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Food charity help plea as winter bites

By Lynn Winton

Food Bank Aid is the local grassroots charity, based opposite Hollywood Bowl on the Great North Leisure Park, that supplies 32 north London food banks with a significant percentage of the goods they distribute. This includes Finchley Foodbank in St Mary's Church on the High Road in East Finchley. Every week Food Bank Aid delivers 72,000 items to support the 20,000 people who currently rely on visiting those food banks.

These largely volunteer-staffed organisations are at the forefront of helping people who are braving a daily dilemma: do they heat their homes or put food on the table? It has declared its winter mission to

rice, flour, vegetables and fruit, along with the loo rolls and laundry soap, but have enough funds for some mince pies too? No one should miss out on a nibble of festive cheer".



Christmas appeal: The Food Bank Aid team ready for festivities

"keep the food banks fed" and ensure no one has to sacrifice a warm meal for a warm room. The Archer spoke to Naomi Russell, the dynamic person who has made eradicating food poverty her life's work and is the founder of Food Bank Aid and now it's co-chair. "This can be a brutal time of year, especially for families," she said. "A whopping 700,000 children in London live in poverty and recent stats show 13.6% of households are skipping meals because they just can't afford food and toiletries, not even the basics. "Wouldn't it be great if we could provide our usual nutritious staples such as pasta,

Drop or donate
 Food Bank Aid provided some magic numbers: £32 feeds a family for a week, and £128 covers them for a month.

Compare that to the average family in the UK, whose monthly groceries and household bill is £508, almost four times as much.

Naomi, an N2 resident, is hoping your precious donations can help them plan their food orders, and with a bit of help, she can include some of those mince pies. You can donate cash or find their suggested shopping list online at foodbankaid.org.uk.



The Archer team wishes all our readers, deliverers and advertisers a very merry festive season and plenty of health and happiness in 2025. Thank you for all the stories you've sent our way, all the copies you've pushed through letterboxes and all the advertising space you've taken in our pages. The Archer is YOUR community newspaper and we couldn't keep publishing without you! If you have a story for us, please email news@the-archer.co.uk. If you'd like to advertise your business to 10,000 homes and other businesses across East Finchley, please email advertising@the-archer.co.uk. Thank you. Archie image by Mike Coles

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Poetry reading

East Finchley poet Dennis Evans will be reading from his new collection of poetry, called Turning the Page, at the United Reform Church, Pond Square, Highgate Village, N6, on Saturday 7 December at 7.30pm. Entry is £10.

Items can be dropped into their hub on the Great North Leisure Park or you can email info@foodbankaid.org.uk to find your nearest drop-off point. The QR code here will also take you straight to a donation page.



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Stricken: The fallen hornbeam lies across the path in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Jeremy Mardon

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

Proms at St Jude's the music and literary festival taking place in Hampstead Garden Suburb every June, is looking for volunteers. They would like help in fundraising, logistics, volunteer management and educational support. Time commitment is likely to be about one day per month. You'll be joining a lively and friendly group and will enjoy contributing to a wonderful festival raising money for the North London Hospice, Toynbee Hall and educational outreach. Express your interest at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering

An East Finchley **community gardening project** needs new volunteers. There is a small sloped garden near the entrance to East Finchley Station, known as Station Bank. It has been tended under supervision by volunteer gardeners since 2012. It currently grows a mixture of flowers and fruit but could grow vegetables too. This would be an ideal project for flat dwellers who enjoy gardening. Contact Kate at brown.kate@btinternet.com

Number Champions, based in N2, is an award-winning charity that helps young primary school children who are struggling with numeracy or lack confidence in maths. Its trained in-school volunteers use games and other creative activities in one-to-one sessions with children. If you have good basic numeracy, plenty of enthusiasm, 1.5 hours/week during term time and you're interested in volunteering, visit www.numberchampions.org.uk and then contact volunteer@numberchampions.org.uk.

Food Bank Aid urgently needs volunteers! Flexible shifts mean you can volunteer when you want, helping at the hub near the Vue Cinema in North Finchley to sort, pack and deliver donations to food banks. It's a fun place and there's always tea and cake! Food Bank Aid provides essential goods to 32 North London food banks who help 16,000+ people every week. Please email volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk and put 'The Archer' in the subject line.

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please email news@the-archer.co.uk



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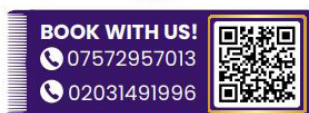
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- 1/2 Daycare (5/6hours)
- Full Daycare (7/9 hours)



Tree collapses across park path

By John Lawrence

Questions are being asked after a large tree fell across a normally busy path in Cherry Tree Wood without any obvious cause. Luckily no one was injured in the incident on Tuesday 19 November.

The tall hornbeam broke free from its roots and collapsed across the path between the High Road entrance and the children's playground at around 11.20am.

Eyewitness David Adams was a little further along the path when he heard a noise and turned to see the tree falling, hitting and breaking a large branch on another tree on its way down.

"I hurried to the spot to check that nobody had been hit by it and fortunately saw nobody," said David. "It was strange that there was absolutely no wind provoking the

fall. The roots had simply snapped and the tree inevitably fell."

He alerted Barnet Council who came along to clear the path later the same day, along with an adjacent trunk which may have shared the same root system.

Root of the problem

Roger Chapman, chair of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said the cause of the fall was unknown but noted that the roots were shallow and possibly stunted in places.

"It was a coppiced hornbeam. The last time it would have been coppiced would be

at least 100 years ago. Normally they would be coppiced about every seven to 15 years. It could have become top-heavy and the sleet that morning was the final straw," he said.

Barnet Council's tree team survey all the trees in Cherry Tree Wood about once a year. The Friends will be asking the council if that inspection and coppicing schedule needs to be reconsidered in the light of this potentially dangerous collapse.

Thank you to everyone who alerted us to the fallen tree. You can contact us any time by emailing news@the-archer.co.uk

Town Team social all welcome

On Thursday 9 January all are welcome to join East Finchley Town Team's first event of 2025, an informal social meeting at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2 8DE.

The Team was formed three years ago with the aim of promoting and supporting the High Road in N2. Using a grant from Barnet, it ran successful events to this end, featuring themes like sustainability, music and the arts, including East Finchley's Got Talent at the Phoenix Cinema and a very popular food fest. Gradually they have taken on more local issues, with the development of a town square becoming a challenging long-term project. Visit www.eastfinchley.london for more information.

Everyone is welcome to bring along ideas and suggestions to the social meeting or just come for a chat and a drink from the reasonably priced bar and hear what might be happening in the area. **Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.**

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet

121 High Road, N2
Mansard roof extension with terrace area and three rear-facing roof lights to create one studio flat.

21 Beresford Road, N2
Roof extension involving hip to gable, raising of the ridge height, rear dormer window with Juliette balcony and three front-facing roof lights.

Ground-floor flat, 68 Huntingdon Road, N2
Variation of condition 1 of planning permission reference 23/5254/FUL dated 05/02/2024 for 'Single storey side and rear extension. Alterations to

fenestration.' Variation to include clarification of the patio design and steps to garden. Changes to the angle of pitched roof and addition of box gutter along boundary.
Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, N2
Installation of roof-mounted solar panels.

