

The Archer is a non-profit-making, non-political & non-religious newspaper, run entirely by volunteers
Delivered free to 10,000 homes and businesses across East Finchley

Phoenix spreads its wings

By John Lawrence

The Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley has been nominated for a major award as it gets ready to introduce a number of programming innovations and bring back some old favourites under a new executive director.

Our local movie venue is in the running for the first-ever Cinema of the Year award, to be announced as part of the British Independent Film Awards. A shortlist of five will be named on Monday 3 November and voting will take place throughout the month ahead of an awards ceremony on 30 November.

It comes as the Phoenix prepares for a busy autumn and winter season with new audience-winners like parent-and-baby screenings, dog-friendly performances and a monthly comedy night, alongside its diverse programme of independent films, opera and theatre screenings, and director Q&As.

Unique spaces

Kathryn Smith was appointed as the cinema's new executive director in June and says she

wants it to "spread its wings", adding that the refurbished 170-seater main auditorium and the new 22-seater second screen can be used in many ways for the benefit of the community.

"We have two unique spaces where we can offer party packages, host podcast recordings or stage conferences and product launches. We can customise the screen and we can organise catering. All people have to do is come along and enjoy," says Kathryn, whose career has included working at Vue and Odeon cinemas, and Picturehouse Central in Piccadilly.

"We have a loyal audience and we'd love to get more people through our doors. We'll always have a strong programme of excellent films and we have ideas for different types of screenings, like dementia-friendly or parent



Laughter lines: Comedian Joe Bar on stage at the Phoenix hosting the September Stand Up night in aid of the cinema. The line-up also featured Sara Barron, Tom Price and Ross Smith. Photo Mike Coles

and baby. And we'd love to open partnerships with local businesses where they can sponsor screenings and get publicity for the services they offer."

Competition

Phoenix trustee Steven Smith said cinemas generally continue

to struggle with competition from TV streamers like Netflix, coupled with a shortage of crowd-pulling releases. On top of that, 45-60% of a ticket price must be handed to the film-makers and distributors, so it is vital for venues to generate other sources of income.

"What matters most is having large audiences who return again and again, but if our guests can also buy a coffee or popcorn from us, or become Phoenix members, that is money that goes directly to the cinema and supports us for the future."

What's on at the Phoenix pg. 10

Ideas welcome at Town Team social

Everyone is welcome to the next Town Team meeting taking place at East Finchley Constitutional Club, 9 The Walks, N2 8DE on Thursday 9 October. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start and there is a reasonably priced bar.

Perhaps you have some ideas for changes or improvements in the local environment? What can we do to support the High Road and ensure the survival of its traders and businesses?

Are we being blighted by

new building proposals such as the Great North London Leisure Park redevelopment right on our doorstep? Come along if you'd like to discuss, listen to or suggest topics relating to our neck of the woods.

Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley.

Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line **0800 612 0748**.

Thank you

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BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

The **224 North London Scouts** group is looking for adults to help with its Beavers (ages six to eight) and Cubs (ages eight to ten). From games and crafts to cooking, outdoor activities, and trips, no two weeks are the same. You don't need experience, just enthusiasm and a willingness to join in. Whether it's a weekly commitment, occasional help, or support behind the scenes, you'll make a real difference and be part of a friendly team. Get in touch to find out more. Email del@224northlondonscouts.org.uk

Friends of Coldfall Wood & Muswell Hill Playing Fields are a small informal group of volunteers who share a common interest in protecting and enhancing these two green spaces. They are involved in a range of things to support the wood, such as arranging free guided walks and events and supporting its many users (human and animal!). They are always looking for new members, for just a handful of hours a month, to help with admin and liaising with other local groups and the council. For more information, please email: info@coldfallwoods.co.uk

N2-based Number Champions is an award-winning charity that helps young state primary school children who are behind in maths. It trains volunteers to use games and other creative activities in one-to-one sessions to help children achieve their educational potential. If you have enthusiasm to help children, confidence in basic numeracy, 1.5 hours/week available in term time, see www.numberchampions.org.uk or contact volunteer@numberchampions.org.uk.

Long Lane Pasture nature reserve is a wildlife haven and peaceful green space providing a home for birds, insects, trees and wildflowers in N2. It is a charity run by volunteers as an urban sanctuary that connects visitors with nature and supports local conservation. The team there is always looking for volunteers to help maintain the Pasture for two hours on a Saturday morning between 10am and 12noon so just turn up or find out more at longlanepasture.org

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 signpost people to help with the cost of living, employment, housing etc. You will need to be available for food bank sessions on Tuesdays and/or Saturdays between 11.30am and 2pm twice a month. To find out more about becoming a digital champion volunteer email: finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com

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

Project delays keep underpass closed off

By John Lawrence

Regular users of the pedestrian underpass between Trinity Road and Manor Park Road, N2, have asked why refurbishment work is keeping it closed for so long.

The walkway under the Northern line was originally closed in June for a projected period of six weeks for major improvements but, at the time of going to press, was still closed at the end of September.

The project is being spearheaded by the Grange Big Local regeneration team to bring new lighting, drainage and accessibility features to the underpass, making it safer and more welcoming for pedestrians to use.

However, The Archer understands that unexpected drainage issues and the complexity of co-ordinating the work between Barnet Council and Transport for London have led to the path staying closed.

Inconvenience

A Grange Big Local spokesperson said: "While GBL has supported the community engagement and design, the construction work is being managed by Barnet Council and permissions from Transport for



No entry: The pedestrian underpass between Trinity Road and Manor Park Road was still closed to residents in mid-September.
Photo John Lawrence

London have taken longer than expected due to the works being undertaken close to the main track lines.

"We know that this has caused inconvenience, and we want to thank everyone for their patience. We believe that, once completed, the underpass will be safer and more pleasant for everyone who uses it.

In the meantime, we appreciate the community's feedback and understanding as the work continues."

As part of the refurbishment, graffiti is being removed and new path surfaces laid. Mirrors and lighting will improve visibility for users navigating the tight corners.

Clissold Arms up for British pub award

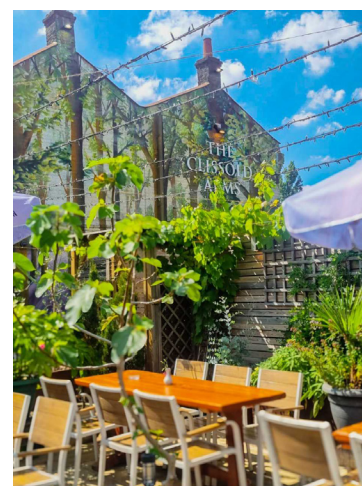
The Clissold Arms Gastro Pub in Fortis Green, N2, has been selected as one of the six national finalists in the Best Community Pub of the Year category for the Great British Pub Awards.

This recognition makes the Clissold, which serves authentic Greek food plus traditional British Sunday roasts, as the only London establishment to reach the final in this category.

Throughout its 175-year history, The Clissold Arms has supported a variety of cultural, educational and charitable initiatives by offering donations and providing space for meetings and events and is the main sponsor for the Chris Harmanda Foundation "Christmas Blue Jean Bash", which helps less

fortunate families during illness. The pub runs a range of events spanning live Greek and English music, quiz, comedy and open mic nights, wine tasting, chess, backgammon and choir evenings and a knitting club.

