off and three bedroom ceilings crashed down. The house was filled with all this noise and with thick dust and soot which poured down the chimney. Well, that's what you get when two land mines fall near.

The second (Woodside) bomb fell on No 37, the first house past the allotments (going from this house towards the Great North Road). So you see we only got the blast from them. The Smith family lived at No 37. The house is just an indescribable heap of rubble, also several beyond it and opposite, and many uninhabitable. The number of casualties is very small considering the damage. Mrs Smith was killed outright and her son, aged 19, died the next day from the effects of a fractured skull. Mr Smith was badly cut and bruised. There were 14 seriously injured (broken limbs etc) and over 40 minor injuries (cuts, bruises etc). Miss Preston got a cut on her head which had to be stitched.

I do not know how many casualties there were from the first bomb but a great deal of damage was done. The two bombs have demolished and damaged many houses, a lot of which have been condemned as impossible to repair. You see, blast travels so far. You can't imagine how this poor road looked, and indeed still does present a sorry spectacle though it has been tidied up a good deal.

To go back to that awful night. When we found that the whole house had not collapsed, we went into the cloister and sat close together on my bed with eiderdowns round us as our teeth were chattering. I couldn't control my trembling. The electric light failed so we had only our torches and a candle. Then Mr Reid, our warden, climbed over the fallen front door and came to see if we were all right. Then Mr Alexander also came, and as I was too scared to go and turn on the gas, which is in the garage, to make tea, he said he would get some for us as his house was not so badly damaged. So, he returned with a pot of tea and a jug of milk, and I plucked up the courage to grope for cups.

I tell you, that tea saved our lives. We felt ever so much better and were able to scramble out of the front and by the mighty flare of a broken gas main we could see the ruins of where the bomb had fallen. We could see the huge cloud of smoke over the fires London-wards and the planes and gunfire continued. As there was nothing we could do we crept back into the cloister and waited for the all-clear which came at 6 o'clock. It was daylight then, so we went out the front and found everyone coming out in miscellaneous garb.

...

It is impossible to describe the state of the house: broken glass, three whole ceilings down, dust and grit everywhere, soot everywhere, as there were no doors and few windows left the breeze blew it about. Tattered strips of curtains were hanging and blowing about; it all looked like a crazy nightmare. I plodded on alone as Mrs Barton does not come on Sundays. The Martins were coming to tea and when they arrived at 3.15, I was just finished clearing up the pantry, scullery, kitchen, hall etc.

I hadn't attempted to touch the dining room which was covered half-way over in soot, so we had tea in the kitchen. They are really a pair of bricks for they insisted on coming next morning to help. They arrived at 9 o'clock in overalls, bringing dustpans and brushes, so that we should have enough for us all to use. Mrs Barton was here as usual so we all toiled all day carrying the broken glass and ceiling plaster, broken crockery etc out to the roadway where each house had a bigger and bigger pile as the day wore on.

By the time the dining room was finished and all traces of the soot had vanished. I feared the carpet and chairs would have to go away, but the Hoover did the trick. Also the three bedrooms were cleared. Amy and Horrie came on Sunday and carried away a dress and jumper which I had left out in my bedroom upstairs and were covered deep with plaster and dirt, and washed them and brought them back on Monday at teatime. Auntie Kate also came Monday afternoon to lend a hand, so I was surrounded by a band of real pals. Also, Leonard, who used to do our gardening, heard of the trouble in Woodside Avenue and came Monday morning straight from all night duty (full time A.R.P.) and stayed the whole day helping me and Mrs Want. So, you see there is nothing like a spot of trouble to find out your real friends.

You may like to know how our A.R.P. services work. Within a second or two of the bomb exploding wardens and police are on the spot! Followed immediately by Rescue Squads who dig out buried people, ambulances, first aid parties, Mobile medical units, Repair parties (who deal with burst gas and water mains if necessary), and Fire Services. When all the people are accounted for and taken away, the Damage Repair parties start to arrive. These are local building firms who do the work under contract to the Council. Each firm has a section of houses to deal with.