72 Durham Road, N2
Single-storey side/rear extension. Roof extension involving rear dormer window. Erection of a rear outbuilding.

308B Long Lane, N2
Use as a garage.
86 Church Lane
Change of use from commercial Class E) to one self-contained flats (Class C3). Associated

refuse/recycling and cycle storage.

Haringey

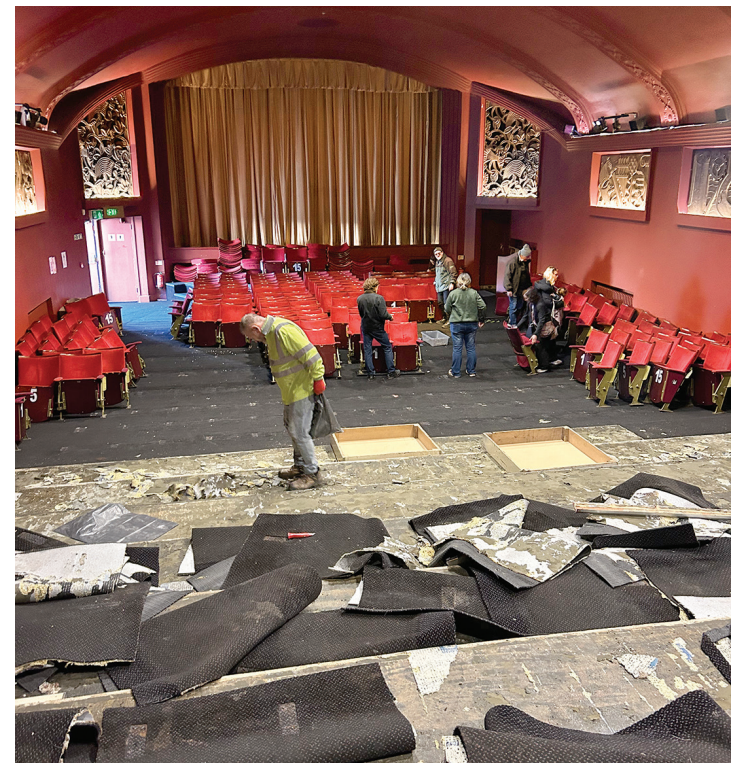
Flat 2, Manor Court, Aylmer Road, N2

Removal of non-load-bearing wall (according to structural engineer survey) and conversion of kitchen and sitting room to open plan. The wall is approximately 4m long and consists of a perpendicular wall under a supporting beam and onto an angled wall, closing the space with a door.

28 Church Vale, N2
Internal layout reconfiguration and installation of new domestic lift from level 00 to level 01.



Phoenix gets ready to fly again



Screen clean: The tiered floor of the cinema's main auditorium is laid bare left, and Phoenix supporters arrive to collect the outgoing red seats. Photos: Mike Coles, Rob Kenny

By John Lawrence

The Phoenix Cinema is getting ready to reopen to film-goers this month after closing for four weeks to finish construction work on its long-awaited second screen and to refit the main auditorium with all-new seating and an improved sound system.

Installation and testing is continuing on both screens ahead of a projected re-opening date of Tuesday 17 December. The Phoenix team said the redevelopment will bring the venue up to everyone's expectations of a 21st-century cinema.

Phoenix unseen

Meanwhile, our photographer Mike Coles got a chance to see the work in progress, capturing the Phoenix as no one's ever seen it before and probably never will again. When he visited late last month, all 250 of the old tip-up seats had been removed from the main screen, leaving just the bare floor on view.

This tiered surface, dating back to the 1930s when the current auditorium was installed, will be reorganised to accommodate 188 larger and more comfortable seats. There will be new carpeting throughout, an upgraded sound system and a

new bar kiosk.

Film fans and friends of the Phoenix who wanted to save a part of its history were able to come along and take away single or double seats in exchange for a donation. Executive director Rob Kenny said he was blown away by how many people turned up.

One of those who took a double seat was Nadia Savvopoulou. She said: "I have watched many films at the Phoenix and it is my favourite cinema in London. I got two seats to preserve a piece of this unique cinema's history."

Immersive

At the same time, 23 seats

will be installed in the new second screen, which occupies the former café space. Rob said: "This will be a game changer, allowing us to host even more diverse films and events, and to offer the space out for private hire. This screen will also boast large, modern cinema seats, a brand-new 2K Laser projector, and an immersive 7.1 surround sound system." Once the two screens reopen, the Phoenix also has plans to refurbish the main entrance foyer and the toilets, probably starting in March.

Coming soon

Major movies lined up once the foyer doors are open again

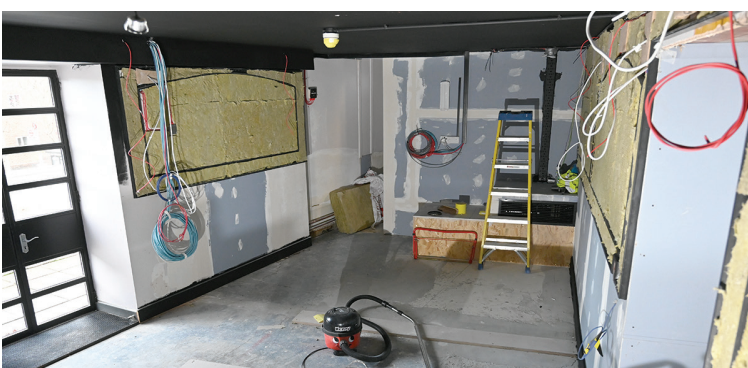
include Oscar-contender *Conclave*, based on the bestselling 2016 novel by Robert Harris and starring Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci. For the whole family there will be *Paddington* in Peru and seasonal classics *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Three Wishes for Cinderella*.

Live arts

The live arts schedule includes Peter Wright's much-loved production of *The Nutcracker* from the Royal Ballet and a screening of *Tosca* from the Met Opera in New York.

Then January will bring *We Live in Time*, starring Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh, *The Brutalist* starring Adrien Brody and Mike Leigh's *Hard Truths*, filmed partly in East Finchley last year.

Keep an eye on the cinema's website for the confirmed re-opening date and ticket sales. Rob added: "Your continued support is invaluable as we work to bring the Phoenix to new heights. We can't wait to welcome you back soon." Visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk



Inner space: The new second screen waits to be fitted
Photo Mike Coles

Will all be well?

Theatre in the Square, who rehearse at East Finchley Methodist Church on the High Road, are performing *All's Well That Ends Well* by William Shakespeare this month.

A play that poses ethical dilemmas that require more than simple solutions, it is one of the Bard's lesser-known but most beguiling comedies. Performances are at St Mary's Church, Church End, Hendon, London, NW4 4JT on 4 and 5 December 2024 at 7.30pm and on 6 December at 4.30pm. Tickets are available online

at www.theatreinthesquare.org priced £13 with the usual concessions.

Formed 57 years ago to provide amateur drama opportunities in north London, Theatre in the Square puts on three to four productions each year. For further information, contact the group at info@theatreinthesquare.org

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- Call **101** for non-emergencies, if your property has been stolen or damaged, you wish to report drug dealing or a minor traffic accident, and for general police enquiries
- Report crime to your local Safer Neighbourhood Team by email: eastfinchley.snt@met.police.uk, gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk or fortisgreen.snt@met.police.uk

Find full details for the local SNTs at www.iloven2.co.uk/local-government-and-policing

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For the future: Children and staff at Martin Primary sow poppy seeds by the playground

Remembrance poppies

By Ruth Anders

Monday 11 November provided a sunny morning for Remembrance Day events at Martin Primary School in East Finchley.

