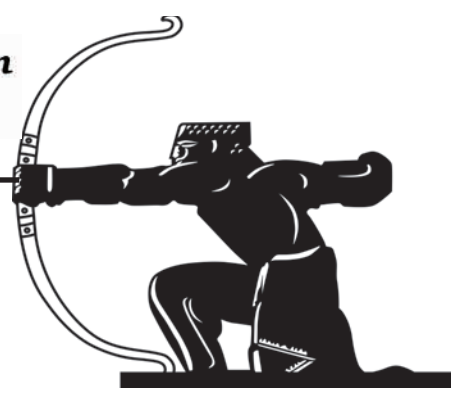




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# The Archer

Local News is our Aim  
30 years 1993-2023



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Delivered free to 10,000 homes and businesses across East Finchley

## Festival finds new way to cover its costs

By Alys Wainwright  
Organisers of the annual East Finchley Festival have made two major announcements: the event is now carbon neutral and it is moving into a new funding model to keep it thriving long into the future. The massively popular community party will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> event when it takes place on Sunday 23 June in Cherry Tree Wood. The day will feature another stellar line-up of performers on two stages, plus artisan market stalls, children's activities and an array of food and drink.

In recent years, East Finchley Festival CIC has worked hard to make the festival more sustainable by banning single-use plastics and disposables, getting rid of the diesel-powered rides and introducing reusable and degradable packaging. Last year, they went one step further by running one stage entirely on solar power, provided by South East London Community Energy, and the other with renewable HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel.

its long-term future at risk. Moving away from single organisations sponsoring 'big ticket' items like the main or community stage, they are now looking for as many local businesses as possible to contribute to sponsoring 'the festival' as a whole. "The new model will make it possible for more local businesses to get involved, and will allow us to offer all our sponsors better visibility for a smaller outlay by adding



Packed park: Festival-goers in Cherry Tree Wood in 2022

Now, following an audit by Josh King of East Finchley-based sustainability consultancy, Leaf Ray, the festival has offset its emissions by to become carbon neutral.

**Leaner funding model**  
At the same time, the team has decided to put in place a new funding model. The festival is and always has been free to anyone who turns up to enjoy it but still costs a large amount of money to run each year, for example to cover the hire of the park and equipment. Mike Hughes from the organising team said the event had been supported by generous sponsorships from local businesses over the years but inflation along with other economic factors are now putting

their logos to our posters, as well as the stages." said Mike. Anyone wishing to preserve this important community event for the next 50 years by contributing sponsorship can contact: [organisers@eastfinchleyfestival.org](mailto:organisers@eastfinchleyfestival.org). Find out more at: [eastfinchleyfestival.org/sponsorship](http://eastfinchleyfestival.org/sponsorship).



## East Finchley's new town square?

Plans can now be revealed for transforming the wide area of pavement outside Budgens and Amy's in the High Road into an attractive new town square for East Finchley. Turn to page 5 for more pictures and the full story.

## Anthony Littler murder: two rebailed

Two men arrested in connection with the murder of civil servant Anthony Littler in East Finchley in 1984 have been rebailed. The men, aged 58 and 54, were first arrested in December and initially bailed until January, which was then extended to later this month.

Detectives continue to appeal for evidence and information about the fatal late-night attack on Mr Littler near East Finchley station on 1 May 1984. The 45-year-old Customs and Excise executive was walking back to his home in Leslie Road, N2, when he was set upon on the path, now known as Deanery Close, between the station and East End Road.

His cousin Tricia McClure told *The Archer* in January that her family had been shocked by the brutality of his murder and were still hoping for answers four decades on.

DCI Neil John, of the Met Police, said they were investigating several theories for the

motive behind the attack. He told us: "Possibly it was a robbery gone wrong. But then we know that none of Mr Littler's belongings were actually taken

from him."

Anyone with information should contact police on 020 8358 0100 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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## The Archer

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Thank you to The East Finchley Constitutional Club for providing us with a meeting place.

Copy deadlines - April: 15 March, May: 12 April, June: 10 May



Unused land: The car park at the rear of the Phoenix Cinema is listed as sold subject to contract. Photo Martyn Gerrard.

## Cinema trustees defend decision to sell off unused car park area

By David Melsome

Trustees of the Phoenix Cinema have defended their decision to put the unused car park at the rear of the venue on the market after a group of members called on them to halt the sale and consider other options.

We reported last month that the spare land measuring 2,600 sq ft was being marketed by estate agents Martyn Gerrard as “an exciting development opportunity” for offers over £400,000. It has since been sold subject to contract.

Following our report, three of the cinema’s supporters wrote to the trustees saying they were deeply concerned at the sale of a valuable asset and protesting that it had not been openly publicised to the local community or the cinema membership. They started a petition which at the time of press had gathered 300 signatures.

Stephen Kersley, Ruth Kersley and Rachael Harvey said: “We ask that Trustees please respect the community’s wishes, halt the sale and arrange to hold a meeting inviting members to join in a discussion about your proposals and invite ideas and input from our community about how best to use the land to support the cinema.”

### Financial pressures

In response the nine trustees of the cinema charity, who are volunteers, told members that they had looked at a range of options and shared their thinking at their AGM and with cinema staff prior to taking the final decision to sell the land.

“Like all cinemas and theatres, since the pandemic the Phoenix has suffered the double whammy of higher costs (particularly energy) and lower admissions. UK cinema admissions are still 30% down on pre-pandemic levels. Most months we do not break even and this is creating a risk that the cinema becomes insolvent and would have to cease trading,” they wrote.

“While we are aware that the sale is a one-off move, there is no purpose to retaining it and it is clearly best to realise its value before it is too late to use the proceeds. We will invest the money in creating a second screen and bringing the

main auditorium up to audience expectations, particularly with new comfortable seating.”

The Phoenix bought the land 40 years ago along with the freehold of the cinema. Although accessible as a small car park it has remained unused for most of that time except for a few temporary outbuildings.

**Free concert**  
Soprano Alison Smart Fisher and pianist Katharine Durran will be performing a programme of works entitled *Angels, Saints and Sinners* in the next free concert at East Finchley Methodist Church on Sunday 10 March at 7.30pm. Admission is free with a collection in aid of Médecins sans Frontières. The church is on the High Road opposite Creighton Avenue and is fully accessible.

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

The **Green Man Community Centre** on Strawberry Vale, N2, is looking for volunteers to help out on Friday afternoons at their community hub. Tasks include setting up, cooking and clearing. For more details email [greenmanbookings@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:greenmanbookings@hotmail.co.uk)

**MS Haringey** is a local group of the national MS Society. It is looking to recruit a volunteer to manage all aspects of its financial activity, under Charity Commission rules. Initial training will be given. The role would suit a retired person with an accountancy or similar background. Interest in the welfare of people living with multiple sclerosis would be a strong recommendation. For details please contact Jane Howard at [Haringey@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:Haringey@mssociety.org.uk)

**East Finchley Festival CIC** is seeking activities co-ordinators to schedule activities and performances and liaise with outside providers. There are also assorted volunteer positions available on the day of the festival (23 June). Please visit [eastfinchleyfestival.org/volunteer](http://eastfinchleyfestival.org/volunteer) for details.

**Finchley Foodbank**, based in East Finchley, is looking for new trustees and would particularly welcome candidates from all backgrounds, ages and abilities with experience in communications, finance, fundraising and IT. The role would involve overseeing the governance and direction of Finchley Foodbank and attending monthly meetings. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, please send your CV with a cover letter to [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com) by Sunday 24 March.