To celebrate their achievement, the Clissold team is organising a Community Party at the pub on **Sunday 12 October between 5pm and 9pm** with a complimentary glass of bubbly and homemade Greek hors d'oeuvres and baklava for all visitors to enjoy.



Nominated: The Clissold Arms

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet

Land rear of Fairlawn Avenue, N2

Erection of a two-storey self-build dwelling with basement level including associated landscaping, refuse/recycling storage, car and cycle parking and amenity space

143 Abbots Gardens, N2

Erection of a new garage following the demolition of the existing, first-floor side extension, and changes

to the fenestration

45 Brackenbury Road, N2

Single-storey side/rear extension with two roof lights and new patio area

72 Hamilton Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with a proposed depth of 5.2 metres from the original rear wall, maximum height of 3.2 metres and eaves height of 2.75 metres. Following demolition of existing

lean-to outrigger.

5 Brook Walk, Strawberry Vale N2

Installation of access ramp to front garden and alterations to garden wall and installation of new gate

19 Chandos Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with two flat roof lights following demolition of existing extension. New side window

2A Fortis Green, N2

Change of use of the ground floor from commercial unit (Use Class E) to four studios (Use Class C3). Changes to fenestration. Associated refuse/recycling and cycle storage. External alterations including installation of new windows and doors.

13 Briar Close, N2

Installation of access ramps to front and rear of property with associated handrails and

and alterations to front and rear doors

65 Bedford Road, N2

Single-storey side extension with glazed pitched roof and roof light. New rear patio doors and full height glazing

Haringey

1-6 Highgate Edge, Great North Road, N2

Replacement flat roof covering to Block A and associated works



Tree appeal and events in the Wood

By Debbie Linton, Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are keen to encourage more native trees in the wood and are launching a fundraising appeal to buy two new red and white hawthorns.

The appeal is being launched via Barnet Council's 'Trees for Streets' scheme in which the cost of purchasing and planting each tree is £400, which includes watering and maintenance for three years.

Any donations large or small are welcome and can be made by BACS to Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Sort Code: 50-21-08 Account No. 60620986, using the reference "TREE". The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are a registered charity.

The tree appeal will also be discussed at the group's upcoming public meeting on Thursday 16 October at the Monkey Puzzle Nursery opposite East Finchley tube station from 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Storytelling and litterpick

Meanwhile on Sunday 12 October there will be a celebration of two wonderful trees, the quince and the medlar. This will start at 3pm with a children's story in the children's nature circle beside the playground and will be followed at 3.30pm by a talk at the forest garden near the Fordington Road gate entrance to the wood. Free quinces will be given away.

Also, on Sunday 12 October is the regular litter pick. Make an afternoon of it and meet after the quince and medlar event by the café from 4pm-5pm. There are children's litter pickers available, and it is very much



Fundraiser: The appeal aims to plant two new trees

a family event (and strangely very enjoyable removing any unwanted litter from our wood!)

Park House development

There will be much to catch up on at the meeting. As reported previously, the Friends were very grateful for the public support in helping obtain tree preservation orders on the five Himalayan birches at the front of Park House. There will be information at the meeting on the proposed Cherry Tree Quarter housing development, including any implications for the wood.

Get involved

To get involved with the Friends or just to get in touch email friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com

Long-awaited reopening of library

Muswell Hill Library was due to open its doors to readers again last month after a long period of closure for improvement works. The reopening day on Monday 29 September was accompanied by the introduction of new opening hours.



Open: Muswell Hill Library

The refurbishment has brought the library a new floorplan with new lighting and furniture. There is also a new accessible toilet and lift on site, as well as a designated area for young people to learn and study.

Muswell Hill Library will be open for a total of 41 hours per week as follows: **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday:** 9:30am-6pm. **Saturday:** 10am-5pm. **Thursday & Sunday:** closed.



Model citizen: Peter Snook sits in front of the treehouse garden he helped to create with the miniature houses climbing the trunk behind him. Photo John Lawrence

That's a clever little way to get on the housing ladder...

By John Lawrence

A new high-rise housing scheme has sprung up in East Finchley ... but this one is unlikely to raise any worries about parking spaces or over-development.



Community: The tiny houses have rope ladders, a bridge and a patio area. Photo John Lawrence

It's a treehouse village created by 92-year-old Pete Snook and his neighbours outside their retirement homes in Prospect Place, N2.

The collection of brightly painted miniature houses climbs up a tree in the middle of a shared garden space. Many of the mini-residences have rope ladders outside their front doors and at the bottom there's a tiny patio area and a bridge leading over a rock garden.

Peter is an experienced carpenter and model-maker and crafted many of the tree homes himself along with an eye-catching painted sign saying "Garden rules: Listen to birds, read a book, take a nap,

sip a drink. Relax"

Some may remember Peter from his 42 years working as an electrical technician at Lee's TV in Regents Park Road, N3. His neighbours praise him for his dexterity and skills, which also include watch mending, and for his loving devotion to caring for his wife Joan.

Peter told The Archer: "I can't take all the credit for the treehouse garden. We all had fun contributing to it. I've got such wonderful neighbours here and we enjoy little outdoor projects like this. Other times we're happy just to sit and chat." Prospect Place is run by Barnet Homes and includes an on-site laundrette and community hall.

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Bookshops are the heartbeat of our neighbourhoods

"So please, oh please, we beg, we pray, go throw your TV set away, and in its place you can install, a lovely bookshelf on the wall." So said Roald Dahl in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Local bookshops are more than just storefronts filled with shelves of stories; they are vibrant community hubs that nurture curiosity, foster connection, and preserve the literary heartbeat of our neighbourhoods. While the community bookcase at East Finchley station has thankfully reappeared, many of us are still mourning the closure of Black Gull Bookshop in the High Road last year.

Diana Cormack and Ruth Anders have turned the page by visiting the Black Gull Flies South bookshop in Sussex and the new Muswell Hill Books & Parlour in Muswell Hill.

My final delivery to an old favourite

By Diana Cormack

During my many years of delivering The Archer along the High Road, I always enjoyed visiting Black Gull Bookshop. I confess that when it opened in 2008, I did not think it would last as long as it did.



Read all about it: Diana with The Archer outside the Black Gull Bookshop in St Leonards. Photo Ian Cormack

Happily, it became a popular and much admired centre for the huge and varied range it stocked, attracting customers from great distances to East Finchley.

Visiting Black Gull was always like stepping back in time, with row upon row of bookshelves stacked high, crammed with delight for second-hand book searchers, and there was somewhere for browsers to sit and read. Sadly, all that pleasure was lost to us with last year's closure.

But last month while paying a visit to my brother-in-law in Hastings, I took a trip just up the Sussex coast to St Leonards on Sea, where every avid Archer reader knows that Black Gull owner Chris Overfield landed

after leaving East Finchley (see p4 August 2024).

Black Gull Flies South is settled at 34 London Road, surrounded by antique/second-hand shops and some strange establishments that make you wonder just what they are selling.

The hand-painted signs outside and stacked shelves inside were reminiscent of its former home in N2, though the larger interior seemed lighter and brighter perhaps due to the extensive window frontage.