The children were divided into two thoughtful and well-behaved assemblies, and reminded about the reasons for the special day. The more senior group sang a very moving version of In Flanders Field, accompanied on the piano by music teacher Gabi Brais.

After the minute's silence, children of all ages who were members of the School Council went out to a corner of the playing field where they were given poppy seeds to sow. In previous years the children have made craft wreaths to mark Remembrance Day but, with a focus on environment and sustainability, the school adopted a greener approach this year.

From The Archer archives ...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
December 2014

Christmas 2014 saw the start of the long struggle to keep East Finchley Library open, after Barnet Council published plans to cut the libraries budget by £2.8million over the following five years. The East Finchley Library Users Group objected to all the options for the library suggested in the Council's proposals and, eventually, their hard work plus many protests by local residents saved the library for our local community.

15 years ago:
December 2009

Archie, the impressive statue on top of East Finchley station, was chosen as a London Landmark for the 2012 Olympic Games, after winning a public vote in Barnet. His image was then included in a set of London Landmark badges, along with other icons from the capital, to go on sale in advance of the Olympics.

23 years ago:
December 2001

This month saw the loss of one of East Finchley's most distinctive shops, with the closure of Valantique, the antique shop situated at 9 Fortis Green for nearly 20 years. The owner, Valerie Steel, attributed the closure to antiques falling out of fashion, as a more minimalist look had become popular, particularly amongst the younger generation.

Farewell to Daphne Chamberlain, writer and friend

We are very sad to report that Daphne Chamberlain, our long-term colleague and friend on The Archer team, died last month at the age of 84.

Born in Kentish Town in a house that was destroyed by a bomb not long afterwards, the young Daphne and her mother moved around Britain for the next four years, following her father's postings. After their return to Kentish Town, she went to school in Camden and continued to travel there every day when the family moved to St Pancras Court, East Finchley in 1952.

together in talking about them.

We shared the same initials and, somehow, people often confused our first names. In fact, my husband and I once received a card with Christmas greetings to Ian and Daphne!

Once, during a phase when the paper was very short of writers, Daphne and I ended up writing most of it using family members' names as pseudonyms. We also collaborated on giving joint talks about The Archer to various groups, sometimes bringing them to an end in the style of The Two Ronnies. Sadly, this time it really is goodbye from me, Daphne. I will miss you.



Archer colleague: Daphne Chamberlain

She trained as a specialist children's librarian, which led to a long and satisfying career in Islington libraries where she helped to create two publications, one of reminiscences of senior citizens and one of creative writing by library users.

Daphne's own creative writing came more to the fore after she joined the amateur drama company Escape Route, primarily for her love of acting, but which branched out into writing and directing. Through joining reading groups and poetry workshop, she came to realise that poetry was what interested her most of all.

After her beloved mother's death in 2010, Daphne moved into Stokes Court, N2. She loved East Finchley and she loved The Archer, which she joined in 1996. Her funeral will take place at Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road, at 12 noon on Saturday 7 December.

Diana Cormack, long-time colleague on The Archer, writes: Daphne and I met when we volunteered for The Archer at the same time in 1996. In those days we were not au fait with computers or smartphones, so suffered together what for us was a huge learning curve over the years. We also both suffered from having a mother with Alzheimer's and spent a lot of time comparing their behaviour, finding comfort

David Hobbs, former editor of The Archer, remembers: Back in the mid-1960s, The National Film Theatre on the South Bank used to hold all-nighters on Fridays. As this was one of the few places to see art house films that had not had a general release, it was a magnet for film buffs, and Daphne was one of them.

The films started at about 11pm and ended at about 6am, just in time to catch the first trains home.

As she was working in Church End library at that time, she would dash home, grab a couple of hours sleep and then head into work. Normally this worked out fine and she managed to yawn her way through the day. On one occasion it didn't and she overslept, not getting into work until lunchtime. Her manager was not amused and she had to be a bit more careful after that.

John Lawrence, editor of The Archer, writes: When I joined The Archer team in 2005, Daphne was one of a handful of volunteer writers whose hard work in finding and writing articles filled the pages of the newspaper every month. Without her we would have had a lot of white space.

Daphne was always forthright and energetic, and determined to report on the issues that affect people in East Finchley, such as local transport and housing. She turned up unfailingly at our weekly meetings, bursting with ideas and sometimes with a word of frustration for the 263 bus that had made her late. On behalf of the whole team, thank you, Daphne, for your years of dedication.

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I picked up my messages and heard: “You’re a perfect match”

By Lynn Winton

Kimmy Strelley will never forget the day of 23 June 2021 when she received an urgent voice message that was going to change her life. The message was from Anthony Nolan, the charity that collates the register of prospective stem cell donors. “Hello, it’s Liam from Anthony Nolan. You’re a donor on our register and you’re a perfect match. Please call back as soon as you can.”

What was not disclosed to her by the charity until much later was that an 11-year-old boy, George Shaw, was in Sheffield Children’s Hospital dangerously ill with a rare leukaemia, and that she was the sole match worldwide for a life-saving bone marrow transplant. Not even his own twin brother was a match. Without Kimmy, he was going to die.

Kimmy, a highly articulate woman who owns the Kimberley’s Salon in Fortis Green, N2, and is mother to eight-year-old Jake, was brought up in Muswell Hill and attended Fortismere School. “My mother died of cancer when I was a teenager and being one of six children I had to leave school and start to earn a living,” she told me. She registered as a donor with Anthony Nolan 13 years ago and, as it only involved sending back a cheek swab, had quickly forgotten about it.



Going home: Kimmy gives George a hug as his family gather round

Recovery was easy

Once the call came and Kimmy said she was unreservedly ready to do anything to help, things moved quickly. But by now George was too ill to receive a transplant and needed more treatment first. It wasn’t until December 2023 that George was strong enough to go ahead and Kimmy was driven to the London Clinic in Marylebone where she donated

bone marrow under anaesthesia and came home the next day. “Recovery was easy,” she said, “as there were no stitches and I didn’t even need any painkillers. I just took it easy for a few days and Anthony Nolan called to check up on me every day.”

George went from strength to strength after his bone marrow transplant, and by now, George and Kimmy were anonymously writing letters to each other via the charity. At



Life-changing: Kimmy Strelley with George Shaw, who received the bone marrow she donated

last the day came when George was better and was going to be given an absolute discharge from hospital.

There is a tradition for an outgoing patient to ring a bell on the wall and all the ward staff line up to clap them out. What George didn’t know was that his family had invited Kimmy, along with little son Jake, to hide in a side room and emerge to give him a hug.

Younger donors

Since its inception in 1974, Anthony Nolan has made possible over 26,500 transplants, and there is a pressing need to recruit more people aged 16-30 to join the register. Research has shown younger donors offer better survival rates for patients. Kimmy is a fierce ambassador and hopes that Archer readers will register or encourage young people to come forward, as she once did. “To think I have saved a life is a sobering thought. What would have happened to George and his wonderful family if I hadn’t

come forward is something I can’t bear to think about.” Find out more at anthonymolan.org

Warm spaces

Warm space and coffee morning sessions will start running on Thursdays this month at the Tarling Road Community Hub, Fellows Close, N2 8LG, just a few minutes’ walk from the High Road. They are open to the whole community and are free.

