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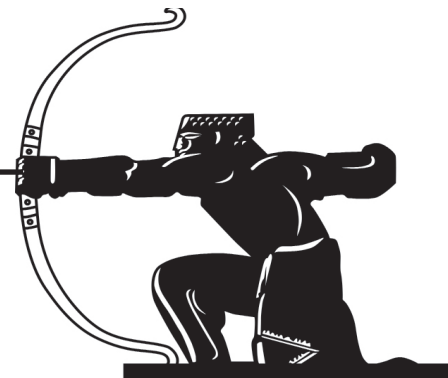
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# The Archer

Local News is our Aim



June 2025 No. 374

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

## Get ready for Festival 2025!

By Catherine Stewart

The hugely popular East Finchley Festival returns this month to Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 22 June from 12pm to 6pm, and everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy the day.

One of the biggest local highlights of the year, the free event will feature music, food and drinks, sport, children's activities, arts and crafts and a large marketplace with more than 80 stalls showcasing talented local makers and vendors.

Following the success of last year's 50th anniversary Parade, festival-goers are invited to come along early to join in this year's Parade, which will begin at Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, N2, at 11.30am and proceed down the High Road to reach the festival at midday for the opening ceremony.

### Family Fun

Across the Main and Community stages, 26 acts will showcase the best music, dance and performance that East Finchley has to offer.

A diverse range of international food, hot and cold, will be available to enjoy. Muswell Hillbilly Brewers have produced a special Festival Pale ale, which will be available along with other local beers. There will be wines, cocktails and soft drinks available across the site.

Children will have a huge range of activities to choose from, including laser tag, storytelling, face painting, Lego and eco arts. Local sports teams will again be putting on taster sessions in football, pickleball, rugby and tennis.



Party atmosphere: Crowds enjoy the 2024 Festival in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Organisers are asking for anyone who may have an hour or two to spare on the day to volunteer for roles which include selling raffle tickets and parade stewarding. If you would like to know more, please visit [www.eastfinchleyfestival.org/volunteer](http://www.eastfinchleyfestival.org/volunteer).

Look out for the official festival programme through your front door with more details.

Full festival information can be found at [www.eastfinchleyfestival.org](http://www.eastfinchleyfestival.org) or on Facebook and Instagram @EastFinchleyFestival.



### EAST FINCHLEY FESTIVAL: WHAT'S ON

Sunday 22 June, 12-6pm, Cherry Tree Wood

#### Main Stage

Hosts: Kate Galston

12:00 - Festival opening  
12:10 - Naval Gazing  
12:45 - Strange Looks  
13:20 - Her Name Was?  
13:55 - Sleeveless  
14:30 - The Plummers  
15:05 - Dream Park  
15:40 - Ben Eaton  
16:10 - The InSect  
16:45 - This Escape of Ours  
17:10 - Raffle draw  
17:20 - Meera - Dj Set  
17:35 - Neon Lights

#### Community stage

Host: Nick Allan

12:15 - Martin Primary School Choir  
12:55 - Shay Dollan  
13:05 - Odissi Dance Performance  
13:30 - Coldfall Community Choir  
13:55 - Stage Academy  
14:15 - Archer Academy Choir  
14:40 - JK Dance Academy  
15:00 - Brookland Junior School Choir  
15:25 - California Dreaming  
15:40 - Christ's College Finchley Dancers  
16:00 - Adam Richard

16:25 - Highgate Primary School Choir

16:50 - Medans Master Class  
17:10 - The Eejits  
17:35 - The Groove Collective

#### Storytelling Tent

12:15 - The Magic Wagon  
13:10 - Ilana Banana  
14:05 - Debutors  
15:00 - Jason Korsner, author  
15:35 - Granny Franny's Big Red Bus  
16:15 - Spinning Top stories and activities  
17:00 - Pink Patsy and the Rainbow Puppet show with Jake and friends

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### STEWART DUNCAN

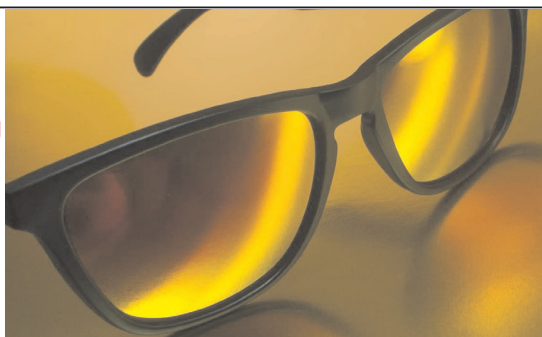
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## The Archer

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[f](#) [X](#) [@](#) @TheArcherN2

Voicemail: (messages only) 0800 612 0748 for editorial and general enquiries

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Copy Editor John Lawrence	Production Editors Nadia Savvopoulou Ridhi Shah	Editorial Team Ruth Anders, Diana Cormack, David Gritten, David Hobbs, Janet Maitland, Lynn Winton
Sub Editor Lucy Moorman Fiona Macdonald	Distribution Toni Morgan, Jane & David Marsh	
Picture Editor Mike Coles	Finance David Marsh	<b>Social Media: Justine Csaky</b>

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Cannabis factory: The disused Finchley Mortuary off the North Circular. Photo Mike Coles

# Flourishing cannabis factory discovered at former mortuary

By Janet Maitland

**When police officers raided the old Finchley Mortuary in April this year, they found 700 flourishing cannabis plants. But not a soul was in the building, nor have any arrests been made since. The investigation is ongoing.**

The mortuary is tucked away in a secluded spot alongside the North Circular, off Avondale Road, N3. Before it became a cannabis factory, its potential as a film location was, and still is, advertised by Locations Hub who say it is "mainly empty but perfect for dressing" and a good choice for locations that need to be "clinical, empty, derelict or spooky".

The site has a considerable historical pedigree. Over a hundred years ago, Bernard Spilsbury, one of the founders of forensic pathology, carried out famous autopsies there, such as Lord George Sanger, the circus owner, and Margaret Lloyd, one of the victims of the 'Brides in the Bath' murderer. Spilsbury became a household name after identifying human

remains in the home of famous murderer Dr Crippen in 1910.

But why was the mortuary allowed to become empty and derelict? It was decided by Barnet Council in 2015 that the facility was no longer viable because it was underused, so it was decommissioned, subject to an agreement that neighbouring Brent would deliver a shared mortuary service, available to Harrow, Barnet and Brent.

The mortuary was returned to the council's property base and Barnet Property Services estimated its disposal value at just under £1 million for a possible 15 two-bedroom flats, subject to planning permission.

However, the mortuary became not new housing but a storage facility for hundreds of

objects and documents related to Barnet's heritage.

The council revealed in 2018, in response to a Freedom of Information request from local blogger Mrs Angry, that the collection was given to Capita, who were contracted in 2013 to run most of Barnet's services.

In turn, Capita sub-contracted the care of the collection to Ad Hoc Property Management, who stored it in the mortuary, where it went missing. A police investigation in 2018 established that "the items were disposed of as a result of human error".

Since then, criminals have obviously found new uses for the building, if the discovery of the thriving cannabis factory is anything to go by.

## BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

**Barnet Bereavement Counselling Service** is looking for a volunteer fundraiser to help grow its online presence and support its vital work. The role is remote with flexible hours and could suit an A-level/university student in business, marketing, events, or related fields. You will create engaging social media content and promote fundraising campaigns. Find out more by emailing Salli Cohn at [info@barnetbereavement-service.org.uk](mailto:info@barnetbereavement-service.org.uk)

**Finchley Foodbank** is looking for a new kind of volunteer to help people with all things digital, such as searching the internet, sending emails and booking appointments. You will help them find services and support connected with the cost of living, employment and housing. You will need to be available for sessions on Tuesdays and/or Saturdays from 11.30am to 2pm twice a month. To find out more about becoming a digital champion volunteer, email: [finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com)

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

**Driving Aid to Ukraine** is a non-profit organisation based in N2 delivering lorries of humanitarian aid across Europe to the Ukrainian conflict zones, via border transfer points. They require all kinds of volunteers: to run a social media campaign, to raise funds and seek grants, and to organise collections of vital aid. Find out more at [Drivingaidtoukraine.org](http://Drivingaidtoukraine.org) and get in touch with Michael on 07791 912389.

