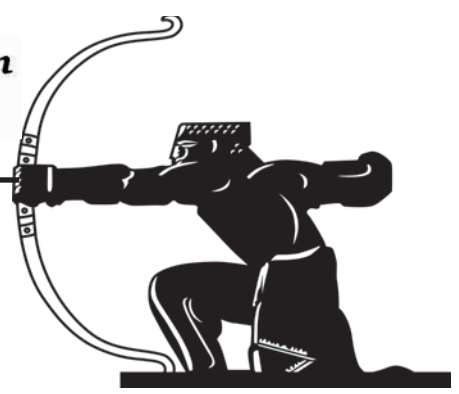


# The Archer



**A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.**

## Speed signs on crowded roads ‘irresponsible’

By Ruth Anders

**Residents of the County roads in East Finchley are up in arms after signs were put up advising motorists that they can travel up to 30mph on their narrow streets, even though cars are parked nose to tail and children or animals could cross at any moment.**

The signs were installed on 28 July because Department of Transport rules require Barnet Council to advertise the change of speed zone from the 20mph that has been in place along the High Road for many months. But residents say the signs are irresponsible.

The 30mph signs have gone up at the entrance to each of the County roads: Hertford, Bedford, Huntingdon, Leicester and Lincoln. In Bedford Road’s case, the speed sign obscures the road name sign.

A 30mph sign is also in place at the end of Kitchener Road while Leslie Road and Leopold Road, along with Church Lane, are already 20mph zones.

### Petition and action

Residents hope to organise a petition asking the council to remove the signs and to make all residential roads in East Finchley 20mph. Haringey Council’s side roads are already limited to 20mph and there are hopes that the same will soon be possible in Barnet.

East Finchley ward Councillor Arjun Mitra told *The Archer*: “The previous administration’s policy only located 20mph zones outside schools. This is being repealed in favour of a new policy allowing 20mph zones where residents request them. Pending the agreement and sign off from the Cabinet for the policy change, we will consult residents about extending the 20 zones, and the County roads are a long-standing priority.

**Continued on page 2**



Too much information: The new 30mph sign obscures the Bedford Road street name

### “Baffling”

A Bedford Road resident told *The Archer*: “Since the signs went up, we’ve been talking of little else.” Others added: “This seems completely baffling as we would expect any action to slow traffic rather than speed it up on such narrow streets,” and “It’s totally irresponsible to encourage ‘speeding up’ on family roads.”



Smash and grab: The Pacey’s burglar breaks into a cigarette cabinet and sweeps its entire contents into a huge bag in an image taken from the shop’s CCTV footage.

## Five businesses targeted in night-time raids

**Five businesses on the High Road in East Finchley were targeted by burglars in just one week with raiders cutting through security shutters and in the case of Pacey’s newsagents making off with more than £12,000 worth of cigarettes. Turn to page 5 for the full story and more photos.**

## Help us with our advertising

Advertising in *The Archer* helps local businesses reach a potential 20,000 readers in East Finchley and online every month. For the last 30 years, they have found it an excellent way of spreading the word to the people of N2 about their goods or services.

Nobody on *The Archer* team gets paid for anything, including our volunteer deliverers, but we do rely on the support and the income we receive from our advertisers to cover the costs of printing the newspaper.

Those costs are rising so, in our anniversary year, we are looking for someone to help us manage our advertising successfully to ensure *The Archer* can continue to serve the N2 community for at least another 30 years.

If you have the skills and some time each month to liaise with local companies, shops and venues to fill our advertising space, we’d love to hear from you. Please email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) and we can tell you more.

If you trade in or around East Finchley and would like to advertise to the almost 10,000 homes and businesses we deliver to each month, we’d love to hear from you too. We have competitive rates and can

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## Speed signs 'irresponsible'

Continued from page 1.

"I have been lobbying the Cabinet member for a speedy decision, but the Prime Minister's recent announcement about blocking councils from installing 20 zones may be problematic." Meanwhile he has asked Barnet to remove or cover the new 30mph signs.

Advice: slow down

Cllr Alan Schneiderman, Chair of the Environment & Climate Change Committee, told us: "We want drivers to slow down on the County roads and definitely not to speed up. Speed signs are a legal requirement and not an encouragement to drive at the maximum permitted speed. We want to make our roads safer and therefore make it easier and quicker to introduce 20mph zones where they are needed, and residents want them. That includes reviewing speeds in the County roads in East Finchley."

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet Council

#### 48 Church Lane, N2

Roof extension with rear dormer window.

#### 95 East End Road, N2

Roof extension involving outrigger dormer and three front-facing roof lights.

#### Flat 2, 101 East End Road, N2

Part single-storey, part two-storey rear extension. Insertion of two side-facing conservation roof lights.

#### East Finchley Station Car Park, N2

Six electric vehicle charging bays (including one accessible bay), three electric vehicle charging upstands (2.1m in height), UK Power Networks substation (height 3m, length/width 3m), switch room enclosure (height 2m, length 3.4m, width 2.45m) and 2.45m in width). Fencing (height 2m).

#### 27 Elmshurst Crescent, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Roof extension involving rear dormer window and one front roof light.

#### 121 High Road, N2

Rear extensions at lower ground and ground-floor level to create two self-contained units, following demolition of existing steps, landing and storage buildings. Associated amenity space.

#### 3 Huntingdon Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Conversion of garage into habitable space, including insertion of side access door, two roof lights to flat roof, and raising of garage parapet wall. One roof light to flat section of main roof. Replace-

ment front door. New front porch. Enlargement of ground-floor front window. Removal of ground-floor rear window, first-floor window, and ground-floor door to west elevation. Replacement of existing windows. Replacement of rainwater goods, soffit and fascia. Installation of CCTV cameras and extraction vents. Resurfacing of driveway and rear patio. Replacement of metal pedestrian gates with timber. New shed and installation of heat pumps with associated acoustic screening in rear garden. Roof extension including addition of rear dormer window. Alterations to windows and doors on side elevation. Replacement of front and rear paving with new stone paving. Addition of EV charging point to side elevation. Installation of air conditioning unit and associated enclosure in rear garden.

#### 46 Leicester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

#### 43 Leopold Road, N2

Two-storey rear extension, following demolition of existing extension. Roof extension involving raising ridge height, rear dormer window and one front roof light.

#### 430 Long Lane, N2

Use as four-bedroom HMO.

#### 30 Manor Park Road, N2

New rear oriel window at first-floor level. New rear structural glass at first-floor level.

#### 26 Park Hall Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer and outrigger dormer and three front roof lights. Single-storey side/rear extension.

# Avenue blaze marks sad end to a tale of two Towers

By Alison Roberts

On the morning of Friday 21 July, residents of East Finchley, Highgate and beyond awoke to the smell of smoke lingering in the air. The Bishops Avenue was shut for several hours whilst fire crews dealt with the aftermath of an enormous blaze which had destroyed the road's largest residence.

Known as 'The Towers', it had stood empty for years. The blaze came only weeks after one of the derelict mansions in nearby White Lodge Close was badly damaged by fire and a year after a large derelict mansion on the opposite side of The Bishops Avenue met the same fate.

A 28-bedroom mansion called 'Tower' owned by singer and actress Gracie Fields, the world's highest paid film star in 1937, originally occupied the neighbouring plot. When Gracie and her husband Archie separated in the early 1930s, she donated the house and grounds to the NHS. By 1936, the grounds had been divided up, and another house built on a large plot at the far end of Tower's garden.



Former glory: The original Tower mansion built for Gracie Fields in the late 1920s. Photo courtesy The Original Gracie Fields

price, and the building was demolished and replaced with an enormous house, named 'The Towers'.

Valued at £25million, The Towers became the most expensive new house in Britain. It

dance floor, but alas it was never lived in, and the house stood empty and unloved for two decades. As the house fell into decay, it became a favourite destination of urban explorers.

