



Letters



Meal message: Sophie Thompson (see letter, below right)

Jab shambles

Dear Editor,

I was fortunate enough to be called for a Covid-19 booster vaccination and my appointment was on the afternoon of Saturday 16 October at the Torrington Park Health Centre in North Finchley. I arrived 25 minutes early to find a queue of at least 30 people.

After about an hour I eventually reached the entrance and had a brief respite sitting on a plastic chair. Soon afterwards, I joined a second queue for registration, then a third queue to enter the actual vaccination area, which added another 15 minutes. I am pleased to say that I received the vaccination, albeit 50 minutes late.

However, at no time was there any explanation or apology for the delay. I am fit if not young and perfectly capable of standing in a queue for an hour. It was boring but not distressing.

For some of the people attending, it was an ordeal. Numerous attendees clearly had mobility problems, some quite serious. All had to queue for an extended period. For one very elderly lady this became too much and she had to leave without getting a jab.

Quite a number of others were obviously distressed, but at no time was any help offered to those unfortunate people. There were at least a dozen unused chairs in the waiting area beyond registration that could have been employed to provide relief to those who needed it.

When I finally left, the queue had not diminished one iota. All in all, it was an inexcusable shambles.

Lawrence Robinson,
Address supplied.

Torrington Park Health Centre was given the opportunity to respond to these comments:

We're sorry to hear this individual's experience at our vaccination clinic didn't meet their expectations. We are always looking to improve the experience patients have when they visit us, and will take on board the feedback provided.

Vaccination remains the best way to protect you and your family, and in coming weeks we'll be calling in thousands of patients for both COVID boosters and flu jabs. We thank everyone for their patience at what

is a really busy time for our team.
Barnet PCN2 and PCN3 Covid 19 Vaccination Team

Meals for millions

Dear Editor,

It was World Porridge Day on 10 October and while for some this might conjure up images of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, or those famous old porridge adverts, there's also a more important meaning to this day, one that can, quite literally, change lives.

Mary's Meals feeds more than two million children in 19 countries around the world every school day. In the countries where the charity works, including Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, children are normally served steaming mugs of porridge, known locally as likuni phala, enriched with vitamins to help them learn and grow.

Providing a daily meal in a place of education is helping even the most vulnerable children to attend school and concentrate in lessons, giving them the freedom to learn and fulfil their potential. And the average global cost to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year is just £15.90.

Your readers can learn more about the work of this charity, and how a mug of porridge is helping to transform young lives, at marysmeals.org.uk

Sophie Thompson,
Former East Finchley resident,
actor and former winner of
Celebrity MasterChef

Organic fruit and veg shop

By Diana Cormack
Does East Finchley really need another fruit and vegetable shop? Many may have wondered this when the Cherry Tree opened last month at 36 High Road. However this one is quite different.

Owner Mahmut Kelec also owns the N2 Food Centre only a few doors away at number 46. After seven years of running that, he decided to concentrate the fruit and veg part of the business within a shop selling wholly organic products. The former premises will continue to be an off licence and will still sell a range of goods in the grocery line.



As well as delicious looking fruit and vegetables, Cherry Tree has an impressive range of organic goods on display. This includes toilet and kitchen rolls, cleaning, beauty and health products, a wide variety of teas and coffees, organic powders and herbs, sweets and chocolates, vegan biscuits, tinned and frozen goods.

The best way to find out what's there is to go and take a look. You could get yourself a freshly squeezed orange juice at the same time. Cherry Tree is open daily from 7am -9pm.



Top gear: Kitchen and serving staff in the Engine Rooms dining space. Photo Mike Coles

Foodie destination with a side order of classic cars

By Mike Coles

Most readers will be familiar with Hexagon Classics, the specialist car showroom just south of East Finchley station, but many may not be aware of the new developments there. In 2015 Paul Michaels, the Hexagon chairman, was inspired by a visit to Petersham Nurseries to consider expanding the site into a foodie destination. Petersham, a garden centre in Richmond, south west London, is now as well known for its restaurant as it is for its plants.

Working on the project with his late wife, the first phase to open 18 months ago was the gourmet shop called Bottles 'N Jars (*The Archer*, January 2021), a food emporium where you can get ingredients and wines carefully sourced from all over Europe.

The next phase was the most ambitious: a top class restaurant and wine bar serving Mediterranean inspired food. With a staff of 25 and James Harrison as Head Chef, The Engine Rooms restaurant opened a few weeks ago.

Hailing from Manchester, James came down to London and built up his reputation at several top restaurants. He is particularly keen on the creative use of fish as an alternative to

meat-heavy meals and uses at least 80 per cent of fresh British produce in his cooking.

Special surroundings

Apart from food, the building itself may well find fame for its architecture and interior decoration strongly influenced by Paul's late wife, a designer. And that's not to forget the collection of classic cars that gleam through Hexagon's huge showroom windows.

Although Covid initially presented a few problems for the restaurant seating, it was possible to cover and heat a large exterior courtyard to comply with restrictions. The restaurant is now taking bookings and the coffee shop is open all day.

Garden gold lines the streets

By Piers Reilly

As we head into the darker, wetter, bleaker days and once more (voluntarily) retreat into our homes to shield from the non-stop downpour that November in London brings, we should take note of that most divisive of activities: composting. Truly, this is one of those subjects that has divided gardeners for as long as we have gardened. Roughly 12,000 years of contention, therefore whatever is said next someone will heartily disagree; more brown matter vs more green material, bacterial additions vs native fungi, hot vs cold... the clash is truly endless. Today we shall ignore all of this and take heart that one does not need to weigh in on the fiendishly complex world of compost in order to create black gold.

Leaf mould is the easiest method of creating compost that exists, short of accidentally leaving a huge pile of nutritionally dense garden waste somewhere and coming back in a few years.

Grab all the fallen leaves you can find on pavements and paths, make a cylinder from chicken wire (or grab a couple of bin bags with a few holes) and pack them

all in, wet it and then you're done. Come back in 6-12 months and use it to start seeds, add to plant pots to improve water retention, or use as a readily broken down mulch for flower beds. You can speed up the process enormously by chopping the leaves up a bit via lawnmower or disturbing the pile every fortnight to add in some oxygen, if you want it ready for spring.

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.

Or join our live-streamed services on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsef/>

The church is also open for private prayer as advertised on the website.

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

For more information,
contact the Vicar, Fr Ian Chandler, on
020 8883 9315

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

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