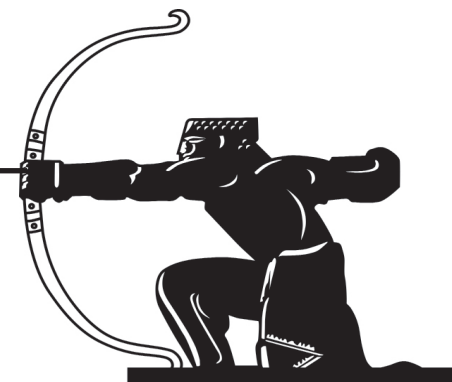




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Fly-tippers dump tons of rubble

By Rita Lam

Residents of Simms Gardens, off Tarling Road, N2, were shocked after an estimated 4.6 tonnes of construction and demolition waste were illegally dumped on their estate late at night, one of the largest single fly-tipping incidents ever reported in the area.

Huge piles of heavy rubble blocked cars from leaving and potentially fire engines from gaining access, stretching along the road almost as far as neighbouring Lucas Gardens. One resident told The Archer: "All estates in London suffer from fly-tipping: fridges, freezers, beds, chairs, furniture but I've never seen anything to the extent that we saw on that night. It was quite shocking, really." He raised the alarm at 11pm and the estate's managing agent Michael Laurie Magar Ltd (MLM) arranged for a contractor to attend that same night, arriving around midnight to clear a path so that at least emergency vehicles could pass. A clean-up crew returned the following morning and took several hours to remove the several tonnes of waste.

Some items found within the rubble were later traced back to a café in Highgate that was undergoing a refit for a new opening. The resident said the café's proprietors told him they had paid between £1,000 and £1,500 to a builder or removal firm to dispose of the waste responsibly. "We think the men possibly thought this was a quiet



Tip and run: The piles of builder's rubble block Simms Gardens. Photos Rita Lam

location, and that there would be less prospect of them being tracked down if they just dumped all their waste here," he said. The incident on 9 July happened on private land and residents remain concerned

that they may ultimately bear the cost of the emergency and clean-up operations through their annual service charge. MLM has told them that an insurance claim has been submitted. Residents hope that if a criminal prosecution is brought and results in a conviction, the insurer may be able to recover costs through the justice system.

An MLM spokesperson told The Archer: "Whilst we are not willing to make comments on the specifics of the case, due to the ongoing investigation, fly tipping of this nature is a growing problem for all concerned, especially on open sites."

Barnet Council recorded 6,708 fly-tipping incidents

between January and July 2026. Being a private estate it was not responsible for the clean-up in Simms Gardens but confirmed that the incident had been

referred to the Environment Agency. The agency would normally get actively involved if the amount of waste exceeded 20 tonnes or if hazardous waste was found.

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The Archer

www.the-archer.co.uk Email: news@the-archer.co.uk

@TheArcherN2

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

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

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BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

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 in the pupil's school. The charity is active across London and is especially looking for N2 volunteers. If you have enthusiasm to help children, confidence in basic numeracy, 1.5 hours/week available in term time, visit www.numberchampions.org.uk or contact volunteer@numberchampions.org.uk.

Dovetail DaCapo is a friendly place where asylum-seekers and refugees meet to make music together on Saturdays from 2pm to 3.30pm at Wren Academy, N12 9HB. The music is followed by a shared vegetarian meal. If you are interested in joining its rota of volunteers who prepare the meal (heating up soup, putting out bread, hummus, fruit, etc), they'd love to hear from you. They are also interested to hear from volunteers who would like to help in other ways. Email: jam@dacapo.co.uk

224 North London Air Scouts (N6) are looking for adult volunteers to help run fun weekly sessions for young people. No experience needed, full training provided. Flexible roles to suit your availability. Even a couple of hours a week makes a real difference. Interested? Get in touch at del@224.org.uk

Do you enjoy swimming? **WeSwim** is a London-based charity that creates safe, welcoming spaces where disabled adults can swim with the support of volunteers one-to-one in the water. They are looking for volunteers who are keen to make a difference by working with the disability community in Crouch End, giving just a few hours a month. No swim teaching/coaching qualifications are required, although being comfortable in the water is a must. Contact harriet@weswim.club for more information.

Join the team at the **Finchley Free Legal Advice Centre**. This new community-led initiative is providing free legal advice to residents who are most in need. If you have a legal background, and can spare two hours a month, your experience could make a profound impact on someone's life. They are particularly looking for lawyers with experience in immigration, housing, benefits, crime and family. The new Advice Centre will rotate to different venues in the constituency every other weekend. Find out more by emailing sarah.sackman.mp@parliament.uk.

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

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet

82 Summerlee Avenue, N2

Erection of wooden bike shed in the front garden. Ref: 26/3270/HSE

14 Abbots Gardens, N2

Conversion of garage into habitable room, insertion of window to replace existing front garage door. Removal of pitched roof of existing single-

storey rear extension. New side dormer window and alterations to existing rear dormer window to create a juliet balcony. Changes to side and rear fenestration. Replacement of existing front door. Ref: 26/3203/192

42 Church Vale, N2

Erection of a single-storey rear

Residents move into new homes on Grange Estate

By Matteo Lanzini

This summer, at the end of a process lasting almost six years, keys to 16 new flats built on the High Road and on Central Avenue as part of the Grange Estate were handed over to their new tenants.

Consultation on adding extra homes on the estate started all the way back in 2020. The original plans for 64 new units on five sites drew strong opposition over the loss of green space, of a nursery and several car parking spaces, as well as the proposed demolition of existing homes on Brownswell Road. Concerns around design layouts and construction disruptions were all raised as objections.

On the back of this feedback, Barnet Homes and its community engagement partner Newman Francis amended the project and reduced its scope from five sites to the current two blocks, each hosting eight new homes.

Planning consent for the revised proposals was granted by Barnet Council in late 2022, followed by the appointment of the contractor company, Stack London. After preparatory works to the area to facilitate the transit of heavy-duty vehicles, redirect pedestrian routes and minimise noise and dust pollution, the construction phase started in winter 2023, later than originally planned, and in total took more than two years due to delays.

The two new buildings were completed earlier this spring: Everest Court, in the courtyard of Craven House off Central Avenue, and Morar House, on the High Road nestled between Hilton and East View houses.

Both provide secure bicycle storage, new landscaping, refuse and recycle points, electric charging stations and some limited car parking for residents. Their traditional bricked facades blend in with the existing blocks on the estate, while their vibrant green doors and windows add a touch of colour and establish a visual connection with the surrounding grass areas.

Additionally, as part of the development, the pedestrian path and parking courtyard outside Willow House was repaved and its layout improved. With the completion of the project,



Extra homes: One of the new blocks on the Grange Estate.
Photo Matteo Lanzini

Cabinet member for homes and regeneration, Cllr Ross Houston, told the Archer: "These new homes will provide much-needed places to live for Barnet residents and contribute to Barnet Council's ambitious targets to provide more high-quality, long-term homes.