First roofs are repaired, then window spaces are covered by black waterproof felting, then outside doors are repaired and replaced and the chimney stacks are repaired. This is called first aid and makes the house habitable. Mine was finished by Friday, except the garage doors which are smashed to pieces and will be done later. All the interior damage I have to arrange for myself. If a house is badly smashed a surveyor comes round to see if it has to be pulled down or is repairable.

Well, Chicky, what do you think about this tale of woe? Of course, the first point that emerges is how marvellously fortunate I have been to get off so lightly. I am very, very thankful.

Excuse this hasty screed. My hand is still a bit shaky, but I am quite all right and carrying on with my firefighting duties.

I sent birthday wishes to you a fortnight ago with a parcel. I don't know how long it will take to reach you (in South Africa). And don't forget that my thoughts and a little prayer come for you every single evening with Big Ben's chimes,

Fondest love,
Auntie Flo

P.S. When he was free at 12 o'clock on Sunday morning the Rev. Stanley came along and called at the houses to enquire and offer help. Wasn't that sweet of him?



Life-changing: Linzi Clark, left, at the Horatio's Garden with fellow volunteer Jane Fletcher

How digging in the garden transformed my lockdown

By Linzi Clark

Having previously been an in-patient support volunteer at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore, I'd heard about the plans to create an accessible garden for spinal injuries patients. The garden is the fifth such venture by the national charity Horatio's Garden who create and nurture beautiful gardens in NHS Spinal Injuries Centres throughout the UK.

Desperate to break out of the monotony of life at home during lockdown, I got in touch. And despite killing every houseplant I'd ever owned, I became a volunteer gardener.

First day nerves

With great trepidation, I arrived on my first day to transplant 400 bedding plants. My fellow volunteers come from all walks of life and include an investment banker, an engineer at Heathrow Airport and a counsellor who, without fail, appears with a home-baked cake every week.

On that first day we fell into an easy companionship, squatting down to dig under the watchful eye of head gardener Ashley Edwards. My initial

apprehension soon vanished as I became absorbed in the comforting rhythm of digging and planting. With each plant liberated from its plastic pot, I felt the first stirrings of contentment as my laptop-addled shoulders unfurled in the warm sun.

Garden transformation

After that first visit, I was hooked. I became a regular and used every day of my annual leave to escape to my garden sanctuary. And every week, I saw transformation take place. Wide resin walkways replaced cobbled paths enabling wheelchair users and bed-bound patients to experience their first taste of freedom in months. Garden pods provided space

for visiting friends and family while carefully positioned benches offered solitude for patients to reconcile with the traumatic events that had led them here.

When the garden opened in September, with sadly no opening fanfare, we still felt immense pride. And as we swept up the first autumn leaves, the first patients appeared. Taking a break from their gruelling rehabilitation schedule, the garden allows them to relax and enjoy a few moments of solitude in a world far removed from the wards.

To become a volunteer at Horatio's Garden, Stanmore, contact Tracey McCarthy, tracey@horatiosgarden.org.uk

Things are picking up in Cherry Tree

Roger Chapman, from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, reports on all the activity in the park this spring.

• Litter

We have reinstated monthly litter picks which will take place on the second Sunday of each month for an hour starting at 4pm during the summer months: 9 May, 13 June, 11 July, 8 August and 12 September. Our last litter pick on 11 April yielded 22 bags of rubbish, including a considerable number of vodka bottles and a fire extinguisher.

If you bring bottles, food wrappings or plastics to the Wood please use the bins provided or, even better, take the rubbish home with you. Apart from the visual mess rubbish causes it could be contributing

to the increasing evidence of rats in the area, which we have notified Barnet Council about, and can be harmful to wildlife generally.

• Playground

A new path has been constructed around the playground. This area was getting very worn and the path should help in wet weather. A new group has started to meet to discuss playground improvements. Contact us if you want to get involved. We intend to undertake a playground deep clean soon.

• Planting

Our gardening volunteers are doing a brilliant job planting pollinating plants next to the orchard trees, protecting the



Improvements at Cherry Tree Wood Photo Mike Coles

to the increasing evidence of rats in the area, which we have notified Barnet Council about, and can be harmful to wildlife generally.

We want to thank all our volunteers for their litter-picking efforts and to make a special mention of the seven Duke of Edinburgh award students who have been litter picking every week throughout the wood doing a tremendous job.

