



Letters

Play on

Dear Editor
How lovely to see the pictures of children playing in Leopold Road (*The Archer*, May 2023). I was a child who 'went out to play' myself, and I've always thought it such a shame that children nowadays miss all that fun and freedom.

Of course, it's the traffic that's stopped it. So well done everyone who's worked so hard to make the two hours a week possible. Let's hope the idea spreads.

I was interested to hear from a friend that apparently it has been possible for local authorities to create these play streets for a very long time; maybe since the 1950s, according to my friend, but the idea didn't take off.

Evie Robinson,
East End Road, N2.

Bus blockers

Dear Editor,
I'm sure we all appreciate the seats provided at bus stops, but please could I ask some fellow travellers to stop blocking the view of the buses. It happens a lot. You get one or more people standing by the bus stop post, making it impossible for anyone sitting down to see what's coming.

It's just thoughtlessness, but very annoying. So please can I use *The Archer* to ask people not to do this. Please remember that the people sitting down may well have mobility problems. Anyway, nobody wants to keep jumping up and down. Thank you.

V. Nicholas,
Address supplied.

Send your correspondence to:
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.

Cars dominate

Dear Editor,
How lovely for the children and neighbours who were able to participate in the play street when Leopold Road was closed. It's a measure of how the car has taken over our lives that this could only be made possible with a great deal of work by local people and Barnet Council.

East Finchley is full of families who would benefit from being able to play out in the same way. Unfortunately, only a minority of our roads would be suitable for even temporary closure. Leopold Road is in a good position because there are alternative routes around it that don't inconvenience drivers.

Despite the lure of screens and YouTube these days, I'm sure many children would play out if they could. Near where I live, Claybrook Close is a no-through road, more of a parking area for the flats there really, and children are often out playing football and the like.

Deborah Betts,
Long Lane, N2.



Ready to party: Sharon and Sharon get in the George Michael mood at Cherry Tree Café. Photo Mike Coles.

Happy Birthday, George. Love Sharon

By Lynn Winton

Sharon McGoey, who with her business partner Sharon Hall has made such a success of revitalising the café in Cherry Tree Wood, has always been in love with one unattainable man: the one and only late superstar and East Finchley's very own George Michael.

Now she's ready to share her passion for the Wham! front-man and solo singer-songwriter with the rest of East Finchley on Sunday 25 June, on what would have been his 60th birthday.

Ambitious plans are underfoot to transform the café kiosk near the tennis courts into Pike's Hotel in Ibiza, the location for Wham!'s iconic *Club Tropicana* video.

Spoiler alert

Whilst Sharon is reluctant to discuss party details, as she'd like to keep an element of surprise, I can disclose there will be a chef setting up a Greek (what else?) barbecue, and there's a mixologist busy inventing cocktails inspired by George's incredible catalogue of Number One hits, which will be playing throughout.

Everyone is invited and, to add to the vibe, you can come as your favourite George, whether that be in a Hawaiian shirt as from the Wham! Era, or the more sophisticated and mature George in black leather and shades.

Statue plan

Councillor Arjun Mittra is planning to attend, and wants to engage with visitors to gain support and ideas for his campaign to commemorate George Michael's links to N2 with a statue in East Finchley. The singer's family lived in Church Lane when he was born in June 1963 before later moving to Kingsbury, NW9. After find-

ing fame, George lived in The Grove, Highgate. He died on Christmas Day in 2016, aged 53.

And best of all, Sharon, in the spirit of George the philanthropist, who gave millions away in his lifetime to help others, is partnering with Finchley Foodbank, to ensure a good chunk

of the money spent at the party will come their way.

George Michael's 60th Party will be at the Cherry Tree Café on Sunday 25 June. Check at the café or on their Instagram @cherrytreewoodscfe for party timings subject to weather conditions.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Time to rethink tube and rail

By Rob Adamson

Though it may be many years yet, the experience of all of us who use East Finchley's trains towards town will change.

Euston's Underground platforms will one day have a link to Euston Square's and Camden Town's southbound platforms will have a level interchange with no stairs, as already exists on the northbound platforms.

More significantly, all our trains may eventually run via Bank, with all Edgware branch trains running via Charing Cross, to allow an increase in trains per hour, although there is no indication when this long-standing idea may be put into practice.

But are there other changes that would suit us, shortcuts that would reduce the pressure we put on existing lines? Imagine if a new tube line went due south from Camden to Great Portland Street and Bond Street, a good interchange for the Elizabeth line. What if the line were also to continue northeast from Camden to Finsbury Park and Manor House as an alternative to the Victoria line?

Is that affordable? Yes, if it is built instead of the New Southgate £4 billion branch planned for Crossrail2, the planned NE-SW line of rail gauge. The branch's value was queried in a 2016 report by the National Infrastructure Commission. Dropping it would increase Crossrail2's usefulness. For example, 50% of Crossrail2's trains could serve Leytonstone on the Hackney branch, relieving the Central and Elizabeth lines into Liverpool Street.

Improving public transport is essential for reducing car traffic. The new tube line I propose and the Leytonstone service in Crossrail2 would contribute to that.

All Saints' East Finchley



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.

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

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

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

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

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