Barnet Homes would like to thank the residents of the Grange Estate for their patience and cooperation while works have taken place."

outbuilding. Ref: 26/3180/HSE
Land adjacent to 290 Long Lane, N2

Erection of two terraced two-storey dwellings with rooms in the roof space with associated hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, recycling/refuse and cycle storage. New front boundary wall/fencing. Ref: 26/3132/FUL

21 Leicester Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension. Roof extension involving rear dormer window. Erection of a rear outbuilding. Ref: 26/3140/192

43 Leopold Road, N2

Non-material amendments to planning permission reference 24/1113/FUL dated 22/01/25 for 'Demolition of existing units in the central and southern parts of the existing building and construction of new replacement self-contained dwellings to provide 36 residential units (Class C3). Alterations to the existing and retained front part of the building to provide 3 reconfigured self-contained residential units and the retention of 1 existing self-contained residential unit (Class C3), along with other general refurbishment and alterations

works, new landscaping, refuse store, car and cycle parking, sub-station and retaining existing accesses on East End Road and Pulham Avenue. Retention of St Anne's House (2 units) and general refurbishment and improvement works.' Amendments include: Redesigned access around the rear garden: Redesigned hard and soft landscaping; Amended refuse store footprint. Ref: 26/3265/NMA. Submission of details of condition 17 (Excavations for Services) pursuant to planning permission 24/1113/FUL dated 22/01/2025. Ref: 26/3070/CON. Submission of details of condition 19 (Green Roof) pursuant to planning permission 24/1113/FUL dated 20/03/2024. Ref. No: 26/3068/CON

72-74 High Road, N2

Change of use of the rear of the ground floor from shop (Class E) to two self-contained flats (Class C3) Associated refuse/recycling and cycle storage. Ref: 26/3149/PNE. Mansard roof extension involving front and rear dormer windows to provide 4 bed 4 person HMO (house in multiple occupancy) Alterations to the front elevation to add additional front door.

Associated refuse/recycling and cycle storage. Ref. 26/3025/FUL

10 Sylvester Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear dormer window and three front-facing rooflights. Ref. 26/3040/192

Haringey

20 Bancroft Avenue, N2

Erection of a part single-storey rear extension; installation of an obscure-glazed window to the first-floor side elevation serving the shower room; removal of the existing private chimney stack to the front elevation; and enlargement of the existing patio area. Ref: HGY/2026/2347. Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a new rear-side dormer extension, together with the installation of four front rooflights and two rear rooflights. Ref: HGY/2026/2471

7 Annington Road, N2

Certificate of lawfulness: Proposed erection of a rear dormer and the installation of three front rooflights. Ref: HGY/2026/2389



Lie back and think of clouds

By Diana Cormack

Just weeks on from Cherry Tree Wood being a favourite gathering point for viewing the partial solar eclipse, sky-watchers returned to the park, this time to contemplate the beauty of clouds.

Lying flat on mats and picnic rugs, they peacefully observed the shapes and patterns of the ever-changing vista above in a Cloud Appreciation Hour hosted by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

The group's Roger Chapman said: "We offered a little guidance on the different types of clouds overhead, but otherwise there was deliberately very little to do. We just invited people to lie back, slow down and watch the sky."

Clouds were also the theme for Nature Club youngsters who met next to the park's playground earlier the same afternoon. Led by Kate Brown with the support of Jan Hogan and Andras Szabo from the Friends group, the children were kept well supplied with

cotton wool, glue and felt-tipped pens for their artistic interpretation of the subject.

When they looked at the pictures through the ever-popular story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, this grandmother asked herself what has that got to do with clouds? Well, the next time I read it to my grandchildren I will be sure to point out the wonderful drawings of clouds throughout the book that I confess I have never noticed before. Maybe they'll tell me that they already have noticed them!

The last Children's Nature Club meeting of the year is on Sunday 4 October from 2-3pm in the same place. This is a free event for eight-year-olds and under, accompanied by an adult. The theme this time will be autumn.



Blue sky thinking: Cloudwatchers enjoying the overhead vista in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Supermarket sticks with its wholesaler

Managers at the Budgens supermarket in the High Road, N2, have told The Archer that they have decided against switching to an alternative food supplier.

Budgens manager Ripon Shaha informed us last month that his store was considering the wholesale arms of Waitrose, Morrisons and Marks and Spencer as possible replacements for their long-term suppliers Booker.

However the store has since decided not to make any changes after testing the market as part of a regular review. Ripon has confirmed that Budgens will continue to be supplied by Booker. And Budgens owner

Paul Gardner told us: "The most important thing for me is to maintain my independence. Booker will continue to supply mainstream lines and, whilst they might not tick all the boxes, I have the freedom to buy plenty more elsewhere."

The Budgens franchise model relies on independent retailers working with a regular supplier. Booker supplies stores across the UK under brands including Budgens, Londis and Premier.

The Archer

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The Archer has been serving readers in East Finchley since 1993 and is run entirely by volunteers. We're a friendly team contributing in our own time from home and keeping in touch by email and with a monthly meeting.

Currently we have these roles available and would love to hear from you if you are interested in joining us. Email news@the-archer.co.uk and we'd be delighted to give you more details about what's involved.

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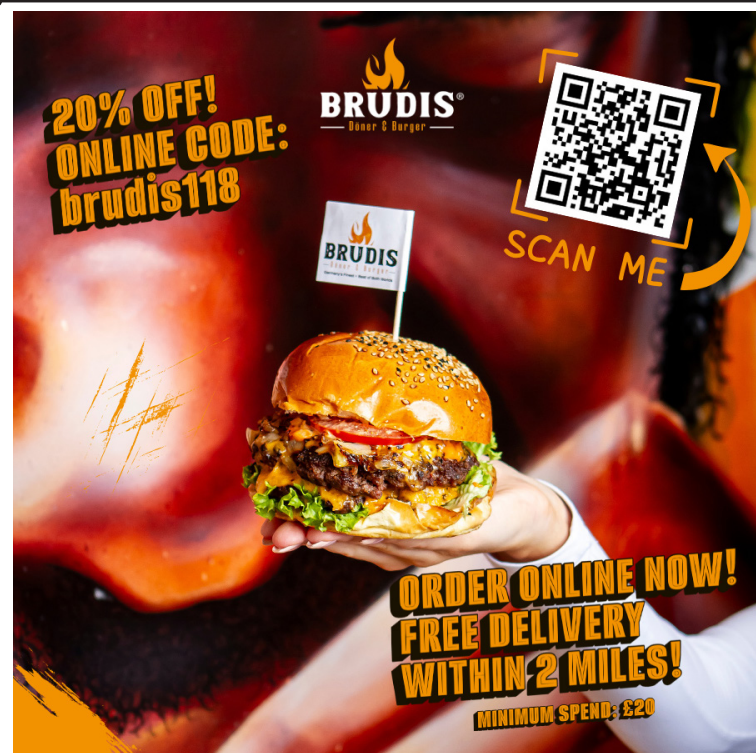
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David Smith

The Finchley Society has paid tribute to David Smith, its former chairman and a founding member more than 50 years ago, who has died aged 87 after living in East Finchley all his life.

David was also a long-serving churchwarden at Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, N2, where his funeral takes place on Wednesday 7 October at 11am. All who knew him are warmly welcome to attend to celebrate his life and say a final goodbye.

We will publish a fuller tribute to David in our next edition. Please send any of your memories to news@the-archer.co.uk





Games take-over in the square

By Peter Hale



Giant games: People of all ages joining in the pavement activities in the High Road. Photos Mike Coles

Back in the heady days of the hot summer, East Finchley Town Team arranged with Fixation Academy at Finchley Youth Centre to borrow giant games for an event on Saturday 29 August. As luck would have it, this turned out to be one of the wettest days for months but Games in the Square still went ahead.