• Sports

The newly surfaced tennis and basketball courts are getting well used already. The current white lines on the court are temporary lines whilst time is allowed for the oil from the tarmac to dissipate. The contractor will be back, probably during May, to install the permanent line markings.

The basketball courts are available to all. The tennis courts are also free but should be booked at <https://clubspark.com>

triangle garden with some hazel and willow weaving, exposing the path edges, which haven't been seen for many years, tending to the wonderful daffodil display by the front gate and generally trying to make a few improvements around the place. If you have ideas for other improvements send them to us.

• History

A detailed history of the Wood has been written and can be found on the Friends website at <https://friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog>. Do send us any comments or personal reminiscences about the wood. We are particularly keen to see any photos of the pond that sat in front of the old park keeper's bungalow.

• Get in touch

There is no charge to become a Friend of Cherry Tree Wood. We can be contacted by email at: friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com

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Open air table tennis returns at Tarling Road. Photo Mike Coles

Tarling Road centre is open for bookings

By Janet Maitland

The community centre on Tarling Road, N2, is at last open for bookings after a long run of Covid delays and false starts. Among the first users of the communal garden are the East Finchley Table Tennis Club and there are plans for a youth club to open later this month.

“The hall in the centre is perfect for community meetings, exercise classes, after school activities, and celebrations,” said manager Jon Woolfson. “It can only take 20 people at the moment because of Covid, but hopefully it will soon be up to 100.” The new building, which replaced the Old Barn centre demolished in 2016, also has office space available for local businesses, start-ups and charities. Co-working space desks can also be rented. There are hopes, too, for a cafe that will be open to everyone.

Gardens

A Barnet Council spokesperson told us: “We have asked the YMCA to explore options for opening the gardens to the public during the hours the YMCA are on site. The tarpaulin on the external fencing was not installed by the council or the YMCA and will be removed as soon as possible.”

The Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA) is finalising its lease of some of the

building with the council, as is the Just Like Home nursery. The gardens around the building are for community use, apart from a small section of playground space directly outside the nursery premises, which is included in their lease.

Keeping hire costs down

London City YMCA, contracted by Barnet Council to manage the centre, is trying to make the cost of hiring space as affordable as possible for local people, so there is one rate for businesses and a reduced one for community use. Mr Woolfson is also confident he can create partnerships with local businesses that will lead to further reductions in costs or even free events.

The community rate for the hall is £35 an hour or £50 for businesses. Office costs range from £260 to £330 per month for community use and £390 to £490 for businesses. A co-working desk is £70 a month or £100 for businesses. The centre can be contacted on 020 7018 6560 or tarlingroad@cityymca.org

An art work you can walk around

East Finchley artist Rosha Nutt has had her project chosen to receive funding from the Mayor of London’s Make London campaign. One of 39 projects picked from hundreds of entries, the initiative will run a free arts trail at Alexandra Palace this summer.

You may have seen some of Rosha’s work last year on Annington Road, N2, as part of lockdown art project Artists Walk, where artists used their home windows to display art and connect with the local community during their daily walks, or her sunflower mural near the BBC Tower at Alexandra Palace.

Artists Walk 2021 will involve chewing gum man Ben Wilson (*The Archer*, April 2021), local sculptor Julia Clarke and as many other local artists as



Inspired by nature: Artist Rosha Nutt is helping to lead an outdoor art project. Photo @_paula.photography

possible in creating an enjoyable art trail in the grounds of Alexandra Palace. Working with their Young People’s Programming Team, the project will provide opportunities for career development and mentoring too.

Rosha says: “I’m thrilled to have been chosen, the competition was incredibly high. All the early morning starts writing the application during lockdown while my children were home-schooling have been worth it and

I can’t wait to start showcasing some of our wonderful local artists in this amazing setting.”

The project team is continuing to crowdfund to support the artists at www.spacehive.com/alexandrapalace and is also looking for volunteers to help run the marketing and social media accounts as well as technical help developing its website. If you would like to get involved email artistswalk.office@gmail.com

Gym limbers up for re-opening

By Lynn Winton

As a long standing member of The Manor gym on Fortis Green, I was relieved to hear it was not going to be demolished to make way for a block of flats after all, and is now renamed The Muswell Hill Club.

