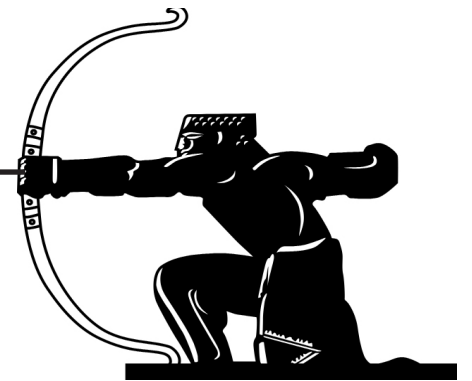


# The Archer

Local News is our Aim



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February 2025 No. 370

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

## Stay on your guard against phone snatch bike gangs

By David Melsome

**Commuters and pedestrians in East Finchley are being urged to be on their guard against gangs of thieves who are riding into the area on electric bikes to steal mobile phones from unsuspecting users in the street.**



*Out in the open: Be alert on your phone*

Several real-time alerts were raised on social media last month as people reported seeing robberies taking place or being attempted, two of the incidents being near East Finchley tube station and close to the Iceland store in the High Road. Met Police say there were a total of 20 mobile phone thefts reported to them in the last three months of 2024, four in October, nine in November and seven in December. At the time of going to press, there had been one theft logged in January but there are likely to have been others unreported.

There are locations where phone users are particularly vulnerable: the tube station has had nine incidents, the crossroads at the junction of the High Road and Fortis Green has had four, Market Place has had two and Oak Lane has had two.

### Travelling gangs

Jan Lovell, of the Met's Safer Neighbourhood Team in East Finchley, said the offenders were young males travelling up the A1000 from the Camden area. Often riding electric bikes, dressed in black and hooded, they can arrive, snatch devices from the hands of their victims and disappear before they can be stopped or recognised. One exception was an incident widely reported on social media on Thursday 9 January when two men were seen at around 7pm stealing

phones in and around the car park outside the tube station.

The father of one of the victims was said to have chased one of the thieves and pinned him to the ground, although he suffered a stab wound in the leg in the scuffle that followed. Police were called to the scene and made an arrest.

Jan Lovell urged anyone whose phone is stolen or who sees suspicious activity to report it immediately to police on 101 so that officers can respond if possible and also build up a picture of where the criminal activity is happening.

### Protect yourself

Most importantly, we can all reduce our chances of becoming victims by taking simple precautions. Keep your phone in your bag or pocket while walking, using earbuds or headphones if you want to make a call while walking. Be aware of your surroundings at all times and if you do need to take your phone out try to do so in the security of a shop or an enclosed doorway.

As one Facebook user said: "Please warn others to be aware and keep their phones out of



## Ice to see you, to see you ice

**There was a chance for some impromptu skating in Cherry Tree Wood during one of the cold snaps we had in January when the park's flooded grass turned to a glassy sheet of ice. Walkers and their dogs were seen picking their way across the hard surface, keeping their feet clean for a change where they'd normally be ankle-deep in mud and water.**

Photo by Nadia Savvopoulou

sight!"

Phone snatching itself is not a new phenomenon but numbers seem to be spiking thanks to the availability of fast-moving bikes and a growing market for reselling stolen phones, often after they have been wiped and reset by criminal factories in Asia according to national media reports.

## Call for Archer reporters

Could you be a reporter for The Archer? We are looking for people to join our team to research and write news articles on topics important to people living and working in East Finchley. We aim to be balanced and non-political in all our reporting. We are all volunteers and the

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role can be done in any spare time you have each month. We are happy to offer guidance to new writers. Experience in

writing or journalism would be a bonus. For more details, please email our team: [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk). Thank you.



## The Archer

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The Archer team wishes to thank all the generous volunteers who give up their spare time, in all weather, to deliver the paper for us.

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

Copy deadlines - March: 14 February; April: 14 March; May: 11 April



Country in the city: The College Farm fields were open to the public until 2001

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

**Reengage** host monthly Sunday tea parties in and around Finchley for people aged 75 and over who are lonely, isolated or in need of companionship. Volunteer drivers are needed to collect older guests from their homes and take them to the tea party where between 10 and 15 older guests and volunteers share tea, cake, and companionship, and enjoy a change of scenery for an afternoon. At the end of the tea party the volunteer drivers take the older guests safely back home. If you would like to get involved as a driver or a coordinator please contact [ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk](mailto:ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk). Find out more at [www.reengage.org.uk](http://www.reengage.org.uk)

Our local **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](mailto:brown.kate@btinternet.com)

Become a **Proms volunteer!** Could you give a few hours a month to help make this year's Proms at St Jude's Festival an even bigger success? The skills or experience needed include admin; IT; organisation and logistics; fundraising; and education. It's a great opportunity to get involved in a local community project, gain experience and meet new people. Find out more by going to [www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering).

**Food Bank Aid** provides essential goods to 31 food banks who in turn support over 20,000 people per week. The team is looking for drivers and help to sort and pack donations for food banks. Their hub at the Great North Leisure Park in Finchley is a fun place to work, with friendly people, music, cake, tea and coffee. Flexible shifts are available. Email [volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk)

The Archer is happy to help all the various local organisations that need volunteers. Don't miss out on this free initiative that gets results! Please submit your listing of maximum 80 words to [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk)

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk)



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## Watchdog places open farm charity under special control

By David Melsome

**The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, has issued a regulatory alert for College Farm Trust, which looks after the farmland open space in Regents Park Road, Finchley.**

The charity, which registered in 1999 to run the farm for public benefit, was placed under statutory inquiry in August last year to investigate a range of concerns about trustee decision making.

The Commission has now appointed Interim Managers to the charity, whose role is to undertake certain duties in line with the charity's governing document.

The Interim Managers were appointed in December and will

be in control of the charity to undertake the duties specified in the appointment order, including securing the charity's property and assets and recruiting members.

### Popular attraction

College Farm used to be home to cattle on its fields and operated as a popular local attraction for families and school visits from 1980 until 2001, when it was shut down because of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak.

Since then, the farm has been open only to customers of the site's associated businesses at the stables, saddlery and tack shop, pet shop and dog grooming parlour.

A campaign group called College Farm Action Group has been calling on the trust to reopen the farmland and resume its former activities.

The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.

## Run and help out in the wood

**A running and volunteering group is aiming to help out more in Cherry Tree Wood this year. The GoodGym team meet regularly for a short run before taking part in an activity that needs manpower and womanpower.**

Late last year, the group met at the Old White Lion pub in the High Road and crossed the road into the wood to spend an hour or two removing turf and creating space for raspberries and other fruit bushes to be planted.