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)

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### Barnet

#### 220 High Road, N2

Change of use of part of the ground floor commercial (Class E) to one self-contained flat (Class C3). Changes to fenestration

#### 93 High Road, N2

Demolition of rear storage building, rear steps and landing. Construction of side and rear extension to existing rear outrigger and excavation of basement below, to provide two additional residential units. Mansard roof extension with terrace to front to create an additional residential unit at third-floor level. Associated cycle storage and amenity space

#### Ground Floor flat, 34 Park Hall Road, N2

Erection of a garden room

#### Land at High Road (between East View House and Hilton House), Grange Estate, High Road, N2

Submission of details of condition 11 (Electric Vehicle parking provision) 19 (Play equipment) pursuant to planning permission 22/3544/FUL dated 03/01/2023

#### 4 Trinity Avenue, N2

Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer window, three

front-facing roof lights and new side gable window

#### 26 Abbots Gardens, N2

Non-material amendment to planning permission 24/5627/HSE dated 14/04/2025. Amendments include change of the roof to the ground-floor rear extension from flat to pitch roof.

#### 74 Brendon Grove, N2

Non-material amendments to planning permission reference 25/0860/HSE dated 22/04/25. Amendments include increasing length of the side wall from 300mm to 400mm

#### 4 Old Farm Road, N2

Renewal of fencing to rear garden and installation of security rollers over new fencing

#### 9 Lewis Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension with one roof light following demolition of the existing boiler room. New veranda to the existing porch.

#### 121 High Road, N2

Variation of condition 1 (Approved Plans) planning permission reference 24/4643/FUL dated 30/12/24 for 'Mansard roof extension with terrace area and 3no. rear facing rooflights to create one studio flat.' Amendments to

include alterations to the layout to convert Flat C (Studio Flat) into a one-bedroom flat

#### 267 East End Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with one roof light and new terrace area. New front entrance. This application seeks to renew the lapsed planning permission permission 17/4899/FUL

### Haringey

#### 38 Bancroft Avenue, N2

Damp prevention channel. External and internal windows and doors replacement. Understairs w/c with shower. Garage conversion to utility room. Flat roofs renewal. Garden room to existing domestic dwelling.

#### 38 Ringwood Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension, two first-floor extensions, loft conversion with rear facing dormer, roofing works, window replacement and associated refurbishment works including; structural, plumbing, electrical, drainage and external works.

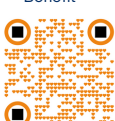
#### 5 Church Vale, N2

Renovation and structural works. Pending.



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# Overflowing bins and rubbish bags blight High Road

By Diana Cormack

Concern is growing over the rubbish that regularly appears along the High Road in East Finchley. Pedestrians sometimes find themselves having to avoid tramping through garbage strewn across the pavements, usually at its worst early in the day. It is not a pretty sight, consisting of contents of the various bins used by local businesses and residents.



Health hazard: Rubbish strewn across the pavement by a High Road bin. Photo Mike Coles

People who live on the floors above ground level and who do not have wheelie bins are provided with plastic sacks for recyclable rubbish and black bin bags for other garbage. They are asked to leave them out on the pavement for collection, where they are frequently ripped open by animals such as foxes exploring the contents in search of food.

Food is also contained in some of the large commercial bins used by the many eateries and food merchants along the High Road. Although some are locked, others have been seen with rubbish propping open their lids, the subsequent overflowing debris decomposing below.

## Fixes not foxes

In an effort to rectify the situation, East Finchley Town Team, which was originally established to promote and support the High Road, has been working with local councillor Alison Moore and Barnet Council.

It has noted that not all the commercial bins are clearly labelled to show which business they belong to and, as they are emptied by different operators, the programme for this varies. Those served by Barnet Council are emptied twice a week, with twice-weekly collections of household rubbish.

Collection details for other operators differ, as does the amount of time containers are left out. Kate Brown of EF Town Team said: 'In the short term it is vital that no bin, be it commercial or domestic, is overfilled and the amount of time a sack is on the street is minimised.'



Shared responsibility: Waste disposal is handled by at least seven different collectors

Ideally, Kate said, fixed times for putting out and collecting rubbish which everyone adheres to would be wonderful.

At present the Town Team is investigating how other areas deal with this problem and hoping to come up with a solution that Barnet could instigate... as long as someone informs the foxes.



Tidy: Jamie, Toby and Emily Lesser with friends Logan and Presley and their litter pickers

## Pals pick clean path to school

By Jamie, aged ten, and Toby Lesser, seven

**Most kids avoid rubbish on their way to school but on Mondays we go out looking for it. That's because it's the day that we take the long route to our school armed with litter pickers.**

With our sister Emily and two of our friends, Logan and Presley, and our mums Lucy and Danii, who bring big sacks, we help to clear as much rubbish as we can off the streets.

We started litter-picking in lockdown, when we were picking up hundreds of masks and gloves. Now we are mostly bagging and binning bottles, cans and strips of Amazon packaging. We've also found phones, foreign money, and bits of an old motorbike. Disgustingly, we often find bottles filled to the brim with urine and bags of dog poo too.

### Video stars

Earlier this year, the charity Keep Britain Tidy came to film us on our weekly pick, because we want to encourage other children around the country to litterpick on their way to school. Think what a huge difference it could make! The video has been watched by thousands. In it, Emily, who is five, says: 'It is good to litter pick. It makes a gooder world, and it stops all the animals from eating plastic and getting ill.' Jamie adds: 'I think that more people should litter pick because if there is already litter, then others think

that it is okay to create more.' Logan, who is ten, says:

'We think other people should join us in litter-picking, to make a clean world with no rubbish.'

Other pupils at Brookland Primary School are now joining us and picking up rubbish on their walks to school. So we recommend you too join the litter-picking campaign. Why not give it a go?

Mum Lucy Tobin adds: 'We've bought out litter pickers from B&Q and local shops. We recommend not buying the cheapest ones as they break and add to the litter problem.'

## Artsdepot memories

North Finchley's arts centre Artsdepot is putting a call out to visitors and residents to contribute their personal memories to its 20th anniversary exhibition.

They want to hear about first theatre experiences, what new talents people may have

discovered at workshops and whether visits to the centre opened doors for anyone's creative career. Find out more at [www.artsdepot.co.uk](http://www.artsdepot.co.uk) and contribute by emailing [memories@artsdepot.co.uk](mailto:memories@artsdepot.co.uk)

## 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.

## Drag bingo

To celebrate Pride Month, Age UK Barnet is holding a Drag Bingo evening. Hosted by Manuka Honey, the event takes place on Monday 17 June from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2. Expect prizes, snacks, a bar, and guaranteed laughs whether you're a bingo pro or just up for a good time!

Age UK Barnet warmly welcomes everyone, and especially wants to celebrate and include over-55s from the LGBTQ+ community. To book, contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)



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# Bioblitz finds woodland life... and a rare specimen

By Kate Brown

On Saturday 3 May, the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood ran a two-hour 'bioblitz' in the wood, essentially an attempt to log as many plants, bugs and mammals as possible in the allotted time span. It was aimed at adults and children and involved both traditional and modern methods.

Those with smartphones were encouraged to download two free applications which help with identifying things in nature. One is called Seek and is aimed at children, but beginners of all ages find it useful. The other is called iNaturalist and is equally easy to use and within this application, CTW has been set up as a 'project'.

This means that anyone using the app within the wood boundary can contribute to the data bank of species in the wood. It will become our very own local citizen science project and a great way of monitoring the biodiversity of the wood and evaluating the effectiveness

of the woodland management plan.

For those who prefer to be phone-free in the wood, the friends had a table-full of identification sheets, books and handouts. And for the children, the greatest excitement were two deep white trays.

One contained a 2L sample of pond water from the bog garden behind the tennis courts. This was alive with tadpoles which were duly returned to their home post bioblitz. The other tray contained a soil sample and was equally alive but the identification needed good eyesight. Young eyes had no difficulty spotting woodlice,

millipedes and spiders.

## Rare specimen

Local resident Ruth Brown, who downloaded iNaturalist for the first time on the day, discovered that the tree behind the toilets which deposits its furry white seedheads on the roof of the block is a Black Poplar. It is listed on the Barnet tree plan as a poplar but not as the much rarer Black Poplar.