The giant games of drafts, connect, snakes and ladders and Jenga, were set up in the new event space in the High Road

outside Budgens, Pristine Amy's and Oakdale. Understandably not many people were out in the damp, squally weather, but when the rain

abated parents and children were delighted to have a go at the out-sized games. This event space was part of the plans for

the creation of a future town square with new seating and planting to enhance the High Road for our local shops and businesses.

Family fun at the Community Hub

Bollywood dancing, family yoga and Boxfit sessions were some of the activities enjoyed by visitors to a Community Fun Day hosted by Boost Jobs Plus at their new base in the Tarling Road Community Hub in East Finchley.

There was also a bouncy castle and live music on what turned out to be the hottest day of the summer, meaning high

demand for the ice lollies and refreshments provided by the community centre's team. Boost Jobs Plus supports

residents on the Grange Estate in looking for work, a second job or learning new skills.

AgeUK free annual celebration

Silver Sunday, Age UK Barnet's free annual celebration of ageing well, takes place on Sunday 4 October at Middlesex University in Hendon.

This year's event will feature live music, dance performances, workshops, health checks, advice sessions and a lively disco. New for 2026, the event will also include a vibrant merengue session, adding even more energy and colour to the day.

Attendees can expect a full programme of talks, information stands, friendly advice, and free refreshments, all designed

to support wellbeing, connection and confidence in later life. Free parking is available close to the venue in the Greyhound Hill car park. Bus routes 143, 183, 326, 125 and SL10 stop nearby. For more information about Silver Sunday 2026, contact Salima Jiwa at Age UK Barnet: salima.jiwa@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 07503 353157.



Action packed: Boxing with Omar as part of the Boost Jobs Plus community day

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

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
October 2016

Local residents were shocked by the brutal double shooting of Annie Ekofo, 53, and her nephew Bervil Ekofo, 21, at their home in Elmhurst Crescent, off East End Road, N2. After a lengthy legal process involving five trials in four years, Obina Ezeoke, who was 24 when the murders were committed, was convicted of the crimes in October 2020 and jailed for a minimum of 40 years.

15 years ago:
October 2011

After the withdrawal of funding by Barnet Council the previous year, community charity East Finchley Advisory Service (EFAS) finally closed down. EFAS originally started in 1982 and was based at the Green Man Centre in Strawberry Vale, offering a drop-in advice service. Desperate appeals for funding from other sources proved fruitless, so future clients had to travel further to access other already stretched resources.

25 years ago:
October 2001

The Archer team and local supporters celebrated the paper's 100th edition with a walk around the parts of the Finchley Common within East Finchley. The walk included the original settlements of Hog Market and Red Lion Hill, plus Glebelands, Coppetts and Coldfall Woods, ending at Cherry Tree Wood. Local historian Tony Roberts led the party of 29 adults and two dogs, pointing out various features of historical interest along the way.

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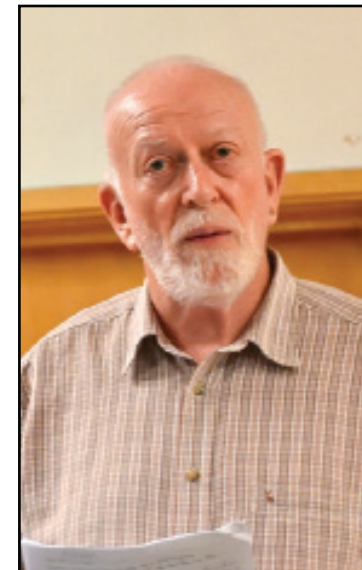
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Hundreds call for trees to be saved

By Geoffrey Davies



Public voice: The crowded meeting at All Saints Church, Durham Road, N2, with Roger Chapman, of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, top right, making the case for saving the Park House trees, bottom right. The QR code for the trees petition is in the story below. Photos Mike Coles and Geoffrey Davies

Campaigners are stepping up their efforts to save a group of mature trees threatened by the proposed development of private housing on the Park House site, opposite East Finchley station. In a letter to Barnet Council, they have called for “an urgent meeting... for a constructive discussion” before the land is sold.

The ‘Save Our Trees’ campaign is focussing on seven trees at the front of the site that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). More than 70 people attended a public meeting on Monday 14 September organised by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood (FoCTW) and The Finchley Society. A petition has already attracted more than 1,800 signatures.

“There is a lot of talent in the area: planners, architects, media people,” Kate Brown of FoCTW told the meeting. “If everyone here encourages three people, we can influence how the site is developed.”

The site is currently fronted by five mature yew trees, each estimated to be more than 70 years old, and a birch. A seventh tree, a crab apple, was planted in memory of Sonny Parma, who was killed aged three in a road accident in East End Road in 2019. He was a pupil at the Monkey Puzzle Nursery which was on the site until May this year. Two plans for concentrated housing to replace Park House have been proposed by

developer London Placemaking in conjunction with Barnet Council, as Places for Barnet. As we reported in April, the council is winding up the partnership and selling the site to the developer with no conditions.

In architect’s images shown at the public meeting for up to 75 dwellings in eight storeys, the trees had disappeared and the development extended to the edge of the public footway. Oliver Kuropatwa, of London Placemaking, has already told residents at a previous meeting that he intends to remove the trees.

Roger Chapman, of FoCTW, himself a former town planner, said that the size of the proposed housing development was very dense and in excess of 50 units. “For any application above 50 units, the Mayor of London can call the application in and approve it,” he warned. “At that stage the developers could also ask for the TPOs to be removed.” Writing to the Leader of the Council, Barry Rawlings, FoCTW has asked that the council “convene a

meeting between London Placemaking and community representatives to explore a redesigned scheme” that will keep the trees. The Friends suggest that completion of the sale of the council land be delayed “before an important public asset finally leaves Council ownership.” It adds that the campaign wants to see homes and a nursery on the site but in a way that “respects the adopted Local Plan.”

One voice was raised at the public meeting against the campaign to save the trees stating the trees were out of scale and that new housing could be erected behind smaller trees. Separately, Paula Murphy, the owner of Monkey Puzzle Nursery, was at the meeting and said she understood that a new nursery building would be included in the redevelopment and that she would have first refusal to move back there. The nursery currently caters for around 100 children aged between three months and five years at its new base in Park Road, N2. Concluding the meeting

Roger Chapman said he has been involved with the site for eight or nine years and warned that the fight could go on for another six or seven. “This is not about stopping housing being built but getting what we want. The site is important to all of us,” he said. A spokesperson for Barnet Council told The Archer that it recognised the interest of local groups but that it cannot prejudge the outcome of future planning applications. “Any application would be assessed

independently by the Local Planning Authority against the adopted development plan and all other material planning considerations,” they added. Specifically mentioning the protected trees, the council say they would expect “robust supported evidence from the applicant” before reaching any decision.



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When the Northern line headed south

By John Lawrence

One hundred years ago, London's busy public transport network took another step into the future when the Northern line extension to Morden opened to paying passengers.