In 2013, The Towers was purchased by Isle of Man-based developers Birch Ventures Ltd. The Towers was still the subject of a planning application to Barnet Council to demolish the building and replace it with an eight-storey block of 65 flats, when fire tore through the building last month damaging the ground and first floors and destroying the roof.

Since the 1980s, The Bishop's Avenue, dubbed Billionaire's Row, has become famous for its rotting derelict mansions, with an estimated two thirds of properties on the road standing empty. Yet it still seems sad to see a building which was once filled with hopes and dreams go to waste.

Read the full article and more at [www.ILoveN2.co.uk/history](http://www.ILoveN2.co.uk/history)



Derelict: The Towers had stood empty since it was built in the 1990s waiting for a new lease of life

Gracie's former home was initially used as an isolation ward and in the Second World War became the maternity wing of North Middlesex Hospital. When the war ended, the new building at the end of the garden was eventually completed and this became the Tower Maternity Annex - North Middlesex Hospital. This newer building remained a maternity hospital right through to the 1970s.

In 1962, the original Tower became a Jewish care home named Heinrich Stahl House. However, by 1999, the nature of care for the elderly was changing, and the home's managers decided to close it. The two-acre site was sold for £16.25million and Tower was demolished and replaced with three apartment blocks.

Meanwhile, in 1992, the former maternity hospital, which had been built at the far end of the original plot, was purchased by the Saudi royal family for £10million, reportedly less than half its asking

included a banqueting hall, indoor squash court, swimming complex, gym and sunken



Destroyed: Both floors and the roof of The Towers are engulfed in the blaze. Photo London Fire Brigade

## Chargers at the station

A planning application has been submitted to install six electric vehicle charging bays, including one accessible bay, in East Finchley tube station's car park.

There would be three charging stands, each serving two vehicles, plus a small substation and switch-room run by UK Power Networks with some fencing. The application was put before Barnet Council last month and a decision is awaited.



# Race to give toddler Robin a fighting chance to survive

By Lynn Winton

Just after his first birthday, Robin Samuel was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, which is a high-risk cancer that in the UK still has one of the lowest survival rates. Now in remission, he has endured eight cycles of chemotherapy, a stem cell harvest and a nine-hour operation.

Parents Rachel and Nick, who live in a rented flat on Tetherdown, N10, are desperately appealing to the community for funds to enable Robin to travel to Barcelona to undergo urgent treatment which is unavailable in this country.

Rachel, who works for The National Literacy Trust, explained to me that this is crucial as it will give Robin the highest chance of survival with far fewer side effects. His current course of treatment has cured his cancer for now, but there's a 50% chance of a relapse.

### Immunotherapy

The next step in the UK would involve yet more of

his current regime. The risks include deafness, fatal infection, infertility and leukaemia. But the alternative treatment of just five rounds of the state-of-the-art immunotherapy, as yet only available overseas, will train his immune system to recognise and kill cancer cells in the future and enable him to grow up healthy.

Rachel and Nick have set up a Crowdfunder page. The amount they need to complete Robin's course of treatment is £300,000 and in less than three weeks, at the time of writing, they have already raised £75,000. This has accumulated largely thanks to a huge number of people pledging relatively

small amounts, mainly from their local community in East Finchley and Muswell Hill.

"The truth is," Rachel told me, "that one day this will be offered on the NHS but it is not right now and Robin can't wait. If we can take him to Barcelona in September we are looking at our little boy being cured before his second birthday and going on to live life as a healthy adult."

### Raising the money

As well as the Crowdfunder drive, Rachel and Nick are planning multiple fundraising events. Nick, a composer and saxophonist, is tirelessly performing at gigs in and around north London.

If you would like to help Robin, here's how: the Crowdfunder QR code is below, or you can go to crowdfunder.co.uk and search using keywords "Robin cancer london". You can also follow their planned events on twitter @savebaby-robin. Rachel and Nick can be contacted on 07399 447705 or rachel.samuel@myyahoo.com



Fighting for the best chance: Robin's parents Rachel and Nick



No time to spare: Robin Samuel has been through many rounds of treatment for neuroblastoma

## Fees introduced for tennis in Cherry Tree

By David Melsome

Fees of £8 an hour for adults have been introduced for the first time at the tennis courts in Cherry Tree Wood. Until now, playing on the courts has been free.



Coaches from TPTennis running free sessions at East Finchley Festival in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo: Tetiana Shedko

Barnet Council has brought in the charges at the courts in all its parks. Adults will pay £8 an hour, with concessions at £4 per hour. Annual season tickets are available for £35 a year for adults, and £15 per year for under-16s and over-60s.

But there is some good news as free-to-play courts will be available every Monday to Friday, from 10am-11am, 4pm-5pm and 5pm-6pm. These and all sessions must still be reserved via the council's online booking portal.

The two tennis courts in Cherry Tree Wood now have

PIN access gates, which became active last month, and the new charging model launches on Monday 4 September. Banners and posters were being installed to advise players of the changes.

The courts were fully refurbished with new Tarmac, nets and markings two years ago after the poor condition of the playing surface was highlighted as dangerous. They are not flood-lit and the park closes each day at dusk. The adjacent basketball court is not affected by the charges.

For more information and to book, go to barnet.gov.uk and search 'Tennis in Barnet'.

## Indoor car boot

The next Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 30 September from 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. For more information, contact 020 8368 8180.

## Serious incident on Beresford Road

By Janet Maitland

Police were called to reports that a man had been assaulted in Beresford Road, N2, at 12.20pm on Tuesday 22 August. The London Ambulance Service treated a man in his 30s with a head injury and took him to a major trauma centre as a priority. His injuries are not life threatening.

A 31-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of grievous bodily harm. He was still in police custody at the time of going to press. Enquiries into the circumstances continue but The Archer has been told a baseball bat was allegedly involved.

"This was a drunken affray ending in one of the men being hit over the head causing con-

cussion and bleeding," said Jan Lovell, from the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Anyone with any information is asked to call 101 or tweet @MetCC and quote crime reference number CAD3380/22 Aug. You can also provide information anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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# Plan for greener playground moves to the next stage

By Samantha Haycock

After two and a half years of campaigning, fundraising and community engagement, Friends of Market Place Playground have confirmed that their innovative re-design of the site is now moving towards the construction stage.

In September, Barnet Council will begin the tender process where contractors are invited to quote to deliver the new landscape design which received planning consent in April. After many discussions with the council, the group now has a timetable for procurement.

Unfortunately, inflation in the construction sector means that the £370,000 raised to date will likely need a further £100,000 to deliver landscape designer Aileen Shackell's vision of a green, natural environment for the play space, between Park Road and The Walks, N2.

The group says it is confident of securing these funds and is buoyed by support from the community and East Finchley's local councillors.

The London Marathon Foundation is the latest high-profile charity to show confidence in the project with a grant of £20,000. Friends Chair Kathy Batten said: "This is a unique and different collaboration between the council

and a community group which sometimes means the process isn't always straightforward but we are delighted to be moving ever closer to delivering a wonderful new play space at Market Place."

Earlier this year, acclaimed actor Bill Nighy backed the fundraising campaign by taking part in a Q&A session at the Phoenix Cinema ahead of a



Star backing: Actor Bill Nighy at Market Place Playground.

sell-out showing of his most recent film *Living*, whose plot revolved around a civil servant battling to build a children's playground in the 1950s.



Food in the foyer: Passengers and residents enjoy the informal tea party in the entrance to East Finchley station. Photo Mike Coles

## Tea party at the tube station

By Ruth Anders

Did you know that, despite its name, 55% of London's Underground system is actually above ground? This leaves plenty of open-air platforms for Transport For London (TFL) staff to showcase their gardening skills in their annual In Bloom competition, which started in 1910, organised by the District Railway Company.