Even more exciting, it appears to be a FEMALE Black Poplar. If the identification is correct, then it is one of only 600 in the whole of the UK. The Friends have now uploaded multiple pictures of the specimen: leaves, seedhead close ups



In trays: Young Cherry Tree Wood visitors spot miniature life forms at the Bioblitz

etc and we await formal confirmation. Watch this space.

## Garden openings

Congratulations to Susan Bennett and Earl Hyde who have received an award for 30 years of opening their Muswell Hill garden for the National Garden Scheme.



Their back garden has featured many times on TV and in magazines, after actress

Maureen Lipman chose it as her favourite for a celebrity fundraiser in 1995. Susan said: "She visited us recently and was astonished at how mature it has become since she did a bit of pottering."

Susan and Earl will be opening their garden at 5 St Regis Close, N10 2DE, again on Sunday 29 June and on Sunday 3 August from 2pm to 6.30pm. Admission £5, children free. Other charity openings coming up are at 25 Springfield Avenue, N10, on Sunday 8 June; Ally Pally Allotments, N22, on Sunday 22 June; Railway Cottages, N22, on Sunday 6 July and 24 Twyford Avenue, N2, on Sunday 20 July. For full details, visit [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk)

## Future events in the Wood

### Forest Garden

A drop-in session to explore the next phase of development for the Forest Garden in Cherry Tree Wood takes place on Wednesday 2 July. The garden will contribute to the biodiversity of the wood and also provide an educational area to learn about food-growing and pollination.

All the trees in this area produce something edible, and are slowly being underplanted with

fruit bushes and other edible plants. Meet the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood by the new trees as you exit towards the Fordington Road gate at 7pm.

### Butterfly Count

The national Big Butterfly Count runs from 18 July to 10 August. On Sunday 27 July, there will be a butterfly event for all ages in Cherry Tree Wood, meeting at the nature circle near the children's playground at 2pm. This event will introduce the five most common butterflies in a child-friendly way along with storytelling.

## Round square

A reminder that the 'Round the Square' event takes place on Saturday 7 June between 2-5pm on the pavement outside Budgens and Caffé Nero in the High Road, N2. You can learn about the East Finchley Town Team's plans for reconfiguring that particular area and there will be entertainment with performances by local groups, alongside activities organised by the Finchley Pollination Project. The afternoon forms part of the London Festival of Architecture.

## Free concert

The next Sunday evening concert at East Finchley Methodist Church is a piano recital by Guillem León, who will be playing music by Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin and Mompou. It takes place at 7.30pm on Sunday 8 June at the church on the High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue.

Admission is free with a collection in aid of Snowdon Trust, supporting disabled students in education and employment. The venue is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

## From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:  
June 2015

The Grange Big Local project, which had secured £1million of Big Lottery funding, made its first donation of many to local causes. It awarded £1,000 to Age UK Barnet, as sponsorship for Nic van der Breggen, who ran the 2015 London Marathon in aid of the charity. Age UK was one of several local voluntary organisations that Grange Big Local had been working with over the previous year.

15 years ago:  
June 2010

June 2010 heralded the 200th edition of The Archer, with profuse thanks to the many volunteers and advertisers who helped us reach that milestone and who continue to support the paper today. Amongst the many stories in this landmark issue was the extraordinary walking-on-fire event at the Five Bells pub. After an intensive training session, 35 intrepid volunteers braved temperatures of up to 500°C to raise money for the North London Hospice. Fortunately, no injuries were reported!

25 years ago:  
June 2000

The RSPCA raised concerns about a rise in animal cruelty locally, particularly by young people. Pigeons, squirrels and a woodpecker had been found shot dead in Cherry Tree Wood and, following one incident, the park-keeper apprehended a teenager seen running from the park with a friend carrying a brown gun case. Local police highlighted the danger of air rifles and that it is illegal to kill birds and protected animals.

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# Civic awards for 40 years service to East Finchley

By Ruth Anders

It would be hard to find two people who have given more to the community than long-term East Finchley residents Roger Chapman and his wife Kate Brown. At the recent annual Barnet Civic Awards ceremony at Hendon Town Hall, Roger was given an award for lifetime achievement while Kate was awarded a Certificate Scroll of Recognition for outstanding service in the community.



Community champions: Kate Brown and Roger Chapman at the Civic Awards ceremony

The impact of their dedication to the community over more than 40 years and the initiatives with which they have been involved are too numerous and varied to list.

One of Kate's earliest ventures was joining the campaign to save Edgware General Hospital. An early joint effort in 1982 was the Barnet Campaign to Defend Public Transport. The 1987 North Circular Road campaign marked the start of the pair's green planting mitigations, which they have pursued ever since. Kate has even undertaken an RHS horticulture course at Capel Manor to develop her gardening skills.

In 2019 Roger established and continues to chair the Barnet Green Spaces Network of 58 Friends groups across the borough. Ongoing joint

commitments include the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, East Finchley Community Trust, Martin Primary's Forest School, East Finchley Town Team, the local Pollinator Project and more.

## Busy lives

Arriving in London as a student nurse, Kate came from Wales, where she didn't speak English until she was five. Roger's career as a town planner saw him start with 'A' Level entry at Norwich City Council. He soon moved to London, meeting Kate at Crouch End's King's Head pub in 1982.

Of his professional role he says: "I've moved round more London boroughs than I've had hot dinners. I retired some time ago when work began to interfere with my community activities."

Apart from their grandchildren, other hobbies include gardening, leading local history walks and helping to run battlefield tours (Roger), and serious walking. Their most recent hiking expedition was Peddars Way (Thetford to the Norfolk coast), while others have included Hadrian's Wall, the Lake District and Glyndwr's Way in Wales.

The couple show no sign of winding down and The Archer has no doubt that East Finchley will continue to benefit from their endeavours for some time to come.



Perfect poise: Kenwood staff hang the Sargent portraits for the summer exhibition

## Review: Heiress: Sargent's American Portraits – The Real Lives of America's Dollar Princesses

Kenwood, Hampstead, until Sunday 5 October

Review by Ann-Stephenson Wright

To mark the centenary of the death of John Singer Sargent, 18 of his stunning portraits of American heiresses have been brought together for the first time by English Heritage at Kenwood in a revelatory exhibition which explores the real lives of the women portrayed.

The exhibition focuses on a small group of the more-than-400 wealthy American women who married into the British aristocracy at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century and were painted by Sargent, the leading portrait painter of his generation.

Born in 1856, Sargent had had great success from a young age and was celebrated for portraits that captured both the likeness and personality of his subjects. Famous for his dazzling technical skill in conveying light and texture, he painted prominent figures,

socialites, aristocrats and politicians from both the American and European elite.

The glamorous subjects of this exhibition were the celebrities of the day and they are vividly brought to life in luscious oil paintings and delicate charcoal sketches, several of which have never before been on public display.

The sketches, drawn by Sargent for pleasure and friendship, are far less well-known and more rarely shown than the commissioned oil paintings and it is fascinating to see these hung together in elegant rooms of a

type which would have been the backdrop to the new lives these women were crossing the Atlantic to embark on.

Painted in their twenties and after marriage, the women were disparagingly dubbed 'dollar princesses' by critics of the transatlantic marriage 'trade' but the persistent 'cash-for-coronets' stereotype is roundly challenged in this rare, not-to-be-missed exhibition which highlights the wide-ranging achievements of these diverse, fascinating and extraordinary women so brilliantly portrayed by Sargent.

## Tennis club special offer

By Stelios Pavlides

As reported in The Archer in April, an application for development of the Fortis Green Tennis Club's site off Southern Road has been refused by Haringey Council. The club facilities continue, therefore, to be available to the local community.

The club has very attractive grounds, four clay courts and a welcoming atmosphere for people of all ages and levels.

A new coach started work this season and there is an extensive programme for both adults and juniors, open to members and non-members. The club is making an effort to extend its reach and there is a special offer to join for only £50 (normal annual fee £170).

Terms: (a) you should have never been a club member before (b) offer open till end of



June 2025 (c) offer price applies for first year of membership. To take advantage please contact Liz on [lizhanchet@gmail.com](mailto:lizhanchet@gmail.com) or send the club a message from its website at [clubspark.lta.org.uk/fortisgreentennisclub](http://clubspark.lta.org.uk/fortisgreentennisclub)

## Boxes of fun at toy library

By Lauren Fleishman

A new toy library has been set up for parents and carers at Martin Primary School to browse, borrow and have some fun. With the support of The TOY Project, there is a collection of indoor and outdoor toys such as puzzle games, yarn art, flashcards and magnetic blackboards.