On my flying visit, I did not know the shop assistant at the till, but he knew about The Archer and happily took the copy I had taken with me for my last delivery to Black Gull.

A new chapter in Muswell Hill

By Ruth Anders

When our beloved Black Gull Books in East Finchley closed its doors 18 months ago (since sitting empty), residents mourned the loss of a treasure trove for literary wanderers. The shelves that once groaned with history, poetry, forgotten classics and local folklore stood empty, and regulars were deprived of the soothing hush found among well-thumbed pages and creaky floorboards.

But now a short walk or bus ride from East Finchley a new hand-painted sign has appeared at 190 Fortis Green Road, reading 'Muswell Hill Books & Parlour' and behind this rebirth is former Black Gull associate Chris Masson.

At the new shop, which opened last month, Chris greets visitors with the same gentle enthusiasm that made Black Gull a sanctuary for so many. There's a sense of continuity with old regulars from N2 reuniting over discussions of rare finds, and local writers already inquiring about readings and events.

The ethos remains unchanged: a haven for readers, a champion of local voices, an advocate for the serendipity of stumbling upon a book you never knew you needed.

With a lifelong interest in literature and music, some years ago Chris opened his own shop Boom Cat Books in Camden Town, the sister shop of Black Gull. A quirky, unique treasure trove of rare art and literature, Boom Cat outgrew its little space and closed.

Multi-use space

Having returned to Muswell Hill with their family, Chris and his partner Katrina are combining their skills and experience to create a multi-use space: a bookshop selling carefully



Well stocked: Owner Chris Masson in his new bookshop in Muswell Hill. Photo Mike Coles

curated second-hand books, artwork and rare music items, and a 'Parlour' to host children's and grown-up events.

Through her company 'Kat's Whiskers' Katrina has been a children's party entertainer and family event organiser for 15 years. She has organised family parties all over London, and staged kids shows at festivals such as Latitude, Secret Garden Party, and Boom Town Fair.

Although not a fan of social media, Chris knows that financial success will involve online sales. He told us: "Our new market will be totally different from Camden Town where our buyers were transient and often tourists. The stock will be similar to that of Black Gull, perhaps leaning a little to the

Left!" Chris has worked hard to stock the shop with a variety of offerings.

We wish him well and look forward to many visits. For more information see <https://www.muswellhillbooks.co.uk>

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
October 2015

In their last chance to show support for East Finchley Library, local residents were led by actor and author Rebecca Front in a noisy and good-natured demonstration march against library closures in Barnet. They set off from East Finchley Library and walked to Church End Library, where they were greeted by a brass band and decorated open-top bus full of supporters. The march ended at North Finchley Library. Afterwards, the East Finchley Library Users Group thanked participants for their "brilliant" support and, ten years later, all three libraries are still open.

15 years ago:
October 2010

The Bobath Centre, a charity for children with cerebral palsy, was targeted by thieves, who stripped all the lead from the roof of their building in East End Road, N2. The theft not only caused a lot of damage to the roof, but also resulted in widespread internal water damage and a very expensive repair bill for the charity.

25 years ago:
October 2000

A petrol crisis and fuel protests closed local garages and brought temporary quiet to the roads of East Finchley. This prompted a mixed response from local residents, whose views were highlighted and discussed in The Archer. While there was far less commuter parking, cleaner air and more people shopping locally, some locals complained of journeys to work becoming a nightmare and many businesses suffered reductions in trade.

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Uncertainty as park cafés are put to tender

By Cobi Jacobs

The City of London Corporation has announced plans to put five cafés under its management out to tender, including the popular and much-loved Highgate Wood Café.

The issue stems back to 2016 when leases for cafés in Parliament Hill, Golders Hill Park and Highgate Wood were awarded to coffee chain Benugo.

Following a strong public backlash and a petition signed by thousands of people, Benugo withdrew from the catering contract for all three locations. Ultimately, the running of the Highgate Wood café fell into the hands of local operator Hoxton Beach.

Now the tender process has reopened for the same three cafés plus two others at the Lido, near Parliament Hill, and at Queen's Park, NW6. This

Beach, echoed this sentiment, saying: "We have been immensely touched by the support expressed by our customers and we have our fingers crossed that we'll make the cut to stay on in this extraordinary place."

While the Corporation of London has not indicated any preference for large operators, critics point out that the financial strength and integrated supply chains of corporate entities could give them an edge.

One local café owner, not involved in the parks in question, told us that independent operators already struggle to compete with chains offering



Change of owner? The popular Highgate Wood Café.

Photo Mike Coles

has reignited concerns among the cafés' supporters that large corporate chains could once again be positioned to displace local operators.

In its announcement, the City of London Corporation said: "This process will provide greater clarity and security for the cafés' operators, supporting their long-term investment and future on these sites."

For some café operators, the promise of stability is welcome. One proprietor said that uncertainty over their long-term position had made it difficult to commit to the level of investment they had hoped to make.

Petition

Still, many residents remain wary. A petition urging the City of London Corporation to keep the cafés in local hands has amassed over 17,000 signatures. Opponents argue that the award of these contracts to corporate chains would contribute to gentrification and strip away local knowledge and character that make these spaces unique.

The current operator of Highgate Woods Café, Hoxton



Arts and crafts: Families enjoy the activities tables at the Grange Big Local Fun Palace with Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman joining in (facing camera, second left). Photo Grange Big Local

Fun Palace brings cultures together for family time

The Grange Big Local team hosted their fourth Fun Palace on Saturday 6 September at the Tarling Road Community Centre, N2, the last event they will be holding as their 10-year regeneration project comes to an end.

Volunteers came together to share their skills, passions and interests.

Inside there were arts and crafts with Yaran Women's Club, Heritage Crafts CIC, Cecilia Montero Crafts, Katy, Felicity, Willemien and Brenda. Fatina from Marah Arabic Language Centre taught people how to write their name in Arabic calligraphy, Boost Barnet offered Jenga (and financial sponsorship) whilst Peps did some face-painting. There was

science with Little Volcanoes Science Club, Long Lane Pastures, and Wild Science, who brought snakes and salamanders to the centre.

Outside in the sunshine, people enjoyed live music from performers from Barnet Mencaps' Sound Hub, alongside soft axe throwing from 224 North London Air Scouts, forest bathing, and free food and ice cream.

"In times of increasing fear and division, it is so important

for people to be able to share their culture and their joy with their neighbours. I am so grateful to everyone who helped, and who came, for creating such a fun and inspiring afternoon," said GBL Chair James Masters.

There will be an exhibition of Fun Palaces research by GBL volunteer Dr Katy Pilcher at the Artsdepot in North Finchley from 17-31 October. The exhibition is entitled Creative Voices, Activist Voices: Sensory Stories of Creative Communities.

Black History Month

A celebration of African-Caribbean culture, music and food as part of Black History Month is taking place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, on Monday 20 October from 2pm to 4pm.

Author, actor and comedienne Andi Osho will be joining to share her life stories and there will be other speakers and performers. To register for the free event, call 07502 989403 or email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk.

Your letters p.11

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Police urge vigilance on cuckooing

By Janet Maitland

Police are asking people to be on the alert for 'cuckooing', a practice whereby someone's home is taken over as a base for criminal activity, such as drug dealing or sexual exploitation.