As reported in our August edition, station manager Nino Santos has pulled out the horticultural stops to ensure that East Finchley tube station is a highly competitive entrant this year.

Santos, as he likes to be known, went one stage further on the competition's judging day at the end of July by inviting the public to a morning tea party in the station to celebrate TFL's work in the community. Using part of his modest TFL budget, a table was spread with delicious buns and cakes, some made by Santos himself. The Brazilian cheese rolls made with cassava flour were a special treat.

### Emma's in her element

One of the young managers of the competition, Emma Bartlett, there to coordinate the judging process, told The Archer, "I'm part of a four-year training scheme. TFL are funding my Business Management degree, and I work on the Customer Insight Strategy and Experience team to get an overview of all that TFL does. I move around the organisation every six months, and I love it!" Emma explained that she is coordinating the competition judging across 58



Community-minded: Station manager Nino Santos

bases including Tube, Overland, bus, offices and depots.

Santos and his volunteer helpers were palpably excited as they

dashed around organising coffees and teas. We wish him well and look forward to the judging results on 20 September.

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## Enjoy Joyce

A group that meets weekly to read and discuss *Ulysses* by James Joyce is about to start a new cycle working its way through the novel from start to finish.

The free group, run by Joyce expert Russell Raphael, convenes every Wednesday in a pub in the Muswell Hill and East Finchley area. Find out more on the 'North London Ulysses' page of [russellraphael.com](http://russellraphael.com).

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

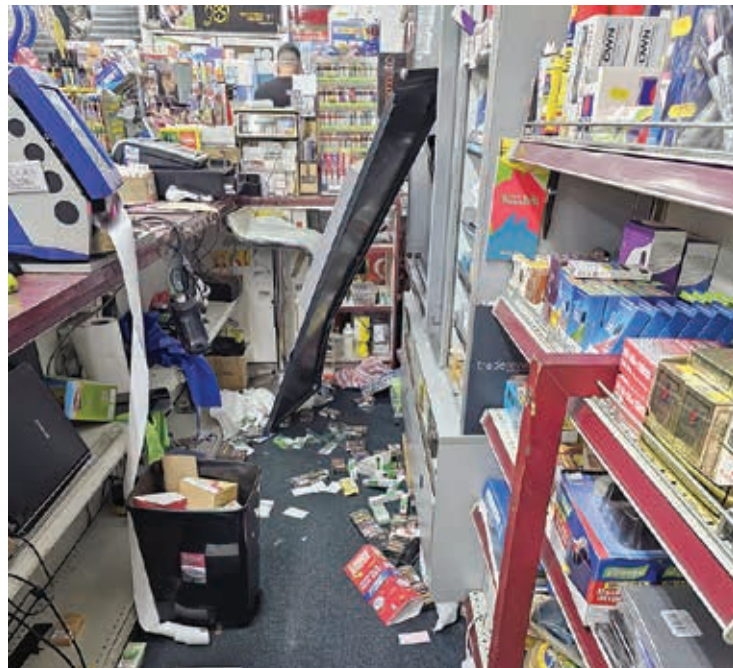
The team at the **North London Hospice** shop on East Finchley High Road is looking for more volunteers. Whether you want to get work experience, help temporarily whilst between jobs or are looking for a long-term role, call in to the shop and talk to the manager Anastasiya. Age is no barrier, ages 14-94 welcome. You will play a vital role in funding the vital work of the hospice and enjoy the camaraderie of a very inclusive team.

Can you spare a couple of hours outdoors every so often to help **Barnwood Community Garden** group? Barnwood, in Tarling Road, N2, is kept as natural as possible so that everyone can enjoy this calm oasis, but every two weeks the volunteer team there gives nature a helping hand. No experience required. Contact: [n2barnwood@gmail.com](mailto:n2barnwood@gmail.com) or call Celia on 07940 592755

**Finchley Foodbank**, based in East Finchley, turns 10 years old this year and to mark the occasion, they are asking for your help! Can you donate your time to volunteer? Get in touch by email at [finchley-foodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchley-foodbank@gmail.com) and find out how you can give back to your community. The food bank currently regularly supports between 550 and 650 people a week with three days of food, essential toiletries and baby goods and other household items.

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please send details (max 80 words please) to [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or visit [www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it](http://www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it).





Safety fears: Pacey's owner Ghazanfar Mehmood. Aftermath: The damage caused to the counter area at Pacey's after the burglar, centre, had stolen cigarettes and the till.

# Five businesses targeted in night-time raids

By John Lawrence

Five businesses on the High Road in East Finchley were targeted by burglars in just one week with night-time raiders cutting through security shutters and in one case making off with more than £12,000 worth of cigarettes.

The break-ins and attempted raids are just one more headache for hard-working local traders already under pressure from rising rents and falling customer spending.

Worst-hit was Pacey's newsagents, which was broken into at around 4am on Friday 28 July. *The Archer* was shown CCTV footage of the burglary lasting little more than five minutes. A masked raider wearing a head torch cut a square out of the shop's metal shutters before

smashing a pane of glass in the front door to climb through, setting off the shop's burglar alarm in the process.

He then used a crowbar to prise open the shop's cigarette cabinet and swept the entire contents, worth more than £12,000, into a huge builder's waste bag. On his way out he pulled the till off the counter and took it with him. Luckily it contained no cash. Police alerted by the alarm company arrived shortly afterwards to find the damage.

### Traders feel unsafe

Pacey's owner Ghazanfar Mehmood has run the business for 23 years and told us he has never felt as unsafe as he does now. "I was in shock. We should feel safe with metal shutters across the front of the shop but if they can cut through those what more can we do?" he said.

"Our customers are very supportive but a lot of us in the High Road feel insecure and we are all struggling. I just want others like me to be aware

and to take all the precautions they can with cash and valuable items."

### Local businesses targeted

On the same night as the Pacey's raid, there were signs of attempted break-ins at three other businesses along the same side of the High Road. A week earlier, front door glass at the Premier convenience store was smashed and a quantity of cigarettes was stolen.

Cigarettes are an obvious target for criminal gangs

because they are high-volume and high-value and can be sold on quickly. East Finchley was last targeted in late July and early August 2021 when Ella Food Centre on the High Road and King Street Food and Wine were broken into within two weeks of each other. Business owners can find Met Police security advice at: [www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-business-safe-from-crime/keep-burglars-out-business/](http://www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-business-safe-from-crime/keep-burglars-out-business/)

# An enchanted garden with its own rooms to enjoy

By Maxine Klein

My friend Rachel, with whom I go to sculpture classes (the significance of which will become apparent) complained that her husband Jeremy spends all his summer evenings in his garden, not coming in until 10pm. Being a gardener myself I was sympathetic to his needs although I don't put in those sort of hours.

He was, of course, preparing for his Open Garden which was in July in Twyford Road. As I was going to be away for the opening I was granted a preview by Rachel and I immediately understood why he had needed to work so hard.

His garden is divided into separate 'rooms', each with a different look and feel. At the front there is a sunny area which is vibrant with flowers of many different colours and shapes. It has a certain wild look to it, as weeding and maintaining a manicured appearance is so last year. This year we are all accommodating a certain amount of 'wild flowers', as we now call



Natural beauty: The glory of Rachel and Jeremy's garden in Twyford Avenue

weeds, in order to attract birds and insects.

Walking through this area there is then a dry garden that is designed to need little or no water with drought-resistant plants. It is covered in gravel and decorated with Rachel's sculptures, various follies and terracotta pots with plants in them. Rachel calls this the Pompeii garden.

Further on is a shaded area with woodland plants and trees and a special bench that is hundreds of years old. There was

even room for a little kitchen garden and a greenhouse used for making cuttings, many of which were on sale.