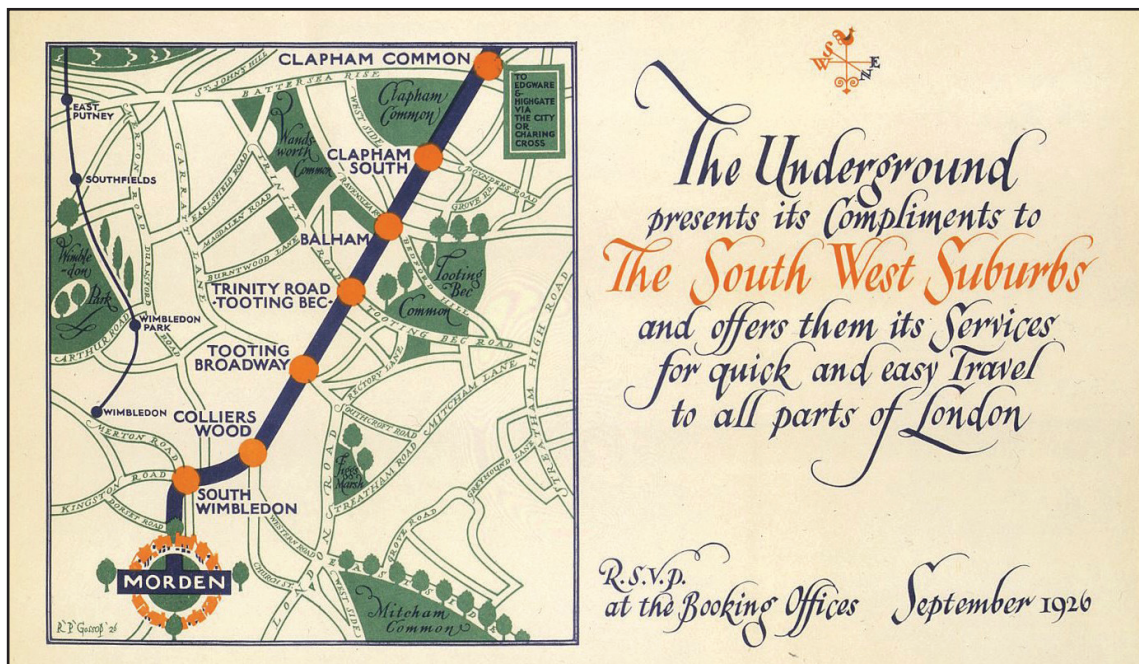
Going beyond Kennington for the first time, trains took commuters to and from a string of new stations at Clapham, Balham, Tooting, Colliers Wood, South Wimbledon and Morden itself.

This was 13 years before the Northern line brought the tube to East Finchley but in many ways it was a mirror of what was to come our way. The stations on the new southern extension were designed by renowned architect Charles Holden. Along with Ruth Ellis and LH Bucknell, Holden went on to design East Finchley station for its reopening in 1939. The striking modernist architecture of the Holden stations marked a new direction for London

Underground and they continue to be regarded as highly influential in the field of transport architecture around the world.

Once Morden and these southern suburbs were connected to the City, they experienced a period of massive economic and residential growth in the 1920s and 1930s.

The same growth and prosperity had already been evident in East Finchley and the surrounding areas thanks to stations and services on the London and North Eastern Railway. But from the 1930s, the Northern line took these over and electrified the branches from Highgate to Mill Hill East and High Barnet, connecting us to the rest of the tube network



Deep south: The new stations taking the Northern line into the southern suburbs. Photo TFL



Front carriage: Junior Transport Secretary J T C Moore-Brabazon in the first train to arrive at Morden. Photo TFL

and helping to create the 36-mile line that today carries around 340million passengers a year.

Of course, East Finchley and Morden have always been rumoured to have a special connection. It is said that the famous Archer statue on top of our station, designed by Eric Aumonier, fired an arrow down the length of the Northern line and it came to rest in Morden station.

The fact that Archie's arrow mysteriously disappeared almost immediately shouldn't spoil the story nor stop us celebrating the subterranean links to our southern counterparts that were put in place a century ago.

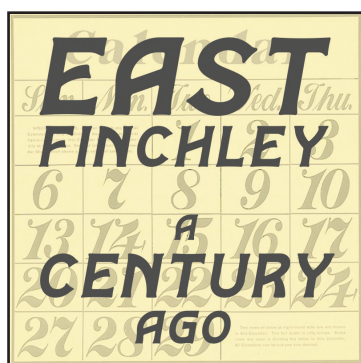


Influential: South Wimbledon station is an example of Charles Holden's Art Deco designs

East Finchley-on-Sea, heading out on safari and going to the football

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

By Frank Edwards



Flooded Wood

It's the 1926 annual meeting of the East Finchley Ratepayers' Association. Once members had sounded off about the state of East End Road, they moved on to Cherry Tree Wood. It was a delightful place, they observed, and the recently-built tennis courts were some of the best in north London.

However, the paths, laid with broken glass (!), were a disgrace. And the central field was increasingly marshy and might better be made into a pond for children. 'Why not?'

agreed one member. After rain the field looked like Southend-on-Sea when the tide was out.

Life with the lions

A wet field in Cherry Tree Wood was not unexpected but it must have surprised residents to learn from the local paper that something akin to a zoo was operating up the road at an address in Barnet High Street. This came to light in a disquieting report of a case before the County Court. The Court heard that the premises were an ordinary shop which nevertheless housed, from time-to-time, lions, tigers, elephants, monkeys, camels, bears, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas and pythons. What was described in Court, with understatement, as a curious state of affairs was not a zoo but, unhappily, a saleroom for animals. The proprietor was George Chapman, well known in the circus world as an animal trader. Chapman employed a Mr Cole at the premises. Cole

initially looked after eight elephants, then some lions from Marseilles. When throwing meat into their cage one scratched his finger. It became infected and had to be amputated. Cole sought compensation for his injury. Chapman's defence that Cole was often drunk did not sway the Court. It found in Cole's favour, indicating £2 a week as a basis for compensation.

It's only a game

If none of this aroused interest, there was always football (there always is). Filmmakers had been capturing action from football matches from the end of the 19th century and, before television, your local cinema, now called the Phoenix, then called the Coliseum, was the most likely place to view this.

In 1926 Pathé News, who provided short features shown in cinemas as pre-film entertainment, secured the rights to the

FA Cup Final. The local paper reported that Pathé had built 'crow's nests' from where their highly efficient cameramen could film the entire match. An added attraction was the promise, weather permitting, of some slow-motion footage, providing 'novel and instructive' shots of different players.

Of course, whether you took the trouble to pop down to the Coliseum might depend on how glad or sad you were about the outcome of the match. Well, in 1926, as in 2026, one finalist was Manchester City. Unlike 2026, 100 years ago, City lost 1-0 to Bolton. Are those cheers we hear?



Witness appeal after assaults

Police are appealing for witnesses after being called to two incidents relating to a woman assaulting people in East Finchley.

The assaults happened in the Long Lane area on the morning of Sunday 6 September. On the same day, a 23-year-old woman was arrested for these assaults and has been charged with two counts of wounding with intent and possession of an offensive weapon. She has been remanded into custody.

Police say there may have been other incidents of assault by the suspect that day and are urging anyone who has any information, however minor, to come forward. Call police on 101 and quote CAD 2295/06092026, or provide information anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org



A wonderful way to remember Rudi

By Councillor Alison Moore



Respected and loved: Sarah Sackman MP addresses the Cherry Tree Wood gathering for the bench dedication to former MP Rudi Vis, right. Photo Mike Coles

In brilliant sunshine on Sunday 6 September, a large crowd gathered by the playground in Cherry Tree Wood to dedicate a new memorial park bench in honour of former East Finchley councillor and MP for Finchley and Golders Green, Rudi Vis.