**Re-engage** is looking for volunteers co-ordinators, hosts and drivers to assist with monthly tea parties for over-75s, who are lonely, isolated or in need of companionship. See [www.reengage.org.uk/volunteer/new-volunteers/become-a-tea-party-volunteer](http://www.reengage.org.uk/volunteer/new-volunteers/become-a-tea-party-volunteer) for details or email [ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk](mailto:ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk)

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column and listed on the East Finchley community hub website, please complete the form at [www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it](http://www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it).



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Any questions, please contact:

[Miranda.macfarlane@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:Miranda.macfarlane@kcl.ac.uk)

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## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet Council

#### 65 Brackenburg Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window.

#### 8 Cherry Tree Road, N2

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

#### East Finchley Cemetery, East End Road, N2

Rebuilding of two sections of collapsed boundary walls.

#### 32 Gurney Drive, N2

Submission of details of conditions 5 (Acoustic report) 6 (External door/window details) pursuant to planning permission.

#### 1 King Street; N2

Single-storey rear extension.

#### Land at Central Avenue (adja-

#### cent To Willow House), The Grange Estate, N2

Submission of details of conditions 3 (Materials), 9 and 10 (Acoustic Report), 13 (Cycle Parking), 15 (Privacy Screens), 17 (Secure by Design), 24 (Landscape & Ecological Management Plan), 30 (Ecological Features) and 31 (Boundary Treatment), pursuant to planning permission.

#### Land rear of The Bobath Centre, 250 East End Road, N2

Submission of details of condition 20 (Surface Water Drainage Strategy) and 22 (Excavations for services in relation to trees) pursuant to planning permission.

#### 5 Leicester Mews, N2

Change of use of building (light

industrial) to live/work unit. Changes to front and rear fenestration.

#### 17 Manor Park Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension.

#### O/s 79 - 83 High Road, N2

Installation of one electrical vehicle charging point unit with double-sided LCD screen, feeder pillar and associated electrical connection works.

#### Rear of 15 Talbot Avenue, N2

Erection of cottage, following demolition of existing rear studio. Associated refuse/recycling, storage and amenity space.

#### 21-25 Viceroy Parade, High Road, N2

One double-sided internally illuminated LCD screen, with integral vehicle charging point.



# Parking zone postponed with no future date

By John Lawrence

**The introduction of East Finchley's controversial new controlled parking zone (CPZ) was abruptly halted at the last minute by Barnet Council last month with no future date being set for its reinstatement.**

Some of the 2,600 residents and workers falling into the new pay-to-park zone across the northern half of East Finchley had already started trying to register for parking permits in time for the advertised start date of 19 February when they were confronted by a short message on the council website. It read: "Please note that the implementation of the experimental zone (EF) CPZ has been postponed. Residents will be advised of the date that permit sales open in advance of the rescheduled implementation date."

Resident Edward Butler, who organised a petition against the CPZ that attracted over 1,000 signatures, said: "If the council is committed to the rollout, then they should engage fully, transparently and with all information available. However, the information I have seen and the decision notice which has been published seems hastily and retrospectively prepared."



Ziz Chater, headteacher at Martin Primary School who feared she would lose staff if they were forced to pay to park near the school, said: "We are pleased that the CPZ is not being implemented and hope that if any similar schemes are discussed in the future there is a thorough consultation and careful consideration of the impact on everyone in our community."

Barnet Council carried out an online consultation exercise two years ago which they said resulted in 51 per cent of residents either actively supporting a new CPZ or identifying parking problems in their road. They did not define the split between those two groups.

The proposed new controlled parking hours would be 11 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday across a huge swathe of roads all the way up to the North Circular.

## Time to consider

East Finchley Councillor Alison Moore told *The Archer*: "Parking problems and parking controls can be a really tricky

issue and have come to the fore in East Finchley a number of times during the past 20 or so years. On each of those occasions what's been really important is hearing from local residents and trying to get the balance right in dealing with those problems.

"The current proposals have raised questions and concerns from residents and local organisations, and as councillors we have received lots of correspondence and had conversations with many residents and others in the community."

With hardly any of the expected signage and road markings in place and with the need to give residents adequate notice of a new start date, it seems East Finchley will not get its new CPZ for some months.

## Council responds

*The Archer* asked Barnet Council to explain the postponement of the CPZ. Here's what they told us.

**The Archer: Why has the start date for the new East Finchley CPZ been postponed?**

**Barnet Council:** The implementation of the East Finchley CPZ has been paused to enable the council to fully consider the feedback received from residents and ward councillors.

**When can residents expect to hear of a new commencement date?**

Council officers are in dialogue with elected members currently and hope to be able to confirm details in the coming weeks.

**During the postponement period, will the parking team be considering and responding to the feedback and criticisms of the new scheme that is has received?**

Although the scheme is not yet operational, we thank those who have made comments so far. These are being collated and will be included as part of the statutory process.

**How does Barnet Council think the need to postpone the implementation reflects on the accuracy of the public consultation carried out two years ago?**

The results from the public engagement previously undertaken remains valid. The implementation has been paused to facilitate feedback received to the correspondence sent out about the zone to be considered.



Well deserved: Youth club organiser Maureen Clemetson, right, receives her community award from Barnet Mayor Councillor Nagus Narenthira

# Maureen honoured for 18 years of work with the Monday Club

By Diana Cormack

**At the end of January Barnet Homes held their annual Community Awards presentation ceremony in Burnt Oak. Described as 'crowning the worthy winners of those who make a real positive difference to their community' the winner of the Project of the Year category was East Finchley's own Maureen Clemetson.**

Regular readers will know that for the last 18 years Maureen has run the Monday Club and is now involved with what she calls her third generation of youngsters, mostly from Strawberry Vale and the Grange Estate. The club continues to provide seven to 12-year-olds and 13 to 16-year-olds with somewhere to go where they will find plenty to keep them busy. Activities available include art, games and sport, and meals are provided as well.

A delighted Maureen described the presentation dinner and dance to *The Archer* as being "like the Baftas. Three of us had been nominated. I couldn't believe it when they opened the envelope and read out my name."

She told Barnet Homes: "We've always provided membership, all activities, food and outings for children absolutely free of charge. The club started off with a handful of children attending in the first few months. Within two years the club had become so popular that we needed to relocate to cater for almost 50 children per session. Early on we were fortunate enough to have the trust and full sponsorship of a local businessman who wanted to help our community."

"Over the years, I'm proud to say that I've supported three generations of young people through our club doors. I've watched them grow up and have children of their own who've also attended. They all

call me Aunty Maureen. It's a joy to see them go on and do well. Recently, one of the old members contacted me to say that he is training to be a pilot and he's promised to take me on a flight to Jamaica!"

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# Summer sporting highlight cancelled after seven years

By John Lawrence

Amateur athletes from East Finchley, Muswell Hill and Highgate could have run their last race together after organisers of the annual Race the Neighbours event announced that the event is cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Around 450 runners have come together in Cherry Tree Wood in June for seven years to compete in the friendly 10k race to Alexandra Palace and back. The fastest collective postcode claims the coveted Cherry Tree Cup.

But the volunteer organisers have told the hundreds who have already signed up for this year's race that they've run out of time to organise it and are sadly pulling out of future years too.

## Clash of dates

We reported in December that the Race had been forced to move its planned 2024 date after inadvertently clashing with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the East Finchley Festival on Sunday 23 June thanks to a mix-up by Barnet Council's events coordinators The Event Umbrella.