Toys are suitable for children from Reception through to Year Six. Headteacher Ziz Chater said: "The new toy library is a great initiative and will give all our families access to a wider range of toys aimed at supporting cognitive, social, and emotional development."

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# Prime thinkers set cartoonist on new path

By Lynn Winton

When East Finchley serial entrepreneur Maurice Collins had the idea to harness a team of local seniors to give free expert business guidance (The Archer, July 2024), his first 'client' was an unusual one.

Prolific cartoonist Neil Kerber, who lives in Barnet, has a regular weekly cartoon in Private Eye, and has been published in virtually every national newspaper. He had just put together a new book called Rhymefulness: The Cartoony Rhyming Guide to Happiness Inside which was doing well, but he didn't know what to do next.

"At the first Prime Thinkers meeting some fantastic ideas came out, including a suggestion that a version for younger readers would be a natural progression," Neil explained. Being a dad to two teenage girls I took their advice and went on to create Rhymefulness for Amazing Kids.

"It's something I'm very proud of, and I think can add enormous value to the younger generation in these stressful and complex times. It's getting a really great reaction so far ...even from my own kids who usually don't like to rave about my 'silly job'.



Good idea: Neil Kerber

"I have found Prime Thinkers to be a fantastic way of bringing experienced and helpful minds together. I believe lots of people will benefit from telling their story, and listening to this fantastic group of people."

Neil's books are available at Amazon. If you would like to join the Prime Thinkers team or seek their advice, contact Maurice Collins on 07796 991140.



Top-level tuition: Itamar Rashkovsky, right, gives a lesson to a young student

## A new kind of conservatoire

By John Lawrence

**A professional violin teacher is setting up a new kind of conservatoire-level music school that he hopes will attract students from across north London.**

Itamar Rashkovsky, who lives in Neale Close, N2, trained at the Royal College of Music and is now a teacher at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

His new venture is called the Miriam School of Music and is

aimed primarily at young music students who may prefer classes on a Sunday with a curriculum that focuses on Jewish music and culture.

There will be a Sunday programme over three weekends in June in partnership with the JW3 centre in Finchley Road, teaching musicianship through interactive workshops and group lessons. The school also offers one-to-one lessons any time during the week at a student's or teacher's home.

Itamar said: "I want to unlock the potential in the

Jewish community. There's a history of music and we want that to be as successful in the next generation and nurture it through the next generation."

"We are aiming at children and young people but there are no real boundaries. One idea we have is to run group sessions with parents included. That's something I would love to do if there is demand."

Tuition is available for piano, violin, clarinet, harp and voice, plus music theory. Find out more at [www.mirimusic.com](http://www.mirimusic.com)

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## Summer brightness for roadside trees

By Gail Norcliffe

The young chitalpa trees at the end of Church Lane, N2, have been made even brighter with an array of beautiful begonias. Residents Caroline and David Broome came up with the roadside planting idea and it has been warmly welcomed and well supported by neighbours, many of whom chipped in to help with the costs.



Summer display: Caroline Broome plants the begonias in Church Lane

Each of the five trees between East End Road and Holy Trinity Church has its own colour of begonias, ranging

from bright red to salmon pink to lemon. Begonias are a perfect choice because they cope well with both with drought and a lot of rain, do not need dead-heading and keep flowering until October.

Caroline has been delighted with the response to the flowers. "Apart from increasing the greenery on the lane, the flowers provide pollen and are good for the bees," she said. "I also think by smartening up the pavement, it brings the community together and encourages everyone to treat the neighbourhood better, for example by taking more care not to drop litter."

It would be fantastic if others in East Finchley consider doing the same in their own streets."





# Long-serving volunteer team replaced by paid panel

By Diana Cormack

**A group of volunteers who were active in Barnet for over 30 years helping people in interviews with the police has now been phased out.**

Few people were aware of Appropriate Adults (AA) and their role until a programme about the notorious serial killers Fred and Rose West was shown on television, in which a female AA featured. The role was shown again last month in a Netflix production on the same topic.

AAs can be spotted in many documentaries and crime dramas alongside suspects who are being interviewed by the police.

## Safeguarding

The National Appropriate Adult Network describes them as “being responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of a child or vulnerable adult (includes autism, learning difficulties, mental illness) who is either detained by police or is interviewed under caution voluntarily”. The role was created alongside the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

When the scheme started in Barnet in 1994 it originally included juveniles, but in 2001 a

grant enabled the Youth Offending Team to set up a new panel with paid workers, leaving vulnerable adults to the voluntary AA team.

When an AA is needed, they are called by a police officer and given a time to attend the police station, where they can spend many hours in their supportive role. A legal representative may also be present throughout the procedure.

## Paid provision

An East Finchley resident who was a member of the Barnet AA panel told The Archer that all AA provision for vulnerable adults within the Metropolitan Police Service is now managed by a contract held by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime.

A new service with funding of £5.4million will ensure that vulnerable adults across London have quick access to an independent appropriate adult to support them when in contact with the police.



Full of life: A youngster enjoys the ball pond therapy at the CPotential centre in Muswell Hill

# Early years treatment under pressure from spending cuts

**A local charity is raising the alarm about vital specialist services for children with disabilities being under unprecedented strain due to chronic underfunding.**

CPotential, based in Muswell Hill, has launched the Ticking Clocks Appeal to raise funds to ensure children with cerebral palsy, global developmental delay, and acquired brain injury can access the therapy they need.

“More and more charities are being forced to close due to financial challenges,” said CPotential CEO Brett Parker. “What’s most alarming is the risk that children with disabilities are being forgotten. Families already face dwindling resources and declining funding. Now, with proposed cuts

to disability benefits and assessment reforms, they’re being pushed even further to the margins.”

## Growing demand

In the last five years, CPotential has grown from a small service supporting 36 children annually to a hub helping more than 400 children each year. Demand continues to surge, but funding has not kept pace, it says.

Scientific research says that early intervention is key to improving mobility, confidence, and independence for

children with neurological conditions. The brain is at its most adaptable in early childhood, meaning timely access to specialist therapy can change a child’s future.

The Ticking Clocks Appeal invites businesses, schools and individuals to fundraise, donate, and take part in time-themed challenges to help keep CPotential’s specialist services open for families in need.

For more information and to get involved, visit [cpotential.org.uk](http://cpotential.org.uk) or email Johanna Vigilante at [jvigilante@cpotential.org.uk](mailto:jvigilante@cpotential.org.uk) or call 020 8444 7242.

# In celebration of VE Day

Residents from Strawberry Vale, N2, and the wider community came together on the May Bank Holiday Monday for an afternoon of VE Day celebrations, hosted by The Green Man Management Group. The event featured a vintage afternoon tea and an old-fashioned sing-a-long.

And on the previous day, residents of Elmfield Road, N2, got together to celebrate the 80th anniversary with home-made food, games and music under the sunshine in a car-free street.



Time to remember: Councillor Alison Moore, right, joins guests at the Strawberry Vale VE Day party

# Green Man activities

With reference to our article last month ‘Activities for Everyone at the Green Man Centre’, we have been asked to point out that Hope North London is a charity not a church group. It runs activities for the whole community.

Also, the Green Man works with Peabody’s community team, rather than its estate managers, on the upkeep of the community centre (not the estate). We are happy to set the record straight.

# Women’s rugby makes comeback

By Andy Stone

**Finchley Rugby Club has been celebrating its 100th anniversary year since January. Both the 1st and 2nd XV have had very successful seasons, with sides fighting for promotion and finishing third and second respectively, and a senior women’s side has been re-established after 40 years.**

In January, scores of Junior players aged from 6-16 provided the guard of honour and flagbearers at Saracens’ first Premiership fixture of 2025 against Bristol Bears.

In February, it was the adult’s turn. Finchley were invited to hold the flags and banners in the pitch at Allianz stadium Twickenham whilst the anthems were played before England’s thrilling victory over France in the Men’s Six Nations.

There was also the fantastic news that Lily Pereira Dos Santos, a member of Finchley’s Girls U18 side, had been selected for the England U18 Six Nations squad. She then scored in her first game against Italy. Lily received her cap from the RFU’s President elect, former Finchley and England women’s player, Deborah Griffin.