New owner Hussain Lalani took me on a pre-opening tour and I am pleased to report the once shabby premises have been given a much needed facelift, whilst still retaining the non-corporate feel of an independent local business.

On the fitness front he has upgraded the gym equipment, including importing top-of-the-range spin bikes, created a new room for free weights, and another room dedicated to stretch and tone, and refurbished the pool, changing rooms and showers. There is an app to book distanced classes that start on 17 May, but there will also be virtual MyZone classes so those worried about distancing can

book their own personal class in the studio or on the 110” screen in the spin studio.

Exceptional value

I asked Hussain how all this upgrading will affect the fees. “There is a moderate increase in the fees to reflect the investment in the neglected club but I still believe I’m offering exceptional value,” he said. If you would like to judge

for yourself, Gail or Natalie on reception will show you round by appointment. And for the many Manor members who were left out of pocket on their annual membership when the old club closed, Hussain will deduct those sums from your new membership. More details from The Muswell Hill Club on 020 8883 0500 or www.muswellhillclub.com



Do you, or someone you know need a new home?

The Finchley Charities have been providing quality sheltered housing in a supportive community environment, across three sites in East Finchley and Finchley Central.

If you have lived in the Borough of Barnet for at least five years of your life, we can provide homes for individuals and couples aged over 55, in need of sheltered housing and able to live independently.

If this sounds like you or someone you know in need of a new home, please contact us on: 020 8346 9464 or email: info@thefinchleycharities.org to discuss eligibility.

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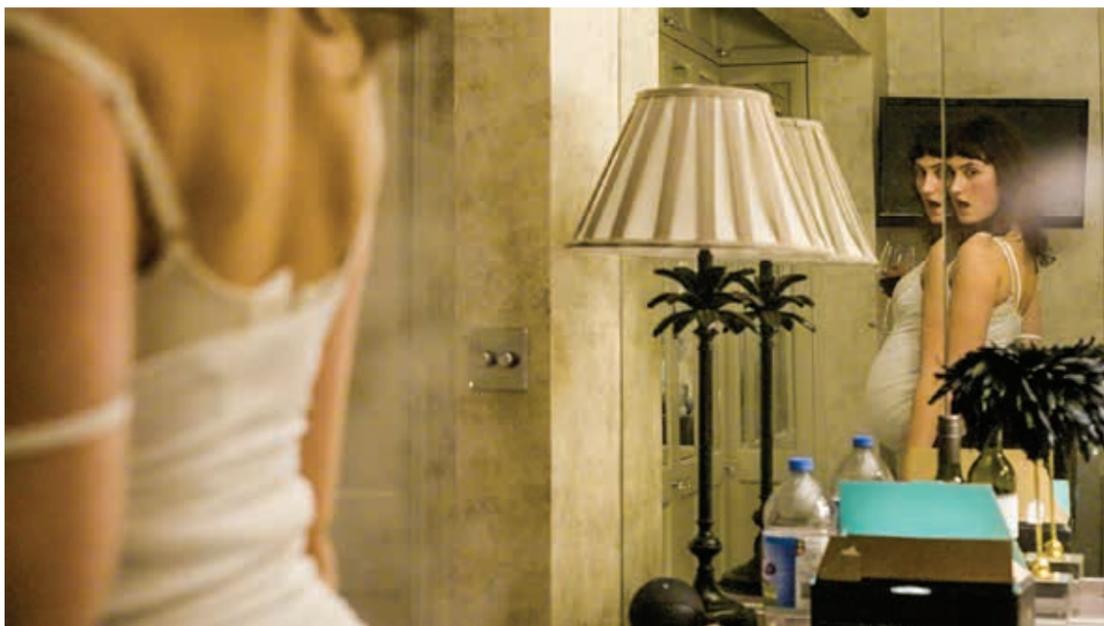
Master of the Barbie

The sun is shining, lockdown is easing and six people can socialise in each other’s gardens. And that means one thing: time for Homo Stupido to go inside the garden shed and emerge as the suburban superhero that is the Master of the Barbie.