Organiser Paul Salman said: "As always, GoodGym is about the unexpected joys of helping out. If you're reading this, maybe it's time to ditch the screen and dive into something real. Discover the satisfaction

of helping your neighborhood while keeping fit and making friends."

The group usually meets on Tuesday evenings throughout the year. Find out more at [www.goodgym.org](http://www.goodgym.org)

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet

**1 Richmond Road, N2**

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front-facing roof lights

**59 Chandos Road, N2**

Single-storey rear extension following demolition of the existing outrigger

**35 Summerlee Avenue, N2**

Erection of a rear outbuilding

**143 Abbots Gardens, N2**

Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and three front-facing roof lights

**7 Oakview Gardens, N2**

Conversion of garage into habitable room, insertion of window to replace garage door

**44 Baronsmere Road, N2**

Single-storey rear and side extension to existing rear projection. Replacement of the first and second-floor rear windows with new enlarged double glazed windows

**26 Abbots Gardens, N2**

Roof extension involving hip to gable with rear dormer window, three side-facing and three front-facing roof lights, new side gable window. Part single, part two-storey side / rear extension. New front porch with new steps to front door and bin store. Alterations to the front driveway. Changes to fenestration. Erection of rear outbuilding.

### Haringey

**6 Southern Road, N2**

Enlargement / formation of a patio door opening, associated alterations.

**16 Shakespeare Gardens, N2**

Side porch extension, structural alterations at ground floor to an existing two-storey dwelling.

**15 Springcroft Avenue, N2**

Internal renovation of kitchen and dining room, staircase, front living room, first-floor rear bedroom, Underfloor heating to ground floor of the property.

Moving existing side windows to side passageway.

**Whittington Court, Aylmer Road, N2**

Works to upgrade communal doors.



# Calls to improve 'ghost bus' service

By David Melsome

**Campaigners are putting pressure on Transport for London to improve the frequency of the 603 bus route, which has often been described as a 'ghost service'.**

Running between Muswell Hill and Swiss Cottage, passing along Fortis Green and the High Road in East Finchley on the way, it operates on school days only and is heavily used by school and college students.

But the first bus of the day leaves Muswell Hill Broadway at 7.25am and does not start its return journey from Swiss Cottage Station until 8.30am meaning it arrives back in Highgate and Muswell Hill after 9am, when schools and colleges have already started.

## Petition

Campaigners have been organising a petition and have won the support of Camden councillors to lobby Transport for London for an improved service.

Christine McKenzie, of the 603 Watch Group, said other potential users are teachers and

staff as well as general passengers wanting to get to shops and doctors along the route, or to reach Kenwood House and Hampstead Heath.

The campaign group has suggested that there should be regular buses in both directions from Muswell Hill and Swiss Cottage between 6.45am and 8.15am, and between 3.15pm and 6.15pm.

Cllr Mike Hakata, Haringey's cabinet member for transport has now said that his council will arrange a meeting with TfL, Barnet and Camden to "review the proposals and to explore all the options for increasing the frequency of this bus route".

A TfL spokesperson said: "We are happy to discuss the operation of route 603 with Camden Council and other local stakeholders, to ensure we're providing the best bus network possible for Londoners."



Rain or shine: Group leader Louis Victor, right, and his fellow walkers wrap up to enjoy all weathers

# A walk to blow away the cobwebs

By David Melsome

New Year's Day is often a good day to get outside and blow away some of the cobwebs of seasonal celebration. Blowing away was very much on the menu for participants in the first East Finchley Wellbeing Walk of 2025 as they were accompanied by 50mph winds! It seems that Wellbeing Walkers

are made of tough stuff though as there was a turnout of 11 despite the unpromising weather. The Wellbeing Walk takes place every Wednesday morning at 10am come rain or shine and everyone is welcome for a free, easy-paced, one-hour sociable stroll in local green spaces.

The meeting point is opposite East Finchley Station (behind Bus Stop H) and all you have to do is show up and look for the walk leader in a green tabard. For more details look for efwellbeingwalk on Instagram, find announcements in local Facebook groups or email efwellbeingwalk@gmail.com

# Time for tree planting

By Donald Lyven

**Those fortunate to have obtained a Long Lane Pasture Calendar for 2025 will see that February's picture is of Wayne Armsby, the man mainly responsible for saving the Pasture from development, when it was brought under the control of a trust in 2005.**

Wayne was one of the volunteers who turned out regularly to help turn the bramble-infested, rubbish-strewn site, opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3, into the welcoming and award-winning green space it has become. Sadly, Wayne died at this time last year, but his commitment for the environment lives on. Wayne often said: "The best time to have planted a tree was 20 years ago; the next best time is today!" Wayne was

in it for the long haul.

The weeping willow he planted that day is still growing strong, with its double trunk making it very distinctive, and proving that planting a tree at any time is a great way to safeguard the future of our environment.

This year, Wayne's widow Elsie, plans to plant a silver birch on the Pasture in Wayne's memory for future generations to enjoy.



Nature lover: Wayne Armsby planting a young tree on Long Lane Pasture in 2005. Photo Donald Lyven

The calendar photograph shows Wayne in 2005 carrying a tree he was about to plant. Twenty years on, that flat green view of the Pasture has been transformed.

# 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](http://www.the-archer.co.uk). The site also gives information on advertising in our pages and how you can contribute to the paper.

## SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

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# Fly-tipping: people must change their behaviour



Uncollected: Piles of household items are left by the communal bins on the Font Hills estate, off Long Lane

By Julia Lawrence

Thank you to everyone who got in touch following our front-page report last month on the scourge of fly-tipping around the streets and open spaces of East Finchley. You told us about more hot spots where the problem never seems to go away.

Fly-tipping is rife on the corner of The Mead and Font Hill, off Long Lane, N2, says nearby resident Wendy Alderson. "Often it remains on the grass for so long that the grass dies. We do report and often the council will collect only for more to appear," says Wendy. Matteo Lanzini highlighted the

path between King Street and Wardell Court on the Grange Estate, where he often sees household items piled up. He wondered whether adding a bench and a few perennial plants would make fly-tippers think twice.

"I understand the challenges for Barnet Council to educate

and deter people from dumping rubbish in public spaces," said Matteo. "I am however surprised public money is being spent to regularly keep clearing items from some of the hotspots, people thinking of using it as dumping ground."