The term comes from cuckoos laying their eggs in other birds' nests to get free parenting for their offspring. But human cuckooing has nothing to do with nurturing. It is a form of cruel exploitation, where the homeowner or tenant is controlled financially, physically or psychologically and as a result ends up at risk of modern slavery, involvement in crime, and losing their home.

Police leaders nationally recently reported that in one week at the end of last year, 853 suspected cuckooed homes were visited.

It works by the perpetrator manipulating a potential victim in order to get inside their home and take it over. The tenant or homeowner might be offered drugs or money to gain access, but this quickly becomes a form of debt bondage.

The victim might also be groomed into thinking they have made a friend or started a relationship, but once the perpetrator has easy access to the property, they take control of it through force or deception.

Elderly people, people with disabilities and people with mental health illnesses can all

be targeted, as can those who are socially isolated, living in poverty, addicted to substances, sex workers and undocumented migrants, but anyone can become a victim.

Warning signs

Warning signs include a sudden increase in visitors, more vehicles parked outside the property with their owners staying for short periods of time, and increased noise and litter from drug use; also the homeowner or tenant not being seen for a long time, having signs of assault such as bruises and/or seeming frightened or withdrawn.

"Cuckooing is not a named criminal offence but a range of offences fall under the cuckooing umbrella," said a police spokesperson. A bill creating a new bespoke crime for this offence is going through Parliament.

If you suspect a home has been taken over, contact police on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555111** or the Modern Slavery Helpline (24/7) on **08000 121 700**. If possible, make a note of parked vehicle registration numbers. Don't take any risks and in an emergency call 999.

Looking for volunteers?

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation?

Our 'Be Part of It' column is published on page 2 every month and gets results. Submissions are free and are

included subject to available space.

Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to news@the-archer.co.uk, marking your email 'Be Part of It'.

Primary school open day

Holy Trinity CE Primary School is holding an open day on **Wednesday 12 November** and inviting parents and families to find out more about its learning environment.

The school in Eagans Close, N2, says it offers a nurturing,

child-centric ethos with specialist PE provision, a rich variety of extra-curricular activities and outstanding SATS results.

The open day sessions start at 10am and 2pm. To find out more and book a place, email the school at office@holylrinity.barnetmail.net

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Torn apart: The once-majestic tree suffered a major collapse, left, and has now been heavily cut back to its main trunk. Photos Mike Coles

Huge branch tears away from landmark tree

By David Melsome

A landmark tree has been heavily reshaped after a massive branch dramatically collapsed, narrowly missing parked cars. The Norway Maple spread extensively at the corner of Woodside Avenue and Fordington Road before Saturday 6 September.

Eye-witnesses described hearing and seeing a huge branch tear away from the main trunk and ending up across the Fordington Road pavement at about 1.30pm. A resident alerted Haringey Council and a team

of tree surgeons arrived promptly to cut down other unstable branches. The cause of the collapse may have been weakness through age coupled with the after-effects of the near-drought conditions over

the summer. The stricken tree has not been removed altogether and there is hope that the remaining trunk and branches will support regrowth and a return to its previous majestic form in the future.

Many more street parties to come

By Diana Cormack

On the first Saturday of September, residents of Cherry Tree Road gathered for their annual party.



Street party: Neighbours enjoy each other's company in Cherry Tree Road

They supplied a delicious range of sweet and savoury food, with hot dogs and burgers cooked outdoors during the afternoon.

There was a Guess-the-Weight of the cake competition along with a quiz for the youngsters. One of these, 12-year-old Izzy, impressed everyone with her confident singing performance accompanied by her dad

Dave on the guitar.

A question in the quiz about who had lived longest in the street led to comments about the number of young babies present, with evidence of more to come!

So, with plenty of takers evident for future parties, thanks were effusive to the organisers of this year's enjoyable event.

Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley.

Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line **0800 612 0748**.

Thank you

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

How to report a crime

- Call **999** in an emergency when there is a danger to life or a crime is in progress

- Call **101** for non-emergencies, if your property has been stolen or damaged, you wish to report drug dealing or a minor traffic accident, and for general police enquiries

- Report crime to your local Safer Neighbourhood Team by email: eastfinchley.snt@met.police.uk gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk or fortisgreen.snt@met.police.uk

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

- Stay anonymous and report information to Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**

Car boot sale

The next Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 25 October from 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH. Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. For information, phone **020 8368 8180**.



Neglected path is a 'danger' to users

By David Melsome

Residents on the Strawberry Vale estate in East Finchley are hoping for action after reporting the poor state of an underpass path that many use to reach local bus routes. Overgrown bushes and broken steps have left it difficult and dangerous to use.



Watch your step: The broken stairway on the path near Strawberry Vale

The path goes from the estate down to the A406 North Circular where people catch buses to Brent Cross, and also under the High Road or A1000 bridge where people can catch the 263 heading north.

"People with buggies, wheelchairs and electric scooters find it difficult to access these bus stops as the path is badly overgrown," said one resident. "It will only be a matter of time before someone will get seriously hurt as many steps are broken."

Maintenance and repair work has not happened because. Barnet Council and Transport for London have not yet agreed who is responsible for the path.

MP involved

Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman has taken the issue up on behalf of the estate residents. Her office reports that TfL met with Barnet Council representatives in the summer to discuss the path and that extra information on the boundary lines was requested before action could be taken.

Ms Sackman's office added: "We are arranging a meeting with borough officers to clarify responsibilities in this area. We want to make sure this is fully agreed before finalising next steps. TfL officers and borough officers have promised to visit the site to clarify who holds ownership and responsibility."



Family-run: Emiliano Ventura, second left, and his restaurant team at Taco Bros. Photo Mike Coles

Family food in honour of a Mexican heritage

By Margaret Crockett

Taco Bros is the new restaurant on the High Road, N2, next to Genzo's. I went to talk to Emiliano Ventura, the owner and manager, to find out what inspired his family to come to our patch to serve Mexican food.

It is late afternoon when I arrive and a group of mothers with their pre-school children are sitting around the tables outside.

Inside the décor is simple and it feels like a family living room. Emiliano comes in with his six-year-old son Sammy, who is soon tucking into a bowl of guacamole and two types of hand-made taco chips. This nicely illustrates Emiliano's concept of an independent family-run restaurant serving authentic and traditional Mexican food.

"It's about preserving a legacy and sharing a piece of our heritage with the community," says Emiliano. He explains that his father Francisco would take him to Mexico City every year to visit his late grandmother, who made and sold quesadillas to support her family, both instilled his love of Mexican food and inspired him to found the business. "We wanted to

honour her," Emiliano says simply. Fred, Emiliano's younger brother, is the other half of Taco Bros and he works in the restaurant whenever he can alongside their mother and other family members. The rest of the staff – Kawa Ramos, Emiliano Ventura, Emilia Diaz, Blanca Ruiz and Antonio Angeles – all have Mexican roots. Francisco also came over for several months to support the restaurant opening in July.

Organic growth

The family business has grown organically, starting out selling food at markets at the weekend, also catering for private events using the food truck that they still hire out, and expanding to weekday markets too.

Securing a spot at the Southbank Centre Food Market was a milestone, requiring more fridge space and prompting plans for the next move to a

permanent space.