The bench was installed at the special request of his widow Jacqui Suffling-Vis, who called me earlier in the summer. It was her heartfelt wish that Rudi should be remembered in the place he loved and that held such happy memories for her and their boys when they were children, in the playground or playing football in the park with their dad. With the help of Roger Chapman, Chair of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood,

a prompt response from council officers and a swift collection of contributions from friends and former colleagues of Rudi's, the bench was ordered and installed by the end of August.

Sadly Jacqui, who approved the wording on the plaque and got to see pictures of the new bench safely in place, died just a few days before the dedication after a long illness. However, she was with us in spirit. The dedication of the memorial

bench was attended by Jacqui's sisters Jane and Laura Suffling, family members and many of Jacqui and Rudi's old friends, including councillors past and present. MP Sarah Sackman spoke warmly in tribute to her predecessor, who served as Finchley and Golders Green MP from 1997 until 2010. Rudi stood down that year knowing he was suffering from cancer

and died soon after at the age of 69.

After Jane cut the ribbon we all raised a toast to Rudi who, as the plaque says, 'loved his family, East Finchley and Cherry Tree Wood'. Thank you to Jacqui, and to everyone who helped make it happen and came together to remember Rudi. As he would have said:

'Wonderful!'



In memory: The inscription on Rudi's bench

Volunteers on the side of patients

By Kolsum Jahan

Among the team at CB Plus Barnet Plus Primary Care Group is a volunteer who has lived in East Finchley for more than 50 years and another who worked in East Finchley as a district nurse for many years.

The group explores primary care issues and has produced patient information sheets, one of which shows patients where to go for medical advice and treatment in Barnet when their regular GP surgery is closed.

Another example of the group's work is the Wider Practice Team, a sheet showing patients the practitioners that might work in their surgery and how to get access to the Social Prescribing Teams who look after patients' wellbeing

A third and current project is a sheet to help patients prepare for a GP or other type of

consultation by completing the form with all their relevant medical symptoms in advance of the appointment. This sheet can also be used for noting down the outcome of the consultation and the way forward for their treatment.

If you would like to support the work done by the Barnet Primary Care Group, please contact the group on their dedicated email address primarycaregroup@cbplus.org.uk.

To access the patient information sheets visit <https://cbplus.org.uk/cb-plus-primary-care-group/>



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Trick and treating inspires a bedtime adventure

An evening spent trick-or-treating on the streets of East Finchley sparked a bedtime story that, ten years later, has become local author Matt W. Robinson's first rhyming picture book.

Rose's Halloween follows a little girl who ignores her mum's reminders to say thank you and finds herself whisked away to the mysterious Land of the Tangerine Sky. There, Halloween decorations come to life, and Rose must mend her manners before it's too late.

"I wrote the story when my children were very little," says Matt. "After we'd been out trick-or-treating, one of them asked for a made-up story at bedtime. I was shattered but somehow came up with the idea of the Halloween decorations coming to life, which I rather liked." The story's message grew out of another familiar part of the evening: repeatedly calling after his children to remind them to thank the neighbours handing out treats.

Over the following months, Matt developed his bedtime invention into a rhyming adventure he would read to his children each year. Now they are older, he has finally been able to bring it to a wider audience.

The story captures the excitement of Halloween while encouraging children to mind their Ps and Qs. It should serve parents well through bedtimes in October and help to reinforce good behaviours on the big night.

Families can preview the story at www.crillybooks.com/rose and download a free activity pack at www.crillybooks.com/rose/activitypack. The pack includes printable Two-Headed Troll masks, handy for anyone looking for a Halloween costume idea.



Halloween treat: Matt Robinson with his newly published children's book

Matt welcomes enquiries from local schools and venues about readings and book-signings at hello@crillybooks.com. Rose's Halloween is available on Amazon.

Paths to take when families stop talking

For families facing separation, communication is often at its most difficult. The day-to-day pressures of family life, together with decisions about children and money, can turn conversation into a source of conflict. Terrence Trainor, Family law partner at Keystone Law and East Finchley resident, explains the paths they can take.

If an East Finchley family needs assistance from the Family Court, Barnet is likely to be their local hearing venue, situated in St Mary's Court, Regents Park Road, Finchley Central, N3, where, as across the family justice system, delays can sometimes be substantial.

Families will not necessarily have the same judge throughout. Proceedings generally become more expensive the longer they continue.

Most importantly, once a dispute enters the courtroom, control passes to a judge who may reach a decision very

different from the outcome either person had hoped for. Family law has moved on. Separation does not have to begin with both sides "lawyering up" and preparing for court.

Legal proceedings can determine the issues in dispute, but they do not resolve the

underlying problems or improve communication, particularly where children are involved.

Mediation can be a powerful starting point. A mediator helps families discuss practical issues and explore whether they can reach their own agreement. An agreement reached by those involved is more likely to work than a decision imposed by someone else.

Family therapy also offers something different. It is not marriage counselling nor is it limited to couples trying to stay together. It gives families a supported space to work through difficulties, understand one another's perspectives and find better ways to communicate.

Every family and relationship is different; there is no single process that will suit everyone. Better communication may help separating families agree arrangements and have a greater say over the solutions that will shape their future. It may also help families explore whether separation is the right outcome at all.

Sometimes the most important first step is simply finding a better way to talk.

For more information on mediation, visit <https://resolution.org.uk>. For more information on family therapy, please visit <https://tavistockrelationships.org>.

A film everyone should see?

By David Melsome

This year's summer climate conditions both here and abroad have caused, and continue to cause, suffering to many. Whether it be floods, wildfires, water shortages, stunted plant growth on farms and allotments or just the extreme temperatures, the list is long and few can feel unaffected.

Many are asking what can be done to prevent this happening in future and a film soon to be screened at the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley argues that we ought to be taking action now.

The People's Emergency Briefing is being shown numerous times countrywide to enable the public and decision makers to be more informed about the climate and nature crisis.

The Phoenix Cinema, in partnership with Barnet Friends of the Earth, Barnet Climate Action Group, Chipping Barnet Foodbank, East Finchley Town Team, GoodGym and Incredible

Edible Barnet, is putting on a free screening of the film on Wednesday 14 October 2026 at 6pm.

Lasting 50 minutes, it features footage from last November's National Emergency Briefing, which brought together leading UK experts in climate science, food security, health, economics, national security and nature.

The screening will be followed by a facilitated community discussion (ending by 8pm) about implications for our community and actions we can take. Tickets can be booked on the Phoenix Cinema website at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk



Footage from last November's National Emergency Briefing features in the film

Help to read

A charity that helps adults gain reading skills, confidence and independence is seeking more volunteers to join its team as literacy coaches.

Read Easy Haringey currently supports 28 reader-coach pairs across the borough but the need remains significant. Around 21,000 people in Haringey are estimated to have very low literacy skills or be unable to read confidently.

"Imagine not being able to read a hospital letter, a street sign or a note from your child's school," says Read Easy Haringey's volunteer Literacy Specialist, Gillian Lazar.