## Frequent eyesore

A reader in Elmshurst Crescent rang our free phone line (find



Take pride: Could this fly-tipping hotspot off King Street be replaced with a bench and planters?

the number on page 2) to say she and her neighbours often have piles of unwanted items left around their homes.

She has alerted the council many times and eventually they are picked up but in the meantime they are an eyesore. "I think the best solution is for the council to offer a free service, well-advertised, to pick up these large items from people's homes," she told us. "Currently people are put off by the charges.

The community skips do not work because many people don't have the strength to carry large items to where they are situated."

## Skip the skip

Tony Roberts, who lives in Sedgemere Avenue, agreed that Barnet Council's community skip service was not easy to use. "When the service was introduced we were notified that our skip would be at the bottom of Brookland Rise, which was really much too far away for us to carry anything; not only that, but if we didn't have the right paperwork we'd have to carry it back again!

We heard nothing since then and are surprised to learn from The Archer that there was a skip on Trinity Avenue, much nearer to where we live, in October! We were not notified of this."

Finally, Bob Davenport told us that the North London Waste Authority offers Barnet, but not Haringey, residents free collection of large, heavy household electrical appliances that cannot be easily carried by one person. These are limited to goods like fridges, freezers, ovens, televisions and dishwashers. Find out more at [www.anyjunk.co.uk/council-booking/north-london-waste-authority](http://www.anyjunk.co.uk/council-booking/north-london-waste-authority).



Eyesore: More rubbish left out in the open on the Font Hills estate

## From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

### 10 years ago: February 2015

A 'forgery factory' was discovered in Western Road, N2, by police when they broke up an Albanian-led forgery network after a three-year investigation. Arsene Meci, owner of the house, and his associate Medi Krasniqi, received long sentences after pleading guilty to a variety of charges, having been described in court as "prolific forgers".

### 15 years ago: February 2010

Fires in two local homes highlighted the need for care in ensuring safety in the home. A kitchen fire in Trinity Road quickly spread to the rest of the property, and a resident died following a fire in a flat at Paul Byrne House in Helen Close. London Fire Brigade reminded readers that they offer free personal fire safety advice to local residents and can also fit free smoke alarms.

### 23 years ago: February 2002

Long-serving chief projectionist at the Phoenix Cinema, Peter Bayley, was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list. He started working at the Phoenix in 1960 and became chief projectionist four years later. His investiture took place on 27 February and, despite more than 40 years' service, Peter said he had no plans to retire.

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# Call for volunteers at Citizens Advice

By David Melsome

Citizens Advice Barnet are seeking people who are interested in becoming volunteer advisers or trustees with the charity. All new volunteer advisers will receive extensive training to make sure that they are equipped to give high-quality advice, including on problems with employment, benefits, debt, immigration and housing.

Naomi Bielak, training and development manager at Citizens Advice Barnet, said: "Clients often come to us when they are at breaking point and don't know where else to turn. We equip volunteer advisers with the skills and tools to help these clients move forward and make a real difference to people's lives."

Catherine Mkhize has been a volunteer adviser at Citizens Advice Barnet for just under one year. She said: "It has opened my eyes to a whole side of living in London that I was unaware of before. It is very humbling and at the same time rewarding because you are helping clients by giving them the advice and help they need to sort out their problems."

Citizens Advice Barnet are also particularly keen to hear from people who have work and or life experiences that could be put to good use as trustees for the charity.

Ms Bielak added: "Perhaps you know what it is to lead an organisation and provide guidance and vision for how to move organisations forward. We have trustee roles available, and we need strong leadership, now more than ever, to help us navigate the challenges that come with being a small, independent charity in this current economic environment."

Citizens Advice Barnet is an independent, local charity and a member of the Citizens Advice network. For more information about volunteering, visit: <https://barnetcab.org.uk>



Huge potential: Gold medal winning Vivienne is looking for support to help her pursue her gymnastics career

## Winter warmer invite

A reminder that the Grange Big Local team are hosting a Warm Space at the Tarling Road Community Centre, Fallows Close, N2, every week until the end of March.

Free and open to all, there will be coffee and activities like arts and crafts, talks and gardening.

Parents and carers are encouraged to drop in after the school run to make new friends.

The sessions run from 9.30am to 12pm every Thursday morning from 9 January to 27 March.

Find out more by emailing [info@grangebiglocal.org](mailto:info@grangebiglocal.org)

## Young gymnastics star seeks help to be the best on the mat

By David Melsome

A family has put out an appeal to help their 10-year-old daughter realise her dreams in the world of competitive gymnastics.

Magdalena Karwan is celebrating after her daughter Vivienne was selected for the English Rhythmic National Team Squad last month. But the honour comes with a lot of financial demands for travel and gymnastic kit which the family are finding it hard to meet.

They are appealing for a local individual or business to sponsor her activities in 2025 so that she can fulfil her potential.

Vivi, who lives in the Tarling Road area of East Finchley and goes to Highgate Primary School, is already a three-time gold medallist in the NDP British Rhythmic Gymnastics championships and a three-time

gold medallist in the English Rhythmic Gymnastics championships.

### Elite squad

She began the sport at the age of six, training online in the pandemic, and now practises five days a week as part of an elite group. She is one of the three youngest girls selected for the English squad.

"Vivi needs additional ballet classes, classes at least once a month 1:1 with a trainer in the gym, and the possibility of doing master classes in dance and gymnastics," said Magdalena.

"We are not able to provide £700-750 per month, together her with all this. The costs of her training are already around with my husband we can barely make ends meet.

"We will be grateful for any help. Maybe there will be a person or a company that will decide to enable her to develop in this sport. In return we can offer to promote logos and company names on Vivi's accounts on Instagram, Facebook and other social media."

To find out more contact Magdalena at [magdalenakarwan@gmail.com](mailto:magdalenakarwan@gmail.com)

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### Did you know?

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# My grandparents' journey to safety in England



Refugees: Alex and Anne Singer in England, date unknown, and, right, a photo taken in 1915 of Alex Singer practising as a dentist in a German Field Hospital during the First World War

**Debora Singer MBE lives in the heart of East Finchley and has devoted a large part of her life and career to campaigning for a fairer society in the fields of human rights and helping refugees, and received her MBE in 2012 for services to women seeking asylum, whilst working at Asylum Aid. Her own family history of many relatives fleeing persecution informs her work today at human rights charity René Cassin. To mark Holocaust Memorial Day last month, Debora recounts the experience of her grandparents who escaped the hell of Nazi Germany.**

My grandparents were both dentists. It was unusual for a woman to be a dentist in the 1930s, so I am very proud of my grandmother. Anne and Alex Singer had separate surgeries in Nürnberg in Germany and brought up their children as the Nazi laws took hold. Their journey to safety in England is now illustrated in the Refugee Map created by the Wiener Holocaust Library.