The family lives in north London and Emiliano wanted to find a restaurant in this area. When buying a fridge from Genzo's, Emiliano got talking to owner Aki Toumazos, who liked Emiliano's plans and they negotiated the lease for the premises.

The sharing plates and mixture of small and larger dishes, as well as the mini tacos and quesadillas, make the restaurant particularly family-friendly, Emilio explains. Having finished his snack, Sammy was keen to draw our attention to the family photos displayed on shelves along one wall near the entrance.

Francisco is there in the boxing ring but there is also a photo of a younger Sammy and his great-grandmother at home in Mexico City. Her legacy is very apparent when visiting Taco Bros restaurant.

Wine from 1,000 vineyards around the world

By Karly Benson

A new wine shop has opened for business on the High Road, N2, after a soft-launch and free wine tasting event on Friday 5 September. Finchley Wine by Wine Designer has been five years in the making and owners Shah, Ricky, and Ekaterina bring over 20 years of combined experience in wine selling.

The shop, previously an off-licence, was filled with locals for over three hours for the tasting event on Friday 5 September. "It's nice to have it open again," one guest said, adding that it's refreshing to have another different type of shop to add to the variety of outlets on the High Road.

The opening of the shop was not without its growing pains as the owners struggled to source builders during the summer months. A ten-day project turned out to take much longer, so the shop was still a work in progress at its opening.



Vineyard connections: Owners Ricky, left, and Shah at Finchley Wine. Photo Mike Coles

Despite not having its full inventory, the shop displayed an international selection with hundreds of types of wine, as well as spirits, beer, and individually mixed drinks. The owners stated that they have over 200

suppliers, sourcing wine from over 1,000 vineyards globally. In addition to selling wine, the shop is applying for a permit to serve it by the glass, with in-store seating where people can gather, work, and learn about different types of wine.

"Community building is the priority," said Shah, stating that it's the long-standing residents of East Finchley they want to cater for. The shop plans to continue hosting tastings and events, inspiring members of the community to shop locally.

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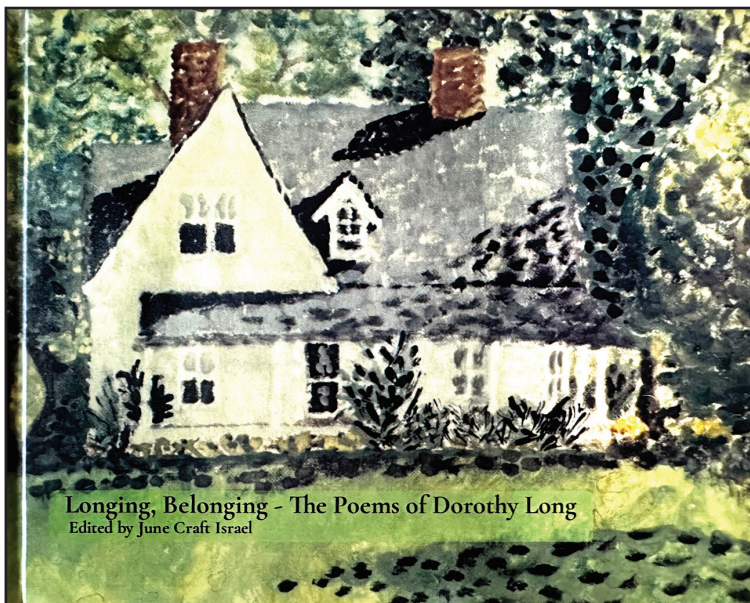
Website: www.read-my-lips.org



A debt finally repaid to a loving aunt

By Margaret Crockett

When local artist June Israel was an impoverished student in the 1950s, her loving Aunt Dorothy provided her with meals and other much-needed support. Seventy years on, June has found a way to repay her debt of gratitude by publishing a volume of her aunt's poetry.



Longing, Belonging - The Poems of Dorothy Long
Edited by June Craft Israel

Cover art: Dorothy's childhood home in North Carolina

Until now, publication has been unaffordable but June used online self-publishing platform Lulu.com to produce a slim hard-backed volume of her aunt's writings called *Longing, Belonging – The Poems of Dorothy Long*, with a striking cover image of her own oil painting of the house in rural North Carolina, US, where Dorothy grew up.

June, who is 94 and has lived in East Finchley since 1962, chose a selection of poems that speak to Dorothy's appreciation of nature, her strong Christian belief, her search for a romantic partner and the onset of blindness in later life.



Poet: Dorothy Long

Growing up

Dorothy, born in 1908 and known as Dot to family, grew up in a rural farming community in Dozier, North Carolina. She was a child prodigy and she walked to school with Anita (June's mother and two years older). Dorothy graduated from high school, aged 14, the same year as Anita.

Dorothy went to North Carolina College for Women, requiring a special permit because of her age. By her 15th birthday she

was teaching Latin and French to students her own age at Vienna School.

No permit was needed to buy a car and she taught herself to drive between home and work. In the Second World War, Dorothy served as librarian to the US Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina before going on to work in university libraries. Throughout study and employment she maintained close links with her family, travelling back to Dozier regularly.

June, who knew Dorothy better than anyone else, remembers her visiting with gifts of paper dolls when she was a child and, later, her first lipstick.

Audiobook

Dorothy suffered from macular degeneration, badly affecting her eyesight, and she was forced to retire in 1977. She returned home to the Long House to live with her mother and her younger disabled sister. Dorothy died in 1987.

She wrote poetry throughout her life and her works appeared in various publications such as the North Carolina Christian Advocate, Coraddi (her College magazine), Winston-Salem Poets and Perspectives in Biology and Medicine.

June, who is also thinking about reading the *Longing, Belonging* poems for the sight-impaired, perhaps recording them as an audio book, says simply that the poems "tell a story as it is".



New look: Customers in the Stag's refurbished dining room on reopening night. Photo Mike Coles

Opening night party at the refurbished Stag

By Maryam Bitege

Guests and visitors turned out in force for the reopening party at the Bald Faced on Friday 22 August, filling the refurbished pub at 69 High Road, N2, after staff worked until the final day to complete preparations.

Families mingled with long-time regulars throughout the evening, gathering in the renovated interior and beer garden under summer skies. The outdoor space, dominated by a mature tree, buzzed with conversations as guests explored the refurbishment. "It's always nice to have something the community can look

forward to," said one attendee, while another regular said: "I've always loved this pub and I'm glad it's back."

Launch evening

Guests were able to sample the new menu during the evening. After some years as part of the Greene King chain and a period

of closure for the refurbishment, the Stag is now owned and operated by Urban Pubs & Bars.

And if the packed attendance on the relaunch night is anything to go by, there is strong local enthusiasm for the pub's return to the East Finchley community.

Be a lifeline through SANE

By Joanna Michaels

National mental health charity SANE is actively recruiting dedicated individuals to join SANEline, its emotional support help line, which is open daily from 4pm to 10pm.

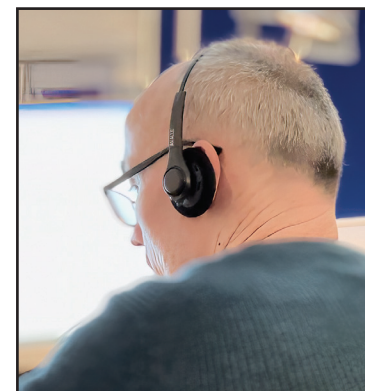
You don't need to be a mental health expert to get involved. Empathy and a genuine desire to help matter more than academic qualifications or previous experience.