It would have been impossible for both events to be held in Cherry Tree Wood on the same day so Race the Neighbours agreed to seek another date but it now seems that will not happen. Local resident Avi Freeman, one of the founding organis-



Last legs: Runners set off in the most recent Race the Neighbours event in June 2023. Photo Mike Coles

ers, said it was a sad decision to have to make. He said: "It looks like 2023 will have been our last race, at least for the time being. The time pressures involved for all of us have led us to the reluctant conclusion that we need to hang up our organising shoes for now. There will be no Race the Neighbours 2024.

## Adventure

"Way back in the summer of 2015 we began an adventure, establishing a new 10k in our own corner of north London. In the nine years since then we've held seven summer 10k races, welcomed hundreds of runners, learned a lot about staging

events, and put a smile on lots of faces including our own.

"We've raised and donated more than £8,000 to local charities. And we've just loved taking over Cherry Tree Wood for the day and turning it into the headquarters of London's friendliest 10k."

Avi added that they weren't completely ruling out a return in the future. "In the meantime we'd be very happy to talk to anyone that is interested in the idea of perhaps taking on the mantle of organising a local 10k in this area that uses the same route. If that's you, then please do get in touch."



Cherry Tree Wood. Photo by Alison Roberts

# Changes in the Wood

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are planning a busy year ahead with a number of new and existing projects that are already making a big difference to the park and its facilities.

Although no solution has been found yet for the flooding that blights the grass area in the winter months, the Friends group are continuing to work with Barnet Council to find ways to improve the drainage.

Two new forest gardens that came to life in 2023 will continue to be developed along with a project to collect data on the park's woodland fauna and flora. There are also plans to replace the broken trampoline in the play area.

The next litter pick is on Sunday 10 March from 2pm to 3pm. The next Gardening and Conservation groups are on Sunday 10 March from 10am to 12pm and on Tuesday 19 March from 10am to 11am.

## Busy year

The forthcoming events were all announced at the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood AGM attended by 20 supporters in January, where it was agreed that 2023 had been another busy year of activity.

Monthly litter picks had continued (with the welcome support of Duke of Edinburgh volunteers). A new hedge had been introduced by the High Road gate along with two dropped kerbs to improve accessibility. The High Road gates had also been repainted as had the Summerlee Road entrance gate. There had been five bat monitoring evenings, identifying four species.

A Barnet Council proposal to locate a circus in the wood over the winter had been vigorously fought off, not least because of the flooded state of the ground.

## Popular events

There had been numerous popular events including the East Finchley Festival, a Cloud Appreciation Day, guided history tours, a Festival of Architecture talk, a Seed Swap day (East Finchley Pollinators Project), a beautiful mosaic unveiling, an Easter egg hunt, a Halloween skeleton hunting event and a Christmas wreath making workshop.

To find out more, or to get involved with the Friends charity, get in touch via email at [friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com)

## From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

### 10 years ago: March 2014

Managers at the Phoenix Cinema were shocked to find out, after the event, that a film crew who hired the auditorium were making a porn movie. Embarrassed Phoenix trustees promised to review their hiring guidelines in light of the event, but amused trustee Maureen Lipman predicted that East Finchley was unlikely to become the porn capital of Europe!

### 15 years ago: March 2009

Sales of the 2009 Archer calendar raised an amazing £2,088 for East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact. The money was to be used to help the charity in its vital work with elderly, disabled and isolated people in our community. The calendar was printed free of charge by [photobox.co.uk](http://photobox.co.uk) and several High Road shops and other outlets had volunteered to sell it.

### 23 years ago: March 2001

We highlighted that it wasn't just local pubs that were disappearing as a result of the building frenzy in East Finchley. Building sites were springing up all over the area, all involving high-density housing. Current or proposed projects involved the loss of Park Lodge in East End Road, garages behind 114 High Road, at the junction with Lincoln Road, the Texaco Garage and Currie Motors in the High Road, Lincoln Parade shops, Viceroy Close car park and the detached bungalow in Park Road. All have since been replaced by flats or houses.

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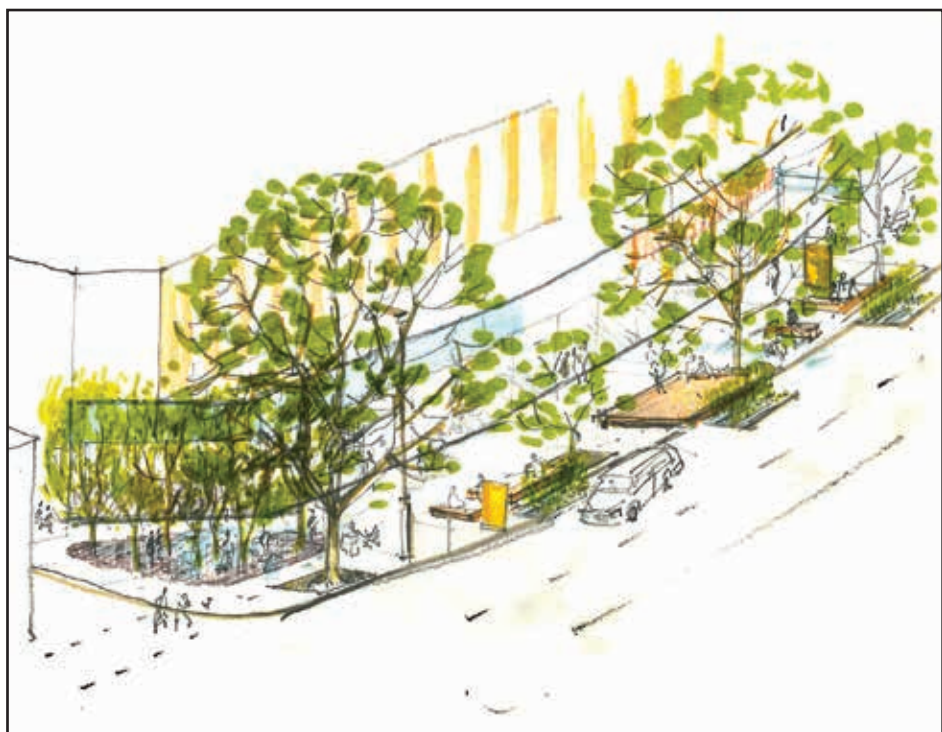
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# Cluttered pavement reimaged as town square

By David Melsome



Leafy: An aerial view of the new trees, seating and performance area on the redesigned pavement and, right, the area as it looked during the ideas event last summer

**Plans can now be revealed for transforming the wide area of pavement outside Budgens and Amy's in the High Road into an attractive new town square for East Finchley. Designs have been drawn up by local architects MillsPower at the request of East Finchley Town Team, whose aim is to boost trade for N2's venues and shopping areas.**

The plans incorporating dozens of new trees, improved seating and a complete repaving will be put in front of Barnet Council's planners soon and fundraising for the project is about to begin in earnest with the aim of starting the transformation later in the year.

### The people's ideas

Architect Mark Power said his company's proposals had been inspired by public responses at the Town Team's *Happening* event held during the London Festival of Architecture last June. Among food stalls and live performances, passers-by were encouraged to air their thoughts on what a town square could be by pinning postcards onto a 'wishing line'.

"Analysis of these ideas revealed that more than 50% of visitors want improved planting, more trees, better seating and space for community events," said Mark, "effectively a green town square where residents and visitors to the neighbourhood can enjoy healthier surroundings and celebrate

the wonderful community and cultural variety East Finchley has to offer.

"Currently the wide pavement area between Budgens and Iceland is cluttered, with raised planters obstructing pedestrians

"The concepts we have designed show instead a generous expanse of uninterrupted and usable open space, where people can pause, meet, gather, as well as pass in both directions, and where stalls can be

trees marking and shading the edge of the pavement, keeping it accessible to car parking and open to the opposite side of the street.