The map shows that in November 1939, my grandfather Alex Singer was one of thousands of Jewish men rounded up and sent to an internment camp, in his case Dachau. By this time their son Peter (my father) was 16 and at Farnham Grammar School in Surrey. Peter's headmaster, Dr Morgan, with others, helped my grandparents to obtain visas and they arrived in Farnham. Their visas stated that they were not allowed to work for a year. Indeed dentists were not allowed to work at all because British dentists were concerned about competition.

### Kindness of strangers

With no money or means of earning, my grandparents were dependent on the kindness of strangers. Dr Morgan had them over to his house for meals

every day. When Alex tried to thank him, he brushed him off saying it was a privilege to help.

The next place on the map is the Isle of Man. In 1940, Alex was one of many so-called "enemy aliens" interned there. Although the camp proved a cultural environment, it was very hard for Alex and his family to be separated for nearly a year. Finally the map shows that my grandparents settled in London. Sadly Anne's health declined and she died of cancer in 1951. Alex continued trying in vain to obtain work as a dentist. Meanwhile he provided dental treatment to other refugees in north London despite

it being against the rules.

### Parallels today

I work at René Cassin, where the human rights of refugees are one of the areas we campaign on. Looking at my grandparents' map and story, my colleagues and I were intrigued by the many parallels with the experiences of people seeking asylum today. There are common themes of persecution, the need for safe and legal routes, visa requirements, the kindness of strangers, internment/detention, not being allowed to work and working illegally.

My hope is that we can learn from my grandparents' story to improve the experiences of people seeking protection from persecution now.



Tracing her family history:  
Debora Singer

### Scams sense

In October 2024 Barnet residents lost over £1.3 million to scams. Age UK Barnet is offering one-to-one support to anyone over 50 to help them change their habits and reduce their risk of becoming a victim.

A member of the Age UK team can give a talk to your organisation or group, and they are on hand to provide extra support to individuals as well.

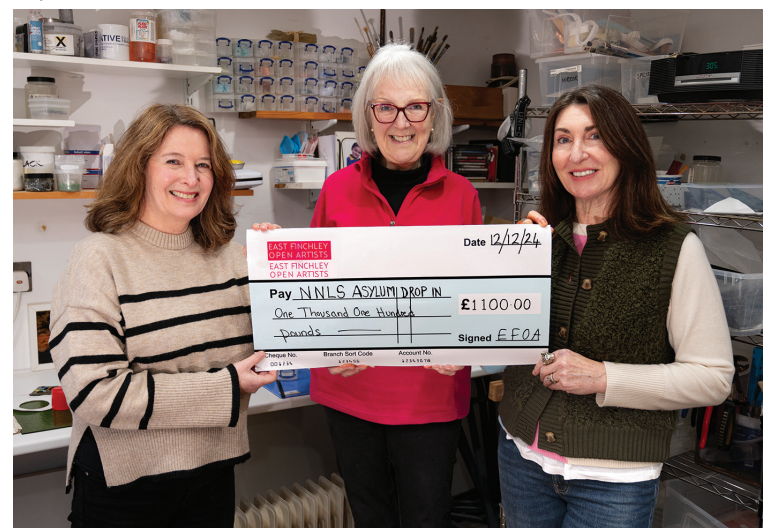
Email [scamsawareness@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:scamsawareness@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call 020 8432 2217.

### Tell us the news in N2

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Tell us what is going on in East Finchley by emailing [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you.

## Artists raise funds for asylum seekers

East Finchley Open Artists, a community arts group, raised £1,100 at their annual arts and crafts Winter Fair raffle for north London charity, NNLS Destitute Asylum Seekers Drop-in, a charity that helps to relieve hardship and provides support to those seeking asylum.



Vital service: Representatives from the East Finchley Open Artists group with the funds raised to support the asylum drop-in

## Indoor bargains

The next Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 22 February from 10am to 1pm in its usual venue of 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.

This regular event always takes place on the last Saturday of each month, offering a wide variety of stalls and bargains. For more information, contact 020 8368 8180.

## 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.

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# How Matt will use his honour to push for change

By Lynn Winton

**Matt Cain, successful writer, journalist and gay activist, moved into his home in Fortis Green Avenue, N2, with husband Harry Glasstone and Nellie the cat 18 months ago. Meeting at his local café Green and Blossom, we talked about exploring his new surroundings, his body of work in writing and broadcasting, and mainly his MBE, awarded in the New Year's honours list.**



Breakthrough: Matt Cain hopes his MBE will bring more recognition to other writers and gay characters

Matt, 50, who has been honoured as a writer and broadcaster for services to LGBTQ+ culture, grew up amongst a close extended family in Bolton, but was horrifically bullied and marginalised at school. "So after decades of fighting prejudice and hard work, when I opened the honours letter from the Cabinet Office I burst into tears," he said.

"I am hoping its heft enables me to carry on pushing for change, so I can help talented authors writing about gay characters to get more recognition at major literary festivals, and that younger gay writers won't have such a hard time breaking through."

### Unflinching

Matt's latest and seventh novel *One Love*, has been described as "rich, funny, poignant and an unflinchingly honest portrayal of friendship, love and everything in between" and he thinks it's his best yet.

"My third novel, *The Madonna of Bolton*, was rejected for 10 years, due to its gay protagonist and theme. Once I realised the rejections were purely for homophobic

reasons, I turned to crowdfunding to publish it and reached the target in just seven days." Pledges came in from 28 countries and backers included fellow popular authors David Walliams, David Nicholls and Lisa Jewell. Matt writes daily in his book-lined third-floor eyrie, with "walking to think" in Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood an essential component of his routine. "We're great friends with the actress Harriet Thorpe (who plays Elaine Peacock in *EastEnders*) who has lived in East Finchley for years and she was one of the reasons we ended up here. In the summer she took us to the East Finchley Festival and we absolutely loved it!"