The centenary celebrations are only half-way through, so come along next season to play



Star player: Lily Pereira Dos Santos, right, receives her England cap from RFU President elect Deborah Griffin

or watch, or come and meet us at the East Finchley Festival on 22 June – say hello, pass the ball or try out a tackle-bag.





# Questions on the plans for High Road housing

*We reported last month on the latest plans unveiled for the proposed Cherry Tree Quarter housing development on the High Road opposite East Finchley Tube station, and residents' reactions to them.*

*Based on the comments and queries we received from our readers, architect and Archer team member Nadia Savvopoulou compiled a list of questions for the developers Places for Barnet. Spokesman Marcello Burbante welcomed the opportunity to clarify their plans and gave us these responses.*

**The Archer:** Why has the number of units increased to 75? According to the revised plans, the height of some buildings decreased so does this mean that the height of the tallest buildings has increased? Will the tallest buildings be over 18m?

**Places for Barnet:** The number of units have been optimised to deliver an exemplary scheme. Massing has in fact been reduced in areas adjacent to Ingram Road and Hamlet Gate [the neighbouring flats]. The height of the tallest buildings has not changed since the February consultation and the development is below the 18m threshold for high-risk buildings.

It is important to bear in mind that the units at this scheme support the essential provision of Affordable Housing at the Avion Crescent site so the optimisation of the site is essential [Avion Crescent in NW9 is the proposed site for 125 social rent homes for Barnet]. The need for additional affordable housing, particularly social rent homes, in Barnet is acute as it is across London. The units being delivered at Cherry Tree Quarter, given that they will act as enabling development for a 100% social rent scheme at Avion Crescent, are crucial to achieving this goal.

**The Archer:** What is the shortest distance between buildings in this scheme?

**Places for Barnet:** A distance of 23.7m is maintained between the rear façade of the Ingram Road properties to the facing windows within the development, which exceeds policy requirements. A distance of 12.7m will exist between the rear facades at Ingram and the top of the roof pitch. We are considering a green roof to further soften the appearance of the roofline.

**The Archer:** Will the green space at the front of the site, which currently has five mature trees and a large, planted area, be restored elsewhere in the project?

**Places for Barnet:** The yew tree adjacent to Hamlet Gate is being retained. A full landscape design is being developed including the planting of two new silver birches within the street design, in the heart of the development, and a number of additional trees on the edges of the site as well as areas for wildflowers and shrubs, woodland planting in shaded areas and planters; there will also be green roofs. The scheme will deliver a series of carefully designed landscaped spaces.

**The Archer:** Will the entrance to Cherry Tree Wood from the High Road be extended? If yes, who will manage and maintain this space and will it be publicly accessible?

**Places for Barnet:** The proposals will incorporate a design for extending the entrance to Cherry Tree Wood. The entrance will, of course, remain publicly accessible and we are looking at how the access to the woods can be enhanced. It is intended that responsibility for the management of this area will be included in the overall scope of the new development but this has not yet been finalised with the Council.

**The Archer:** Has there been an acoustic survey to determine the anticipated noise level from the new position of the Monkey Puzzle Nursery, and ways of mitigating that for the residents on Ingram Road?

**Places for Barnet:** Yes, acoustic surveys have been carried out. These surveys will form part of the acoustic report being undertaken and will be submitted as part of the forthcoming planning application. Currently, the nursery playspace backs onto several Ingram Road gardens without any acoustic treatment. By contrast, the new development proposals will incorporate acoustic mitigation measures, such as acoustic fencing.

**The Archer:** According to the recently revised plans, the new nursery will have fewer pupils and a much smaller outside



Pathways: Access to the development would be through pedestrian walkways

space than the existing nursery. Based on the EYFS framework and BB103 guidelines, an outdoor area of 2m<sup>2</sup>/child should be provided for early years. Does the proposed covered area meet these guidelines? Parents express concerns about the impact of the new design on the nursery's Ofsted rating.

**Places for Barnet:** We have held constructive discussions with the nursery operator throughout the design process and the new facility has been designed according to their precise specifications. Paula Murphy, the nursery owner, is fully supportive of the design. The new nursery building will be 450 sqm in size and have a similar capacity to the existing facility. The nursery will be fully compliant with Ofsted requirements.

**The Archer:** Has there been a lighting survey to determine ways that levels of natural lighting to the houses and gardens on Ingram Road might change as a result of the proposal?

**Places for Barnet:** A daylight / sunlight report is being undertaken and will be submitted as part of the forthcoming planning application, which will be publicly available. The design approach (including significant changes in massing made over the past few months) will ensure that any impacts to properties on Ingram Road and any other neighbouring properties are minimised.

**The Archer:** Is this going to be a gated community?

**Places for Barnet:** Consultation is ongoing with the Metropolitan Police's 'Secure By Design' team around access into, and through the site, and whether any restrictions are required. The ambition is to enable as much access through the scheme as possible; however, this needs to be balanced against safety and security requirements. Full details will be provided in the Design and Access Statement.

**The Archer:** What are the dimensions of the main corridors that traverse the site and are there clear access routes for the Fire Brigade and other emergency vehicles? How is rubbish going to be collected?

**Places for Barnet:** The dimensions of the external pedestrian walkways vary, which reflects the design intent of the scheme. As part of the Fire Strategy, access for the Fire Brigade has naturally been provided as have other associated requirements including dry risers and a firefighting lift. In terms of evacuation procedures, this is still being finalised but it is currently assumed that residents would assemble at the front of the scheme on the High Road. Rubbish will be collected from the loading bay at the front of the site.



Six floors high: A drawing of how the Cherry Tree Quarter frontage would look

**The Archer:** Why is Barnet allowing such a large development to be created without parking provision while banning potential residents from applying for parking permissions in the surrounding Controlled Parking Zone?

**Places for Barnet:** In line with the Council's priorities and Greater London Authority policy to encourage more sustainable modes of transport and recognising that the site is in a highly accessible location close to East Finchley station and several local bus routes, the proposals are for a car-free development, with the exception of Blue Badge spaces. Future residents of the development will not be permitted to park on surrounding streets.

This will be secured within the planning permission, residents' leases or both.

## Live line-up

Age UK is staging a summer music festival this month with acts including the Italian tenor Yuri Sabatini, the N12 Community Choir and guitarist Darren Loveday. There will be stalls, tombola and a raffle, with prizes including gym membership, meal vouchers and cinema tickets. The event takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 on Saturday 28 June from 11am to 3pm and everyone is welcome. Entry is £3.

## Music from outer space

Fortismere Community Symphony Orchestra is inviting families to celebrate Fathers' Day with a musical journey through the cosmos. The orchestra will perform a programme of iconic film music including E.T., Star Wars and Superman alongside movements from Holst's The Planets and the Horn Concerto No1 by Richard Strauss.

The concert takes place at St Andrew's Church, Alexandra Park Road, N10 2DD on Sunday 15 June at 7pm and everyone is welcome. Tickets priced £16 on the door or £13 in advance from [www.fortismeremusiccentre.co.uk](http://www.fortismeremusiccentre.co.uk)

## Season to sing

Alyth Choral Society's Summer Concert will feature A Season to Sing by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, a reimagining of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, along with Psalm 118 Give Thanks to the Eternal by Julian Dawes.

ACS is a mixed-faith community choir founded in 1983. The summer concert takes place on Sunday 6 July at 7.30pm at NWRS Alyth, Alyth Gardens, London NW11. Tickets priced £20 are available from <https://alythchoralsociety.wordpress.com>. Students and under-18s are free.





# Lesley's love for a lifetime of dance



Career on the move: Lesley, front row, second right, with the Second Generation company in the 1970s and, right, still sharing her love of dancing today

By Ed Newman

**Age UK Barnet exercise instructor Lesley Ann Chowen, née Wootten, has been bringing showbiz sparkle to dance classes in East Finchley for the last 26 years.**

And back in the 1970s and 80s, Lesley was a regular on Saturday Night television, dancing, singing and acting alongside some of the legends of entertainment such as Morecambe and Wise, The Two Ronnies, Little and Large and Bruce Forsyth. She also toured the world performing cabaret shows in glamorous places like Monte Carlo, Hong Kong and Mauritius.

After being taken to her first class by her mother at the age of three, Lesley fell in love with dancing and has been tripping the light fantastic ever since. She couldn't wait to leave

school at 15, although her parents did insist she did her O-levels first.

