



The Archer at 30: Four men in a pub

By David Hobbs

It all started in the pub. The pub was Welch's Ale House, now Maddens, on the High Road; the four men were Kevin Finn, Noel Lynch, Paul Savill and Andrew Taylor. For some reason, by the time they left the pub they had decided that what East Finchley needed was its own newspaper. Choosing a name was easy, it was called *The Archer* after the sculpture on the top of the station. The rest was the hard part.

It only took a couple of months to put together a team, write the articles, find a printer and the first issue appeared in January 1993. By the third issue Malcolm Griffiths had joined and designed the masthead with Archie and the slogan 'Local news is our aim'. The paper kept on recruiting writers, dis-

tributors, and helpers. When I joined in July *The Archer* was looking good.

The Portakabin decision
Then came a disastrous team-building meeting when most of us were sacked or fell out with each other. Those who survived were left with a title, an issue to get out and no money. In other words, we had a problem.

The following Saturday we all got together in an old Portakabin on Strawberry Vale with a big decision to make. We could pack up and go home or find a way of keeping going. All we needed was cash. So, we had a whip round. Every one of the 20 or so people there contributed £50 each and we decided to keep going.

Pete Maslen became chair, Paul Savill became editor and Kevin Finn took on the advertising and marketing. You could say that was when *The Archer*,



Three men in a pub: Archer editors Kevin Finn, David Hobbs and Paul Savill at the 100th issue celebrations

as a community newspaper run by volunteers, really began.

A proper grown-up paper
Apart from the local news,

we had cartoons, a gardening column, record reviews, local history and Young Archer. We recruited more people to the team including David Tupman as picture editor, Alison Roberts on the production side and John Dacam as chief subeditor whilst retaining all the original team members like Cathy Young, Malcolm Griffiths and Len Willcocks. We would get together every month to deliver the paper and reward ourselves with a drink or two afterwards.

When the Conservatives lost control of Barnet Council in 1994 we delayed publication so that we could run on the front page the headline 'Goodbye Tory Barnet' like a proper grown-up paper. When, a couple of months later I went to interview the new, Labour council leader, I couldn't help notice that he had our front page framed on his office wall. *The Archer* had arrived.

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago: February 2013

The Archer celebrated 20 years of providing news and information to almost 10,000 homes in East Finchley. Also there was great excitement when Hollywood actor Dustin Hoffman visited the Phoenix cinema for a screening of his film *Quartet*, which starred Maggie Smith, Pauline Collins, Tom Courtenay and Billy Connolly. Hoffman was effusive in his praise of the Phoenix, describing it as a "gorgeous cinema".

15 years ago: February 2008

A car travelling along Church Lane, a major route between East End Road and the High Road, went out of control and crashed into the walls and gardens of three houses. Residents of Church Lane had long been concerned about the road's safety, especially where it narrows at the junction with King Street, but it was to be some years before Church Lane became a 20mph zone with speed bumps.

26 years ago: February 1997

The Archer celebrated its fourth birthday with a fundraising auction at the Old White Lion to help secure its future – and we're still here 26 years later! Over £600 was raised on the night. Elsewhere we reported that East Finchley "has become one of the most sought-after areas in North London, with its proximity to the underground network and public transport". That's one thing that hasn't changed in 26 years.



The Archer team in 1996 (l-r): Jo Loh, John Dacam, David Tupman, Noel Lynch, Alison Roberts, Paul Savill, Sue Holliday, Diana Cormack, David Hobbs, Paul Northam, Simon Manning, Daphne Chamberlain, Louis Green and (front) Nathan Loh, Claire Gates. Photo by Toni Morgan

Archer at 30: I got wrapped in seaweed

By Cathy Young

It was a long time ago; 30 years apparently. All I remember about my first association with what is now a successful, well-produced community paper is sitting upstairs in a dark, over-crowded room in a house fairly close to East Finchley station.

I was being interviewed about my business and financial skills because a team were setting up a one-page broadsheet for the local area. My interviewer naively thought that, as a headteacher, I could be useful. Luckily, there were others prepared to work for nothing. In fact in those early days we actually paid for the privilege.

There were ups and downs, changes of personnel and a few worrying times trying to get advertisers to pay their invoices but eventually *The Archer* settled into a six-paged, black and white newspaper, delivered regularly, well mostly, to local residents.

Assignments to remember

My first assignment in 1993 was to interview a female bodyguard called Miakol.



Laminated: Cathy Young's press pass from her Archer days

Clearly East Finchley was more dangerous back then. Contrast that with one of my final pieces in 2016, about fairies in Cherry Tree Wood.

My favourite assignment was when a new holistic centre

was opened in Leicester Road in 1995 by Renee Mallardo. In sampling the pampering sessions on offer, I ended up being trussed up from head to toe in seaweed bandages, having a pencil strategically placed to

check if my hips were aligned and my polarity sorted. All good clean fun.

There were times when news and ideas were scarce and I remember one meeting in the back room of Maddens when it was suggested that someone could ask the council if there were plans to run red routes through the High Road. Of course there weren't but we were able to splash the front page with the news of their denials!

Still writing

I have now moved away and write for free magazine *The Whitstable Whistler* but my time writing about the people, pets, businesses and community organisations in East Finchley gave me great joy. I hope the readers enjoyed it too.