There will be free hot drinks and a range of activities such as arts and crafts, talks and gardening. The sessions run from 9.30am to 12noon and are provided by the Grange Big Local team, who welcome any volunteer support.

They start on Thursday 12 and 19 December then resume after the holiday break on Thursday 9 January, running through to the end of March. To volunteer, email Lizzie@grangebiglocal.org or go along and have a chat.

Cake sale clears plates

My name is Ella and I am almost 10 years old. I go to Brownies in Muswell Hill and I have been gradually getting different badges.

We get badges for doing different activities. For example, to get your charity badge, you have to donate something to a charity.

I chose to raise money for Finchley Foodbank because I like how they help people in need of food. I decided to make butterfly cakes and chocolate-chip cookies with my parents. We baked a LOT and the raw cookie dough was so yummy, it was hard to resist eating it!

On the day, we set up outside in the front garden of my house in East Finchley, and my friends and brother helped me sell them. Almost immediately, we got our first customer and it was a neighbour from a few doors away. After about an hour, we had sold out of everything.

Altogether, we had around 20 customers and we raised £87. My favourite part of the day was how everyone gave lots of generous donations, and it was also fun meeting different neighbours and people living nearby.



Big bake: Ella Halliday, second left, with brother Louis, left, and friends Harper and Flynn

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Stockholm award for campaign on penal reform

By Janet Maitland

East Finchley resident Frances Crook has been awarded the Stockholm Foundation prize in Criminology for steering thousands of young people away from a life of crime.

Frances was chief executive of the Howard League, the oldest penal reform organisation in the world, for over 30 years. Established in the 1860s, one of their first achievements was to abolish public hanging.

When Frances started work at the Howard League in 1986, there were 3,500 children in prison in England and Wales and police were arresting a staggering 300,000 children every year. By the time she retired in 2021, there were just 500 child prisoners and annual arrests of young people had dropped to 70,000.

“When I first started, police were arresting children just for being annoying,” Frances told *The Archer*. “Being arrested is a conveyor belt to prison, and prison just makes children worse. The data showed that as the number of children sent to prison reduced, so did the levels of crime.”

“We identified pressure points to bring about change, one of which was the police. We provided each force with regular reports on their crime data, showing who was being arrested and what for, so it was clear what was happening and what could be done about it. “We also set up the Howard League as a law firm, which meant that we could use our own lawyers to stop children from

getting into the criminal justice system in the first place.”

Crime prevention

So what can be done about children today committing serious crimes such as assault and even murder? Frances said: “To prevent violence by children, mostly boys, from escalating, particularly in their late teens and early 20s, we need a complex patchwork of services that support troubled families and reduce drug-taking.

“And we need to work with boys to prevent violence against women and girls. I’m pleased about the materials for teachers recently announced by Sadiq Khan to help counter misogyny, intended for nine to 11-year-olds.” Frances also worked for Amnesty International and was twice elected a local councillor in Barnet. In 2010, she was awarded the OBE for services to youth justice.



Stockholm Prize: Frances Crook

Seasonal singalong for the festive season

Age UK Barnet will be holding a Christmas concert and singalong on Monday 9 December from 3.30pm to 5pm at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

There will be a festive singalong with free mince pies, spiced apple drink and

mulled wine, plus a raffle and a chance to buy Christmas cards designed by the Age UK art group.

To register, email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call Teresa on 07502 989 403.

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Party started: Levi Roots entertains at the Age UK centre. Photo Age UK Barnet

Stories of hope and resilience

By Karen Williamson

Age UK Barnet welcomed Dragon’s Den success story Levi Roots and other inspirational speakers to its Black History Month celebration on Monday 21 October, focusing on this year’s theme of reclaiming the narrative.

More than 100 people came to the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley to hear Levi speak about the importance of understanding our shared history. He said the Windrush generation were “entrepreneurs who saved the NHS and fixed a broken country which was struggling after the war”.

He also shared fond memories of growing up in Jamaica and moving to London, including how he experienced racism for the first time. “History is so important because it gives us a chance to understand ourselves,” Levi said.

“As one of my heroes, Marcus Garvey, once said: ‘Without knowledge of your past, you’re like a tree without roots.’”

Author Charlotte Oshi and her daughter, comedian and actor Andi Osho spoke about Charlotte’s recently published memoir, *The Jagged Edge*. This explores her journey to happiness after leaving Nigeria and an abusive marriage. “I wrote about how I learned to stand up for myself and how I got my life back,” said Charlotte. “It’s a story of hope and resilience that people can learn from.”

Anne Stennett, whose parents ran a newsagents in Finchley, spoke about how they were the driving force behind her ambition and success in becoming a partner at law firm Curwens Solicitors.

There was also a display of paintings by East Finchley resident and Age UK Barnet volunteer Eugene Turney. A former art teacher, Eugene was born in Jamaica, came to the UK in 1960 and completed his degree in fine art in the mid-1970s at the London Guildhall.

Face-painting friends flourish at wedding awards

By Amaya Shankardass

Face-painting business POW! Parties have become finalists in the prestigious Wedding Industry Awards, a competition that recognises the finest companies in the field from across the UK.



Sparkling: Friends Lyla, Eimer and Marie are getting noticed for their face-painting business

The team was shortlisted in the Best Newcomer category and will now vie for the Special Touch title. They are hoping to make it through their regional

round and advance to the national final in January.

POW! Parties was founded by Lyla, Eimer and Marie, three lifelong friends with a shared

passion for creativity and fun. They offer face-painting and glitter tattoos at corporate, children, and adult events, using only hypoallergenic, vegan, and gluten-free face paints, paired with biodegradable glitter.

They’ve worked in partnership with Watford and Southampton Football Clubs and with Holy Trinity Primary School in East Finchley.

Lyla Harris-Quinn, one of the co-founders and an East Finchley resident, established and led the company’s wedding services. “It’s been an incredible journey,” she said. “It’s truly an honour to be celebrated for doing what we love and making your special moments even more magical.” To find out more, visit

www.powparties.co.uk.



School's pride for Nobel Prize winning student

By David Melsome

This year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2024, announced in October, was jointly awarded to Sir Demis Hassabis and Dr John Jumper for developing an artificial intelligence model to solve a 50-year-old-problem: predicting the complex structures of proteins.

Sir Demis is a former student of Christ's College Finchley in East End Road, N2, who went on to study at Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1994 before founding the video games company Elixir and the AI company DeepMind.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences made the award in recognition of the

discoveries being recognised this year congratulations to Sir Demis on this phenomenal achievement.

Dr Ruth Hill, headteacher at Christ's College Finchley, told us: "We have sent our heartfelt congratulations to Sir Demis on this phenomenal achievement. He is a true inspiration to us all and our staff and students have benefited greatly from his



Nobel Prize: Demis Hassabis

pair's research and work that has already been life-changing for millions of people across the world.