### In conversation

Matt's latest novel was published last month and is widely available. He will be discussing his life and novels in conversation with Clare Gardner at Finchley Church End Library on Sunday 4 May at 11am, as part of the Barnet Libraries Literary Festival. Further details about the festival are not yet available but will be in a future edition of *The Archer*. Find out more at [mattcainwriter.com](http://mattcainwriter.com)

# Regeneration champion named in New Year's Honours

*This New Year's Honours list brought recognition for James Masters, who was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community, as Chair of the Grange Big Local regeneration project in East Finchley. Here he explains what the honour means to him.*

While I've put in a lot of work, and my name may be on the medal, it feels far more like a recognition of what we've achieved together through Grange Big Local (GBL).

GBL has always been about bringing people together to make real, lasting changes in our community. When the programme began, it offered an incredible opportunity: £1 million to transform our area over a decade, led entirely by residents.

That's no small challenge and has required a lot of commitment from me as Chair, but it's also what makes Big Local special: it puts the decisions and power in the hands of the people who live here.

### Creative change

Looking back, I'm so grateful for what we've accomplished. We supported a range of projects including Barnwood N2, which reclaimed a neglected space and turned it into a community forest.

This space later hosted N2 Mums Speak (and others) during the pandemic and was featured on BBC London News.

We funded Bread n Butter, which tackles social isolation, and Art Against Knives, which empowers young people through creativity. We contributed funding to an outdoor play and learning space called 'Green Arrows' at The Archer Academy, and an inspirational local changemaker for whom we seeded a small grant to support girls' football locally, an initiative that mushroomed into a multitude of projects.

One of the boldest ideas we explored was a Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot. For a time, it felt like the whole country was talking about it: a question at Prime Minister's Questions, another to the Mayor, two hours of debate on LBC, and coverage across national and international media. It was a defining moment that demonstrated how powerful a community-driven idea can be.

### Seen and heard close to home

People can be odd... in many ways. Tell us if you've seen or heard something funny around East Finchley and we'll give it a mention. Email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748.



Team effort: James Masters was awarded a BEM in the New Years Honours

### Ripple effect

As we enter the final year of Grange Big Local, its legacy feels more important than ever. The ripple effect of investing in projects, people, and groups will continue to benefit our community for years to come.

The seeds we've planted will keep growing long after we're gone. It's this long-term vision that inspired my efforts to help found a national organisation called ACT, ensuring the work continues and connections expand.

  
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Overall 'GOOD' rating from the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report. Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. You may view the full report at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

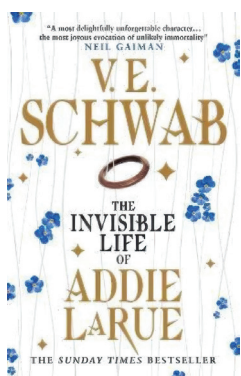


## Six of the best

As we move between the dark winter evenings and the lighter days of spring, Archer writer Amaya Shankardass recommends six of her favourite reads.

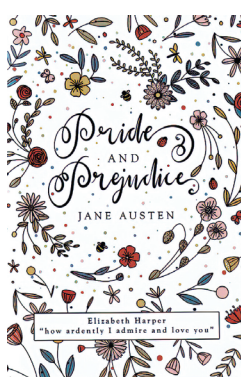
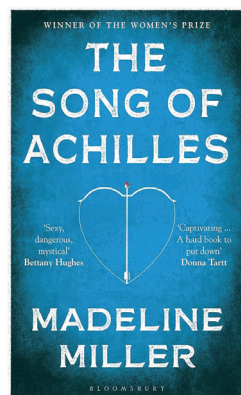
### All The Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr

This novel weaves together the captivating stories of a blind French girl, a German boy, and a German sergeant major as they navigate the events of World War Two. From its first chapter, the story is beautifully painted through vivid, faultless writing. To see the evolution of the war through young eyes on both sides of the battlefield is not only moving but enlightening, and proves a testament to Doerr's literary skill. It is undoubtedly one of my favourite books. "Open your eyes... and see what you can do with them before they close forever."



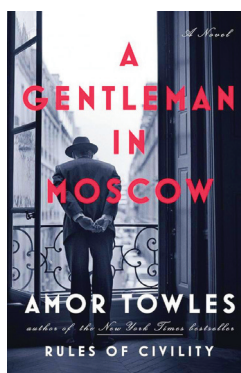
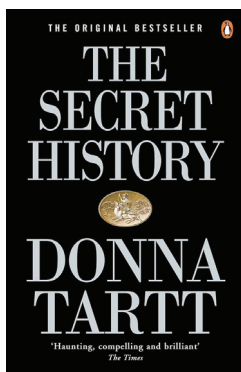
### The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, by V.E. Schwab

On the night of her wedding, Addie LaRue realises that she cannot bind herself to an unremarkable, repetitive life. Leaving her rural village of Villon-Sur-Sarthe, she strikes a deal with a dark god to escape her fate, and is granted immortality. The only downside? Upon leaving one's sight, she fades from memory. Like Anthony Doerr, V.E. Schwab delivers Addie's story with a singular elegance and passion. Last year, I re-read this book before each of my GCSE English Language exams, for inspiration! "Do you know how to live three hundred years?... The same way you live



### The Song of Achilles, by Madeline Miller

Through the perspective of Patroclus, an exiled prince, Madeline Miller retells the events leading up to and during the Trojan War. After initially befriending Achilles, Prince of Phthia, the relationship between the two men develops into something much deeper, until Achilles is forced to leave for war. Unable to leave his side, Patroclus follows him, instigating a heart-breaking story which questions the cost of glory. Tear-jerking and moving, this novel is perfect for those looking for an emotional escape. "Perhaps it is the greater grief... to be left on Earth when another is gone."



### Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen

If you enjoyed the latest Bridgerton series, then why not try the book that inspired the author Julia Quinn? Elizabeth Bennet initially finds herself despising the rich, disagreeable Mr Darcy. However, their relationship evolves as personal growth leads her to overcome her prejudice and him his pride. With enemies-to-lovers, scandals, lavish balls and comedy,

what's not to like? "There is no enjoyment like reading! How much sooner one tires of anything than of a book!"

## Home and family for a Londoner in Lusaka

By Ruth Anders

East Finchley has been home to some very creative writers, and The Archer recently met another, local resident Rachel Davies, who has just published a book of poems called *Life, In Shorts*.

When Rachel applied to work with Voluntary Service Overseas in 2007, she was posted to Zambia and, knowing nothing about the country, she moved to Siavonga on the north shore of Lake Kariba. Rachel learned to cook from scratch there, despite the limited food available, even learning how to kill her own chicken!