A new grove of young trees close to the High Road and East End Road junction, level

scheme with local planting, porous tree aprons and free-draining surfaces will also help the immediate ecology.

Wooden bench seats will face one another rather than confront the traffic as they do now, and in one place will be broad enough to become a performance area for outdoor plays and concerts, impromptu busking or stand-up performers.

"With winds of change at last prevailing, and the support of East Finchley's three Ward Councillors, we will shortly be finalising these suggestions to put to the planners," added Mark. Kate Brown, Chair of East Finchley Town Team, said the group realised it would take a lot of effort to turn these aspirations into reality.

"Archer readers with long memories will be aware that there were plans in the 1980s to widen the Bald Faced Stag junction, which were defeated by local opposition. This is the reason that we have a wider pavement from Caffé Nero to Budgens," she said. "However little effort has been made to improve the space since then. These plans are designed in response to local feedback requesting more space for people whilst maintaining planting. In particular local people want more seating and a performance space for social activity which East Finchley values."

If you have comments on the designs email [estownteam@gmail.com](mailto:estownteam@gmail.com) before the end of March.



Formal designs: The scheme to be submitted to planners shows: 1) larger planted areas for existing trees; 2) a new grove of cherry or birch trees; 3) a new London plane tree; 4) rain garden sustainable drainage; 5) seating and stage areas; 6) raised table at pavement level.

All images by LFA2023 © Kes-Tchaas Eccleston and MillsPower Architecture

and preventing other activities. Electronic billboards have been added recently, prioritising technological rather than human uses of the space.

set up for occasional festivals and family-friendly events."

### Tree-planting

The scheme aims to reinstate a full complement of tall plane

with the pavement, will allow pedestrians to walk among them and their foliage will help to filter the air overhead. A sustainable urban drainage



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Join the team: Some of the food bank volunteers who already give their time to help people in need.  
Photo Finchley Foodbank

## Food bank team appeals for new volunteers to help charity thrive

**Organisers of Finchley Foodbank are appealing for people with skills and experience in communications, finance, fundraising or IT to step forward and become a trustee. The role of trustee is very important and involves overseeing the strategic direction, governance, and management of the Finchley Foodbank charity, based in East Finchley.**

Trustees are expected to attend regular trustee meetings and participate in decision-making. They also support fundraising and publicity efforts and contribute to the development and implementation of the charity's vision, mission, and values.

Although the trustee role is voluntary and unpaid, reward comes from involvement with the food bank team, who provide a vital service to many people in need. The time commitment is about half a day per quarter, plus occasional events and activities. The term of office is three years, renewable once. Additional skills

Chair of Trustees Dipo Oyewole said: "We are proud of the way that we run the Finchley Foodbank and of the work that our current trustees have done to get our new charity up and running over the past 18 months.

"Now we need to add some additional skills and we are keen that our Board of Trustees better reflects the range of clients who come to the Foodbank. This will help us to make sure that we provide the best service that we can to all of our clients." The particular skills that Finchley Foodbank is especially looking for include fundraising, grant writing, IT implementation and policies, finance, and communications. There is also a role for community engagement and partnership building.

### Diverse backgrounds

Finchley Foodbank welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities. Your English must be fluent enough to read formal documents and contribute to the discussion but if you are not familiar with the role of trustee, there will be support available for you. If you are interested in applying, send your CV and a

cover letter explaining why you want to join Finchley Foodbank and what skills and experience you can bring to the board. The deadline for applications is midnight on Sunday 24 March. Applications should be sent to [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com).

## Writers' group member writes her first book

By Ella Malik

**Mary Moloney works as a university administrator and has always wanted to write a novel. She originally started writing short sketches and pieces for Belladonna, a small theatre group in Finchley, whose members wrote and performed their own work.**

She is now a member of an East Finchley writers' group, who meet monthly to provide constructive criticism on each others' writing. Mary says she is extremely grateful to the group and is sure that her novel would never have been published without them.

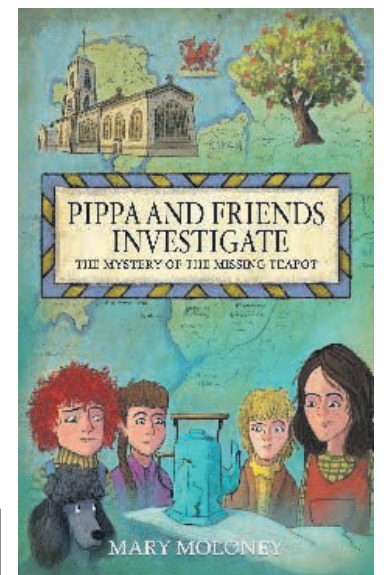
Set in North Wales in 1973, her exciting detective story for children called *Pippa and Friends Investigate: The Mystery of the Missing Teapot* attempts to recapture the spirit of *The Famous Five* novels.

*Emma and her trumpet-playing brother Edward live with their eccentric grandparents, Edith and Ernest, in St David's, while their parents are overseas. When eggs are stolen from Farmer Richard's farm, Emma sets out to solve the*

*mystery with her three friends, Lizzy, Laurie and Katie, and her beloved poodle Pippa, who likes to save the day.*

### Inspiration

Mary said the main character in the novel, Emma, is



Adventure: Mary's debut novel

based on her mother and, as a child, she also had a poodle called Pippa. Many of the events in the novel are based on her own childhood experiences. Mary's mother, Emma, came from North Wales and many school holidays were spent there and provide the backdrop for the novel.

Mary's book will be officially launched by the Welsh Book Council in early summer 2024. To buy an exclusive advance edition, visit [www.candy-jar.co.uk/books/pippaandfriends.html](http://www.candy-jar.co.uk/books/pippaandfriends.html)

## Romantic symphonies

**Finchley Symphony Orchestra with conductor Christopher Stark will give a concert including two large romantic symphonies on Saturday 9 March.**

Until recently female composers, however talented, struggled to gain acceptance. Leokadiya Kashperova, a Russian contemporary of Rachmaninov, was highly regarded by many including Saint-Saens. Her symphony is a richly romantic piece and the orchestra believes they are giving its first north London performance.

Rather better known, Tchaikovsky's second symphony draws heavily on Ukrainian folk

melodies. Indeed much of it was written while the composer was on holiday in Ukraine which is perhaps reflected in its generally optimistic mood, quite unlike that of his later symphonies.

All of this music can be enjoyed at Trinity Church, Nether Street, North Finchley starting at 7.30pm on Saturday 9 March. Tickets cost £18, concessions £15, under 18s £7 and you can save £1 per ticket by advance booking online at [www.finchleysymphony.org](http://www.finchleysymphony.org)



**Where to donate your unwanted household items for recycling**

- Batteries to EF Electricals and Sainsbury's, High Road
- Bicycle inner tubes to Bike & Run, High Road
- Cables and small electrical items to EF Electricals, High Road
- Crisp packets to Cherry Tree Café, Cherry Tree Wood
- Dental products (toothbrushes and heads) to Cavendish Dental Practice, East End Road
- Electrical cables to Everything Electrical, High Road
- Ink jet cartridges to UOE, High Road
- Lightbulbs to Amy's or EF Electricals, High Road
- Make-up to Oakdale Pharmacy, High Road.
- Paper, cork, ribbon, foil, wood off-cuts, buttons, stationery, sequins, carpet samples to Amy's, High Road
- Spectacles to Stewart Duncan Opticians and David Hillel Opticians, High Road



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# Talent contest and bake-off are GO!