### Visitors welcome

It was a magical experience. Each area is a surprise and delight. Jeremy and Rachel would be happy to show people their garden after the open day if they make an appointment and give a £5 donation to the charities that they are supporting. I would strongly recommend it. Email Rachel, if interested, at [averly54@gmail.com](mailto:averly54@gmail.com).

# From summer events to autumn plans

Much of this summer might not have felt very summery, but that hasn't stopped members of North London U3A from getting out and about on city walks, gallery visits, arts courses and more.

North London U3A Chair Michael Johns said: "We've been delighted to meet and connect with many people from the local area during July and August, and we've enjoyed extending an invitation to members of the public, offering retired people a varied assortment of one-off events."

And in September, North London U3A will be extending another invitation, this time to an Open Morning showcas-

ing their regular year-round activities. The event offers the opportunity for visitors to find out what's on offer this autumn, and to chat to existing members and organisers.

Anyone who is semi-retired or retired is very welcome to come along to the event, which takes place on 11 September from 10am to 11.30pm at St Margaret's Church, Victoria Avenue, Central Finchley. Find out more on the website: [www.nlu3a.org.uk](http://www.nlu3a.org.uk)

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# Hives are honey pot for food bank

By Lynn Winton

Lucie Chaumeton is one of East Finchley's very own beekeepers. She single-handedly tends her many beehives, decants the honey into jars and then labels and distributes the jars from her kitchen table.

I have been a local customer of Lucie's delicious 'Miel de Lucie' for many years. What I didn't know until now was that Lucie is not looking for commercial gain from her all-consuming hobby. She annually donates 100% of the considerable profits, a four-figure sum, to Finchley Food Bank.

Lucie told me how this partnership came about: "I got to know Anna Maughan (manager of Finchley Food Bank) during lockdown when I spent my time sewing hundreds of masks, including children's sizes, which she was able to distribute to her clients, along with



Happy apiculturist: Lucie Chaumeton with her hard-working honey bees.

all the other items they needed. "The Food Bank is such a 'can do' place and everyone helping there is so dedicated. When I started to make a profit from my honey sales I could think of no more deserving place to benefit from my hobby's success."

Lucie also gives talks in schools, taking with her a special portable observation hive that captivates her audience.

The small fee she charges is also given to Finchley Food Bank.

## Find out more

Her website is packed with information about bees and the considerable amount of work (and daunting initial costs) involved in embarking on being a beekeeper. It also tells you

where you can buy her honey, as well as the ecologically sound wax wraps she makes with the wax from retired hive frames. There's an email link if you would like to be informed of local sales events. Every jar of honey you buy for yourself or for gifts helps Finchley Food Bank. Visit [mieldelucie.wixsite.com/website](http://mieldelucie.wixsite.com/website) or find Lucie on Instagram and Facebook @mieldelucie



Fresh air and friendship: A group at one of the well being walks with leader Louis Victor, second right

# Why this wellbeing walk suits us down to the ground

By Valerie Jones

So there we are at 10am at the entrance to Cherry Tree Wood, all set for our walk through the park, up into Highgate Woods, and then back for a coffee and a chat. I joined the Wednesday morning East Finchley Wellbeing Walk group after a hip replacement operation. All was going well with my new joint, but I knew I needed to get the muscles working again, with something that wasn't too taxing. And I discovered that not only was the pace of the walk perfect, it was also good fun.

We are a mixed bunch: Grace, a former district nurse, and Esther, who'd worked as a radio journalist and translator in China. There's Franco, now retired from the long hours of running a restaurant, who enjoys having a sociable time out in the fresh air, but still getting home to cook his wife's lunch. And also Kerry, a church administrator, recovering from a minor stroke, now realising she needs to take more exercise.

So we all set off. Louis Victor leads the way in his high-vis jacket. The rule is that we go at the slowest walker's pace. Sometimes we pause for

others to catch up. But that's no problem, when the birds are singing and the squirrels hopping around. And there's plenty to talk about.

Louis came up with the idea for the wellbeing walk. A keen walker himself, he realised that not everyone could face a long hike for a couple of hours. So, with the help of the Rambler's Association, he's set up this gentler alternative. It suits those who are now working more from home: a brief time out in the open air, and then back to the laptop. Beverley, a semi-retired teacher, says she's found doing online tutorials

has made her less fit. Too much sitting down.

We've also had our foreign visitors. Johanna from Germany was spending time with her family here. She joined us for a few weeks and says she'll be back. And Edie from America, who happened to find somewhere to stay in East Finchley and wanted to investigate the local culture. I hope we did East Finchley proud.

Then, when the hour's walk is over, there's coffee or tea at the Cherry Tree Café. And we talk about everything. The frustrations of the local car parking apps, the pleasure of singing in choirs, the sad need for food banks, what to do with no-longer-needed medical equipment, suggestions of good films or plays to see. We've mostly avoided the two terrible Bs... Boris and Brexit. There are more interesting topics.

Of course, it is always possible to go for a walk by yourself. But do you? It helps to have the discipline of a definite day and time. And we all agree it is more fun to walk with others. Jules, a picture framer, says being stuck at home during the Covid lockdown has made us all realise how important it is to get out and be with other people. Ben, an actor with an unpredictable work schedule, appreciates the flexibility of being able to just turn up on the day.

So, join us: 10am every Wednesday morning at the entrance to Cherry Tree Wood, opposite East Finchley tube station. It's free, and there are loo stops! For more info email: [efwellbeingwalk@gmail.com](mailto:efwellbeingwalk@gmail.com)

# Watch and learn an ancient board game

By Diana Cormack

An announcement on East Finchley Community Facebook has led to a regular Thursday afternoon gathering at Maddens Bar in the High Road, N2. Friends Marianne Stratton and Denise Outhwaite put out an invitation to join them in playing backgammon, whether you are an experienced player or a beginner.

The game itself dates back to the large family of table games which can be traced through 5,000 years

to parts of Mesopotamia and Persia. It was first recorded in 17<sup>th</sup> century England and has grown to be a really popular board game, with the UK Open Championships taking place at the end of August.

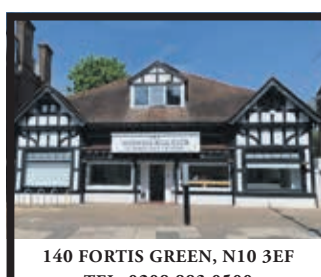
In good weather the mixed group play in twos outside, so the players are watched by the others, particularly carefully by the beginners who are encouraged to watch and learn. Experienced players like Gwyneth Fowler, who was



Games table: The backgammon players enjoy an al fresco afternoon at Maddens

taught to play by her mother at ten years of age, advise and help newcomers.

If you are interested, just turn up at 2pm on Thursdays. The club is free as are the snacks generously supplied by Maddens, but you will have to pay for your drinks.



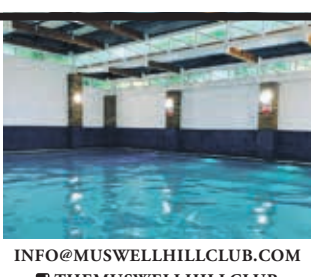
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# Restaurant couple defend themselves against rumours

By John Lawrence

A long-established restaurant owner in East Finchley has been forced to take to social media to dispel rumours that his business is a money-laundering operation.



Husband and wife team: Maria and Aki Toumazos outside the restaurant they have run for 16 years. Photo John Lawrence

Aki Toumazos, who with his wife Maria runs Creightons Brasserie and Genzo Greek in the High Road, got wind that people were sharing unfounded suspicions after his two premises went through a rapid number of name changes in the past six years.

Starting off as Genzo, the main restaurant became Chukkas and then Sika for short periods before changing to Creightons last year. The smaller Genzo Greek restaurant next door has had different names too and has opened and closed over the period.