Batman might have his cape and Superman his phone box, but Homo Stupido has his Cooking Shorts of Destiny. With those on, he is miraculously transformed from a man who can’t boil water without reading the instructions on the side of a kettle to a full-blown culinary genius.

But this will not be the same as the last barbie; this will be the all-new, post-lockdown version. Even the meat will be new and improved, and possibly vegan. He knows, he went to Iceland for wombat burgers and wallaby cutlets and discovered veggie burgers. Not that they will fare any better once he lights the flames. There is a method in starting a barbie. It’s why Aussies are good at it. Sadly, Homo Stupido is British so instead of method he does madness. While the rest of the family hide and the neighbours stare fearfully at their recently rebuilt shed, our suburban superman wrestles with charcoal and firefighters in a fight to the death. Finally, drenched in sweat and cheap lager, he gets the thing to burst into flame and he’s ready to cook.

Soon there will be enough half-cooked burgers to feed the entire local fox population, and next door’s cat will have run off with most of a chicken. By this time the neighbourhood is enveloped in acrid smoke and the fire brigade can be heard on their way. Don’t worry, Homo Stupido will be happy with his achievement and claim that he has kept alive a great British tradition. Meanwhile, the neighbours will be checking their insurance policy and the family will making their selection from Just Eat.



Modern tale: A still from the *Crowning* short film

Debut explores life as a woman

By Ellie Franklin

In her own words, Hannah Jessop's debut short film "holds an intimate lens to the complexities of being a woman". Shot in one day, it will premiere at the Everyman Cinema in Chelsea this month.

Writer and performer Hannah, who has lived in East Finchley for the last three years, trained as an actor for three years at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in Wood Green before being prompted by the pandemic to turn to writing.

Her 12-minute film *Crowning* was inspired by her own experiences as a single woman living in London and turning 27. It focuses on societal pres-

sures for women regarding marriage, pregnancy and relationships. Hannah describes it as an abstract and feminist piece that is unapologetic, fun and dark.

Crowning was written, shot and produced by an all-female team. Hannah says that once the director had seen the script, there was a quick three-week turnaround, and the film was shot in various locations around south London in one

day at the end of February. The production team received no funding; however, Hannah has applied for Arts Council funding for her next short film.

Crowning will premiere at the Everyman Cinema in Chelsea on Tuesday 25 May where Hannah hopes it will get noticed and picked up by some film festivals. She says: "I want to make sure women are taking up space and leading the lives they want to lead."

An end for the Arts Festival... and a new start?

By Daphne Chamberlain

For more than 20 years East Finchley has had its own Arts Festival but following the death last summer of its director, Geoffrey Hanson, the annual event has come to an end.

Members of Geoffrey's long-serving committee have acknowledged that they do not have the artistic direction or the funds to take it forward and so have discontinued their work. The remaining funds of £209 have been donated to charity.

This doesn't necessarily mean that we will stop all celebration of the arts in this area. How that can continue is up to all of us. East Finchley has talent; there is no doubt of that. We have writers, singers, musicians of all types, performance and visual artists, actors, dancers of all ages and levels of experience. Many of us have contacts with artists outside the area, too. If we want to bring our community together in this way, now is our chance.

Flourishing Arts

The Arts Festival was traditionally centred on All Saints' Church in Durham Road, and there is a possibility that the Ripieno Society, founded by Geoffrey, might give occasional concerts in

the church. Some people have also suggested that the church might host evening supper concerts, which have proved popular recently.

Other suggestions are possibly linking with the Muswell Hill Music Festival, East Finchley Festival and N2United.

Now is the opportunity to open up the range of activities and venues. There is certainly

enough talent and enthusiasm in this area to make a mark. Events could be spread throughout the year. There could be public performances or individual pieces of work displayed in different places. The way is open to everyone. *The Archer* would love to hear your suggestions. Email news@the-archer.co.uk or write to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

LICENSING ACT 2003: NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that KATERINA GEORGIU has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Barnet for a Premises Licence to permit: **THE SALE AND CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL**

for the premises **POSEIDON** situated at **100-102 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY, LONDON, N2 9EB**

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at 8th Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London, NW9 4EW or appointments to inspect the register can be made by telephoning 020 8359 7443 during office hours.

Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to the London Borough of Barnet, Licensing Team at the address above, or a E-mail to LicensingAdmin@barnet.gov.uk giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than: **02 / 06 / 2021**

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Authorities Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain.

Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

It is an offence liable on conviction to a fine up to £5000 under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application.

Dated this **16th day of April 2021**

I always knew I had a novel inside me

Christina McLellan had a career as a lawyer and company director but ever since she was a schoolgirl she'd had an ambition to write a novel. Here she tells how it finally happened.

As a result of a chance meeting at a party I joined a local writers' group which still meets regularly in the Tally Ho pub in North Finchley when allowed. This was a real stroke of luck as it consisted of three other excellent writers including East Finchley resident Shirla Philogene, who has written and published a novel and some wonderful short stories about life in her native St Vincent.

beyond the original idea into an examination of the implications for society as a whole of embedding sophisticated AI into all our lives. The novel, which begins in a desert camp in Kenya, ends in parts of north London which most readers will find familiar.

Black Gull has *Almost Human*

The novel is available as a paperback from all major retailers and as an e-book but, having recently discovered the wonderful Black Gull bookshop in East Finchley, I went in just before the latest lockdown and introduced myself and my novel which they were keen to stock. Incredibly, a Turkish friend was then sent a photograph of the novel on display there, which her English friend had noticed while browsing in East Finchley.

I'm continuing to write short stories. Two were published by *The Lady* magazine last year, and as soon as allowed, our writers' group will be reconvening in members' gardens. My message to everyone is: if you've always wanted to write, sit down and start.



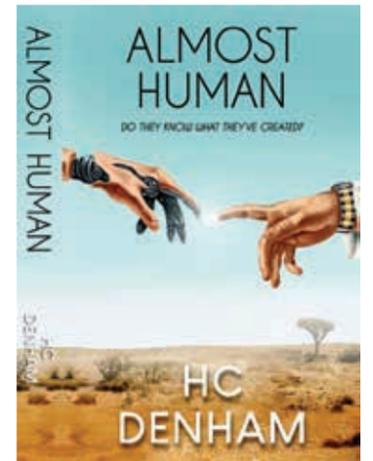
Debut author: Christina McLellan

Apart from being great fun, the group gave me the confidence to show my writing to others and learn from constructive criticism.

Exploring AI in our lives

My novel *Almost Human*, written under my pen name HC Denham, started at least six years ago as a short story. After reading many articles about artificial intelligence and the development of humanoid robots, I began thinking about the implications for human relationships of a person being able to design his or her perfect partner.

The theme developed far



Out now: The cover of Christina's novel

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

You are welcome to join us for:

Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m. and Weekday masses as advertised on the website. Face masks must be worn for the time being.

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Email: vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com or check out our website:

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



Ten years add up for tax firm

By Nick Allan

TaxAssistAccountants celebrates a decade on the High Road next month. East Finchley residents Drazen and Alex Coric originally ran the practice from Islington and had to wait for many years before being able to open in East Finchley.



Drazen Coric of Tax Assist. Photo Mike Coles

Their local base has proved particularly useful during the pandemic. Drazen said: "All of our staff have been working from home since March 2020 but Alex and I would always come to the office to maintain some sort of normal working day. Even though we could not see clients in the office, they always knew that we are here so they could drop off paperwork or call us for advice which they seemed to appreciate.

"It is great to be able to work within our local community and help small businesses and individuals with a range of services. This has seen us make new friends and acquaintances over our ten years and we feel even more rooted in East Finchley."

Looking forward to the next ten years, they offer a wide range of accountancy services including tax returns, annual accounts, payroll, VAT, bookkeeping and tax advice specifically tailored to small businesses and individuals, with an initial consultation free to all.

Coffee cups bad

By Ann Inglis, of No2PlasticsN2

Starting to emerge from lockdown has shown us just what our vibrant High Road has added to our lives and will continue adding, sustained as it will be by a larger cross-section of society working from home.

It is much too early to ask anything of our shops. However we do want to update our shop window signs to ones that have our QR code and website details. Can you help us do that? Do contact us on www.no2plasticsn2.com/help-1.