SANE, based in Islington, provides comprehensive training to prepare volunteers for the role alongside ongoing support. Volunteers are asked for a commitment of one four-hour shift per week for a minimum of one year. Fatima Khan, Director of

Services, explains: "At SANE we support our volunteers with high-quality training and ongoing development opportunities to build a strong and connected volunteer community. This is key in putting our callers first and ensuring a safe and supportive experience."

Heart-warming

One volunteer said their time at the charity had been an eye-opening and heart-warming



On the line: A Saneline volunteer

experience that taught them about themselves as well as about mental health.

Another said: "Most of the callers, in my experience, just want someone to see their reality from their point of view."

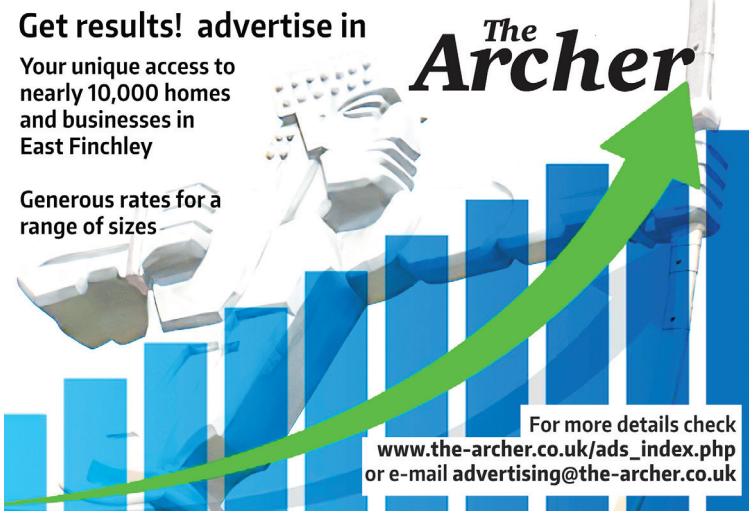
This is why showing them that we genuinely see and follow their thought process, that we can meet them where they are, regardless of the type of the problem they are bringing, is what they need the most."

For more information on becoming a volunteer at SANE, email volunteer@sane.org.uk

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Grandmother's fall inspires wearable ID

By Gail Norcliffe

East Finchley resident Kya Mobasheri decided something had to be done when his grandmother Majoon fainted in the street. Although Majoon made it home safely after her fainting episode, Kya's anxieties grew after an elderly friend was taken into hospital unconscious without any ID and could not be identified by medical staff for 36 hours, leaving family members distraught with worry.



Life-saving: A fainting episode suffered by his grandmother Majoon, left, led to the creation of ID jewellery designed by Kya Mobasheri, right

Majoon refused to wear a standard medical ID because she thought it was unattractive and she didn't want to be labelled as 'sick' all the time. So former Archer Academy student Kya spent a year focused on finding a solution with his grandmother's safety being his primary concern.

According to Kya: "I wanted to create something my grandma would actually wear, something that could speak for her to paramedics and healthcare professionals if

she was ever unable to speak for herself. Wearability was crucial, because it would be no help at all if it ended up sitting in a drawer at home."

British-made

What 23-year-old Kya developed has now become a business venture called MediWear selling medical ID pendants. Apart from the focus on developing an attractive design for his pendants, using sustainable materials has been crucial for Kya and thus they are made

from recycled silver.

They also meet Kya's key principle that manufacturing should take place in the UK. What 23-year-old Kya developed has now become a business venture called MediWear specifically in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. To ensure the pendants are effective in an emergency, Kya has discovered that paramedics are trained to check all pulse points for patient ID. The pendants include the wearer's name, date of birth and NHS number, all of which

enable paramedics and other medical staff to access health records very rapidly. After all her grandson's work, Majoon is delighted to wear the pendant. Kya reports: "Seeing my grandma wear the pendant I

designed makes it all worthwhile. She's happy that the ID jewellery looks beautiful and comfortable enough to wear every day. Knowing she's as safe as possible when she's out and about means everything to me."

A week of creativity on the estates

East Finchley's estates buzzed with energy this summer as the Summer Festival brought a full week of creativity and celebration to Strawberry Vale, the Grange, and neighbouring communities.

Run by a partnership between Hope North London, The Green Man Management Group, church@five and Families Church, the Estates Summer Festival was free for local residents.

Each day offered something new: play-outs for kids, youth football, arts and crafts and performing arts sessions for all ages, Summer Warm Welcome for adults, and Alive Course lunches.

Saturday featured a special Women's Wellbeing Morning alongside the much-loved Teddy Bears' Picnic, giving space for families to relax and connect. The evenings were filled with fun activities, from karaoke to quiz nights.



Artwork: A banner created at the Estates festival

The week ended with a Festival Extravaganza on the Green, featuring a pop-up choir, a cake

bake-off and ribbons of hope tied to a tree.

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Slow trains

There's nothing the British like more than a large chunk of nostalgia and there's nothing that delivers it quicker than trains, especially steam trains from some mythological golden age of the railways.

This is the dream world of boys in short trousers standing at the end of platforms waiting for the Wombat class 6-4-2 'Winchester Cathedral' to come chugging up the incline between Much Bickering and Twittering Junction. In this world there is always a smiling driver, puffs of steam and smartly dressed ladies having afternoon tea.

If you're really lucky and travelling first class there will be a retired war hero discussing murder with the little old lady knitting howitzers and a weird-looking Belgian exercising his little grey cells. Down in the cheap seats of third class will be an entire prep school going home for the holidays and the Famous Five will have lashings of ginger beer.

Who cares if it was never like that? The British sign up to nostalgia, not history. It doesn't matter that half the trains were knackered or that the driver would probably die from some lung disease within a year of retirement. Just as it doesn't matter that the train was noisy and slow or that by the time you got out you would reek of smoke. It doesn't matter that it was probably raining or that the train was late and that if you had the money you'd have bought a car.

This is the world of the heritage railway, this is the fantasy island of Old England, of steam trains, branch lines, cats sleeping on benches and pipe-smoking porters. It's the one that is being sold with all the current fuss about the railways being 200 years old.

And where are we now? China and Japan have superfast bullet trains, while we have the farce of HS2 and are still stuck with the slow train from Middling Town to Muddling Downs. No wonder the age of the train has become a joke. After all, my grandparents got a car as soon as they could afford one and proved that if God had meant us to use the train he'd never have given us the Ford Cortina.



Side by side for the first time in three centuries

By David Melsome

Two paintings depicting the same subject and both known as The Guitar Player – one signed by the great 17th-century master Johannes Vermeer and the other whose origins remain a mystery – are on display side-by-side for the first time in more than 300 years at Kenwood House in Hampstead.



Double vision: A visitor compares the two versions of *The Guitar Player* on display at Kenwood House. Photo English Heritage

On loan from the John G. Johnson Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, US, the mystery painting joins the original Vermeer masterpiece at the English Heritage property, marking the 350th

anniversary of Vermeer's death in 1675.