As new name signs appeared regularly above the door, rumours went round that something suspicious was going on. Some speculated that it was an elaborate money-laundering scheme or some kind of tax dodge, and others even wondered if drug trafficking was involved.

## Explanation

Aki, who was not on social media, finally joined the East Finchley Community Facebook group a couple of months ago where he was able to explain the true situation openly. He also spoke to *The Archer*.

He told us that he has been in East Finchley for more than 16 years and the company that runs the restaurants has always been the same and never gone bankrupt. He said he and Maria

work seven days a week to try to make ends meet in a difficult hospitality industry.

Smiling, he admitted that even he struggles to remember all the name and menu changes. These have come about depending on the chefs Aki is able to employ and keep, sometimes pan-Asian, sometimes Indian, sometimes Caribbean, sometimes his native Greek. When chefs change, he's forced to change the offering.

## Genzo Greek reopening

He bought and opened the smaller Genzo Greek next door for his grown-up sons Lourenzo and Fodi to run. When they went into the finance careers they had studied for he was left to run both restaurants, often manning the kitchens himself, which led to short periods where one had to close.

Aki told us: "I'm happy to get the truth out in the open. Our regular customers have been supportive all the way and we've had plenty of positive reaction to what I wrote. We've even started to see new faces coming in to dine."

Genzo Greek, which has been closed over the summer, is reopening this month and Creightons continues to welcome diners so Aki and Maria will be back to running two restaurants alongside each other again.

## Review of road penalty charges

London Councils has launched a consultation that is likely to see a rise in the level of penalty charges for traffic offences, breaking parking rules and bus lane contraventions on borough roads across the capital, including Barnet and Haringey.

The maximum charge currently stands at £130. Transport for London has already raised the maximum penalty on the Red Routes it is responsible for to £160.

The number of penalty notices issued in London has increased by 50% over the last 12 years and London boroughs say they are concerned that the current charge levels are not high enough to act as a deterrent.

The consultation runs until Monday 23 October. To respond to the consultation visit [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/LondonParkingChargesConsultation](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/LondonParkingChargesConsultation)



New name, new owner: Ali Karimi at Fish N Flame. Photo Mike Coles

## Touch of the old at new fish restaurant

By Diana Cormack

At the beginning of August a long-established High Road business took on a new look when the Poseidon Fish Restaurant became Fish 'n' Flame. An announcement by former owner Angie Lymbourides thanking their loyal customers informed them that the name of the chip shop and restaurant specialising in Greek dishes was disappearing after close to 40 years.

However, it is also a fresh beginning because new owner Ali Karimi is continuing to offer the traditional fish menu along with a greater emphasis on meat dishes, hence the name Fish 'n' Flame, which includes his special Persian style kebab. Open seven days a week, there are special lunch time offers in the take-away and restaurant, plus children's meals available.

Ali was pleased to tell *The Archer* that the same chef is continuing to work there. His own long-term interest in food

has seen him running similar establishments outside London which had to fit in to his professional development, for Ali has a PHD in cybersecurity. Still involved with Loughborough University, he is looking to transfer down here.

So what brought him to East Finchley? Having seen various places, Ali says he was struck by the friendliness of the people and described them as being "really good". We hope that is how they will soon be describing the food at Fish 'n' Flame.

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## The science of deceit

How good are you at spotting whether someone is lying, and is it even possible? Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday looks at the science behind deceit in an upcoming talk and reveals how to protect yourself when it really matters. She will also shed a light on how to reduce the spread of fake news and how to spot a scam.

The psychology of deception talk is free and takes place on Wednesday 13 September from 7pm to 8pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. Organised by Age UK

Barnet, all ages are welcome and there will be refreshments. To register, contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

## Word on the Wood

Everyone is welcome to the next Friends of Cherry Tree Wood meeting. There is much to catch up on, including the group's forthcoming events in the wood, an update on the new woodland management plan and also progress with dealing with flooding and drainage issues.

The meeting takes place at 7.30pm on Thursday 21 September at Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Park House, 16 High Street, N2 (use the side door adjacent to the wood).

The Friends can be reached any time if there are any queries in advance, or you would like to get involved. Email [friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com)



Cabinet of delights: The new book library. Photo Kathy Batten

## Bring a book, borrow a book

East Finchley has a new book cabinet to add to the one already in Creighton Avenue and the book exchange at the tube station. The new library, built by resident David Johns and curated by neighbour Valerie Teague, is in the Leopold Road Neighbourhood Garden at the junction with The Walks. Everyone is welcome to bring a book and borrow a book.

## Head in the clouds

By Roger Chapman

When was the last time you looked up and smelt the clouds and can you tell the difference between cirrus, cumulus or nimbus? You may be able to after spending an hour or two on your back in Cherry Tree Wood at its forthcoming Cloud Appreciation Day.

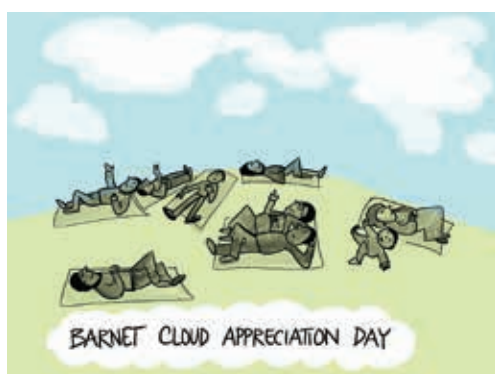
Those who come along to the family-friendly event on Sunday 10 September from 2pm to 4pm will also be able

to learn about north London resident Luke Howard, the man who named the clouds in 1802.

Ground sheets will be provided but you can bring your own blanket if you wish. The observation point will be on the field; keep an eye

out for a gazebo.

For more information, email: [friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com)



On the tiles: Debbie Singer with Councillor Alison Moore and Roger Chapman at the mosaic unveiling

## Magic moment as final mosaic is revealed

By Debbie Singer

On a blustery afternoon in July more than 30 people gathered to witness the unveiling of my final mosaic in Cherry Tree Wood. It was heartwarming to see so many friends and neighbours come to this event hosted by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

The group's chair Roger Chapman welcomed everybody and explained how the Friends are volunteers who take an interest in improving Cherry Tree Wood through gardening, litter picking and planning. I told everyone how he and Kate Brown, who coordinates the Friends' gardening volunteers, had offered me the opportunity to make the mosaics for the side of the toilet block opposite the café.

The artwork consists of ten tiles each featuring an aspect of the park: the core blimey apple and the green and yellow humbug pear which grow in the orchard opposite the café; the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood logo designed by a local teenager; the yellow iris found in the bog garden behind the tennis courts; a red admiral butterfly; a parakeet; cherry blossom, of course; the squirrel; and a wood anemone indicating that this is ancient woodland.

Finally, Councillor Alison Moore asked the children in the

audience to remove the cloth that was hiding the final mosaic tile. And what did they reveal? The archer! The design on the last tile is the archer, so familiar from this newspaper and East Finchley station. The idea had been Guy Redmond's, one of my neighbours.

Then it was Roger's turn to bring out the heavy duty glue and stick the tile to the wall. It was a proud moment for me to see the work completed after over a year working on it at the London School of Mosaics under the creative eye of teacher Catherine Parkinson.

Making the mosaics has been a hugely enjoyable challenge, encouraged by the supportive comments I've received from neighbours and passers-by.

The afternoon finished with the children drawing leaves and the adults joining a historical walk round Cherry Tree Wood led by Roger. And a welcome cup of tea from Sharon at the Cherry Tree Café for me.