Coffee cups

Cafés loom large in the lives of many of us. Many may be shocked to know that paper

coffee mugs are functionally unrecyclable, despite claiming the contrary. Their paper exteriors hide their plastic linings so they can't be recycled with paper waste and their tops, being totally plastic, need to be separated from the mugs.

Legislation

A Private Members Bill entitled the Plastic Pollution Bill, proposed by LibDem MP

Alistair Carmichael MP, is now going through the House of Commons. We will submit written evidence to the committee and lobby our local MP Mike Freer to speak on our behalf. Anyone can do that at <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4004/contact>. Your support can make a difference, particularly when so few Private Members Bills ever do become law.

N2United update: hopeful signs for local business

By Ruth Anders

Some impassioned views were expressed in early April when 22 people got together via Zoom to hear updates about community and businesses' activities at the monthly N2United meeting.

They heard uplifting reports about the East Finchley Food Project and Food Bank, alongside the news that no businesses have closed since the March meeting. Other positive updates included the move of the popular Local Café to Cup of Joy a little further north on the High Road and the imminent re-opening of Tony Mackie's fruit & veg stall at the tube station.

Chairman Nick Allan was particularly pleased to welcome a trio of councillors, Claire Farrier, Arjun Mittra and Alison Moore. These three work tirelessly on behalf of the community, covering a variety of concerns from cycle lanes and pot holes to the Market Place playground and Dementia Friends.

The future of the controversial cycle lanes is still uncertain, but lobbying will continue to

ensure the best possible outcome for both cyclists and local businesses.

Vehement discussion was prompted about the rising tide of local litter. Those attending the meeting agreed that direct action would need to be taken by residents and businesses if things were to improve and the conversation about this subject will continue.

May Zoom-in

With the hoped for further relaxation of lockdown restrictions, the meeting on 13 May will focus on Business Matters, and discuss the planned new Business Stimulation Campaign. So whether you represent a roadside retailer or an independent business working from home, please do join us on Zoom. For information about the May meeting and all things N2United, see n2united.co.uk

New dementia services aimed at carers too

A new hub for people living with mild-to-moderate memory issues and their carers has been launched by Age UK Barnet at its centre in East Finchley.

The Dementia Adviser Service will provide specialist advice and information and a link for the whole family to specialist support services, while activities and events will be offered at the Ann Owens

Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

To find out more about the Living Well services email info@ageukbarnet.org.uk or visit the Living Well page on www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet.

Letters

CCTV in The Causeway

Dear Editor,

Following on from your recent article about incidents in The Causeway (*The Archer*, April 2021), I have major concerns following press reports of a very concerning case of an attempted rape in an alleyway off The Causeway to a 15 year old schoolgirl back in October and also reports on the recent reported rise in street attacks on the young in this area. My daughter has just turned 16 and her natural walk home from the Tube is the back entrance of East Finchley tube through to Edmunds Walk, so of course this is a major concern for my family. As a regular user of the Tube I have always been concerned at the lack of CCTV in The Causeway and adjacent alleyways from the tube exit, and what staggers me is that the Council have spent money on cycle lanes that are hardly used, dangerously designed, take away valuable car parking from shoppers and have been a major hit to local trade, yet they've never invested in CCTV in this area, which is a very busy thoroughfare and much more of a priority. I have been advised that some budgets have now been allocated for CCTV; however the locations haven't been agreed yet, so I plead that the Council make The Causeway and adjacent alleyways a major priority and I'm sure I speak for many others. Surely it's time the Council takes responsibility for ensuring the safety of its residents as this is a well-known danger spot so it's hard to understand why no action has been taken yet to remedy these issues!

David Blakeney, Address supplied.

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page" The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE or e-mail news@the-archer.co.uk

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.

Simms and the RAC

Dear Editor,

I read with much interest the recent fascinating articles about the Simms factory in East Finchley (*The Archer*, February and April 2021), partly because they are local history, but also because Simms was a key person in the history of the car.

Not only was he a British mechanical engineer, businessman, prolific inventor and motor industry pioneer, but Simms coined the words 'petrol' and 'motorcar'. He founded the Royal Automobile Club (RAC), of which I have been a long-standing member, entirely on his own initiative and at his own expense.