"When we work with readers, we see their confidence grow and their opportunities expand. The changes can be truly life-changing."

All Read Easy Haringey's work is delivered by trained volunteers, who meet their readers twice a week in local libraries and community venues. Find out more by searching 'Haringey' at readeasy.org.uk or email haringeypublicity@readeasy.org.uk

Voices in the crowd

What was it like to witness the life and teaching of Jesus from the edge of the crowd? How did people piece together the clues, before the narrative known from the Bible was established?

Fr Terry Tastard, chaplain to Nazareth House in East End Road, N2, and formerly parish priest at St Mary's Church on the High Road, has been asking these questions for a long time. In response he has written 25 fictional short stories. Each story is written in the first person with the range of characters including a midwife,

a physician, a religious expert, a spy, a bandit, an orphan and a waitress. Each story is followed by related gospel passages, and an explanation of the cultural setting drawn from research of scholars into the historical Jesus. The book is called *Voices from the Fringe: Asking who Jesus might be* and is available from Amazon.

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Belly dancing can be for all body types

By Gail Norcliffe

A new addition to the activities list for East Finchley residents to consider is belly dancing. Newcomer to our community, professional belly dancer Stefania Kroo, is offering women and girls classes, performances and an array of fun ways to try this type of dance.

Of mixed Polish and Czech heritage, Stefania is a great advocate for belly dancing and how empowering it can be. She started learning in her early teens having previously tried and disliked the rigidity of ballet.

What particularly appealed to Stefania, who had been a victim of bullying as a child, was that belly dancing celebrated women as they are. From the outset, Stefania could see that this dance form meant women didn't have to worry about their body type or weight or C-section scars or anything not fitting with a cultural stereotype of female beauty.

Stefania went on to spend over 25 years studying, performing and teaching Middle Eastern dance, including attending festivals and competitions, meeting many other dancers.

As well as teaching belly dance classes, Stefania organises performances at women's dance evenings, weddings, parties and hen dos. On truly special occasions these can include an LED costume complete with



Empowering for women: Belly dancer Stefania Kroo

fire and candles. For more participative events such as girls' birthday parties to try belly dancing, veils and costumes are provided.

Stefania is enthusiastic about what she can offer. "I'm really excited to bring belly dance classes, performances and activities to East Finchley and create a warm, welcoming

space for local women, girls and families to build confidence, joy and self-expression through this dance form. For me, belly dance is really about bringing people together, female empowerment and most importantly having fun."

Stefania's Instagram page through which she can be contacted is [bellydance_london](https://www.instagram.com/bellydance_london).

Emergency in the mountains

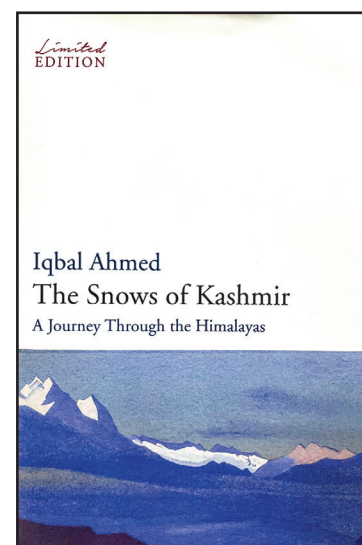
By Gail Norcliffe

This summer's horrendous flash floods in Nepal and Tibet make Iqbal Ahmed's new book *The Snows of Kashmir* especially topical. Former East Finchley resident Iqbal was inspired by climate change concerns to write about its effect on the glaciated regions of Kashmir from where he originates.

At the heart of the work are stories of Iqbal's regular travels to Kashmir and the Himalayan region. Summer holidays are spent visiting family, friends and childhood haunts in the Kashmir valley and Iqbal's book is a gentle meander through his memories of growing up and how previous trips compare with the present day.

As the roof of the world, the effects of climate change in the vicinity are alarmingly apparent. A melting glacier splintering and crashing caused August's devastation. The Hindu Kush-Himalayan's 50,000 glaciers are receding faster than before. The region was severely flooded in 2014 resulting in disastrous consequences; and now this year the region is experiencing appalling suffering again.

Inhabitants rely on the glaciers and the associated fragile environment in multiple ways. As is happening across the globe, poorer countries and their peoples are bearing the brunt of the increasing difficulties of life in a warming world. *The Snows of Kashmir*, which has also been reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement, describes the extreme pollution in modern India from Delhi to new satellite cities like Gurgaon. Notorious for its poor air quality, Iqbal talks about Delhi's resulting fog, which



Timely warning: The cover of Iqbal's book

restricts visibility to 30-40 metres.

In the 30 years since he's been in London, Iqbal has noticed a worrying change in the weather. He says: "When I first arrived here, most people didn't even have fans in their houses but now there are more and more home air conditioning units. The climate emergency is frighteningly apparent in what happened in Nepal and Tibet and made worse by a lack of support to reducing carbon emissions from key players and climate change deniers, including the American government. My book illustrates some of the global effects of the crisis."

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

1066 and all that

Well, it's here after about 900 years, the oldest piece of art as propaganda in Europe, a glorious justification for invasion - and you can see it in London. As long as you don't mind paying £33 for 40 minutes and queuing in the rain, it's all yours. And they say it's where 'history' starts.

If you were at school before about 1970 you might have learned a bit about the Romans, the druids and Stonehenge before skipping most of the next 600 years until you got to 1066. Why? Because no event changed England as much or as permanently. New year, new language, new rulers. King Charles III can trace his line back to William the Conqueror, and the last descendants of the Norman nobility are only now getting their sticky little fingers prised from the levers of power. So what really happened?

When old King Edward the Confessor died childless in January 1066 there was a power vacuum. The English nobility settled on the most powerful earl, Harold Godwinson, and made him king. Fine. Except that William, Duke of Normandy claimed he'd been offered it and that Harold had promised to support him. Not fine, especially when William decided to invade.

We all know about the Battle of Hastings, Harold getting an arrow in the eye and William becoming king. What we forget is that the Normans changed the rules. The English fought behind a shield wall with two-handed axes, the Normans used archers and armed men on horses. Enter the cavalry, the enduring shock troops of all warfare until the tank arrived in 1916.

Once the battle was over, William set about securing his new realm. Castles were built to control the people and cathedrals to control their minds. When there was a rebellion in the north in 1069, William launched a campaign of starvation, slaughter and destruction that killed over 100,000 people. Even the Domesday Book in 1087 described the north as 75% wasteland.

It didn't end there. By 1075 more than 95% of the country had Norman lords who ate different food, drank wine instead of ale and spoke a different language. This was an occupation and a subjugation that outdid any efforts by 19th-century colonial powers.

And the Bayeux Tapestry? It was commissioned by William's half-brother Odo, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and embroidered by women in convents and priories in and around London. These women had seen their country occupied and now had to produce something to justify and glorify the invasion.

Go and see it, admire the art, remember 1066 and read the history. Like I said: great art, but art as propaganda.

Puzzle time: Re-Griddable

Re-Griddable is a twist on the free daily online game griddable.co.uk created by two East Finchley residents, Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson.

There may be more than one solution to each Re-Griddable but there is definitely at least one, which comes from a maximum scoring game of Griddable.

If you get stuck the official Griddable word-checker may help (griddable.co.uk/word-checker). If you like playing Griddable online, why not join the East Finchley Leaderboard? Go to Groups on the site and use code BUJRM4.