The *Guitar Player* (1672) is one of only 37 known paintings by Vermeer, an artist who specialised in depicting everyday

life in domestic interiors. In the painting, a young woman looks up while playing her guitar as the strings continue to vibrate.

Double Vision: Vermeer at Kenwood runs until 11 January 2026.

Review: Opera Cocktail

Artsdepot, North Finchley

By Jessica Holt

Opera Cocktail, staged at Artsdepot, offered a refreshing and accessible take on the world of opera. Designed as a showcase of beloved arias, duets, and ensembles, this production aimed to enchant seasoned opera lovers and those new to the genre.



Open aria: Love and longing were all part of *Opera Cocktail* at Artsdepot

The evening unfolded as a series of musical 'cocktails', blending pieces from well-known operas with a dash of informal commentary and theatrical flair.

From the outset, the OperaUpClose performers exuded a sense of warmth and camaraderie, inviting the audience into the heart of the piece. The singers, all with impressive vocal credentials, navigated the repertoire with technical

assurance and expressive artistry. The direction was deft, balancing the grandeur of operatic tradition with moments of intimacy and humour. The staging around a picnic scene was simple but effective, making clever use of lighting and minimal props to evoke a variety of moods and settings.

Blended voices

Opera Cocktail's selection ranged from the comic brilliance of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* to the poignant passion of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Particularly memorable was the ensemble rendition of *Bella figlia dell'amore* from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, where the singers' voices blended beautifully. Congratulations to the cast Elinor Jane Moran (soprano), Brenton Spiteri (tenor), Felicity Buckland (mezzo) and Hannah

Shilvock on clarinet.

One of the production's strengths lay in its engagement with the audience. Performers occasionally broke the fourth wall, offering context or anecdotes that made each aria more accessible. This approach demystified opera, fostering a sense of inclusivity and breaking down barriers that can sometimes make the genre feel intimidating.

Artsdepot proved an ideal venue for *Opera Cocktail*, with its welcoming atmosphere and excellent acoustics. The intimate space allowed for a strong connection between performers and audience, enhancing the immediacy of the music and drama. The production's informal tone suited the venue's community ethos, creating a relaxed yet vibrant environment.

What's on at the Phoenix in October

By Kathryn Smith, executive director

A huge thank you to everyone for your continued support of the Phoenix Cinema. We wouldn't be here without you. Running an independent cinema comes with daily challenges, so every visit paid, coffee bought or membership taken really does make a difference.

This autumn we're delighted to present a special French season running through October. Highlights include 1969 drama *My Night with Maud* on Sunday 5 October and 1983 classic *L'Argent* on Sunday 12 October.

We're also excited to be relaunching our Parent & Baby screenings every Wednesday at 11am. These relaxed shows allow parents to enjoy the big screen while little ones (under 1 years) are welcome too.

For younger audiences, we have something extra special on Saturday 25 October: Disney Junior Cinema is a fun one-hour programme designed as the perfect introduction to cinema for children.

Very much for grown-ups, we will be showing Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* starring Leonardo DiCaprio in early October. This is already being touted as an Oscar contender and in some places as "horrifying yet ridiculously funny".

From Friday 10 October, we will be showing the acclaimed



new British release *I Swear*, following the true story of John Davidson and his life with Tourette's syndrome.

There are lots of ways to continue supporting the Phoenix: becoming a member, making a donation, buying a coffee, or simply buying a ticket. Every penny spent goes directly into running and preserving this historic local cinema.

From all of us at the Phoenix, thank you once again. Your support means the world to us, and we're proud to continue bringing films, events, and community to East Finchley. For the latest listings and updates, please visit our website at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk



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artsdepot, North Finchley, N12 0GA



Letters



54% rent rise: The Retreat salon

No retreat on The Retreat

Dear Editor

I read in The Archer last month about the 54% rent rise that The Retreat Hair and Beauty salon in East Finchley is appealing against. Having been a customer of Alban there for the past 20 years, I wanted to put in a letter of support in their fighting against this.

This has undoubtedly caused enormous unnecessary strain, and in appealing against this Alban and his wife are also helping prevent this from happening to other businesses in the area.

Debbie Linton,
Address supplied

Save our cafés

Dear Editor

Help! The City of London is attempting to change the beloved cafés that have been serving Hampstead Heath lovers for many years and there is a large movement trying hard to stop this unnecessary process.

People who enjoy the Heath really love the two cafes concerned: the Lido cafe and Parliament Hill Café, which has been run so well by the Italian D'Aurio family for 30 years.

We all really appreciate the warmth and friendliness of all the staff and value of the food they serve and many hundreds are trying hard to stop any take-overs by large chains, which seems to be what the City of London wants to offer for some reason.

We are trying to keep these beloved family-run cafes, and we need all the support we can get before things go further. We don't want them to be replaced by faceless, more expensive chain restaurants.

So if you care too, PLEASE get involved or sign the petition by going to www.change.org and searching 'Save our local cafes'. Your voice will help! Thank you.

Lisa and Dick Robinson,
Beresford Road, N2

Who's knocking ?

Dear Editor

On Monday 8 September, a roofing company knocked on my door in East Finchley looking for work. I had a small bit of guttering to be cleaned, for which I was quoted a cost of £50.

My top front gutter also needed cleaning but I knew it would be a bigger job and a much bigger cost so I told them I didn't want that done.

The next day there was a knock at the door and the same roofers appeared, but I discovered they had already set up a ladder in my front garden to work on the top gutter.

A chap was at the top with a bucket and trowel, clearing it. I also heard roof tiles being moved. I told the roofer to come down and leave immediately with his two colleagues.

Needless to say, no money changed hands but it's impossible to know what damage they might have done by moving the tiles.

This is a warning story to other homeowners. Take care who you are engaging to do work on your property and make sure they never do more than you ask, or you might end up paying the cost.

Name and address supplied

Send your letters to:
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.



Ocean to ocean: Nick Woodward setting off from Nordkapp deep in the Arctic Circle in Norway with cycling companion Pete Goulston; wearing a net to ward off midges in the midnight sun in Finland; and arriving with mascot Quackster at Tarifa on the Mediterranean

Arctic adders, soaring Sierras and high heat on my north to south journey on two wheels

By Nick Woodward

In May, we reported that East Finchley resident Nick Woodward was attempting to cycle more than 6,000km across Europe from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. Well, he did it, completing his epic journey in a remarkable 55 cycling days. Here, Nick shares the most memorable moments.

Our start at Nordkapp in Norway, Europe's most northerly point, was bitterly cold and windy, leaving us with frozen fingers and toes. I was with Pete Goulston, a friend from school days 40 years ago, who'd agreed to join me on the Arctic leg of the trip.

Heading south from there, with the Mediterranean as the target, seemed a near impossible prospect. However, the eight days cycling in the Arctic, much of it off-road through Finnish forests, camping wherever we fancied, with the midnight sun lighting our way, was very special.

Reindeer were ever present. We even woke to a group around the tent one morning. A big shock was nearly riding over an adder (a poisonous snake). We watched our step in camp after that! Worse, the infamous Scandinavian midges were horrific. We were never without our mosquito head nets whilst there.

Early starts

Pete departed as planned in Stockholm and the journey from there to the border of

Spain on my own was without major incident, apart from getting lost and ending up in a disused quarry on the outskirts of Paris, resulting in an unpleasant hour dragging my bike up muddy slopes and across fields to get back on track.