Two competitions to celebrate the performance and baking skills of people in East Finchley are back in the calendar after being unavoidably postponed earlier this year.

East Finchley's Got Talent takes place at the Phoenix Cinema on Sunday 21 April and, in its second year, is again being hosted by East Finchley Festival's MOBO award winner Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock.

Do you have a talent that you can demonstrate on a stage in five minutes? Can you sing, dance, play, perform magic or do something so unique and extraordinary that you just have to share it with the world? If so, East Finchley Town Team wants to hear from you.

cinema foyer, East Finchley Town Team will be hosting a bake-off competition for all ages on the theme of 'The Silver Screen', all about films that might be shown at the Phoenix. If you think you can wow the judges with your kitchen creation, email [EFtownteam@gmail.com](mailto:EFtownteam@gmail.com).

The day starts at 11.15am when the cinema will be screening the hit children's animation *Sing*. Then the talent show starts at 2pm. The bake-off winner will be announced



Sign up now: Entries are welcome for East Finchley's talent contest

The winner of East Finchley's Got Talent gets the opportunity to perform on the Community Stage at this year's East Finchley Festival on Sunday 23 June in Cherry Tree Wood.

To take part in the talent show, email [EFgottalent@gmail.com](mailto:EFgottalent@gmail.com). Applications to participate close on Friday 5 April.

At the same time, in the

during the interval. The talent competition will then conclude with a presentation to the winner at about 4.30pm.

Everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy the day's events. Tickets are available on a pay what you can basis from [www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/movie/ef-got-talent-ef-bake-off](http://www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/movie/ef-got-talent-ef-bake-off).



## TESS

Classic literature and circus combine in a bold new vision of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

arts depot Wed 20 & Thu 21 Mar  
[www.artsdepot.co.uk](http://www.artsdepot.co.uk)



Final chapter: A reading of Simone Weil's poems was the last literary event at Black Gull Bookshop.

Photo Mike Coles

# Books make us more human

By Juliana Sonsin Lima

When I first moved to East Finchley last year, I took a stroll along the High Road to get to know my new neighbourhood. I was enchanted by the local shops and friendly atmosphere, but something caught my eye that made me sure I was moving to the right place: a small bookshop full of stories and a beautiful light blue plaque with a unique bird in it.

As soon as I stepped into Black Gull Books, I knew this charming old shop would be part of my routine. I was right, of course. Over the last year the bookshop has granted me poetic breaths in the routine of this journalist that works immersed into the digital world, but misses touching paper and smelling books. Black Gull was one of those magical places I could escape to whenever I felt overwhelmed.

I was not the only one to feel like that. Manager Brian Schwartz told me during one of my visits that books are doors to other worlds. He said: "You can lose yourself in them. The greatest thing about a bookshop is people don't know what they are going to end up with. They come in looking for Wittgenstein and end up with Jamie



Job joy: Shop manager Brian Schwartz. Photo Juliana Sonsin Lima

Oliver, but hey, that's the thing."

As a booklover, I believe it is right. And I guess my fellow neighbours agree with that, too. Ever since the announcement that Black Gull would close its doors for good, I watched people paying the shop a visit and talking to Brian in a mourning tone, as if they were losing an important part of them.

As sad as it might be for the community, it surely is even harder for Brian, who has been behind the bookshop's care and management for 16 years. "My father always knew I would end up working with books and he was right. Running a bookshop has taught me to be a kinder person. The idea that you open the doors and anyone could come in and anyone does, the whole human parade, it has taught me patience. I used to be less tolerant, but something about books in a book store makes everyone calmer, kinder and more human."

As for myself, I imagined my own world when I was at the bookshop for the last time: in that world would be a new Black Gull on the High Road to keep our hearts and spirits filled with magic and humanity.

# Bittersweet final reading event

By Helen Tierney

Black Gull hosted its last literary event on Sunday 18 February before its sad closure. Dr Philip Wilson was making a return visit to the shop to introduce his new translation of Simone Weil's writings and poetry.

Weil's reputation has grown considerably as an activist and inspirational mystic and Phillip, who is Associate Professor of Translation and Philosophy at the University of East Anglia, spoke in detail about her life and the complexities surrounding her beliefs.

Black Gull staff and event organisers were thrilled with the turnout and although the event signified the end of an era, Philip lightened the mood with a specially composed 'Ode to Black Gull', the final stanza of which is printed right. All in all, the evening was a great tribute to what is already a much-missed literary neighbourhood gem.



Tribute: Dr Philip Wilson at the Simone Weil event

"...And so to this last reading when the empty shelves are sad,

And closing is this shop within a world that's going mad.

So let us raise a glass, even though the points are null:

And let us toast the glories of the shrine that was Black Gull."



Be our guests: Academy students keep grandparents entertained at a special afternoon event

## Students bridge the generation gap

The Archer Academy in East Finchley recently hosted two special events for members of the older community which were both thoroughly enjoyed by students, staff and guests.

The first was an 'Archer Gold' party, in which 70 residents from local care homes including Barnet Grange, Rose-acres, The Meadow and The Limes, were welcomed to the school for a special afternoon tea and student recitals. The students organised the entire event themselves and entertained the residents who all had a wonderful time.

One guest wrote: "I am writing to express my gratitude for the effort you and your students made for us when we arrived at the school yesterday... Thank you for the wonderful performance and the welcome. We look forward to seeing you and your students in the future."

The second event was 'Grandparents Afternoon' in which over 100 Archer grand-

parents visited the school for special afternoon tea, and beautiful dance, drama and music performances, all hosted by students as performers, waiters, greeters and tour guides.

One grandparent wrote: "I wish to compliment Archer Academy for this charming way of acknowledging grandparents' roles in children's lives."



Power move: The panels on the roof of the tennis clubhouse

## Tennis club aces power from the sun

The Avenue Tennis club is thought to be the first in the UK to install solar panels to power their clubhouse and the new LED floodlights it is introducing to make evening play more accessible on its four courts.

The club, set behind the Wilf Slack Recreation Ground off East End Road, N3, has installed 28 solar panels on its clubhouse roof connected to a 10kw battery in the roof. Club members hope to save 80% on their electricity bills and recoup their investment

in six years by selling excess power back to the grid.

Head coach and club manager Sally Bentley said: "Hopefully the solar and LED installation will go a long way to meeting the requirements of our club's policy to becoming

carbon neutral. That was the original objective."

Solar power has been around in the UK since 2006 but in recent years the technology has improved. Panels are monocrystalline which means they produce electricity as long as there is daylight and with a battery, the energy can be stored and used when required.

## School puts money into mental health resources for pupils

The Archer Academy is using the money raised from its Christmas 'Big Give' fundraising campaign to provide more vital mental health resources for young people at school.

The school says it has identified that mental health problems are increasingly affecting young people but early intervention enhances school attendance and life prospects, and is crucial to ensuring students engage with learning.

important that students have a safe haven, and a place they can go for extra support".

### Wellbeing activities

Donations from the campaign have also funded a mental health peer mentoring scheme whereby students



Outdoor classroom: Academy students work with nature to boost their mental health

The school already has a counselling team consisting of three skilled therapists who provide support to students and their families. Sophia Davison, the adolescent psychotherapist who leads the team says: "We know our students really well and work closely with families to support them. We advocate for vulnerable young people to secure them the help they need.

There is a waiting list of students who need regular counselling at school, and the money raised from the Big Give campaign has enabled more students to access the services of the counselling team.