## Round the world

Her first job was as a dancer at a brand-new cabaret club in Sheffield called Aquarius. She later joined Dougie Squires's Second Generation company and, over the next five years, travelled around the world doing shows.

In her 60s, she was back with Squires and her former colleagues performing a 100th birthday tribute to Dame Vera Lynn in front of Queen Elizabeth.

"Second Generation was like one big family with 12 boys and 12 girls," recalls Lesley. "We didn't get paid very much but we went to some wonderful places. Sometimes, we would have to rehearse through the night and then sleep during the day before getting ready for the next show. The adrenaline kept us going. We absolutely loved it because we were living our dream."

## Big stars

Saturday night TV was huge at the time and Lesley regularly appeared on our screens with the big stars of the day.

"Eric and Ernie kept themselves to themselves but they were incredibly professional," she remembers.

"It was the same with the Two Ronnies. I can remember those big dance numbers they did at the end of the show and woe betide if you went wrong. Even though they were there to make people laugh, there was no messing around and they were always spot on."

## Dance is good

It was when Lesley had her three children that she decided it would be a good idea to switch from performing to teaching. She lives in East Finchley

and that meant that Age UK Barnet as well as several local schools and disabled groups have benefited from her skills and enthusiasm over the years. "Dance is good for so many things like your balance and energy levels. It's not just your body either – you have to really focus when you're dancing so it's good for your brain too at whatever age," said Lesley.

Lesley runs two exercise classes for Age UK Barnet on a Wednesday afternoon. For more information about Age UK Barnet's exercise classes, call Wendy on 07741 877027 or email [wendy.nutman@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:wendy.nutman@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

## Bike riding, horse riding... and an incriminating address

By Frank Edwards

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

In the 1920s, cycling was increasingly popular but also hard work. In May 1925 outlets in East Finchley advertised the benefits to tired pedallers of fitting a Sturmev Archer 3-Speed Gear. Weighing only 1½ lbs it would, they claimed, increase speeds by two miles an hour and was as easy to work as ringing the bell.

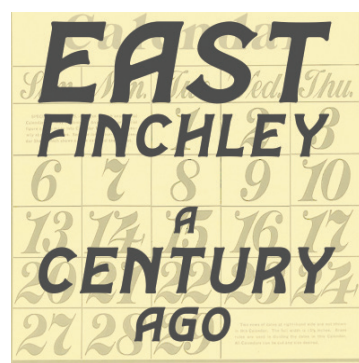
Cyclists, with or without gears, had to take care, however. Joyce Bishop, crossing the junction of Fortis Green and the High Road, collided with a tram. She was unhurt but left with a buckled wheel and bent crank. Sydney Coninsbee, aged 12, cycling down Long Lane, collided with a brick wall, fortunately only sustaining abrasions

to his head.

Amos Smith, summonsed for cycling on the footway in East End Road, was less lucky. The magistrate was unimpressed by Smith's defence that it was early, he was late and the roadway was ill-maintained. Riding on the footway is a growing nuisance, said the magistrate, and fined him 10 shillings.

## Up before the beak

Any number of things could bring you before the local court. In June 1925, Evan Jones was summonsed for being drunk in charge of a horse. He gave the game away by swaying from side to side in his saddle while



the horse tacked across the road and back again. The magistrate fined Evan 40 shillings.

## Undesirable residence

You could also arrive in court if you annoyed the local authority. The District Council prosecuted three 12-year-old boys for throwing stones at street lamps in The Walks, East Finchley. The court reprimanded the boys but allowed them to go, when assured they would reimburse the Council for the broken glass and prosecution costs.

It won't have helped one of the boys, Joseph Tronsdale, that when in court he had to give his address as 'Pavilion Cottage, Thieving Lane, East Finchley'. Despite best endeavours it has not been possible to identify just where Thieving Lane was. If any reader can help, please let The Archer know.

## And finally...

Finally, in the 1930s journalist Claud Cockburn famously claimed to have penned the dullest newspaper headline ever: 'Small Earthquake in Chile, Not many dead'. The Finchley Press may have beaten him to it. In May 1925, it ran a story headed 'East Finchley Burglaries, Little of value stolen'.

## Frenzy of ferns at plant sale

By Ruth Anders

"Overwhelmed," said an exhausted Kim Athanasiou, when I asked her how she felt about her recent plant sale outside Tony's Continental in the High Road, N2. "We had more than 600 plants and we were sold out by 1pm. People have been so generous with donations and contributions of their own plants."

Plants flew off the shelves, with shuttlecock ferns proving favourites. As last year, the initiative was to raise funds in aid of the UCLH Haematology Cancer Care department where Kim's mother-in-law Efi was cared for at the end of her life. The event raised over £2,000.

Enthusiastic gardener Kim had grown the majority of the plants in the sale from seed or by propagation over the last year and, planning well ahead, she is already beginning the growing process for next year's sale.







# Artists get ready to open their houses

By Mike Coles

If you like art and crafts, then you have a treat coming up. The weekends of 28-29 June and 5-6 July will see 55 artists open the doors to 15 houses open across East Finchley to welcome browsers and buyers.

The 21st East Finchley Artists Open Houses event will feature all kinds of original art and crafts to view and buy. There will be prints, ceramics, glass, paintings, textiles,

photography, sculpture, jewellery and more.

Also, on the same dates there will be an exhibition at All Saints Church in Durham Road, N2.

Opening times for the houses are 11am to 6pm each day and for All Saints Church 11am to 6pm on Saturdays and 12 noon to 6pm on Sundays. Entrance is free.

## Fortismere fundraiser



Flag wavers: Fortismere students are ready to welcome you to their summer festival

Despite educating 1,700 students from East Finchley, Muswell Hill and neighbouring areas, Fortismere School has for some time been missing a dedicated Parent Teacher Association. But all this is changing.

A new Friends of Fortismere group has been launched, an important initiative set to give the school a much-needed fundraising boost, and their first big event will be the Fortismere Summer Festival on Sunday 6 July from 12pm to 4pm.

Maeve Curry from Year 10 writes: The event will be happening at Fortismere School, in our very own field and there will be many fun things to do. A classic car show will show cars from decades past.

Do you have a handsome or scruffy pooch? There will be a dog show showcasing students' and teachers' dogs, as well as anyone else who would like to participate. If you like plants, jewellery, second-hand books and more, you will love all our

stalls. There will be fairground rides for those of you who enjoy having an adrenaline rush. We will also have cool food with a variety of different cuisines, homemade cakes, candy floss and a bar.

If you are a music lover, you will delight in our vast selection of performers. From rock to choirs, pop to classical, there is something for everyone! The orchestra and Fortismere community choir will be playing, as well as bands from both the pupils, and the teachers! Anyone is welcome to come, so please bring along friends and family. If you are interested in finding out more, getting involved or entering the dog show please email [friendsoffortismere@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:friendsoffortismere@fortismere.org.uk)

## Rise and fall of a PM

A new play exploring how Margaret Thatcher won the leadership of the Conservative Party and how she subsequently lost power is coming to the Upstairs at the Gatehouse theatre in Highgate this month.



Iron lady: Philippa Heimann portrays Margaret Thatcher

The Rise and Fall of Margaret Thatcher by Edmund Green dramatises the machinations, rivalries, and ambitions of both her leadership battles and shows how she changed in the intervening years.

Philippa Heimann plays the former Prime Minister, who was MP for Finchley from 1959 to 1992, heading a full cast of characters including Michael Heseltine and Geoffrey Howe. The play runs from Tuesday 10 to Sunday 15 June. Tickets are on sale at [upstairsatthegatehouse.com](http://upstairsatthegatehouse.com)

## Review: The Behaviours of Posie Marshall

Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village

By Jessica Holt

This one-woman show described as a dark comedy is performed by its writer Maeve O'Hare. Her story begins with an arrest and the play tracks the previous 37 hours leading up to it.



Roll of roles: Maeve O'Hare convincingly plays multiple characters in the one-woman show

As an 18-year-old woman Posie describes her working-class life, her tricky mother and her beloved criminal brother Jason. A number of scenarios are played out: a party scene, a supermarket scene, a drugs scene, a prison scene and a court scene.

All the characters (approximately 27, I lost count) are played by Maeve O'Hare with remarkable skill, each character is clearly delineated predominantly through her physicality and voice. Making excellent use of accent both to show



country and class she brings the characters to life. This constant changing of roles is never tedious and is played with great pace, energy and humour.