The final leg south though was a different matter. Spain was much tougher than I had anticipated. The European heatwaves meant temperatures were peaking in the high 30s and I had to make it through several mountain ranges with the passes over 5,000ft.

To cope with this, most mornings I left in the dark before dawn and had short days, finishing before noon. Early riding brings its pleasures though: empty roads; riding at sunrise is always special; and on a couple of occasions I cycled past groups of deer and flocks of vultures on the ground, waiting for thermals to soar on. The vultures were spectacular in size and unexpectedly prevalent in the Spanish mountains.

Made it

I had a great sense of achievement and even greater relief to finally reach Tarifa, the

southern tip of Spain, at noon on 24 August. The northern shores of Africa were just visible across the Strait of Gibraltar. I had travelled through nine countries, along 6,000km, up 40,000m of ascent and seen amazing sights along the way. The adventure of a lifetime.

All this was done to raise funds for the Wheelchair Football Association (WFA), which I have been involved with for nearly a decade. After two months on the road, the trip mascot Quackster and I took our final photo overlooking the Mediterranean.

We would be delighted if you used the QR code to learn a little more about wheelchair football and consider making a donation to help the sport and players.



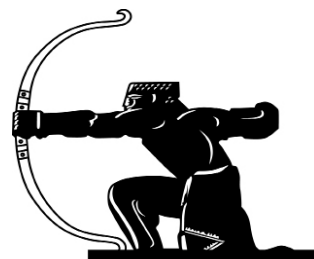
Half term at Artsdepot

Artsdepot in North Finchley has announced a week of shows and creative activities to entertain youngsters during half term.

Running at different times between Friday 24 and Friday 31 October, there's the Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler puppet and song show ASquash

and a Squeeze, the inter-generational adventure Grandad Anansi, live game show WiFi Wars, mindfulness and creativity in The Little Yoga Art Camp,

and Little Terror, a fun show for three to seven-year-olds. Find the full set of listings and book at www.artsdepot.co.uk



When George met George at the club



George meet George: David Koppel's photos of George Michael with Boy George at Limelight

By John Lawrence

George Michael, Boy George, Johnny Rotten, Kim Wilde, Iggy Pop, Bananarama, Malcolm McLaren... just some of the pop and rock icons who found themselves in front of the lens of David Koppel when he was in-house photographer at the iconic London nightclub Limelight in the 1980s.

Now David, an East Finchley resident for more than 30 years, has collected his candid and evocative images from that heady period, many of them previously unreleased, for a new book and an exhibition in Hampstead this month.

Opened in an abandoned Presbyterian church on Shaftesbury Avenue in 1985, Limelight rapidly became the place to be for New Romantics, punk rockers, US rap legends, film stars and fashionistas. David, then a

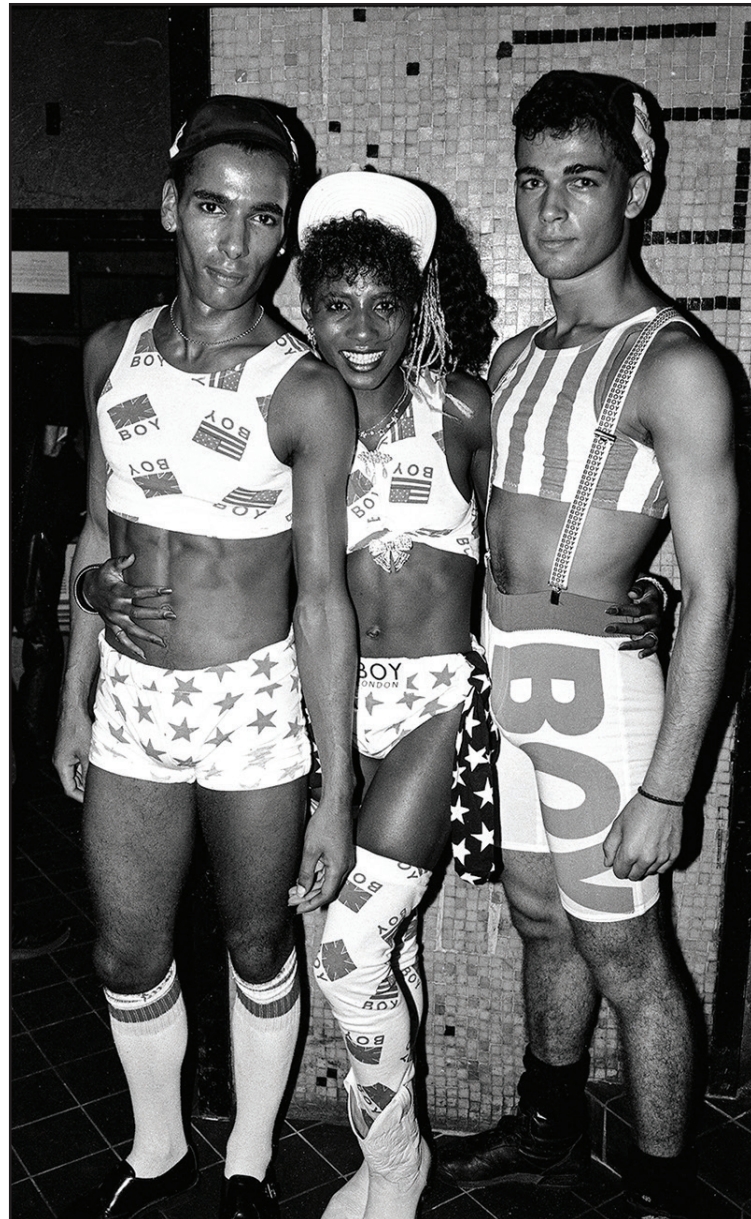
jobbing photographer, was offered a night's work there. "I said I didn't like nightclubs, I didn't drink, I wasn't interested in celebrities, and I was a 'serious' photographer," he recalls. They said, 'We'll pay you for one night.' That one night lasted a year and paved the way for a decade on Fleet Street."

Respect

The club was so dark, David would often ask guests to hold a match to their faces so he could

see to focus. He always shot in black and white because he recalls "every newspaper and most pop magazines hadn't yet discovered colour. There was no internet, no mobile phones, no digital cameras.

"There was a lot more respect between subject and photographer in those days and of course I had permission to be in the club. It was something to be a photographer then. And it was something to be photographed.



Singer Sinitta with her clubbing companions at Limelight

Now everybody is a photographer." In 1986, Bob Geldof had his stag do at the Limelight before marrying Paula Yates. Even King Charles spent a night there in the late 1990s. Other famous faces captured by David include Nile Rogers, Brian May, Billy Idol, Sinitta

and Shane MacGowan.

Career

Limelight eventually closed in 2003, by which time David had moved into a successful career as a freelance photographer for national and international publications.

In 2002 he bought the St Giles Street Gallery in Norwich to display and sell local and international contemporary art and photography.

David's exhibition of his Limelight photos is at the Zebra One Gallery, 73a Hampstead High Street, NW3 1QX from Friday 10 to Monday 20 October. His book *Limelight* is available from www.davidkoppel.co.uk



Famous faces: Actor Robbie Coltrane and singer John Lydon



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