Two Archer Academy students reported on the benefits of the additional mental health provision at school: "Sometimes I get very angry and can't focus on things. It helps to talk and then I get better at calming down and can get on with my work" and "Through extreme periods of stress, it's

are trained to give 1-1 support to their peers. There is also a specialised Wellbeing Week in April with a range of activities to increase resilience and promote good mental health, including yoga, gardening, reading groups, clay workshops, and mindfulness sessions.

Furthermore, the school has launched a new programme which delivers art and music therapy to students most in need. Local artist Laura Fox has been running art wellness sessions for small groups of students, combining art and nature to explore emotions, and music therapist Rory Attwell is running groups which use music to impact emotional expression, communication, and overall mental wellbeing.

Finally, the funding has enabled a programme of parent/carer workshops to be delivered by adolescent mental health specialists, which offer resources and advice on promoting good mental health as well as strategies to support young people at home.

Archer Academy has further plans to increase mental health support for students at school including drama therapy and animal therapy. In the past, they have hosted equine therapy and small animal therapy and have seen the positive impact of this work.

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# Doughty dancers have the time of their lives to help Ukraine

By Maxine Klein

When I told my son that I was going to a Zumba marathon in aid of Ukraine he enquired whether we would be dancing for 26 miles. Well, it certainly felt like it. Two hours of non-stop Zumba is quite a challenge.

The school hall at Fortismere School was filled with women of all ages and a few very brave men. On the stage were a team of instructors put together by Gemma B Fitness. They took it in turns to show us the moves.

They had breaks between dances but we punters danced solidly (well, maybe with a

if exhausting time.

The amount raised at this event, the third of its kind, will enable local organisation Driving Aid to Ukraine to deliver 22 tons of donated medical aid to hospitals and devastated parts of Ukraine, including a special rehabilitation centre for amputees.

Michael Byrne, the driving force behind this scheme has

is no longer frontline news as there are so many other wars going on globally but they continue to struggle with rocket attacks, shortages of food and medication and, consequently, constant fear.

In this troubled world it is easy to get very frustrated and depressed and I find that the only way to keep sane is to do



Mass movement: Scores of Zumba fans enjoy the Dance for Ukraine event at Fortismere School

few breaks) for two hours. The music was compelling, the dances were varied and the Zumba instructors were enthusiastic, so we had a great,

already organised 20 trips to Ukraine delivering 200 tons of vital aid like medical supplies and baby food. The situation in Ukraine gets worse each day. It

the little that we can to help. A lorry load of food and medical equipment won't win the war but it will be of benefit to those who receive the goods.

## What is semi-permanent make-up?

A growing trend in the cosmetic beauty world in recent years has been the demand for semi-permanent make up. But what exactly is it and how does it work? Danielle Corlass, who runs a studio at the Utopia Therapy Hub in East Finchley, explains.

### What is semi-permanent make up or micro-pigmentation?

Semi-permanent make-up is a safe form of cosmetic tattooing to enhance eyebrows, eyes and lips to add definition. Pigment is implanted and dotted into the upper layers of the skin using a digital microblading machine to create the subtle effect of make-up. How long does it take?

The initial consultation takes 20-30 mins to carry out a patch test and full consultation. The actual procedure can take from 45-90 mins depending on the area being treated. A top-up is required six to eight weeks later to perfect the treatment.

### What can I expect after the treatment?

Immediately after the treatment you may experience tenderness, mild swelling and slight

redness. However this will reduce within 24 hours. The treated area will look considerably darker for the first few days and then will reduce and soften by 30-50%.

### How long does it last?

This varies and very much depends on skin type, lifestyle, metabolism and careful

aftercare which is crucial for the first 12-14 days. Colour retention can last for up to two years and it is recommended to maintain the fresh look with a colour boost procedure every 12-18 months.

### permanent make up?

Anyone under the age of 18, pregnant or breastfeeding, anyone who has undergone chemotherapy in the last six months, had recent cosmetic surgery, and clients with a history of keloid scarring or poor wound healing.

### Who would benefit from semi-permanent make up?

Clients who have sparse, thin or over plucked brows, anyone who wants to save time in the morning, anyone who is sporty, a gym-goer or swimmer, anyone who lacks confidence or is unable to apply their own make up.

Find out more from Danielle directly at www.elles-pmu.co.uk



Lip blush: These picture shows lips before treatment, immediately after and then six weeks healed

### Will it be painful?

This can vary depending on the area being treated and the individual's pain threshold. Ultimately the procedure will feel scratchy rather than painful and the area can feel a little tender afterwards (in lip blush the lips may swell for the first 24-48 hours).

### Who should avoid semi-



Off the shelf: Richard Neville stocks the new-look bookcase at the station. Photo Mike Coles

## Second edition for station bookcase

By Lynn Winton

It's hard to believe that the Community Exchange Bookcase is only eight years old, as it's now hard to imagine East Finchley station without it. However, it was looking rather rough around the edges, so when Richard Neville, who lives in Elmhurst Avenue, offered to upgrade it, and The Archer offered to sponsor it, I accepted with alacrity.

Richard is the creator of Bookwise, (Bookwise.io) where people can download and read thousands of classic books for free, and over half a million books have been read there.

Helped by neighbour and carpenter Dan O'Dwyer, it became Richard's parting gift to us all, as he's moving to Bath. And all the books in the photo were donated by his mum.

One study recently concluded that regular readers live longer, calmer lives, so please continue

to pick up a book, drop off a book, and share the joy of reading.

### Indoor sale

This month's Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 30 March from 10am to 1pm at the usual venue of Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. For more information contact 020 8368 8180.

## RICKY SAVAGE ... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

### If you know of a better hole...

Places are famous for different things; Iceland is the home to more mad volcanos than anywhere else, Paris comes first in the rudest cities competition year after year and California has more blue sky thinking than anywhere normal. But what about us?

Once East Finchley was voted the happiest place in London by Time Out, that was at least something to be proud of when your Northern line train was cancelled again. Then nothing. We slipped down the charts and got replaced by Richmond. But, hey, we're back!

Yes, folks, in the weird world of a dog-end government Barnet has something to be proud of once again. Why? Because according to a report by Smart Survey we are Britain's pothole capital. We can confidently say that the High Road is more holes than road and what makes cycling dangerous is not the cars but the possibility of falling into a void and having to climb out.

Nowhere in the country has as many unfilled potholes as Barnet. There are over 4,500 of them; that's one for every 100 residents when most councils keep the figures down to one per 1,000. And our council is slowest at filling them in, sorting out less than a third when places like Lewisham are close to 100%.

This is not all bad news, well not if you own a two-ton SUV car, because you now have an excuse for doing your bit to increase global warming. No more jokes about not needing something designed for a war zone to go to Tesco, because in Barnet you do. How else are you going to get there when the road looks like it's been converted from a tank trap?

But what the hell. In the weird world of Iceland's latest exploding volcano and an alphabet soup of winter storms heading towards us, it's nice to have something to celebrate, even if it's only our potholes.

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Get to grips: The cast of *Going Dutch* argue and fight on their comic journey

## REVIEW: GOING DUTCH

Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate

By Jessica Holt

The Garden Suburb Theatre successfully revived this early observational comedy by John Godber set on board the ferry from Hull to Rotterdam, a trip he had experienced for himself in all its glory.

Mark, played by Andy Farrer, celebrates his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with his wife Sally, played by Alice Gill-Carey, by going to Holland to see a Bruce Springsteen concert. They have invited college friend Gill, played by Miranda Chessman, who brings along her current boyfriend Karl, played by Joe Ellison.

He clashes immediately with Mark, who has always had a soft spot for Gill. While Mark and Sally prefer the Sky bar and its tranquillity, Karl prefers the Irish bar. The clash of cultures dominates many of the scenes. Mark and Karl are from different worlds and often display male aggressiveness which we laugh at but also find distasteful.