After returning to England a year later, she realised that she had left part of her heart there. Around 14 years passed before she and her husband and two children, aged seven and nine, returned to spend 12 months split between Siavonga and the country's capital Lusaka. They returned to East Finchley last summer.

### Life in Africa

Back in London, alongside being a poet and busy mum, Rachel is a life and leadership coach. She acknowledges that her time in Africa has affected her profoundly.

Rachel told The Archer: "I started writing these poems as

a way of processing what I was experiencing throughout our move. It was helpful to record our very different life, watching my children running barefoot, holding on to the sides of cars with the wind in their hair, and spending their days playing outdoors with some rope, sticks and their imaginations.

"I was also reflecting on what 'home' means: identity, parenting, difference, privilege and inequality. Here in London life is all about Things, but I believe that the richness of life lies in simplicity and appreciating what we have."

These themes run through her anthology, a delightful collection of 47 poems featuring anything from the local currency 'kwacha' and Lusaka traffic to village life and the environment.

Rachel added, "My hope is that this collection offers a small insight into what it means to be outside our comfort zone, and that this might encourage all of us, myself included, to explore more." Here's a taster:



Two worlds: Rachel Davies reflects on a life spent between Zambia and north London

### Life

*The crow of the cockerel as the grasshoppers chirrup, a sound mind-breakingly loud for their small bodies. A leaf falls. The sun tickles the tops of the trees, moving slowly to cast its light across the grass path, rays caressing everything they touch before the later scorch – the burn in the heat of the day – but gentle now. Soft early morning, as the dreams of a billion creatures float in the air. Centuries of life on life on red earth. Dust.*

The eBook of *Life, In Shorts* can be found at <https://amzn.eu/d/8hmuoIz>

### The Secret History by Donna Tartt

This modern classic follows six Classical Greek students as their ambitions and intellectual pursuits lead them down a wild path. Donna Tartt subverts the stereotypical murder mystery to construct a novel that explores themes of morality, perfection, and evil. I would particularly recommend it if you enjoyed *The Picture of Dorian Gray* or are studying any of the Classics. "Beauty is terror. Whatever we call beautiful, we quiver before it."

### A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

Towles tells the story of a Russian aristocrat sentenced to a lifetime of house arrest within a hotel. His interactions with hotel staff and guests, across three decades, unmask the political and social upheavals of Soviet Russia. Whilst I haven't finished reading it, the originality and philosophical themes underpinning the novel already convince me that it will be one of my favourites. "It was, without question, the smallest room that he had occupied in his life; yet somehow, within these four walls the world had come and gone."

Do you have a favourite reading list? Send your mini reviews to us and we'll consider the best and most interesting for publication. Email [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk)

## The prince and the orphan

By Lynn Winton

There must be many East Finchley households who already have one of Ros Freeborn's creations in their home: she has built her lampshade company Papershades into a thriving business and has brought a colourful assortment to her stall at East Finchley Festival in recent years.

Now you can have something by Ros on the bookshelves too, as she has written a historical novel based on the real characters of King George III and his illegitimate son Frederick Blomberg, called *Prince George and Master Frederick*.

The facts are little known and fascinating. In 1765 a four-year-old orphan boy is taken to the royal palace in Richmond to be a playmate for three year old Prince George, son of King George III and Queen Charlotte.

Diametrically opposed in temperament and character, they go on to live wildly different lives but remain devoted to each other until death.

Their lives are well chronicled and Ros cleverly interweaves fact and fiction into a



Royal connections: Ros has uncovered a little-known story from the life of George III

compelling novel. Who was Frederick Blomberg and how do we know his parentage? What was Ros's own family connection that drew her in to embark on this endeavour? The book reveals all.

*Prince George and Master Frederick* is published by Alliance and available now.





Circus skills: Trapeze artists perform at Jacksons Lane in 1988

## Fifty years of a thriving community arts centre

By Jessica Holt

It was 50 years ago that a small theatre opened in a converted Methodist church opposite Highgate tube station and the Jacksons Lane centre has thrived ever since, delivering programmes of music, dance and plays with a special focus on circus skills.

At its heart are its outreach programmes to schools and young people. It also opens its doors to charities and offers the theatre as a rehearsal space to commercial concerns such as the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing.

A special evening to mark the anniversary highlighted new projects the creative team are embarking on. For example an archive is to be housed in Bruce Castle Museum in Haringey, a memory project involving anyone with a memory of

a visit to the theatre which I was particularly charmed by.

It also showcased future productions, among them Handful of Nothing starring Tilly Lee-Cronick from Muswell Hill, who studied drama and theatre studies at Fortismere School. This one-woman show, a combination of storytelling, poetry, song and dance, is at Jacksons Lane on Thursday 6 February and will be truly fascinating if her short extract performance was anything to go by.



Still shining: The arts centre as it is in its 50th year

## Jackie Briggs, a friend to families facing hurdles

Gay rights advocate Jackie Briggs, who died in October at the age of 77, had lived in East Finchley since 1983, mainly in Edmund's Walk. Here her son Robert Briggs recounts her life and achievements in using her own experience to help other families.

My mother Jackie Briggs dedicated much of her later life to helping parents understand and accept their children's sexual orientation or gender identity, a cause deeply personal to her after both of her own children came out.

Born in London in 1947 to a middle-class Jewish family, she was proud of the fact that she had much personal and professional success despite leaving school in Harrow at 15 with only one O-Level. After training as a secretary, she worked in various roles, including at the BBC and Cadbury Schweppes, while enjoying an active social life in London.

In 1982, Jackie married John Briggs, a barrister, with whom she had my sister Anne and me. Alongside her family life, Jackie pursued her passion for acting. She participated in local improvisation drama classes and amateur theatre. She later studied at the Central School of Speech and Drama and acted professionally, with notable roles including an appearance as a Ministry wizard in Harry Potter.

### Community volunteer

Her natural warmth led her to community work. This included volunteering as a companion to elderly people through the East Finchley Neighbourhood Centre and taking her beloved whippet Coby to primary schools as part of a 'pets-as-therapy' programme, helping children to build their confidence in reading. But it was her work with Families Together London (FTL), a support group for parents of LGBTQ+ children, that became her defining cause. For nearly 20 years, Jackie provided invaluable support to families, offering encouragement to those struggling with their children's coming out and serving as a vocal advocate on the radio and at conferences.

She was also a long-time member of the Community Advisory Board for Pride in London. She was as comfortable talking with fellow parents in the church hall where the group met every month, as she was marching down Oxford Street in the Pride parade, tannoy in hand and waving a banner.