## All welcome at Town Team quarterly meeting

By Diana Cormack

The first quarterly formal meeting of the East Finchley Town Team is set for Thursday 14 September. All are welcome to participate at the Constitutional Club in The Walks, N2, where views will be expressed, opinions exchanged and ideas discussed. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

Whether you want to talk about how the High Road could be improved or have other local topics you think need an airing, the Town Team would

love to hear your suggestions. You can contact them via [www.IloveN2.co.uk/Town-Team](http://www.IloveN2.co.uk/Town-Team), email [eftownteam@gmail.com](mailto:eftownteam@gmail.com) or just turn up on the night.

## From The Archer archives...

10 years ago:

September 2013

Problems at the Old Barn in Tarling Road came to a head when the Charity Commission intervened in the three-year battle over management of the centre. They had informed trustees that an AGM planned for 21 July could not go ahead as proper procedures had not been followed. The trouble stemmed from 2010, when a group of new trustees led by the Reverend Geoffrey Muhoro took over the centre, and the situation took several years to resolve.

15 years ago:

September 2008

Planning permission for a supermarket at Stag Court, a new block of flats in the High Road north of the Methodist Church, was refused. 506 local people had protested that a supermarket in that location would threaten existing shops, cause traffic and parking problems and spoil East Finchley's village atmosphere. Only 62 people were in favour of the proposal and the ground-floor space was subsequently let as offices.

23 years ago:

September 2000

The Windsor Castle pub in the Walks won the title "Best Bloomin' Pub in Barnet" with an impressive and colourful display of tubs, pots and hanging baskets. Pub managers David and Carole Shephard, who had won many other awards during their eight-year tenure, were assisted by regular customer and gardener Brian Davis.





Pen on the page: Artist Chris Stavrou's subjects range from familiar scenes like East Finchley tube station to the beauty of the natural world

# Chris sees the big picture in a single black line

By Ruth Anders

**Archer readers will be familiar with Kokos, the popular shoe and repair shop that has been gracing our High Road since 1976. But few may know that the owner George's son, Chris Stavrou, is a highly talented artist.**

Continuous Chris as his Instagram account labels him, excels in line drawings of animals, people and buildings, hardly ever taking his pen off the paper.

A very relaxed character, Kokos manager Chris is the person you will often see when

you visit the shop. He grew up in East Finchley going to school in Finchley and Mill Hill, before starting adult life as an architectural student in Manchester. Despite losing his passion for architecture later, it clearly informs his artwork with its precise linear application.

Chris worked in the Barnes and Wimbledon branches of Kokos, both of which have since closed, before moving back to East Finchley to focus on managing our local shop.

He hasn't been indulging his hobby so much recently, as he and his husband are busy

doing up their house on the East Anglian coast. "I love East Finchley," says Chris, "but it's also very nice to escape to the sea air of Suffolk."

## Buildings, people and a whippet

Chris works equally happily with pen and paper or digitally using his iPad. "I've always loved drawing," he told us, "and I like the idea of being able to communicate without words." He has participated in the East Finchley Open Artist weekends and sold many of his sketches and specially designed Christmas cards. "My favourite subjects are buildings and people. I tend to start at the top, focusing on the contours rather than the whole subject, and just keep going," he said.

Animal-lover Chris, whose whippet features in his drawings, would love to run an animal sanctuary in some future life. Meanwhile, you can find his artworks by looking him up via [www.instagram.com/continuouschris](http://www.instagram.com/continuouschris)

## RICKY SAVAGE ... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

### Weather or not

**Remember the opening of 1963's biggest movie? You know, the one about four lads converting a London bus into the first double-decker motor home and going singing and dancing all the way to Athens, picking up three young singers and an American teen starlet pretending to be a boy?**

You do? Well I bet you don't remember the very English opening sequence of the lads eating soggy sandwiches in the rain and moaning about the weather. Because that's the whole point of the movie, getting away from another English summer and going on a proper Summer Holiday where the sun shines brightly and the seas are blue. So very 2023.

After last year's heatwave, this year the weather gods got down to business with a vengeance. First it was a bit of a trick or treat in June with blue skies and soaring temperatures before turning dour for July and August.

Maybe it was the travel companies bribing the rain gods so they could pack more people into tin cans and fly them off to the 50C heatwaves in Greece, or maybe it was just the bad luck of the draw, but this year we got the kind of summer that ruined childhoods in the days before continental holidays had been invented.

Come to the Cornish Riviera, they said. So I did and the rain followed me. Ah, a chance to gaze at the azure blue sea whilst eating ice cream beneath a cloudless sky. No, a chance to sit in the car eating Cornish pasties and drinking tea while watching the rain. It was so bad that even the sea gulls gave up stealing chips and tried to keep dry in bus shelters.

It was the same up north. Skegness wasn't brazing, it was sodden and in Wales the rain came in horizontally from all sides at once. Scotland was worse because you got added bloodsucking midges attacking you from all sides.

It was proof that if they have 48 different words for snow in Greenland, we have at least as many words for rain. It poured, drizzled, mizzled, drenched and rained cats and dogs.

By the time you set out for your monsoon drive back to London you wished you'd converted a bus and driven to Greece just like Cliff and the boys did 60 years ago. The only saving grace from this great British summer was that your fence was still there. There had been just too much rain for even homo stupidus to put on his cooking shorts and try to hold his annual barbecue.



## Seeking cat foster parents

By Sheila Armstrong

**If you like cats and could give one a safe temporary home the RSPCA Finchley want to hear from you. Cats are taken in by the RSPCA for a variety of reasons and go into 'kennels' while awaiting rehoming.**

By fostering one of their cats you are offering it the chance to live in a home giving it extra space, warmth and affection, all of which build their confidence. Everything is provided for them: food, litter, even a cat gym if needed. RSPCA officers will support you throughout and generally keep in touch. All cats are given inoculations and any medical help needed. And you can say how long you want to foster a cat for.

It's a rewarding and enjoyable thing to do, to help a cat find a new direction in life. Almond, Mui Mui and Monty have all moved on to their forever homes after staying in my home. You may choose to adopt the cat you have fostered or not, no pressure.

If you would like to foster or rehome a cat contact the RSPCA on 07928 628771 or email

[admin@rspcafinchley.org.uk](mailto:admin@rspcafinchley.org.uk)

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LONDON CENTRE



# Music from Ukraine fills foyer of Phoenix Cinema

By Ruth Anders

The foyer of the Phoenix Cinema was brought to energetic life on the evening of Thursday 20 July by four spirited Ukrainian musicians in national costume, playing saxophone, violin, accordion and percussion, singing and stamping their feet.

The ground floor, stairs and gallery were packed with enthusiastic supporters clapping in time and applauding the impromptu concert, before enjoying Phil Longman's 2017 film *Kyiv Unbroken* and a Q&A with the director afterwards.

A total of 119 tickets were sold for this special evening designed to raise money to be shared between British Ukrainian Aid and East Finchley-based Driving Aid to Ukraine.

As has been previously reported in *The Archer*, local resident Michael Byrne works tirelessly for the non-profit organisation he started over a year ago driving 24 tons of aid related items to Ukraine every month.

## Motivating supporters

One of his volunteer colleagues, north London business owner Amanda McGrath, started helping the initiative a year ago, fundraising, coordinating volunteers and generally promoting the project. Amanda told *The Archer*: "My mother was a Polish refugee from Gdansk, so I have a connection with this sort of endeavour." She added: "It costs approximately £2,500 a month to send our aid to Ukraine. The Ukraine war is turning into an over-familiar story, but we urgently need ongoing support to continue our vital help for the people of that war torn country."

Other local support has



Sounds of Ukraine: Filmgoers gather in the Phoenix foyer ahead of the charity screening.

included Martin Primary School's collections and *Archer* contributor Lynn Winton's Dancing for Ukraine events.

Now the Phoenix Cinema has added its own momentum to the cause. To find out more visit [drivingaidtoukraine.org](http://drivingaidtoukraine.org)

# What's On at the Phoenix in September

By Zalan Pall, general manager



Korean and British dramas, live opera, ballet and theatre, a poetry event plus much more await you at the Phoenix Cinema this month.