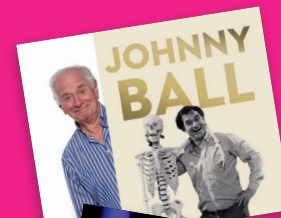
### Masterclass

We are confronted with familiar ideas, the absent father, the son who turns to crime, the abuse of women, the inevitability of violence that can lead to knife crime, the inability of the police to get to grips with the situation.

There are no great insights but the character of Posie enables us to look afresh at these moments in her life with a sense of irony. Posie herself knows we've heard it all before, but she wants us to hear it again in the hope it might change something.

The use of the performance space offers a variety of settings with ease. We accept when she is at the supermarket, in a prison cell or at a party. The lighting supports this well though the sound didn't mean a great deal to me.

Even if the first half was too long by about ten minutes, this production was well worth seeing and I suggest it would be valuable to tour in schools not just for its potential to explore its themes but as a masterclass in playing several characters in one production.

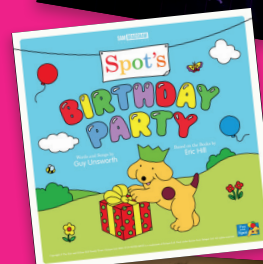


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## Letters



Pile 'em high: The boxes, scattered and then neatly stacked, spotted by reader Bob Janes in Brompton Grove



### Foxed by boxes

Dear Editor,

I walked down Brompton Grove one spring morning and there, across the end of the alley way leading up to Baronsmere Road, was a large heap of boxes, packaging and out-of-date fruit and vegetables.

For those who don't know it, Brompton Grove is the unadopted road that runs from the Monkey Puzzle Nursery opposite the tube station along the side of Cherry Tree Wood to Summerlee Avenue

I wondered where the pile might have come from and where it.

### Pedestrians and cyclists first

Dear Editor

You reported last month that the proposed pedestrianisation of Creighton Avenue had "alarmed road users". Do you mean motorists? I can't imagine pedestrians and cyclists were too concerned.

Your article encouraged me to review the January 2022 updates to the Highway Code while I was sitting in the bath last night. I noticed the new 'hierarchy of road users', with pedestrians and cyclists at the top and motorists down at the bottom.

The proposals for Creighton Avenue seem only to reflect that hierarchy, and the council's duty to encourage those who can to cycle and walk. East Finchley would be a calmer, safer and more peaceful place if car use was reduced. Anything that facilitates that outcome should be welcomed. We might even hear the birdsong over the traffic.

Moses Seittler,  
Market Place, N2

### Over-zealous idea

Dear Editor

The proposed 'School Street' plan for Creighton Avenue is yet another over-zealous scheme on a false pretext which is not supported with evidence. This is nothing more than an insidious attempt to further penalise tax-paying drivers/road users and cause chaos on the roads. A sick proposal from an equally sick council.

Gill Davis,  
Address supplied

might go. Two days later I passed by again and the alley way was clear but along the fence to Cherry Tree Wood was a much tidier pile of the same boxes.

Two days later still it had all disappeared. That bit is not mysterious, Barnet Council had been contacted and cleared it. The mystery here is where it came from in the first place.

Bob Janes,  
Address supplied

### Why shut the road?

Dear Editor

I would like to share my view on the proposed closure of Creighton Avenue during peak times. I do the school run and walk my daughter to school from Leslie Road and down Creighton Avenue to Coldfall School multiple times a week.

The road is one of the quietest and safest roads already during rush hour and I have absolutely no idea why it would need to close when the traffic is already so little. I barely see any cars on my walk to school and the pavements are lovely and wide, providing ample space to walk down with no obstruction or need to cross or move into the main road.

On a Thursday/Friday I take my other daughter to nursery on Fortis Green and the traffic on the High Road is significantly more than Creighton Avenue. Closing Creighton which we use as a cut-through to Fortis Green via Twyford Avenue when we are driving because it's so quiet compared to the High Road seems like a very strange idea. As someone that walks down Creighton Avenue Monday to Friday regularly I see no reason for it to close and would worry if it did that cars would use the county roads as cut-throughs far more, which is incredibly dangerous given how narrow they are compared to Creighton Avenue.

Holly Zisman,  
Leslie Road, N2

### Terrible idea

Dear Editor

Thanks for the article about the shocking news of closing Creighton Avenue during peak times. I live in Fortis Green which is already way too full of traffic. It's a much narrower road than Creighton Avenue

plus it has lots of buses and parking that narrow the road and cause traffic jams.

If the almost empty road of Creighton Ave is closed this will make Fortis Green much worse... It's a terrible idea. I often need to drive in that direction to see my partner as well as friends and have never seen any problems with children crossing the road.

If needed they could create another zebra crossing or narrow the road width to slow traffic instead, although to be honest in all the years I've lived here I've never noticed a lorry driving down Creighton Avenue. It's a particularly quiet and wide road already... unlike Fortis Green where there are always huge traffic jams.

Cate Smail  
Address supplied

### We need more housing

Dear Editor

I read the story in the May 2025 issue regarding the proposed housing development in Manor Park Road. I wanted to respond to the comment that no one in the area supports the proposal put forward by the council for 10 new homes on the car park site.

I and some of my neighbours do support the proposal to provide homes on the site for many reasons. The car park has attracted anti-social behaviour, drug taking and dumping of rubbish for many years. There isn't a problem with parking in the surrounding roads (as evidenced by the campaign against the CPZ) and there is a national housing crisis that needs to be addressed.

Parking will be a bit tighter for residents if there are a few more cars, but there are currently c.2,500 children in Barnet living in temporary accommodation. Surely we can put up with this minor inconvenience so that we can do our bit and help contribute to giving a better quality of life for local families.

Resident of Manor Park Road,  
Name and address supplied

### Silent majority

Dear Editor

As an avid, longtime reader of The Archer I want to thank you for your tireless efforts in keeping an important source of community news running.

In relation to recent articles about the Homes for Barnet developments in our fine borough, I've been somewhat disappointed by the negative coverage. It seems outrage all too often rises to the top of the pile, when a silent majority is too often ignored.

We can all agree there is a dire need for new housing, the younger generation either

cannot afford to move out of their parents' homes or find themselves trapped in a cycle of crippling rent payments.

Those rallying against all these new developments are often those who have been fortunate enough to purchase their houses outright when they were more affordable, or be of means to do so.

We should welcome the fact others want to live in our lovely borough and do what we can to support this effort. I am fully in support of the Manor Park and Cherry Tree developments, as a nearby resident, and believe these constitute good uses of under-utilised space, which is in such short supply.

Robin,  
Long Lane, N2

### Ugly aesthetic

Dear Editor

I'll leave others to comment on Places for Barnet and their 'exemplary' (their word, not mine) building proposals.



First sight: How the Cherry Tree Quarter development would look from East Finchley station

I would just like to raise the purely aesthetic point that the buildings they are proposing are ghastly. Ugly. Very, very ugly indeed. Especially the 'Cherry Tree Quarter'.

The image shown in the recent edition of The Archer looks like someone has crossed cheaply built Marbella time-share flats with an open prison. Is this really what we want to represent East Finchley? The first thing people see as they emerge into the sunlight on the Northern line?

East Finchley is a wonderfully quirky area described as 'charming', 'lovely sense of community', 'quiet streets mixed with indie cafes', 'a surprisingly good arts scene'. That's why we love living here.

The proposed Cherry Tree Quarter does not say 'quirky' or 'charming sense of community' and it definitely does not say 'good arts scene'. And 'Cherry Tree Quarter'? How dare they? A cherry tree is a thing of beauty; elegant and soft and a herald of spring. If I grew a cherry tree and a quarter of it was as ugly as Places for Barnet's proposal I'd chop it down.

Richard Butterworth,  
Manor Park Road, N2

### Baffled by bookcase

Dear Editor

I was born at 9 High Road, East Finchley, in 1946. The taking away and bringing back of the bookcase at East Finchley station (The Archer, May 2025) and all the kerfuffle over a simple act of kindness by a woman is representative of why I left England in the first place.

Here, where I live along the rocky cliffs of Newfoundland in Canada, some people build little structures with glass doors that contain books for the taking. Some folks add books from time to time.