### Deep connections

In her final months, as she endured a debilitating stroke and brain tumour, Jackie continued to form deep connections and friendships with fellow patients in various hospitals and



Campaigner: Jackie Briggs fought to support families bringing up LGBTQ+ children

later a nursing home. Her ability to reach out, even in the face of her own challenges, reflected the deep empathy that defined her life.

Jackie is survived by her

husband John, her brother Howard, her children Anne and Robert, and their partners Elodie and James (Jimmy) who she loved as her own.

ANY READER WHO FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT ANY MATTER IS INVITED TO USE THIS "SOAP-BOX" COLUMN. PLEASE NOTE THAT OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE THOSE OF THE WRITER ALONE.



## Avenue is appalling

By Isobel Grant

These too are now being demolished and replaced with flats, large ugly houses some of which resemble masonic temples, and an enormous old people's 'retirement facility' that towers above tree height, has no pretension to beauty and recalls a stranded liner.

This long-term N2 resident used to enjoy looking at the different houses with their huge well-kept front gardens open to view. Now I sigh with despair at the continued destruction and the gates, hedges and fences designed to stop one seeing anything.

Regular drivers up the Avenue cannot fail to be annoyed at the appalling state

of the upper end of the road created by the many heavy lorries that deliver concrete and heavy building materials to multifarious building sites.

Traffic is frequently stopped by large vehicles turning and reversing whilst making deliveries. Many of the building workers seem to travel by car, as the road is usually fully parked on both sides, making it too narrow for cars to pass the constant stream of trucks.

Even with the need for planning consent, this once attractive street has been degraded. What will happen with even more deregulation remains a mystery, but it won't be pretty!

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a game for all ages  
100 years v 16 years



Every station: Ella and friends pass close to home on their walk down the route of the Northern line. Photo by Mike Coles

## I walked the line

Thirteen-year-old local student Ella describes the day she was joined by a group of friends to walk the length of the Northern line to raise funds for three charities.

On a Monday in late December, I took on the crazy challenge of walking the 23-mile length of the Northern line, all the way from High Barnet to Morden via Charing Cross, in one day.

The reason I wanted to complete this is because my bat mitzvah is coming up in 2025 and I wanted to raise some money for three charities close to my heart: Teenage Cancer Trust, Magen David Adom and MyIsrael. I absolutely love all things Transport for London, and walking too, so I pitched the idea to my parents and thankfully they agreed. On the day, I started at High Barnet at 7.30 am with my friend Nia and my dad, and other neighbourhood friends and family joined for different sections along the way.

I had a photo at each of the 30 stations, and reached Morden in less than nine hours.

We were really lucky with the weather, it was dry all day with a little bit of sun in the morning. At the beginning, I felt excited, energetic and a tiny bit nervous, towards the middle, I felt a little bit achy and tired, but still raring to go, and by the time I finished, I was exhausted and very achy, but proud of my accomplishment too. We decided to get the tube home.

I'm really thankful for people's generous donations to all three causes, but you can never raise too much, so it would be massively appreciated if any more donations were made. To make a contribution, go to [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) and search 'Ella Flitterman'.



Mixed media: A work by Nadia Savvopoulou inspired by characters in the film Dune, directed by David Lynch in 1984

## For the love of cinema

The Phoenix Cinema is hosting an exhibition by a local architect and artist this month.

'For the Love of Cinema' is an exhibition of mixed media work by archnote aka Nadia Savvopoulou. Inspired by a love of cinema and visual arts, this is the second exhibition with the same title to be hosted at the Phoenix.

Last year, archnote presented work that showcased her love of materials and experimentation, and this year she is taking this one step further. All of her work is handmade, including the frames whose style responds to the theme of

the exhibition. Whether simply depicting a character from a movie or series, or creating a composition inspired by various elements in a film, each piece aims to capture the lasting effect of the movie.

Head over to **The Phoenix** throughout February to enjoy works inspired by the Qatsi trilogy, Poor Things, Copenhagen Cowboy and more films that impressed archnote. All original artwork will be for sale and prints will also be available on request.



Find out more about Nadia and her work through this QR code

## What's On at the Phoenix in February

By Rob Kenny, executive director

The response from customers since we reopened in December has been phenomenal and we at the cinema are tremendously grateful for everyone's continued support.

The fabulous films continue at the Phoenix Cinema into February, with Mike Leigh's latest offering *Hard Truths* expected to be a local hit. Mainly filmed in and around East Finchley, it stars Marianne Jean-Baptiste (previously in Leigh's *Secrets & Lies*) as the never-to-be-forgotten Pansy. Award nominations aplenty are sure to be heading her way.

September 5 tells the story of the taking of Israeli athletes as hostages by the Black September terrorist group at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich. The film is set in the TV network ABC's Control Room and features outstanding performances, especially from John Magaro and Ben Chaplin. While the ending may already be known, this is a taut thriller that deserves to be seen at the cinema.

The first NT LIVE offering of the New Year is Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being*

*Earnest*, filmed at the National Theatre on the South Bank. A trivial comedy for serious people, this is a joyful reimagining of this celebrated comedy starring three-time Olivier Award-winner Sharon D Clarke, the present-day Doctor Who Ncuti Gatwa (Doctor Who) and Hugh Skinner from *W12* and *Fleabag*.

The stage version of Stanley Kubrick's film classic *Dr Strangelove*, co-written by Armando Iannucci and starring Steve Coogan, will follow in March with tickets on sale now.

Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 10180 Bruxelles (try fitting that on the sign outside the Phoenix!) is lauded as one of the greatest films of all time, and the greatest film about time. Voted Sight and Sound's Greatest Film Of All Time in the 2022 Critics' poll, Chantal Akerman's cinematically radical film challenged the status quo when it was originally



released in 1975 and continues to do so today. Expect long and thoughtful takes in this slow cinema study of a widow's life over three days.

*I'm Still Here* will be in the cinema towards the end of February and is the much-anticipated return of director Walter Salles, of *Motorcycle Diaries* fame. A powerful true story, Fernanda Montenegro produces a stunning performance as the wife of Rubens Paiva, a disappeared congressman and activist, desperately seeking justice for her husband. Adapted from his son Marcelo Rubens Paiva's memoir, this is a powerful political drama set in 1971 Brazil.

Find our full schedule and book tickets at [www.phoenix-cinema.co.uk](http://www.phoenix-cinema.co.uk) or visit the box office in our foyer.