In *Past Lives*, playing from Thursday 7 September, Nora and Hae Sung, two deeply connected childhood friends, are wrested apart after Nora's family emigrates from South Korea. Two decades later, they are reunited in New York for one fateful week as they confront notions of destiny, love, and the choices that make a life, in this heartrending modern romance.

For the lovers of the live arts on screen, we will have Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* on Wednesday 13 September, the Royal Opera House's *Das Rheingold* on Wednesday 20 September and NT Live's production of the West End hit *A Little Life*, starring James Norton, on Thursday 28 September.

We are also screening *Angelheaded Hipster: The Songs of Marc Bolan & T.Rex* on Thursday 14 September and the Pedro Almodovar Spanish

Western short *Strange Way of Life* with a pre-recorded Q&A on Monday 25 September.

The Phoenix is also proud to be hosting a poetry and music event on Saturday 30 September called *Hungarians in London: Fracture, Identity, and Belonging*. It will focus on what it means to be Hungarian in London and how someone can find their identity and a sense of belonging in a metropolis without losing touch with their roots.

Finally, Ken Loach's new film *The Old Oak*, playing from Friday 29 September, is the story of a village in the Northeast of England, where the mine closed, and people feel deserted by the system. How will the locals receive an influx of Syrian refugees and what will be the future for the last remaining pub in the village.

Find our full listings at [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk) where you can also book seats, or pop into our foyer.

## Drive to find food bank drivers

By Lynn Winton

Food Bank Aid, based in the Great North Leisure Park opposite the Hollywood Bowl, is the grassroots charity that commits to source and deliver vital supplies to 20 north London food banks from Harrow to Tottenham, helping to feed more than 16,000 people every week. These food banks are seeing no decrease at all in demand, so Food Bank Aid is on an urgent recruitment drive to find more volunteer drivers.

"We have a fantastic band of volunteers from East Finchley" said founder Naomi Russell, "and now we really need to find more drivers to deliver the donations. We'd welcome anyone willing to use their own car, especially if it's electric, but that's not compulsory, and also volunteers age 30-plus can drive our own van. An ordinary driving licence is all you need." If you would like to know more about being a Food Bank Aid driver pop in and have a chat with manager Marcus Maughan at the leisure park base. Or you can drop them an email to [volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk).

## Have a September sort-out for Ukraine

By Lynn Winton

Springcroft Avenue resident Nicola Cousins is playing a crucial role in getting vital humanitarian aid to the devastated people of Ukraine and hopes that she can make it easy for readers to play their part too. She's converted her home into a convenient drop-off point where she sorts, packs and labels donations.

Nicola, a retired teacher, read in *The Archer* about the local initiative, Driving Aid to Ukraine, which was set up by East Finchley resident Michael Byrne. Michael has organised 16 huge, multi-ton trucks, laden with goods to reach Ukraine, with more journeys in the pipeline.

After getting in touch with Michael to volunteer her services, they decided this role was a perfect fit for her. "I had already volunteered with a charity delivering clothes to the Calais 'jungle' so I could get on with this straightaway," explained Nicola.

She says nearly every conceivable item you can imagine is needed, but I asked for a list that readers can use as a general guide. "Clothes, medical products, electrical and technical products, children's clothes, toys, colouring pencils and stationery, hygiene products and dried food. All clothes should be clean, not torn or overly worn and basically ready to wear and all underwear must be new," advised Nicola.

### Making contact

If you have any queries on what to drop off, how to arrange



Hub for help: Nicola Cousins co-ordinates donations for the Driving Aid to Ukraine mission. Photo Mike Coles

a collection or drop off time, or wish to enquire about volunteering, Nicola can be contacted by email at [nicolacousins0812@gmail.com](mailto:nicolacousins0812@gmail.com).

Find out more about how donations reach Ukraine at [drivingaidtoukraine.org](http://drivingaidtoukraine.org)

## Letters

### Potholes filled in Dear Editor,

After writing in July to complain about the obstacle course of potholes on The Bishops Avenue near Hampstead Heath (*The Archer*, July 2023), nothing changed for weeks. Then someone came along and filled in some of the worst examples. Only some of the worst holes have been smoothed over and I don't know whether the work was done by Barnet Council or by the construction companies who are working on several sites up there. At least for now, there's a slightly safer path for drivers and cyclists, although many holes still remain. At some point, the whole road is going to have to be resurfaced, at huge cost to the council tax payer.

Michael Howarth, Fortis Green, N2.

Send your correspondence to: [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto: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.



# Dogged determination pays off for Martha

By Ruth Anders

Local resident Martha Epstein started her working life in event planning, but she found her heart was never really in managing weddings, marketing launches and other such occasions.

Furlough during the pandemic gave her time to think about her future. The redundancy that followed confirmed her desire for a different career path. That's when she started thinking about running her own business working with dogs.

Martha, who grew up in Durham Road and Twyford Avenue, told *The Archer*: "The dog grooming idea came from nowhere. I was aware that dog grooming salons were opening ahead of hairdressers, and I joined a salon in Crouch End for a trial."

There Martha progressed to qualifying as a junior groomer, before taking an intensive course with Groomarts in St Albans to become a fully-fledged dog groomer.

### Martha's Mutts is born

She soon realised that taking the groomer to the dog rather than the dog to the groomer was far less stressful for her furry clients and so obtained the funding to buy and convert a van into her own mobile grooming studio via specialist company Wet Pets.

The result is a gleaming vehicle containing a water tank, heater, hydro-bath, wall fan and a wide array of trimming, cut-



Mobile beauty parlour: Martha Epstein with a customer in her dog grooming van

ting and drying tools. The van also acts as a sparkling mobile advertisement for her business, Martha's Mutts.

Martha recommends that dogs are groomed as puppies to familiarise them with the process. She said: "I love building relationships with dogs and their owners, and I'm already enjoying repeat bookings. But I never force a dog to do anything it doesn't want to do."

### Keep that double coat

Martha offers a variety of doggy services from de-shed-

ding and shampooing, to coat and nail clipping. She added: "Some owners don't understand the issue of double coats, which applies to animals like Huskies, Chows and Pomeranians. I have to explain that their thick coats keep them cool in summer and warm in winter and that cutting damages the coat."

Martha's skills and warm bubbly personality guarantee a successful career ahead, in a vocation close to her heart. Find out more at [www.marthasmutts.co.uk](http://www.marthasmutts.co.uk)

# Music lover Mark Mitchell

## February 1967 – August 2023

By Adam Porter

I first met Mark Mitchell in 2008 at my then local pub Maddens Bar in East Finchley. He was living in Leicester Road at the time. Within minutes we were talking like old friends, such was his ability to put you at ease with his charm and humour. Mark was always positive even in his last weeks and loved nothing more than socialising over a beer.

Mark lived for music and art and was a talented graphic designer and illustrator. This made him popular with celebrities, who he would sketch before presenting them with their portrait as a gift. He was friendly with the members of bands such as The Buzzcocks, The Hives, and Pussycat and the Dirty Johnsons. We called him 'Mark, friend to the stars.'

Mark also had a passion for India, spending time in Calcutta, where he gave boxes of ballpoint pens and paper to crowds of excited street children, who ran after him chanting, 'Pen! Pen! Pen!' Afterwards, he braved the sweltering heat in order to ride a camel through the desert in Rajasthan.

I lost contact with Mark for several years, having moved out

of London, but music brought us together again. In June this year he invited me to watch The Beat perform in Camden, reuniting me with another mutual friend. But to our disappointment, Mark didn't arrive for the gig.

It was then our friend told me that Mark had cancer and was too weak to come. I think Mark didn't want to worry people, he was thinking of others, wanting us simply to enjoy the music.