Re-Griddable No.8

Place the letters to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four downwards.

A A N S T T V

		O	W
E			E
	P	E	
L	E		

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution

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'.



Review: Holy Fool

Park Theatre, Finsbury Park

By Jessica Holt

Writers Rosalind Adler and Lea Sellers have written a complex, thought-provoking and entertaining play about the Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich who had an uneasy and fragile existence under the dictator Joseph Stalin.

After displeasing Stalin at a concert, Shostakovich was arrested and was about to be tortured when the torturer himself was arrested. This grim humour throughout the first half is enhanced by the off-stage commentary delivered by male and female voices who change roles throughout as do the actors, apart from Benjamin O'Mahoney as Shostakovich.

Jenna Augen plays Nina, the composer's wife and his most trusted advisor and critic. Their scenes together are delightful and portray a loving and truthful relationship. By contrast the scenes with Katya, a young admirer played by Phoebe Pryce, are less powerful and are too often focussed on her personal development rather than Shostakovich's moral dilemma: how much should an artist compromise with an oppressive regime?

This is more successfully explored in a scene where Shostakovich is questioned by an agent of the state. The scene is tense and the composer struggles to give appropriate answers. According to his interrogator he is "treading on thin ice."

Director Kate Fahy draws our attention to history repeating itself with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She writes about contemporary artists: "They walk the same tightrope that Shostakovich walked, trying to get their message out subversively without losing their life or the lives of their loved

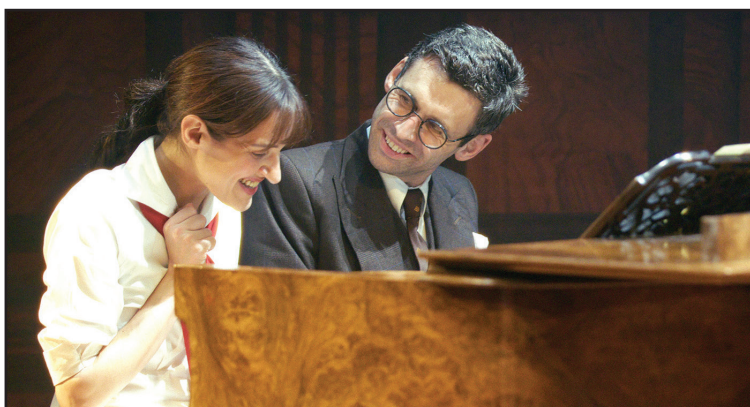
ones".

Designer William Fricker has created a set which at first successfully steeps us in the time and place of Russia in the 1930s. But there are many scenes and many time frames, and the transitions are sometimes awkward.

The change of the backdrop in the second half provided a dramatic contrast as the action moved to the United States and though visually pleasing it became rather overwhelming through the long highly charged scene between Katya and Shostakovich. Possibly a non-naturalistic set would serve the play better enabling the audience to focus more on the themes and dialogue.

The soundtrack was beautifully blended with the composer playing the piano. This was one of the many highlights of the production as it reinforced the genius of the man as well as reminding us of his precarious position in Stalin's Russia. His decision to hide the score of his Fourth Symphony under the floorboards symbolises the composer's opposition to the state and his passion for experimentation.

Interesting questions were being raised throughout such as "Who is Art for?" "On a more pragmatic level: "Why doesn't Shostakovich defect to the United States?" This production has a great future with the impressive quality of its ensemble playing and its important messages for today.



Piano genius: Jenna Augen and Benjamin O'Mahoney in Holy Fool

Shakespeare like you've never seen before

For their latest production, Garden Suburb Theatre have taken Shakespeare's sunniest comedy Love's Labour's Lost, given it a good trim, and set it loose in the garden of a grand hotel. Think riotous colour, larger-than-life characters, quick-witted, quick-fire delivery, and all served with a proper great-British nudge-nudge-wink-wink.

The group is telling its audience to think of it as the rom-com the



Successful production duo Hat Townley and Stephen Graham. Photo Mike Coles

Meet the producers

By Lynn Winton

Among those behind the premiere of new play Holy Fool (see our review left) are actor and coach Hat Townley and retired GP Stephen Graham, who met at the school gates "decades ago" and have been working together ever since.

Most recently, they formed the production company Graham and Townley Productions, which has been finding plays to take to the Edinburgh Festival, to the Upstairs at the Gatehouse Theatre in Highgate and to other venues since 2017.

Their mutual passion for theatre is also shared by Hat's husband, Shakespearian actor Christopher Hunter, and Stephen's wife Teresa, also a retired GP. The two couples live round the corner from each other in the heart of East Finchley, which is very handy for frequent meetings, with Campbell and Syme cafe being their favoured 'boardroom'.

Stephen's theatre CV goes way back to the 1980s when he was a medical student at Middlesex Hospital and took part in putting on student plays and Christmas concerts. He experienced early commercial success when he discovered and produced the first work of then unknown writer John Logan, who went on to achieve huge

playwright and as a screenwriter recognition as a prolific for many hit films, including Gladiator and the James Bond movies Skyfall and Spectre.

That first collaboration with John Logan went to the Edinburgh Festival in 1987 and won a Fringe First. A second Logan/Graham collaboration went to the Playhouse Theatre in the West End. After qualifying as a GP and having a young family there came a long break until retirement, but the interest never waned, and the whole family decamped to Edinburgh every year to enjoy the Festival. Meanwhile, actor Hat was performing all over the country with the Royal Shakespeare

Company and other theatre groups, as well as teaching drama and vocal skills and running voice workshops at Goldsmith's University. If her face looks familiar, it might be because she spent many years helping at the East Finchley Festival. As well as being constantly on the lookout for new talent, they have also made a decision to start investing in high profile shows, such as James Graham's The Standard of Living about the life of John Maynard Keynes, which runs at the Theatre Royal Haymarket until December starring Rory Kinnear and directed by Nick Hytner. It really doesn't get any more high profile than that.

genre was born from; all the fumbling, the pining and the grand romantic gestures you'd expect from a Hugh Grant, Julia Roberts or Colin Firth flick just with 400 years' head start.

Director Daryl Hurst says: "This production is exactly what Shakespeare should be; fun, silly, and relevant. We've pulled together some amazing comedic actors from across north London for what will be a really brilliant production."

Love's Labour's Lost runs at Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate Village from Thursday 8 to Sunday 11 October. Tickets prices £13/£15, also supporting North London Hospice, are available from <https://www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com>.

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Letters

Harvest donations

Dear Editor,

A new initiative has been underway between Creighton Avenue Allotments in Muswell Hill and the London Food Bank after it was noticed that ripe fruit and veg was going to waste on the trees and in the ground around the allotments. A lot of hard work went into growing the produce and it seemed a shame to not gather it in.

I contacted Food Bank Aid on the Vue cinema site in North Finchley asking if they would like surplus produce from the allotments. The next step was to ask the allotment committee for permission to construct two collection point stands. The stands are made out of old wooden pallets, kindly donated by Chris Stephens on Colney Hatch Lane.

With my fellow members at Muswell Hill Men's Shed we discussed how to build the stands. Collective brainstorming produced an easy-to-make design and I was able to take the pallets to the allotment. Each stand took about an hour to construct and

donations have been plentiful. During the harvest season, I have been visiting the collection sites at least every other day and taking the produce to the food bank.

