



## Letters

### 20 is plenty

Dear Editor

As a pedestrian, a cyclist and a motorist, I share your correspondent's concern about cyclists riding on pavements (Letters, *The Archer*, August 2024).

However, a much greater concern is the number of drivers who flout the 20mph speed limit on the High Road, especially when accelerating to and from the Fortis Green traffic lights. There seems to be no visible enforcement. This endangers pedestrians and other road users.

I wonder if some drivers see the large '20' signs painted on the road at frequent intervals as an indication that they should drive no more than 20 inches behind anyone obeying the speed limit.

**Nick Starling**  
Durham Road, N2.

### Enjoy the Phoenix

Dear Editor,

I feel for the people running the Phoenix Cinema who are trying to keep their business going in the face of a shortage of films (*The Archer*, August 2024) and a general downturn in audiences.

It's so easy to take the Phoenix for granted as we pass it every day or every week on our way somewhere, but to lose this precious asset in our community would be unthinkable. Please, everyone, make a resolution to go and see more films at the Phoenix. One a week, one a month, whatever you fancy. That way the cinema will prosper and be around for us to enjoy for many years to come.

**Julie Lampert,**  
East End Road, N2



### Garden glory

Dear Editor

In part thanks to the article in your August edition ('Now I truly know why open gardens matter', page 12), we had over 260 visitors to our open garden event on Sunday 4 August. I asked visitors at random how they knew about the event and many told me they read the article in *The Archer*.

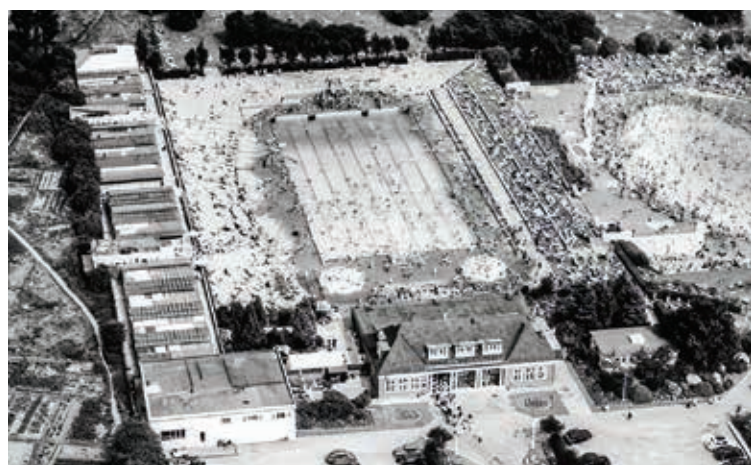
We raised well in excess of £2,500 and it was such a warm and happy event. My partner Earl's cakes were a great hit as usual, and we almost sold out of plants. Thanks to some generous donations of prizes, the raffle raised almost £300.

Our garden in Muswell Hill has been instrumental in bringing all sorts of people together, including our team of volunteers, some of whom started out as visitors. It is a catalyst for good, that seems to help balance much that is dark in our society. Visitors tell us they leave with a sense of peace. So thank you for helping to make that possible.

**Susan Bennett,**  
Alexandra Park Road, N10.



Poolside: Stands filled with spectators watching the 1948 Olympic Games water polo event at Finchley Lido



An aerial view of the water polo pool, left, and the public pool at Finchley Lido during the London Olympics of 1948. Photo Aerofilms

## When the Olympic Games were on our doorstep

By Diana Cormack

**With the glitz, glamour and guts of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad, officially branded as Paris 2024, still fresh in our minds, it is hard to imagine what the 1948 Games in London only three years after the Second World War could have been like.**

It was hoped that they would give a feel-good factor to a country and a world still in the early stages of recovering from that brutal conflict. However, they became known as The Austerity Games as, with Britain facing financial problems, rationing and bomb damage, there was not a lot of money left to spend on them.

So no Olympic village was built for the 4,104 participants from 59 nations. Instead, 3,714 men were housed in Army and RAF camps close to the capital and 390 women in college accommodation.

No new sporting venues were provided either for the 19 sports disciplines. Wembley Stadium, known as the Empire Stadium, was used, along with its Empire Pool for swimming events.

However, the water polo matches did not take place there. The 18 nations competing in that aquatic sport had their own setting with which some

*Archer* readers will be familiar. They used the open-air pool in North Finchley, the much-loved and missed Finchley Lido, now replaced by its modern version on the same site as part of the

Great North Leisure Park.