The playwright's style incorporates short scenes, characters addressing the audience directly and the deliberate use of stereotypical characterisation, all of which is challenging. The company met this challenge and provided the audience with well-timed comic one-liners alongside tremendously energetic physicality.

An added joy was Barry Fernandez, played by Tim Solomons, who teased the audience at the beginning and throughout with his karaoke. We were encouraged to sing songs such as *Sweet Caroline* to place us on the ferry with these characters.

In the second act the play moved into a more serious examination of the characters and their situations. The comedy was still strong, but the hopes and disappointments of these characters came to the foreground and their inability to change anything as they retreat back into their comfort zones introduces a sad tone as the play ends. *Going Dutch* was a fine example of great ensemble playing.

## Choir gives airing to rarely performed work by suffragette

By David Melsome

Following North London Chorus' sell-out performance of favourites by J S Bach and Handel last November, their next concert will include a performance of *The Prison* by English composer Dame Ethel Smyth.

Well-known and highly regarded in her day, Ethel Smyth was a suffragette and close friend of Emmeline Pankhurst, with whom she was incarcerated in Holloway Prison for throwing stones at the homes of politicians who opposed votes for women.

Smyth composed the music for *March of the Women*, the anthem of the suffragettes, and was reputedly observed by her friend the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham leading the women in prison in song whilst conducting with a toothbrush.

Smyth's work has been unfairly neglected until recently and this will be an exceptionally rare opportunity to hear a piece that was premiered in 1930 and appears not to have been performed since 2005. Scored for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus and large orchestra, *The Prison* is essentially a dialogue between a dying man and his soul.

A cantata by Beethoven and a lamentation by Brahms, both composers admired by Smyth, complete the programme on

## Three causes for celebration

By Daphne Chamberlain

Acclaimed poet Fleur Adcock celebrated three events last month: her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the launch of her latest book and the birth in New Zealand of her "incredibly beautiful" great-granddaughter Mira Fleur. This month also happens to be the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of her arrival in East Finchley.

Her son Andrew went to Martin School and Fleur will be remembered for her consistent support of the East Finchley Arts Festival. She is particularly sad at the loss of Black Gull Books in the High Road, where she read her work several times.

Fleur has been talking to us about her early years, including a particular poem, written when she was nine. She told us: "My class at school had to write a poem about the Pilgrim Fathers. Mine had five verses and began as follows:

*We sailed away on the May-flower*

*To America over the sea  
There were one hundred and four of us,  
And nine children sailed with we.(sic)*

"Terrible grammar, but the teacher gave me a gold star for this effort. There is nothing like praise to encourage someone to carry on writing."

Since then, Fleur has received an OBE in 1996 and The Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2006. In 2019 she travelled back to the land of her birth to receive the New Zealand Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Poetry, presented by then

### Statue mix-up

When giving the answers to our close-up photo competition in last month's edition, we wrongly stated that one of the locations was the statue of Mary Wesley outside East Finchley Methodist Church in the High Road. In fact, the wooden carving is of Susanna Wesley, known to many as the Mother of Methodism.



Collected poems: Fleur Adcock reads her latest volume of poetry published to coincide with her 90th birthday. Photo Mike Coles

premier Jacinda Ardern.

Her own first collection of poems is in a little notebook she had when she was seven. "It has the calendar for 1941 inside the cover, and a faded pencil drawing of a fairy on the outside. I called it Poetry Book," said Fleur.

Fleur's mother read poems to her in bed at night. That encouraged her to read extensively, and later to share her

work with other writers. "I often advise students to join a group of people discussing each other's work." Another of her inspirations is travel. "Just looking out of a train window can get me going."

*Fleur Adcock: Collected Poems*, the first complete edition of her poetry, was published by Bloodaxe Books in hardback and paperback on her 90th birthday, 10 February 2024.



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## Letters

### Where's the evidence?

Dear Editor,

I have been looking for any evidence that the proposed new controlled parking zone extending down more or less to the North Circular Road is needed. I can find none.

The sort of evidence that would justify it would come from people living within the area of the zone who find difficulty parking because of vehicles that come into the zone and park for a few hours, whether because they hop on a bus to the tube station or whatever.

If I am right in thinking that there is no such evidence, then there is absolutely no valid reason for this conduct by the council. It becomes simply an unjustified, and indeed an unlawful, decision made by the council in order to raise revenue. This is what comes if you vote for a council of this stripe!

Additional to the problems for Martin School already highlighted in these columns, Creighton Avenue offers us the northern entrance of Fortismere School as well as Eden Primary where visitors to the schools, as well as staff, are going to be severely affected.

The council should also be challenged to show any evidence of the need to prevent visitors to the area from parking between the weirdly extended hours of 11am to 3pm. However, I do not hold out any hope of a sensible response from the council to any of these questions.

**Charles Lewis,  
Cherry Tree Road, N2.**

### Happy to pay

Dear Editor,

Parking often generates heat and the suggestion to pay for parking in East Finchley is no exception. Not everyone is opposed to improving parking controls. I support restrictions and paying for parking and would go further than the council is suggesting.

I would like to see 24-hour restrictions, limited to one car per household. We have to reduce the use of the car if we are to survive as a species and that does mean inconveniencing some people sometimes. And, yes, I do have a car although I try to use it as little as possible and I live in the proposed CPZ.

**Frances Crook,  
Church Lane, N2.**

### Final page

Dear Editor,

The closure of Black Gull Books in the High Road (*The Archer*, February 2024) is disastrous. Such a loss. Heart breaking. It was unique and irreplaceable, a very special place run by the most wonderful people.

A chat and a laugh with the owners used to set me up for the whole day, if not the week. Black Gull gave me many, many random blasts of joy in these bleak and bitter times. A magical haven, now gone forever.

I may not be responsible for my actions if it is replaced by a coffee shop.

**Janet Maitland,  
Address supplied.**

### Bad signals

Dear Editor,

Has anyone else noticed how many drivers fail to indicate these days? 'Mirror, signal, manoeuvre' was always the mantra when I learned to drive but now for too many people using their orange lights seems to have become optional.

I'm a driver and a cyclist and I see it happening all the time. Or not happening. Drivers do sudden U-turns, left-turns and right turns as if there is no one else on the road but them. The proper use of indicators is common courtesy to other road users but also an essential way to prevent accidents.

I don't say it's a particular East Finchley problem but it does happen round here and it certainly seems to get worse the further you go into town.

In my view, anyone caught not indicating should be transported back to the very early days of motoring and be forced to have someone walk in front of their vehicle waving a red flag as a permanent hazard warning.

**Mike Haworth,  
Long Lane, 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.



View point: Olivier Jaegers out walking with dad Jean-Paul on Parliament Hill

## Olivier takes a hike for children's hospital

By Lynn Winton

**When nine-year-old Olivier Jaegers was finally referred to Great Ormond Street Hospital, he had already experienced years of debilitating migraines. Frequent attacks are very rare in children and, as young as he is, he wanted to do something in return for the great care he was receiving.**

"They do such a fantastic job for so many children," said Olivier, "that I wanted to help other children who are ill."

The Martin School Year 4 pupil, who lives with his family in Sylvester Road, N2, decided to set himself the challenge of hiking 25k around north London, taking his dad Jean-Paul for company.

"We are all so proud of him," said his mother Ellen Jaegers-Thomma. "GOSH have helped him so much, reducing his attacks, and he was able to raise £400 for them."