It's a simple community exercise with generous inputs from a range of local organisations. I would be happy to build collection stations on other allotments in the area but each will have to set up its own collection and drop off with the food bank.



Allotment produce ready to be left in one of the collection crates

Richard Rosen
Address supplied

Foxy finagler

Dear Editor,

One morning in late August, I was catching up early with emails. It was a warm summer's day and I wanted to get the slightly cooler air flowing through by opening the front window and back door. I was on my laptop in the front room when coffee called me, so I went to make a cup.

I was sitting in the kitchen when I heard the letter box rattle. I turned to my friend and said the postie was early but when I got to the doormat I picked up this lovely note, pictured. It read: "To Downstairs. I caught a (v small + cute) fox entering your front window with a sandal about 07.00. It went towards Juliana Close but I lost it. FYI!"



Outfoxed: Fiona's remaining sandal and her neighbour's note

/ exiting your front window with a sandal about 07.00! It went towards Juliana Close but I lost it. FYI."

This summer my neighbours and I were saying there are so many brazen bouncy young foxes around. I think one in particular has been popping into the flat, prospecting for cat food. My cat usually hisses and sees them off. Foxes are brave and surprisingly narrow, squeezing through windows left ajar, though on this occasion the window was a lot wider, as I'd been sitting there enjoying the cooler draught.

We went looking for my sandal bought on holiday in Minorca a few years ago. Not spotted. Maybe another trip to the Balearic Islands is on the books for a new pair?

Thanks to my neighbour for the note. My friends are saying I have a new flatmate, one who eats my food and borrows my clothes! Although I don't want one.

Fiona McEwan,
Kitchener Road

Moth migrants

Dear Editor,

These photos taken by Donald Lyven and me show two day-flying migrant moths that have been common and easy to spot this summer, the Hummingbird Hawk moth and the Jersey Tiger. Both come as adults from continental Europe, and are increasingly overwintering here in the UK.

Moths, butterflies, and skip-pers feed by unrolling a long tube-shaped proboscis which acts like a drinking straw to access nectar from the inner base of tubular flowers. So they are seen feeding on accessible flowers like honeysuckle, salvias and buddleia.

Whilst most land on the flower itself, the Hummingbird Hawk moth hovers using high frequency wing beats, and indeed does look exactly like a tiny hummingbird. The easiest way to distinguish



Migrant visitor: The Tiger Moth

between moths and butterflies is that moths at rest have the topsides of their upper wings displayed in a V shape whereas butterflies close their wings like a book to reveal the fuller undersides. In this position, butterflies are often camouflaged

to resemble a dead leaf. By contrast, the wing display of the Jersey Tiger is bright to warn potential predators that the moth is unpalatable.

Linda Dolata,
Leopold Road,N2

White van wonder

Dear Editor,



Neighbours in Bedford Road brandish colanders ready for the eclipse
Photos Jane Marsh

A strategically parked white van helped some Bedford Road residents make the most of their eclipse experience on 12 August. It provided the ideal background on which to project images of the eclipse through colanders and pinhole cards, for those of us without viewing glasses. A fun time was had by all, helped along by the odd glass of wine,

especially when a very non-plussed driver returned to find his van surrounded by people wielding colanders and waving bits of cardboard.

Jane Marsh,
Bedford Road,N2

Re-Griddable solution
from page 9

Across:	Down:
STOW	SEAL
EAVE	TAPE
APES	OVEN
LENT	WEST

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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.

From Cub to helper: what I get from volunteering

By Noah Ridehalgh

I have been involved in the 224 North London Air Scouts community for most of my life. When I was young I loved learning about wildlife and taking part in games in the Beavers group, and then learning about the local area when I was older in the Cubs group.

By the time I moved to Scouts, we were rock climbing and learning how to tie knots. I first joined the Beavers group when I was six years old and, now I'm a young adult, I'm supporting the Beavers group by volunteering as a young leader.

The Beavers meet every Saturday during term time. At the group, children make friends and learn skills through activities, such as cooking, photography and reading. As they learn new skills, they earn badges to celebrate their achievements.

As a volunteer I typically help to set-up and run games and crafts, for example dodgeball and football, or I accompany the children on walks. Then there are all the essential tasks

like laying out the tables and chairs, providing colouring supplies, and helping to clean up afterwards. At the beginning of my volunteering, I struggled to help with activities, feeling nervous about interacting with the children and other leaders. Over time helping with the group boosted my self-confidence and helped me feel more confident about trying new things. Helping with the Beaver group has also brought me closer to nature, with outdoor activities giving me a chance to appreciate local wildlife, reminding me about the wildlife we do not focus on day-to-day. I am proud of my volunteering and being a part of 224: I feel as if I am contributing to the

scouting community and will continue to do so in the coming years. If you would like to learn more or get in touch, the group can be contacted at del@224northlondonscouts.org.uk



Rock climbing is just one of the activities Noah has helped with

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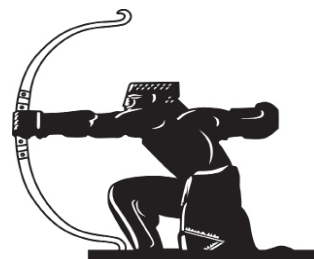
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Story of a refugee and his teddy bear

By Geoffrey Davies

The name John Hajdu will be familiar to many given his work in the community. Over 22 years chairing the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, he helped to rescue the Langton clock in the Broadway, discover the Grove Lodge Muswell Hill path, install commemorative plaques to the famous of the area and develop the 'pocket garden' opposite what is now the Village Green pub.

And now approaching 89, he and his teddy bear have become familiar to an even wider audience as he visits schools to tell his story as a refugee and is featured in two exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum.

As well as the permanent display about the Holocaust, John features in *Childhood in War*, a new, free exhibition about how children have experienced conflict from 1914 to the present day.

"The exhibition is very much hands-on and ideal for children with things like jigsaws," says John. "I asked that they include a section on Hungary to show the breadth

of the story." His personal story is told in the Holocaust gallery. Born in Hungary in 1937, John's father was sent to a forced labour camp in 1943 and his mother Livia to Mauthausen, a Nazi concentration camp.

Even as she was being deported, his aunt took the seven-year-old John to safety at the flat of a non-Jewish neighbour, saving his life. Despite the horrors of the camp, Livia survived and was reunited with John.

Following the Russian invasion of Hungary in October 1956, the 19-year-old John and his mother decided to leave the following month, with two



John's teddy bear



Travelling companions: John Hajdu and his childhood teddy bear.

small holdalls, including the teddy bear. The last stage of their escape to Austria was a 20-mile walk at night avoiding tanks and searchlights and passing an unmanned watchtower.

Since retiring from his hospitality business, John has been working with the Holocaust Educational Trust and lectures at many schools including Fortismere and to other non-Jewish schools at Finchley Reform Synagogue. "I really enjoy lecturing, especially the questions children ask," he says. "Amongst the best are: 'Do I have nightmares from my experiences in the ghetto?' And, 'Has the experience made me stronger?'"

John was awarded an MBE in 2020 for his work in Holocaust education and commemoration. He and his wife Maureen met the King and Queen in January this year in connection with his work for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

Childhood in War is at the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth SE1 and runs to the end of February 2027.



John aged seven in 1944 wearing the yellow star enforced on all Jewish people

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