In 2020, Sir Demis and Dr John presented an AI model called AlphaFold2. With its help, they have been able to predict the structure of virtually all the 200million proteins that researchers have identified. Among scores of scientific applications, researchers can now better understand antibiotic resistance and create images of enzymes that can decompose plastic.

Vast possibilities

Heiner Linke, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said: "One of the

generosity in time and donations when he has visited and shared his knowledge and experience. Some of his teachers are still here and we are all bursting with pride at everything he has achieved for the benefit not only of our community but the world."

Sir Demis co-founded DeepMind in 2010 to develop AI models for popular board games. The company was sold to Google in 2014 and, two years later, DeepMind came to global attention when the company achieved what many then believed to be the holy grail of AI: beating the champion player of one of the world's oldest board games, Go.

Pasture calendar goes on sale

The volunteers who run Long Lane Pasture have released their new calendar for 2025 featuring views and wildlife seen at the nature reserve.

As reported in our last edition, the pasture team is desperate for funds to buy new equipment to keep the site in good condition for its visitors and inhabitants, so every purchase will be a big help. The calendars will be on sale at the pasture opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3, on Saturdays from 10am to noon, when the work teams are there.

is £6 and payment can be made using the QR code on the front of the calendar.



World travellers: Jane Ray and Mike Thomson with Michael Palin, who presented their Alan Whicker documentary

How a brush with disaster shaped our own correspondent

By Ruth Anders

A bonus of attending the showing of Hollywoodgate, the powerful new documentary exposing life under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, at the Phoenix Cinema (The Archer, November 2024) was meeting local resident Jane Ray.

As Artistic Director of The Whickers, a charity for funding first-time documentary filmmakers and podcasters, she was instrumental in raising the money to get Hollywoodgate made. Her husband is the multi-award-winning BBC Foreign Affairs Correspondent and presenter Mike Thomson, and I had the pleasure of talking to them at their home in East Finchley.

The BBC has sent Mike to some of the most troubled parts of the world to cover numerous conflicts, including wars in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Afghanistan. Jane has also won many awards as a documentary maker.

Having worked extensively with the legendary presenter Alan Whicker, she wrote and directed BBC Radio 4's archive programme about Alan: Around the World in 80 Years, presented by Michael Palin.

Mike and Jane travelled much of the globe together before starting a family.

Their life stories could fill several pages of The Archer. Mike told me: "We bonded over shared ideas about the power of broadcasting." He had a slightly rocky time at school and added: "I've always felt that a successful reporter should be trouble."

Drought report

Of his many achievements, Mike is especially proud of the BBC report he filed in 2002 featuring a conversation with a starving boy in drought-stricken Ethiopia which directly led to Sir Bob Geldof's involvement and the raising of £15million.

Jane and Mike are now working together again on a

Radio 4 programme based on his 1974 experience of being caught up in Cyclone Tracy in Darwin, the state capital of Australia's Northern Territory. Mike was swept up in this massive natural disaster while travelling the world as a teenager, a story in itself. Perhaps it was then that the seed was sown for the adventurous career ahead of him.

The programme, My Night with Tracy, will explore the way the disaster influenced Mike's development as a broadcaster and as a person. It will air on Radio 4 on Sunday 29 December at 8pm. Hollywoodgate can be found now on BBC iPlayer.

Last-minute gift buying

The last Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale of the year will take place on Saturday 21 December from 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH.

Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. For information, contact 020 8368 8180.

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Hardy tennis players weather the storm

By Diana Cormack

On Sunday 20 October, despite the arrival of Storm Ashley, members of the Fortis Green Tennis Club managed to carry on with their 'Wear It Pink' mixed doubles tournament in aid of Breast Cancer Now.

Organised by club coach Angie Dean, all four courts were in use for as much time as possible in the wind and rain, with players dressed in pink.

Inside the clubhouse there were fundraising activities such as a sweepstake game, guessing the number of calls the charity's nurses responded

to in a year and guessing the weight of a cake.

All sorts of delicious cakes were available to accompany cups of tea and coffee while avoiding the worst of the weather. Along with their Just Giving page, the club members succeeded in raising a grand total of £735.



Game on: The Fortis Green Tennis Club players at the fundraiser

Coffee and cakes raise cash for charity

By Diana Cormack

The World's Biggest Coffee Morning takes place every year, run by Macmillan Cancer Support, with people all over the UK being invited to host and attend coffee mornings.

Since they started in 1990, these gatherings have raised over £310 million for the charity.

Amongst the East Finchley residents contributing to this year's collection in September were Archer deliverers Gail Norcliffe and Barrie Brown of Church Lane, who welcomed a crowd of friends into their home on a particularly wet and dismal day.

Mugs of coffee and tea were much appreciated, but even more so was the amount and variety of home-baked cakes awaiting. These have become a feature of the coffee mornings over the years and Gail and her

baking friends kept up the tradition admirably. There were a few cakes left at the end but they soon disappeared as Gail had provided plenty of boxes to carry them off in.

Macmillan supplied a kit for the event from which guests were able to enter a couple of competitions, one involving a quiz all about cakes and another a guess about coffee cups. There were also donation boxes which, when coupled with their JustGiving page, revealed that the couple had raised a grand total of £1,080! Well done to these hosts and to any other fundraisers for this event in the locality.



Top table: Cakes await buyers at the coffee morning



Young reporters: Year 7 journalists get ready to interview at the Archer Academy prize giving event. Photo Katie Ruback

Life advice for academy students

By Josephine and Roxana, Year 7

Just before our first half term here at the Archer Academy, we attended the Prize Giving event. This is a yearly tradition at school where students are celebrated for their achievements. The awards evening took place in our sports hall where there was a large gathering of students, parents, staff and special guests.

We congratulated all hard-working students from the past year, whether it was for subjects, effort, or respecting the values of the 'Archer Way'. We were the first ever Archer Year 7 students to join the older students at the event and we were very proud to share this wonderful experience.

We interviewed parents, students and special guests to find out how they felt, and how we could work towards achieving an award in the future. A Year 10 prize winner told us: "Pay attention in class, work hard in

and out of school, and believe in yourself."

We also interviewed guest speaker Laura Coryton MBE, who successfully lobbied Parliament to remove the 'tampon tax' in 2021. Laura said: "At the beginning of my campaign, the things that motivated me the most were knowing that I could make a difference and being able to inspire young people. I always tell people to be creative, have fun, and most of all talk about what you are most passionate about."

Help needed for 10k race

North London Hospice is appealing for volunteers to help make the first-ever winter edition of Race the Neighbours a success.

As we reported last month, the hospice is running a February version of the friendly 10k challenge to join its regular date in June or July. Hundreds of amateur athletes from East Finchley, Highgate, Muswell Hill and nearby postcodes will compete for the Cherry Tree Cup.

Volunteer roles on offer include helping at the start of the race in Cherry Tree Wood as well as being one of the marshals along the route, which passes through Woodside Avenue, Alexandra Palace and around Highgate Wood before returning to Cherry Tree Wood. Around 50-60 helpers are needed. If you are interested, email racetheneighbours@northlondonhospice.co.uk.

If you'd rather join the runners, places are strictly limited so register to secure your spot. All runners must be 16+ to take part. Entries close at midday on Friday 24 January 2025. You can sign up at www.letsdothis.com by searching 'Race the Neighbours Winter Edition'.