## Disco for the young at heart

**To mark Action Against Ageism Day later this month, Age UK Barnet is holding a disco for over 55s, a chance to let go and release your inner Olivia Newton John or John Travolta.**

"Just because we get older, we don't stop enjoying what we loved doing when we were younger, says Age UK Barnet's age-friendly coordinator Pippa. "And since there aren't many opportunities for older people to dust off their dancing shoes, we thought we'd invite people along for a boogie or a toe tap if they want to sit back and listen."

A dance instructor will be teaching everyone a few line-dancing moves too. The disco takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT, from 6pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 20 March. It's free admission and there'll be a cash bar.

For more information and to register your place, contact Pippa on [agefriendly@ageuk-barnet.org.uk](mailto:agefriendly@ageuk-barnet.org.uk) or call her on 07379 331807.

## Auditions for Robin Hood

**Garden Suburb Theatre are holding auditions for their summer production of Robin Hood in the Wood, taking place in Little Wood outdoor theatre in June. With parts available for anyone of any age, adults and children alike are encouraged to come and take part.**

The auditions take place at Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church Hall, Northway, NW11 7AG, on Sunday 24 March at 7.30pm. You

do not need to prepare any specific pieces before the audition, and all details can be found at [www.garden-suburbtheatre.org.uk](http://www.garden-suburbtheatre.org.uk).

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

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



## Room on the bus for all

By Maxine Klein

**Imagine having to decide: Do I visit my family or buy something for lunch? How do I get to my doctor's appointment and how do I get my children to school? These are the questions that asylum seekers are having to ask themselves because the minimum allowance that they receive does not cover the cost of bus fares.**

Citizens UK in Barnet asked asylum seekers who are living in hotels what they needed in order to make their lives more tolerable, and the cost of transport was rated as one of their main problems. In order to make a large impact FRS and Finchley Progressive Synagogues joined up with other organisations who are working with asylum seekers to plan a campaign.

I joined the group of asylum seekers who are staying in a north London hotel and together we travelled to City Hall (a one and a half hour journey) to petition the Deputy Mayor for Transport Seb Dance and hand him a petition. We didn't have an official meeting booked but sent in a request for him to come out and meet us.

So on a cold and windy morning he came out of a meeting in the City Hall to listen to us. He was greeted by a group of more than 100 asylum seekers and stewards holding up placards with buses painted on them and the logo 'Room on the Bus', and singing a song the strapline being 'Room on the bus for all of us'. "He was just wearing a jacket in the freezing cold but was nonetheless smiling and amenable. He posed for photos and promised that TFL would put in a request for free London transport for asylum seekers.

It took me a long time to get home again and even longer to warm up but, if our campaign succeeds, I think that it was well worth it.

### All Saints' East Finchley

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or check out our website:  
[allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk](http://allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk)



Night work: Resurfacing machinery and crews move up the High Road after evening rush hour. Photo Mike Coles

## Smoother journeys after hole ridden High Road resurfacing

This was the scene overnight early last month as heavy machinery began resurfacing a long section of the High Road that was riddled with hazardous potholes. Drivers had complained for months that they were being forced to swerve violently to avoid hitting the deepest holes.

So poor was the condition of the heavily-used stretch approaching the North Circular that complete resurfacing was considered the only option. Work took place in February. According to analysis by Smart-Survey released last month,

Barnet was the worst borough in the country for potholes. In January it had 4,656 holes in its roads and a 'fix rate' of just 32.6%. Barnet Council said the borough had one of the largest road networks in London and among the highest volume of

vehicle movements in a day. It claimed the most urgent potholes were fixed within 24 hours and all other between seven and 28 days. You can report a pothole hazard by going to [barnet.gov.uk](http://barnet.gov.uk) and searching 'Potholes'.

## Shop raids and cluttered pavements

By Frank Edwards

*Greengrocers' displays in the way, smash and grabs on the High Road, a spectacular visitor and a choice of entertainment. This is some of the news from East Finchley 100 years ago, as revealed in newspaper archives.*

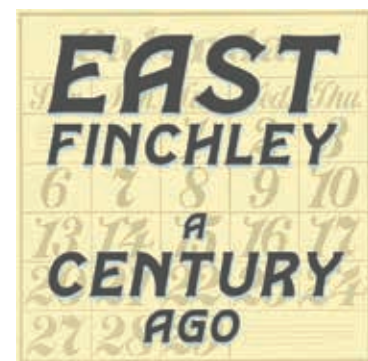
In January 1924 Mr and Mrs Alexander, greengrocers at 26 High Road, just south of Baronsmere Road, were summonsed for obstructing the pavement with a fruit bin. They had heavy rents, rates and taxes to pay, they told magistrates, and the practice of displaying produce for sale on the street was "winked at all over London." In a novel further defence, they argued they could not obstruct the High Road because East Finchley was a "very deserted place." The magistrates were unimpressed and fined them 10s. They were undeterred and three weeks later were fined again.

### Jeweller's raid

Next door, at 28 High Road, one night in March, someone threw a brick through the window of George Freeman's jewellers and stole rings and necklaces worth £4. That same night police officers saw Arthur Johnson outside a jewellers in the Archway Road. Noticing the window was broken, Arthur's leg was bleeding and his pockets bulging, they detained him. "You have got me fair," said Arthur. He confessed to putting his foot through the glass

and taking two watches before adding "I have just done another job about a mile and half down the road."

Admitting responsibility for the East Finchley burglary improved the rate of solved crimes but may not have helped Arthur, an unemployed miner of No Fixed Abode, recently



released from prison. In April, at the Middlesex Sessions, he was sentenced to 10 months hard labour. George Freeman's problems also continued. Persons unknown broke his shop window twice more and stole items worth over £20.

### What a spectacle!

Meanwhile, more people in East Finchley started wearing glasses, well probably. In February 1924 "London's

foremost scientific expert in eyesight testing", a Mr Salmonson, set up in the Wesleyan Church Parlour on the corner of Park Road and the High Road, offering free eye tests and, if "absolutely necessary", lenses and frames at a "nominal price". Unsurprisingly, Mr Salmonson was a spectacles fan. If properly fitted, they "work wonders," he promised and even "tend to gradually strengthen the vision." Confessing alarm at the "numerous cases in East Finchley" of neglected eyesight he was "persuaded" to extend his stay to three weeks, before moving to Hendon and other London venues. He was a "pop-up" optician, long before that term was first coined.

### Evening entertainment

Finally, in the early months of 1924, residents, when not acquiring glasses, could attend Holy Trinity Hall in Church Lane for a Dance and Whist Drive, sing with the East Finchley Choral Society at the Baptist Church in Creighton Avenue or even go to North Road schools (now Martin School) for a lecture on 'Textile Fibres and How they are Dyed'.

## Children's Laureate enlists young testers

By Mike Coles

Joseph Coelho, the Children's Laureate, visited Martin Primary School in January to seek help in testing a new play kit he is developing.

His *Poetry Play Kit* contains 25 games that encourage youngsters to write all kinds of poems from acrostics to haikus, and give them a chance to play poetry consequences and rhyming dominoes.

for organising his visit.

*The Poetry Play Kit* by Joseph Coelho will be available in September. The Children's Laureate role was the brainchild of Ted Hughes and Michael

Since Sarah Batten, from publisher Kaddo, grew up in East Finchley she arranged with Martin Primary to get the school's pupils involved.

Joseph spent the day working with years four and five and their feedback was invaluable to him and Kaddo

in making final changes to the kit. He thanked the children for their time, energy and enthusiasm, and teacher Tracey Hills

Morpurgo, and promotes the importance of children's literature, reading, creativity and storytelling.



Test kit: Children's laureate Joseph Coelho at Martin Primary School

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