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## Letters

### Phoenix reborn

Dear Editor,

East Finchley's beloved independent Phoenix Cinema reopened just before Christmas to showcase its sumptuous refurbishment. Not only has the main screen had a luxurious makeover, there's an exciting additional screen to increase the repertoire of films on offer to residents of N2 and further afield.

We were thrilled to visit the new additional screen a few days after its opening. It's a wonderfully cosy and incredibly comfortable setting in which to spend a few hours of film watching. Boasting 23 large, modern cinema seats, the second screen is an absolute delight. It also includes a brand new 2k laser projector and an immersive surround sound system.



Take it easy: Some like the new seats at the Phoenix, some don't

As a new year treat, we were back, this time to see a film showing in the transformed main screen, with its upgraded sound system. There's a lovely aroma of new soft furnishings, with large, comfortable seats including extra leg room and drinks holders for the cup of tea that is essential for me for film watching, all adding to the joy of a trip to the Phoenix. For those who feel like splashing out, premium seating is also available.

If you haven't yet been to our fantastic new look local cinema, it's well worth a visit for an extra special afternoon or evening out. Part of the High Road since 1910, the refurbished Phoenix well deserves its place as one of the jewels in East Finchley's crown.

**Gail Norcliffe**  
Address supplied

**Send your letters 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.

### Not impressed

Dear Editor

Following the £500,000 refurbishment and expansion of the Phoenix Cinema, apparently "first reactions to the new seats in the main auditorium were positive" (The Archer, January 2025).

I beg to differ: on my first visit in early January I was not the only one to be frankly appalled by the highly uncomfortable, backwards-leaning seats. These could be appropriate in a plane or train, encouraging occupants to doze away a long journey, but are counter-productive in a cinema.

As the backs are non-adjustable I put my rolled-up coat behind me; my neighbour will bring a cushion next time saying, tongue-in-cheek, that the sleep-inducing angle might be intentional so that viewers have



Planet friendly: The Eco Eddy mascot designed to front Martin Primary School's sustainability project

## School sets goal of super sustainability

By Isobel Grant

**A green mascot called Eco Eddie designed by children at Martin Primary School in East Finchley is helping pupils and staff to achieve the school's goal of becoming a Sustainability Super School by the end of the summer term.**

The school ran a competition last term for the children to create an eco-mascot image to represent the programme, and the winner was Eco Eddie, who is now appearing all over the buildings and grounds, attached for example to light switches (Switch It Off!), and everywhere else where an action reminder is helpful.

At the same time, Martin Primary is establishing better forms of waste reduction and disposal, introducing more trees and plants to its premises and implementing an air quality measuring project in partnership with Imperial College.

The school has even launched its own Eco-Council,

whose members from Years 4 to 6 include a representative from each class. They meet once a week to discuss possible improvements to school activities.

One of the school's governors, acting as their Climate Ambassador, is working with a designated member of staff to develop and deliver a climate action plan unique to the school.

### Make a difference

Headteacher Ziz Chater told TheArcher: "I'm delighted with the progress that has already been made with this programme.

We're working hard to engage the children, staff, parents and the wider community

to be aware of all the things they can do to make a difference. The children are really enthusiastic."

Martin Primary is aligning with the Climate Ambassador initiative developed by University College London's Climate Action Unit, a programme that is progressing the Department for Education's sustainability and climate change strategy to help education settings develop impactful climate action plans.

Barnet Council is also involved, co-producing schemes giving general support to schools in the Borough. So, a lot of help is available to inspire and help put the MPS programme into practice.

## Boxing can be for anybody

**Fitness coach Nick Weekes has a passion for boxing as a tool for personal growth in both mind and body, and he is keen to dispel any notion that it's an activity "just for blokes".**

"It's all about keeping it fun with good, happy, vibes and there is no upper age limit: anyone can use boxing skills to be fit and healthy," said Nick, who has just opened a new boxing club in the centre of Muswell Hill.

He is offering a free first session to anyone interested in getting strong, fit and confident. This includes his youth classes

for 12 to 18-year-olds. Find out more at [muswellhillboxingclub.com](http://muswellhillboxingclub.com)



Punch it: The new boxing club is open to all ages and all abilities

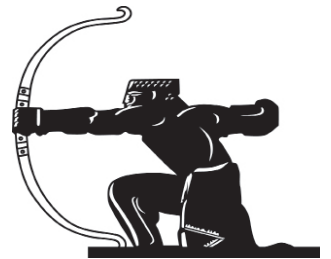
## Did you know?

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.

## Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Tell us what is going on in East Finchley by emailing [news@the-archer.co.uk](mailto:news@the-archer.co.uk) or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you.



## Date confirmed for 2025 summer festival

By David Melsome

This year's East Finchley Festival will return to Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 22 June. The much-loved festival will again have two stages, with live music and performances from top bands and local talent.

To celebrate, we've created a Spot the Difference puzzle using a scene taken by our photographer Mike Coles at the 50th outing of the festival last summer, see right / below.

As always this year, there will be an array of hot and cold food from local traders, offering a range of international cuisines, along with bars selling everything from local craft ales to wines and soft drinks.

Younger visitors will be able to enjoy the children's area, which will include arts and crafts and storytelling. Local sports teams and clubs will be on hand again to provide taster sessions.

Meanwhile, more than 80 local artists, crafters, makers and community groups will showcase their works in the stalls areas in the centre of the field.

### Can you help?

Festival organisers are appealing for volunteers to help out in a range of areas both before the festival and on the day. Roles include assistant stage managers, parade coordination, children's activity coordinator, assistant booking coordinator, programme delivery, raffle ticket sales, site maintenance and stewarding.

Festival manager Mike Hughes said: "We're really pleased to confirm the date for this year's festival, we know how much the East Finchley community looks forward to it each year and our team is working hard on this year's event, which is run entirely by volunteers."

"We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team both in the lead-up to the festival and on the big day. The festival has something for everyone and so do our volunteering roles. If you think you can offer your time and to the festival, we'd love to welcome you to our friendly team and help make the 2025 festival the best yet."

For more information about volunteering roles, visit [www.EastFinchleyFestival.org/Volunteer](http://www.EastFinchleyFestival.org/Volunteer) or email [volunteers@eastfinchleyfestival.org](mailto:volunteers@eastfinchleyfestival.org).



### Spot the differences

While we wait for the East Finchley Festival to come round again in June, try this picture puzzle for fun. Can you spot the 20 differences in these two versions of a photo by Mike Coles that we featured on our front page after the 50th festival last summer? We'll print the answers in our next edition.



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