The Archer on the move

The Archer's website is now easier to use on your mobile phone. Our online pages have been redesigned to make it quicker to find important information like contact details and deadlines, and simpler to read our latest edition or search and browse past editions of the newspaper in our archive stretching back to 1993.

So now you really can take The Archer with you wherever you go. Bookmark our website at www.the-archer.co.uk

Artist sought for new-look underpass

By David Melsome

The Grange Big Local team have put out a call for local street artists and poets to get involved after their improvement plans for the pedestrian underpass beneath the Northern line between Trinity Road and Manor Park Road, N2, were given the go-ahead.

As we have previously reported, the underpass is one of the regeneration organisation's flagship projects and their aim is to create a welcoming and safe space that celebrates community spirit.

Grange Big Local is already collaborating with local schools to ask students to design artwork and write poetry that reflects the character and diversity of East Finchley. They are also looking to commission street artists and poets to paint selected artwork, with verse included.

Big Local. "We have a tight deadline on poetry by the end of January and artwork by end of February 2025." Artists and poets can find out more by contacting Karen at karen@grangebiglocal.org.

The underpass revamp, formally approved now by Barnet Council and the GBL board, is scheduled to start in February and run through to June. Works will include soft lighting in the tunnel, resurfacing, drainage removal of bollards and



Smart art: How one of the paths through the underpass will look

Tight deadline

"We're excited to bring this project to life and have the local community contribute to a lasting legacy," said Karen Hart, project manager for Grange

upgrading the barriers to allow wheelers and pushchairs to get through more easily, while still preventing illegal use by motorbikes, mopeds and bicycles.



Resting actors: Bernard O'Sullivan and John Rayment in *Almost The Birthday Party*

Review: Almost the Birthday Party

By Jessica Holt

The Old Red Lion is the perfect setting for this play, written by Finchley resident Paul Kalburgi. It is small and dark, enabling this absurdist comic drama to envelop the audience. With one lampshade, one two-seater sofa and a large portrait of the face of a cat, the stage is set for the actors Bernard O'Sullivan as Kenny and John Rayment as Vern to entertain us, and that they do with great skill.

Their ambition as resting actors is to put on *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter, but they have a problem: they can only find Act 1, part of Act 2 and none of Act 3! However, this doesn't put them off trying to gather a company around them to perform it.

In the first act, they share their struggles with the imaginary character Mrs Percival, who listens to their failed attempts to get the production off the ground. Without giving away too much, their struggles involve a vicar performing an exorcism in the cellar to rid it of the ghost of Eartha Kitt (why would you want to do that?). Then there is a cake with an item that should definitely not be there and a failed Heimlich manoeuvre which leads indirectly to a prison sentence.

Extended version

This is where the play originally ended when Paul Kalburgi put it on 10 years ago, lasting 25 minutes. On his return from New Zealand and the US (where he continued to write for theatre and TV), he was inspired to develop the play with a new running time of 60 minutes. And the second half is as witty and menacing as the first.

Two new characters, played by the same actors, this time their story with the imaginary Katie, Kenny's daughter. The dialogue is compelling and has a musical rhythm that befits the complex ideas expressed. We all know the catchphrase "less is more" but at the end I still wanted more. I wanted to meet all those characters mentioned, created so evocatively by the writer.

Paul Kalburgi's influences are Victoria Wood and Alan Bennett, and he strongly believes in entertainment for

entertainment's sake.

There's nothing wrong with that, but he also offers much more. You don't need to know the original play by Pinter

because this work speaks for itself loud and clear. The direction by Scott Le Cass is crisp and enables the actors to thrive in their roles and enjoy the dark story they are telling.

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Climate-conscious Christmas

You can tell that Christmas is coming because the adverts have taken over. M&S have mainlined on Dawn French, Aldi have got their animated carrot out of the freezer, John Lewis have channelled their inner Narnia with a clothes rack instead of a wardrobe and Sainsbury's have hired the Big Friendly Giant. Every time you switch on the TV you get ads for perfumes and cut-price holidays just to remind you to max out the credit card.

And besides the ads, the lights are going on. As you walk down the street people are doing the annual Christmas show-off light display, ranging from the expensively tasteful to the seriously tacky. You know, at one end the white lights on the Christmas tree in the front garden, at the other a selection of neon reindeer, and a fat Santa with a stupid grin looking too stuffed on mince pies to get down any chimney.

But what with climate change threatening snow in July and a heatwave in February, every self-respecting Range Rover owner has to make an effort to fight against all this consumerism. The problem is where to start.

How about with presents? Instead of all that plastic, go sustainable and choose a wooden train set that looks like it was handcrafted by a Victorian carpenter from old beer crates? And if it turns out that in fact it was made in China by people whose idea of a living wage is not starving, it's the thought that counts, especially when you have to have that difficult conversation with a child who was expecting an Xbox.

And for your dearest beloved, a piece of jewellery made from recycled buttons just like the ones you made in primary school, except those didn't come in at 20 quid a go. Good luck with that conversation too.

Same with the food. What about an organically farmed limited-edition free-range turkey? It will still have the consistency of sawdust and taste like carpet, but the extra £20 is worth it. It's the same with the cake, why get a factory-made bargain from a supermarket when you can spend twice as much for something with a totally organic sticker... or make one yourself. It may not taste any good but you'll feel better knowing you've done your bit for the planet. And that will give you a lovely warm feeling as you prepare to jet off on your mid-winter long-haul break in Bali. Bottoms up!

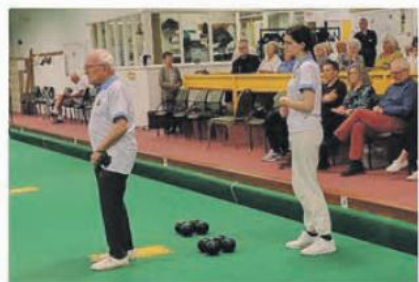


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Keyboard skills: Yuliia Humeniuk plays her recital at All Saints Church. Photo Mike Coles

Eye-opening recital by Ukrainian accordionist

By Sue Sutherley

There was an enthusiastic audience for the fundraising recital by the Ukrainian accordionist, Yuliia Humeniuk, at All Saint's Church, Durham Rd, N2, on the evening of Saturday 26 October.

As The Archer reported in September, Yuliia has been living in East Finchley under the Homes for Ukraine scheme since June 2022 and has just started an MA course at the Royal Academy of Music.

She played a very interesting and varied programme, which showed off her phenomenal technique and musicianship. Yuliia introduced each piece, and also gave us a fascinating history of the accordion.

The programme included Bach, Mozart, and a passionate piece called Reflections by her music professor in Kharkiv. In the second half she was joined by the clarinettist Ben Atkinson for a rousing Spanish piece called Anantango, and by the distinguished pianist, Julian Jacobson, who accompanied

her for a contemporary concerto by the French accordionist, R. Galliano.

The concert was a great success. The audience absolutely loved it. "Eye-opening and wonderful", "a revelation to hear music of that calibre played on an accordion", "such a gifted performer" were some of the comments overheard afterwards over a glass of wine.

The audience was very generous, and the concert raised over £700 towards Yuliia's tuition costs, but she still needs to raise another £5,000 to cover this year's fees, so any contributions to her GoFundMe site would be very much appreciated. You can donate by going to www.gofundme.com and searching for "Ukrainian accordionist".