I'm grateful to have reunited with Mark in his last weeks, and although seeing his rapid decline was heart-breaking, he wasn't bitter or sad, but was great company till the end. He is missed so much by so many. East Finchley won't be the same without him. Mark is survived by his partner Priya and his mother Penny.



Musical connection: Mark Mitchell, right, with Steve Diggle, guitarist and vocalist from The Buzzcocks.

All Saints' East Finchley  
United Methodist Church of England

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  
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 Email: [vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com](mailto:vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com)  
 or check out our website:  
[allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk](http://allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk)

# Know your caterpillars

By Mike Coles

In August I noticed a Red Admiral butterfly in my East Finchley garden and I can't remember how long it is since I saw one there. Their numbers in cities had been falling until people started rewilding and local conservationists started making dedicated nature spaces about ten years ago. Since then, butterfly numbers have been rising, although they are still well below what they were.

Red Admirals, and for that matter, Cabbage Whites, including their caterpillars, the larvae stage in the life cycle of butterflies and moths, are completely harmless, although some gardeners might disagree.

### Reader's experience

Last month however, a reader wrote to *The Archer* to warn of a toxic caterpillar that caused a nasty and painful rash and should be avoided. Although there are a minority number of hairy, colourful caterpillars around which can irritate, the caterpillar in question was probably of an Oak Processionary Moth, which has invaded the UK, at the moment mainly in the London area.

It's serious enough for the government to start a website detailing the problem insect at [www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-oak-processionary-moth-](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-oak-processionary-moth-)



Be wary: The caterpillar of the Oak Processionary Moth

in-England

These caterpillars fire off hairs when threatened, which are also carried on the wind. Children, pets, people who work on or close to oak trees, anyone spending time close to infested trees and grazing livestock and wild animals have been identified as being among the groups most vulnerable to the health hazards associated with them.

### Which to avoid

Southern England was first hit by the pests after the caterpillars arrived in London via a shipment of trees in 2006. The Forestry Commission issued an

appeal for sightings of the moths.

Although it initially favoured oak trees, it's becoming less fussy. Rather than squash all caterpillars you come across, it's important to recognise those that are welcome like the Red Admiral and be wary only of the toxic ones, in particular, keeping young children away from them.



Harmless: Red Admiral caterpillar



## Teenager creates flags from Rubik's Cubes

By David Melsome

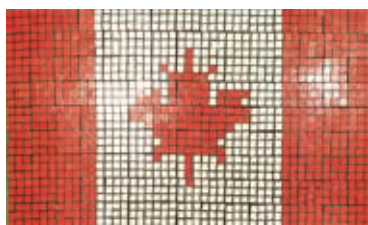
**An East Finchley teenager is creating flags of the world out of Rubik's Cubes in memory of her uncle who died of a brain tumour. Mimi Kaufmann is now part-way through a year-long challenge that will see her create 198 flags out of mini cubes, in aid of the charity Brain Tumour Research.**

The 14-year-old took up the puzzle hobby during lockdown and is now able to solve a full-size Rubik's Cube in 26 seconds. She decided to combine it with her love of flags and raise money in honour of her uncle.

Accountant David Goldschmidt was diagnosed with a glioblastoma in September 2012 after experiencing problems with his balance and spatial awareness. He died ten years ago this October, aged 51, and it is this anniversary that Mimi has been working towards.

### Problem-solving

She was taught how to use a Rubik's cube, which has 43 quintillion combinations, by her 19-year-old brother Joel, who is also a fan of the puzzle. So far she has created 79 flags from his collection of 144 mini cubes. Her mum Aviva said: "Mimi has a good problem-solving mind. She also plays chess so



Nations of the world: Mimi's versions of the flags of Canada, Grenada and Cyprus

she's good at this sort of thing."

Mimi said: "The first flag I made was British, on the day the Queen died. My last one was Ireland and I'm just finishing Israel. I had to miss out Estonia because I'm stuck with the colours of a Rubik's cube, so don't have black. I destroy them to make another but I take photos and videos of them all."

### Sponsoring research

The schoolgirl is aiming to raise at least £2,740, which is enough to sponsor a day of research at one of the charity's four Centres of Excellence. Charlie Allsebrook, community development manager for Brain Tumour Research, said: "We're really grateful to Mimi for taking on this challenge for us and wish her the best of luck finishing it by the end of the year." To support Mimi's fundraising, visit [www.just-giving.com/fundraising/mimi-kaufmann](http://www.just-giving.com/fundraising/mimi-kaufmann).



From square one: Mimi Kaufmann works on the flag of Israel

## My summer stuck inside a Triceratops tummy

By Jake Eiseman-Renyard

**A lifelong resident of East Finchley, I have worked with puppets for the last nine years and auditioned for Rentadinosaur earlier this year. Rentadinosaur, based in Orpington, Kent, performs with realistic, life-size puppet dinosaurs at shows all over Britain and further afield.**

The 'babies' are held by a visible puppeteer, but my favourite characters are definitely the larger dinosaurs, operated from inside. I was asked to operate the back of Tiny the Triceratops at the Godiva Festival in Coventry, an offer I couldn't refuse as I was finally able to work with some big puppets. Introduced to Daniel, who operates the front, I found out he too is an East Finchley resident!

Tiny's puppeteers enter and leave through the belly. I entered first, then switched on the video screen Daniel sees through, from a camera mounted in the front horn, along with fans, depending on

the heat inside.

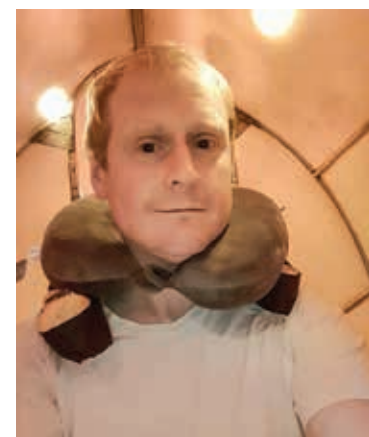
With our legs inside Tiny's, and the weight of his back carried on our shoulders, my main task was to watch Daniel's leg movements and follow them with my own, unless instructed otherwise.

Tiny leaves a marquee from one end and is led into the ring by a wrangler, also a performer, in the show. He defends his baby brother from an attack by Baxter the Tyrannosaurus, Baxter being operated by one puppeteer from inside.

With five shows that day, it was a baptism of fire and being inside what feels like a canvas submarine isn't to everyone's taste, but I loved it! The other



Wizard lizard: Baxter the Tyrannosaurus on the loose at a summer festival



Puppeteer: Jake inside the back half of Tiny the Triceratops

cast members, many of whom study dance and stage combat, were great to work with. Here's to more shows with them.

## Bishop Douglass reunion at 60

We reported last month that Holy Trinity Primary School and Archer Academy in East Finchley are both celebrating significant anniversaries this year, 175 years and 10 years respectively.

Well, they are not the only

ones. Bishop Douglass Secondary School in Hamilton Road, N2, is marking its 60th anniversary this year and has a special reunion event planned this month.

There will be a reunion of former teachers and past pupils and their guests at the school on Saturday 9 September from 4pm

to 11pm. It will be a chance to enjoy light refreshments, drinks and music in a friendly atmosphere, meeting old friends and with the opportunity to take a tour of the school and its extensions.

Entry is free on the door for former teachers while tickets for past pupils and their guests will cost £15 per person.

## Learning to explore

**The Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, located a 10-minute bus ride from East Finchley in Pond Square, Highgate, is hosting an open afternoon on Saturday 9 September from 2-4pm to let visitors explore the range of courses and lectures it has to offer.**

There are classes in literature, history, music, languages, art, history of art, garden design, embroidery, fitness and more. Find out more at [hlsi.net](http://hlsi.net).