As the photos show, spectators crowded onto a stand alongside the main pool to watch the water polo players in action. And the aerial shot

by Aerofilms reveals that the oval leisure pool next to it was also extremely popular with children and youngsters. At least they must have had some good weather that year.

## Review: Argy Bargy

Camden Fringe, Upstairs at the Gatehouse

By Jessica Holt

**In this entertaining farce by new East Finchley theatre company Mutley and Minques, two incompetent kidnappers are on a barge heading towards Camden Lock and become involved indirectly with a Colombian cartel and an Argentinian drugs chemist known as The Baker.**

In keeping with farcical comedy, mistaken identity is a key feature and, yes, they have kidnapped the wrong person. This leads to a number of comic misunderstandings which Pinky (played by Imogen Farnworth) and Perky (played by Tilak Patel) finally unravel and together they devise a plan to avoid being annihilated. Their lively and entertaining dialogue is sprinkled with literary references such as TS Eliot and highlights how mismatched Pinky and Perky are.

Kevin, the slow-witted grandson of The Baker (played by Daryl Hurst) has been kidnapped instead



Farical: The cast of Argy Bargy

of Juan, son of the Argentinian cartel boss, and provides the stooge element crucial in farce.

There is plenty of physical movement by the actors providing a real sense of the barge moving slowly down the canal and the sound effects, designed by Mary Musker, successfully provide the atmosphere and comic tension when required.

## Hailstones, holidays and horse manure...

### East Finchley a century ago

By Frank Edwards

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

#### Summer storms

It hasn't been the greatest summer in 2024 but it was not a lot better in 1924. On 22 July a "terrific thunderstorm" swept across London. More than an inch of rain and hail fell in 20 minutes. In Finchley the downpour was of "tropical intensity". Long Lane, Manor Park Road and Church Lane flooded, affecting basements, gardens and even a fowl house, where several chickens drowned.

For those affected it will have been a challenging event but some took a light-hearted approach. Whoever said Finchley has no beautiful watercourses, they asked, and do traders in Church Lane need boats for their customers?

This was not the end of the

wet weather. A second storm descended a week later, in which lightning struck a house in New Trinity Road. Church Lane flooded again, leading to the suggestion that it now be renamed "Where the Waters Meet".

#### Pack your bags

Wet weather or not, it was still the season to holiday. The London and North Eastern Railway, formed just a year earlier, offered regular day trips from East Finchley to Southend-on-Sea at a fare of 3s/6d (about £10 today).

Southend was popular but taking the train was not the only way of getting there. The boys of the Holy Trinity Church choir, treated to a day by the seaside, travelled by train from East Finchley to London Bridge and from there made the trip to Southend by boat.

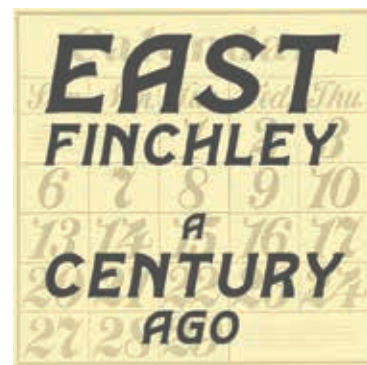
#### Empire on show

A more local attraction was

the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley (for which the Empire Stadium, later Wembley Stadium was built). The exhibition opened in April 1924 and ran through the year. Regular motor bus services from the Bald Faced Stag in East Finchley took visitors direct to the exhibition entrance. The event proved very popular but the volume of motor bus traffic along East End Road was such that it became riddled with potholes.

#### For sale

Those who remained in East Finchley had the chance to browse 'Articles For Sale' in the local paper. In just one week, on offer were a piano, a Decca gramophone with 35 records, an adjustable high chair, a lawn mower, a wheelbarrow, cycles, motor bikes, canaries, fox terriers, horse manure and even a six-month old greyhound (yours for £4).



### East Finchley man does quite well in photography competition

Harry Wheeler of Leslie Road snapped some boys fishing and submitted the image to a national competition run by the *Daily Chronicle*. The newspaper titled the competition "a Happy Photograph" and Harry was no doubt a happy photographer when he learned he had won second prize.

While not the best, this was still an astonishing £100, which equating, perhaps, to up to six months' average earnings and enough to buy 25 greyhounds (see above) was well worth having.