Lost fans find way to the Phoenix

By Yasemin Delen Mokhtari

The Phoenix Cinema last month hosted the UK premiere of Getting Lost, a heartfelt and definitive retrospective on the Primetime Emmy-winning show Lost and the lasting impact on its cast, crew and devoted fandom from its six-season run between 2004 and 2010.

The premiere on Saturday 2 November was attended by the documentary's director and producer Taylor Morden, who joined fans for a lively Q&A session after the screening. Morden, who discovered the series on DVD and followed it passionately until its finale, first considered making a documentary a decade ago.

The project was powered by Lost fans. The production company Popmotion Picture's crowdfunding goal of \$42,000 was met within two days, ultimately reaching an immense \$250,644. "We knew Lost fans social media but we had no idea it was going to go so well," Morden told The Archer. Enthusiasm around the documentary meant that the project scope



Cult favourite: Fans of the TV series Lost packed out the documentary screening at the Phoenix Cinema

snowballed and gained momentum throughout production, with some final interviews recorded and new footage added only four weeks before the international premiere in September.

Getting Lost is not a behind-the-scenes montage. "We're telling a story about pop

Rare showing for masterpiece by controversial director

By Ruth Anders

The Phoenix Cinema enjoyed an extraordinary evening in early November when the film An Officer And A Spy (French: J'accuse) enjoyed its UK premiere to mark the opening of the 2024 UK Jewish Film Festival.

Extraordinary partly because the film is mired in controversy because its director is Roman Polanski. His 1977 guilty plea to a charge of having sex with an under-age girl and subsequent flight from court proceedings in Los Angeles to avoid imprisonment are notorious and distributors throughout the English-speaking world have refused to be involved.

However it was shown at the Venice Film Festival in 2019 where it received a standing ovation and was awarded the Grand Jury Prize. It was released in France three months later but had not been shown in Britain before this Phoenix screening.

Venice Festival director Alberto Barbera defended the film at the time, stating: "We are here to see works of art, not to judge the person behind it. I hope we can just discuss the quality of the film and not Polanski and the case with LA County."

Bestselling author

What made the Phoenix screening even more notable was that a question and answer session was conducted afterwards with the film's writer Robert Harris, a friend and collaborator of Polanski's, whose novels have consistently topped the bestseller lists. a 15,000-page novel into a screenplay is no easy task. I'm much happier writing novels!" Harris and Polanski adapted the screenplay from Harris's book of the same



Face-off: Jean Dujardin and Louis Garrel in An Officer and a Spy

name. During the Q&A, Harris commented: a 15,000-page novel into a screenplay is no easy task. I'm much happier writing novels!"

The Dreyfus Affair

The name J'accuse came from the infamous 1890s court case and Émile Zola's article in l'Aurore in which the famous author accused many French people of continuing to support the blatantly erroneous and anti-semitic accusations against the victim, Captain Alfred Dreyfus.

This writer found the film a riveting two-hour watch. Can the man and the controversy surrounding him be separated from the art? The Phoenix is proud of its anti-boycott stance and would surely profit from a dedicated season of the film. Despite its availability to stream, nothing can beat the

big screen.

Since first visiting the Phoenix in 1961, personally I had never seen every seat filled until this screening. A sell-out show surely deserves more than one viewing in the UK. I very much hope those in charge at the Phoenix will consider further screenings.

Did you know?

The Archer is printed each month on paper made from 100% recycled fibre, mostly retrieved from old newspapers collected by local authorities around the country. It is made here in the UK in King's Lynn in Norfolk, some 50km from our printers Sharman and Co in Peterborough.



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Letters

4,000 new residents

Dear Editor,

I was one of the energised attendees at the East Finchley Town Team meeting in October with representatives of Regal, the developers of the Great North Leisure Park (The Archer, November 2024).

Concern was expressed that so many issues appear to have not been properly considered either for the wellbeing of potentially 4,000 new residents, nor for those already living in North and East Finchley regarding the pressures on the existing infrastructure of the area. Yet a planning application is being submitted at the end of this year.

This would be a huge scheme situated at some distance between the two town centres, with very few amenities for everyday living planned on site and essentially marooned between the North Circular and High Road. No amount of landscaping plans can disguise the fact that this will be a high-rise and high density scheme in a low-rise residential area with huge impact on that local area.

We were told by Regal that they were in the business of building a development and not creating a new town centre community and therein lie the unresolved problems. As there will be so few planned private parking spaces, the new residents will be reliant on the 263 bus route to not only travel to local destinations and amenities but further afield to, for example, the Whittington and Barnet Hospitals. At a previous consultation I learnt that Regal and Barnet Council are in discussions with Transport for London regarding the weak transport links.

Our community will lose its much used local recreation facilities, which may be replaced by substantially reduced versions of the Vue Cinema and Hollywood Bowl in addition to a cafe, on Lodge Lane car park in North Finchley, but again with reliance on the 263 bus route.

The North Finchley Regeneration Plan 2025 plan will also introduce high-density housing on Lodge Lane car park and near the Tally Ho pub into an already densely populated area, again greatly impacting local amenities, transport and services.

**F Petch,
Hertford Road, N2.**

We need more homes

Dear Editor

I understand the concerns about the plans to build almost 1,500 new homes on the leisure park in North Finchley (The Archer, November 2024) and hope that they will be properly addressed by Barnet Council when considering the planning application.

At the same time, we cannot all throw our hands up in horror every time new housing is suggested. London is already densely packed and there is a massive need to find new homes for young people and families.

The leisure park site is old and tired and seems to me a good spot for new homes. Okay we will lose a few restaurants but goodness knows there are enough of those elsewhere. If the Vue Cinema moves to North Finchley, we still have the Phoenix right here in East Finchley.

I'd rather new homes were built, but with proper thought given to providing good facilities nearby and proper regard to capacity at local schools and doctors' surgeries. This is where the council must play its part.

**Mike Haworth,
Long Lane, N2**

Time to rethink bus/ cycle lane

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for this excellent local newspaper. I wish to draw your attention to the situation regarding the bus/cycle lane running from just past the station up to the main traffic lights, which was implemented during the covid pandemic.

During the time of the pandemic it was a worthy consideration for cyclists during this very restrictive time. I feel though that, since those restrictions finished, the bus/cycle lane should have been removed.

I have noticed that every day there is severe congestion leading up to the traffic lights and the traffic is often backing up beyond the junction with The Bishops Avenue. This means most of the vehicles are pumping out toxic fumes particularly near the station and under the bridge.

The important thing to consider is the health dangers to the people and especially young ones in this vicinity. Opposite the station is a children's nursery and behind the station is the Archer Academy. Under the bridge are people queuing at the bus stop and then also the hundreds of people going to and from the station.

The implementation of the bus/cycle lanes also took away many parking spaces which were precious for people using the shops, restaurants and cinema. Also, we lost the space for our lovely French Market which was very popular. I believe that the least that could be done is for a survey to take place.

**Roger Ford,
Great North Road, N2**

The Archer online

Did you know you can catch up with past issues of The Archer online? Every edition since the start of 2000 is available on our website at www.the-archer.co.uk. The site also gives information on advertising in our pages and how you can contribute to the paper.