The thought that someone would 'inspect' these structures or think of how they might be a danger to the public is beyond me. Also, no one would think of locking up the books at night. Anyway, in the future, I'll wait to read complaints about the metal bookcase rusting and who is going to paint it. And, of course, God forbid anyone goes and paints it without 'committee approval' of the colour.

Barrie Barrell,  
Flatrock, Newfoundland, Canada

### Tape on trees

Dear Editor

Walking round East Finchley, it is a real pleasure to see so many new street trees. As I understand it these have been funded at some cost by street residents and other charitable donations, and I also understand that residents have helped the trees to settle in and establish roots by watering during this prolonged period without rain. But I am puzzled by the different coloured plastic tapes which have been tied tightly round the trunk of many of these young trees. I looked on the internet to see what they could mean but the list given on Wikipedia was so long that I was none the wiser. I also saw that it is possible to buy such plastic tape cheaply from Amazon. There must be clearer ways of showing support for different causes.

I wonder how long these plastic tapes will remain on the trees, and who will take responsibility for removing and disposing of them properly to avoid damage to the young trees as they thicken or to our already plastic laden environment.

Mary Williams,  
Hertford Road, N2

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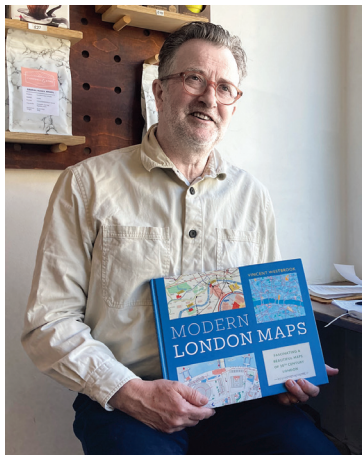


## Map book uncovers multiple layers of life in London

By John Lawrence

Map-lovers will be fascinated by a new book that explores the modern history of London through a collection of colourful and intriguing illustrations.

Author Vincent Westbrook has chosen 60 maps from the London (Metropolitan) Archives that show the multiple layers of life in the capital. There is a map of footways, a map of golf courses, a map of bomb damage from the Second World War, a map of London football grounds in 1931 and a map from 2014 that heralds the city as a National Park with all its areas of greenery.



Map lover: Vincent Westbrook with his new book charting London life

Vincent, who lives in Fortis Green, N2, was commissioned to write London's Modern Maps after retiring from his career as an architect that included work on a number of iconic London projects, such as Wembley Stadium, the M16 headquarters and Embankment Place above Charing Cross Station.

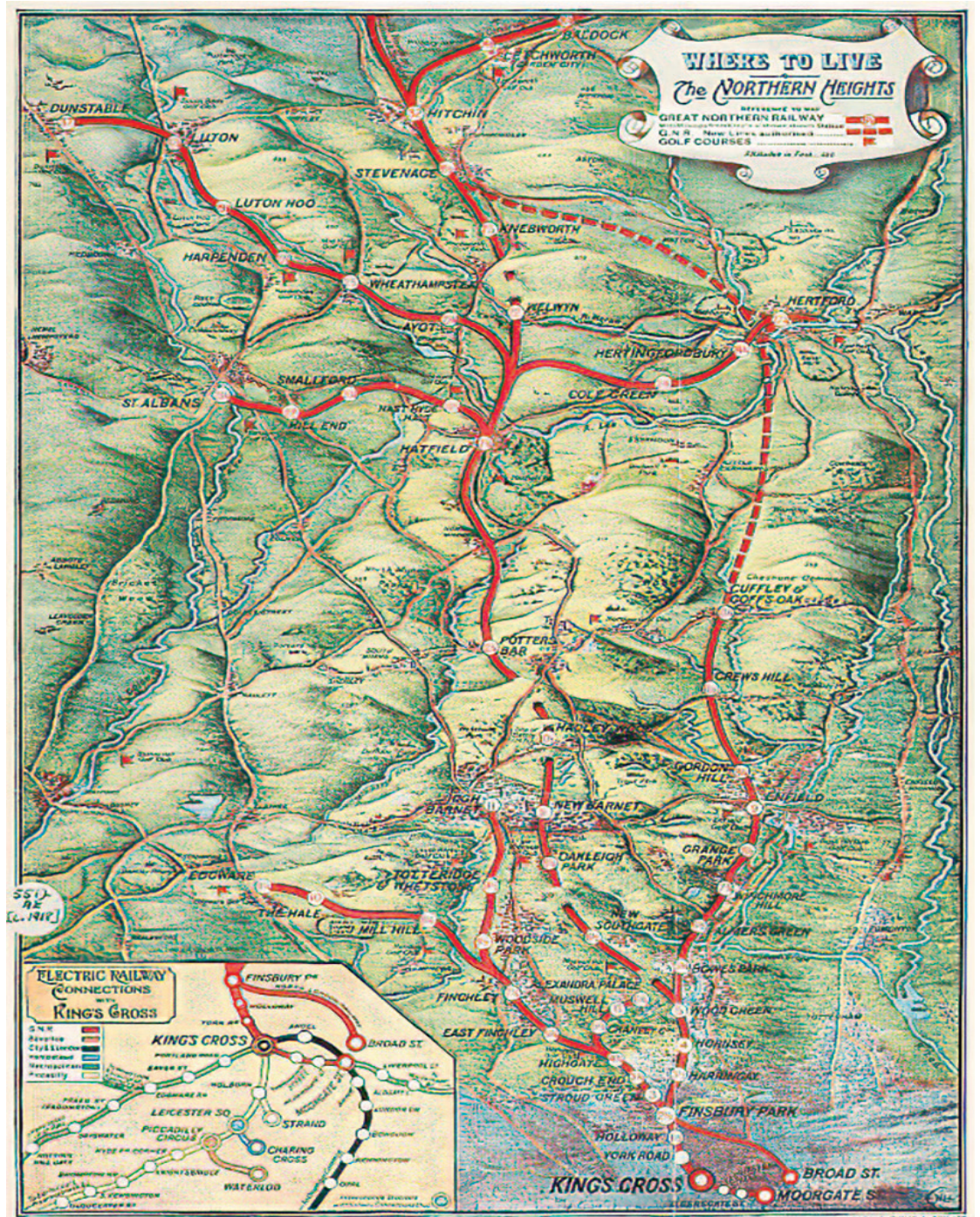
"I've always been interested in maps," he says. "I think it began when I was very young and got the Ladybird Book of Maps. For me, maps are a window into the past and I find it fascinating that they show you something in two dimensions on the page that helps you interpret how the world is in three dimensions in real life."

Vincent says the 20th century was a particularly fertile period for map-making because traditional charting was supplemented by an explosion of creative artist illustrations promoting the likes of tube and rail lines in the suburbs, and popular tourist attractions.

One of the most influential maps in the book is Stephen Walter's acclaimed The Island from 2008, a densely packed, black-and-white hand drawing of words and landmarks that gives a very personal 'mind map' of the capital.

Maps are still a big part of everyone's lives, says Vincent, most often in digital form these days, such as Google Maps or sat nav. "Although for all the new technology, it still doesn't stop us getting lost," he notes.

Modern London Maps is published by Batsford Books priced £30 in hardback. It is available from all good booksellers and from [www.batsfordbooks.com](http://www.batsfordbooks.com)



Before the Northern line: The Great Northern Railway promoted its overground services out of Kings Cross with this map in 1918 Courtesy The London Archives

## Timely plea for summer flowers

By botanist Linda Dolata

Just a plea for our depleted insect populations. Firstly, if you are buying flowers for pollinators then check carefully whether they are 'bee-friendly'. So many of the showier plants are hybrids (marked X or F1 X on the labels).

Although they look lovely, they are bred to often have no nectar or ovaries, which means they flower for longer and hoverflies and bees will investigate them but they get no nectar or pollen reward, and actually lose energy each visit.

Secondly, whilst adult insects are catered for, their earlier life stages are not. Most caterpillars are monophagous, eating only one thing which, as



Feeder: A Holly Blue butterfly. Photo Donald Lyven

they have evolved with it, will be a native organism (so-called weeds). The adults seek out these species to lay eggs on.

Lastly, sterile soil takes many years to fully develop the mycorrhiza that most plants need to thrive, so do try and incorporate some of your garden soil with your shop-bought compost... or you will be shopping again next year for plants that could have overwintered.

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