I have sent copies of the articles to the Editor of the RAC magazine *Pell Mell & Woodcote*, who has told me that they have inspired him to research and publish a full article about Simms in the next edition of our magazine.

Nicolas Fenton, Address supplied.

Be a litter picker

Dear Editor,

We live in a lovely area, but few would disagree with my observation that the amount of litter around everywhere in parks, woods and streets has become horrendous in the past year. I don't see it as a malicious thing, just thoughtless and careless... and once litter is there, more appears, almost exponentially.

It would be so good if when you go out for a walk, you take gloves and a bag and collect a bagful as you go, and add it to your own dustbins. If we all did this the problem would improve. And if you see someone having an outdoor drink or picnic, or indeed dropping the waste that it generates, then maybe have a polite word to say that you hope they will take their own litter away. The majority will comply. After all, they have chosen to eat there and wouldn't do so if it were a tip.

Linda Dolata Leopold Road, N2.

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Art work brightens up boards and bricks

By Diana Cormack and Elizabeth James
Local resident and artist Rebecca Miller's free, nature-focused community art project for young people has produced impressive results on the building site hoardings surrounding the former GLH site opposite East Finchley station. Rebecca's two-month project (*The Archer*, March 2021) featured Saturday morning online workshops funded by the Grange Big Local's Community Grants programme along with sessions sketching trees and nature out in the fresh air.

Under Rebecca's direction, the young painters took just three days to transform the dull hoardings into an enchanting tribute to the planet.



The mural on the old GLH building site. Photo Mike Coles

Comments from onlookers included: "A delightful surprise to see a group of people adding life to the streets of East Finchley." There were even a couple of requests to create similar murals in an outdoor restaurant and a dog sanctuary. Rebecca herself said: "The privilege to work with the children on the mural afforded me the chance to watch and experience the impact of public art on the community and the young artists who make it."

What a brick

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the High Road, members of Lymore Gardens

Girls Football Club were set an Easter Camp Team task at Martin Primary School in Plane Tree Walk, where they meet for training.

In collaboration with a design team from LABT-wnty4, a community group which uses the power of design to change lives, they were given a design brief with four days to design and paint on specific walls at the school. Using paints donated by The Little Greene Paint Company they came up with some colourful creations for the wartime air raid shelter in the car park area.



The Mural at Martin School. Photo Mike Coles



Megan Rose in her garden studio. Photo Mike Coles

An artist's view from her garden shed

By Emma Magnus

Archie's silver bow glints against a bright blue sky. It could be a summer's day but reflected below in the windows of a Northern line train are the bare, frosty branches of nearby trees.

This is local artist Megan Rose's painting of Eric Aumonier's famous Archer statue, which gained praise, and was sold to a collector, after she posted a picture of it on the East Finchley community Facebook group. "It's something I see most days," says Megan. "I was lacking inspiration, and then there it was."

The sale is a promising sign for Megan, who launched her own art business during lockdown. Having studied Art and Design, she had felt that there

were limited options to pursue art professionally. "I did the odd painting, and then I went: 'This is never going to pay the bills. Stop trying to do this.'"

But, after being furloughed from her hospitality job, she says she was encouraged to take the plunge by her partner. "He said: 'Why don't you just give it a go? Give it a time frame and try to pursue it.'"

People, places and pets

Megan paints from her garden shed, which contains an L-shaped desk and a heater.

Her commissions so far have included pet portraits, famous figures like Bob Marley and Walter White, and wildlife paintings. She is currently working on a piece on Coldfall Wood. "I like the time with myself", says Megan. "It's like productive meditation... The time alone and in the quiet is very peaceful."



Snapped up: Megan's painting of Archie has already been bought by a collector

As her business develops, Megan would welcome commissions for local landmarks, people's homes or gardens, holiday snaps in beautiful places, buildings of significance or beauty, pet portraits, people portraits and wildlife. To find out more, search Megan Rose Artist on Facebook. Her A4 watercolour of Archie was sold in February to collector Peter Petzal, who says it evokes a powerful symbolism. He adds: "Megan has a keen eye for the absurd which she delivers with great clarity in this lovely gouache on card. It is presently being framed."

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