Opera maestros: Pianist Brian Hughes, left, and singer Massimo Modoni

Curtain up on the world of Italian opera singing

By John Lawrence

The beautiful sound of Italian opera being sung live is often associated with open-air arenas or grand and historic theatres... but it can also be appreciated up close and personal in a house in Squires Lane, N3.

For that is where the Accademia dell'Opera Italiana runs sessions for anyone interested in learning the techniques of Bel Canto and opera singing more widely, with masterclasses by a roster of world-class artists.

The Accademia was founded by music director and pianist Brian Hughes and professional baritone Massimo Modoni to give a platform for the next generation of opera talent, of all ages. Some people who have signed up have come from a choral background,

others haven't sung for years but want to learn new skills.

The pair invite professionals to join their sessions training singers at their home in Squires Lane, with piano accompaniment, covering the essential techniques and mastering some of the great Italian arias from operas by composers like Puccini and Verdi.

Accademia secretary Gabrielle Wong said: "The idea of the Accademia is to fill a gap. There are all sorts of church

and community choirs but very little dedicated to singing opera excerpts and putting on operas.

"So many people have an amateur interest in it but perhaps don't know where to start. Singers don't need a high level of skill to join us. That is where Brian and Massimo will pass on their knowledge."

The Accademia stages regular concerts and hosts a summer residency in Puglia, southern Italy. Find out more at accademiadelloperaitaliana.com

Review: Fast Upstairs at the Gatehouse

By Jessica Holt

This play by Kate Barton and Stephen Bennett, well written and performed with skill and commitment, is based on the true story of Linda Hazzard, a physician who practised unconventional methods to cure people, including fasting and herbal remedies.

It explores her life, her unshakeable belief in her methods that had devastating effects on two women, and a journalist who brings her to justice. Despite being set in the 1900s, it resonates today as a warning against unregulated medication and alternative treatments.

Sarah Thom is convincing as Linda Hazzard, presenting the audience with a driven, cold-hearted individual who claims she is a success in a male-dominated world of science. But our sympathy is with the two patients who pay to be cured and who are destroyed physically and mentally: Claire, played by Maia von Malaise, and Dora, played by Imogen Gray.

They are naïve, and the actors portray sensitively how Hazzard is able to manipulate them and bring about death in one case and mental instability in the other.

But it is not all doom and gloom!

Much humour and energy is provided by journalist Horace Cayton, played by Jermaine Dominique. Horace is determined to get to the truth and there is a great scene where he confronts Hazzard, extracting the truth from her and uncovering her motives, which include her greed for money and a determination to establish her methods as credible.

The set, lighting and sound elements support the play successfully, creating an appropriate atmosphere and environment of the sanatorium and the gloomy weather outside.

The actors use the space freely – an office is Hazzard's in one scene then Horace's in another. He is never without his telephone as he pursues his story. An engrossing story, largely unknown, and told truthfully with thought-provoking entertainment.



Convincing: Sarah Thom, playing Linda Hazzard, presents her as a driven, cold-hearted individual who claims she is a success in a male-dominated world of science.

Send your letters to:
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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.



One woman's vote, the case for a free library and a sewage surprise...

By Frank Edwards

This is some of the news from East Finchley, 100 years ago, as revealed in newspaper archives.

There was a general election in October 1924. Women over 30 who met a property qualification had secured the vote for the first time in 1918. There were, however, no postal votes for civilians. This did not deter a clearly unwell Mrs Harris. She was taken by ambulance from her home in Hertford Road, N2, to the polling station in the High Road and then carried on a stretcher into the building to vote. Her commendable effort contributed to an 80% turnout.

Let the people read

Recent years have seen energetic actions to defend library services. In East Finchley, 100 years ago, there was no public library to save; the campaign was to have one built. In November 1924 a resident of East End Road wrote to the local paper to praise the virtue of a free library. How long, they asked, would library-less

the local paper had enough letters on the 'Free Library controversy' to fill two columns. When the local Council considered the issue later that month, it decided now was not the time. The wait for a public library went on. (Spoiler alert: Finchley's first library, in North Finchley, opened 12 years later in 1936. East Finchley's library opened in 1938.)

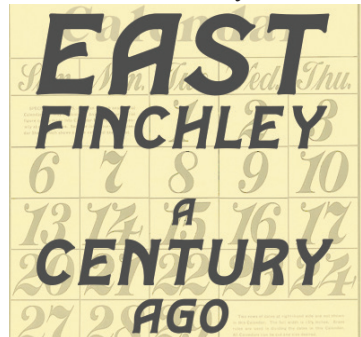
Healthy bodies

If there was no official interest in healthy minds there was in healthy bodies. In October the Council organised a 'Health Week' of open days, lectures and school visits, to demonstrate how it promoted public and personal health and to highlight the role of the individual. Take care of your own health, it said, and help not only yourself but the whole community.

The week was deemed instructive but things did not always go as planned. As its contribution the local sewage farm organised a tour for schoolboys. One fell into a tank used to filter effluent. He was soon rescued from his 'unpleasant position' and after changing into fresh clothes completed the tour (possibly with fewer close companions than when he started).

Calling all axemen

Finally, in November 1924, tree-feller George Sharman, from Long Lane, N2, placed a notice in the local paper: "I, George Sharman, do hereby challenge any axeman in Finchley to chop a 35in. oak log against time. Contest can take place on any picture show stage or elsewhere for the best prize on offer." There were no takers. It looks like George was the only axeman in the village.



Others added support. As well as benefiting young people and the general public, a library would become a home for pamphlets and prints relating to the area, which might otherwise be lost.

Not all were in favour. People will only use a library to get racing tips from newspapers and borrow cheap fiction, asserted a local Councillor; he did not consider this a good use of ratepayers' money. The debate continued. In December



BIRTHDAY PARTY: MAUREEN CLEMETSON, CENTRE, WITH MONDAY CLUB MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS PAST AND PRESENT

Youth club celebrates another birthday

By Diana Cormack

Members of the Monday Club gathered at Tarling Road Community Hub in East Finchley on Friday 1 November to celebrate the club's 19th birthday. Founder of the club Maureen Clemetson, who is passionate about the role of youth clubs, assisted by several local helpers, supplied plenty of food and drinks alongside activities and games for the youngsters to enjoy.

People who came along to celebrate ranged from those Maureen calls her first generation (some now with their own children), second generation (some of whom helped with the party activities) and the present day third generation club members. Some pretty hair

scrunchies were produced by the sewing group, who also make bracelets and badges at the club's regular sessions. Art and craft activities are available along with physical ones such as basketball, football, and Kung Fu. Once the kitchen is completed at the Tarling Road

centre, Maureen hopes to include baking and a healthy eating project.

The club's official birthday is 31 October and Maureen is already making plans for next year's 20th celebration, which will take place at a different time of year. Watch out for news of the big one.

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Park news

Everyone has a chance to hear about plans for the year ahead when the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood hold their AGM at 7.30pm on Thursday 23 January 2025, at the Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Park House, High Road, N2.

There will be a major update on the feasibility study and its proposed solutions for dealing with flooding in the wood, along with information on all the activities of the Friends group, including how to get involved and events for the year ahead. If you require further information in advance or would like to attend, email the Friends at friendsofctw@gmail.com

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