

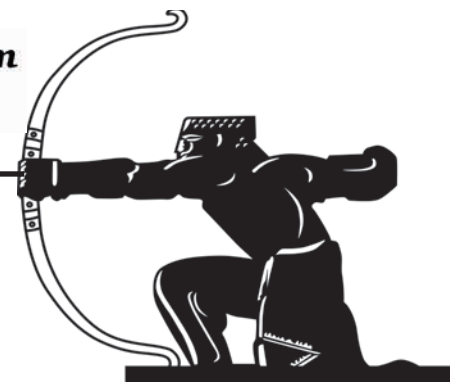


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The Archer

30 Local News is our Aim
30 years 1993-2023



April 2024 No. 360

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

Back on! Race the Neighbours event is saved

By John Lawrence

The massively popular Race the Neighbours event that brings together amateur runners to compete against each other over a 10km course between East Finchley and Muswell Hill has been saved from cancellation.

We reported last month that the volunteer organisers of the annual sporting highlight had reluctantly stepped down after seven years due to pressures on their time. This year's race in June was pulled from the calendar.

But now it's back on after the North London Hospice stepped in. The team there heard the sad news from one of their doctors who takes part each year and decided the race would be the perfect fit for their own calendar of events raising funds to provide free end-of-life care for patients and their families across Barnet, Haringey and Enfield.

so it seemed like an incredible opportunity and one that we didn't want to miss.

"Racegoers can rest assured that we aren't planning on changing anything about this much-loved event. We will be keeping the format and the ethos the same."

Perfect twist

Avi Freeman, one of the original race organisers, said it was "remarkable and fantastic news" and revealed there was a further little twist that made the handover even better. "At the end of the very first race in 2015 when we had a modest excess we wanted to donate it to a charity," said Avi. "We



Friendly rivalry: The runners set off in last year's Race the Neighbours. Photo Mike Coles

Team in place

With a dedicated team of organisers already in place, the hospice will work closely with the former Race team to make sure it goes ahead in June, setting off from Cherry Tree Wood, N2, as usual.

"We are excited to get the race back on its starting blocks," said Anna Cooper, the hospice's Director of Fundraising. "Our community gives a lot to us, and this is one way we can give something valued back to them,

tried to find one with a strong connection to both N2 and N10. Anyhow, you guessed it... it was of course North London Hospice. All of us and them have reflected warmly on this. We even found the letter we sent them with the cheque."

Race the Neighbours will take place on Sunday 30 June, setting off at 9am from Cherry Tree Wood. There are 500 places available. To register go to: register.enthuse.com/ps/event/RacetheNeighbours



Classic sight: A vintage double-decker makes its way down the High Road past the Phoenix Cinema on one of the charity runs. Photo Mike Coles

On board with the double deckers

Nostalgia levels went all the way to the top deck when a number of Routemaster buses rolled through East Finchley last month as a fundraiser for Red Nose Day.

The vintage double-deckers, always a favourite with Londoners, dated from the 1950s to the 1980s. The routes operating for the special event on Sunday 10 March were the 102 between Muswell Hill and Golders Green, and the 603 from Muswell Hill to Swiss Cottage, both of which pass through East Finchley.

Passengers were free to step on and off with all funds raised from donations and the sale of programmes going to Comic Relief. Retired bus managers, drivers and conductors were on board to keep the routes running smoothly.

See Ricky Savage, p9.

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Copy deadlines - May: 12 April, June: 10 May, July: 14 June



Built up: Regal London's illustration of how part of the site could look, including the new leisure centre

Plans unveiled to turn leisure park into site for 1,500 homes

By David Melsome

Radical plans to change the Great North Leisure Park into a major residential development have been unveiled. Currently home to Finchley Lido Leisure Centre, the Vue cinema, Hollywood Bowl and a number of restaurants, the site will instead provide 1,500 new homes of mixed design. Developers Regal London say they will build a new leisure centre on an adjacent plot to the rear where an unused bowling green and social club stand. Barnet Council hopes a replacement cinema and bowling centre will be built on the Lodge Lane car park in North Finchley as part of its plans to redevelop the town centre there.

The leisure park opened nearly 30 years ago and has been showing its age. The indoor and outdoor pools have been closed for long periods for maintenance work in recent years and some restaurant tenants have left.

Under Regal's plans, all the current buildings and car parking areas will be replaced by seven new housing blocks, connected by walkways and green spaces, along with some ground-floor units potentially for shops, eateries and commu-

nity uses. There will be limited parking for residents.

New lido

The new lido will have three indoor pools, including a six-lane community pool, a learner pool and a leisure pool, plus an outdoor pool, a fitness suite and an adventure play area. It could open in 2027 and the current lido would remain in operation while it is being built. Regal London said: "According to [Barnet Council's] draft Local

Plan, the borough has a housing need of more than 35,000 new homes by 2036. The underused space currently is primarily used for car parking, much of which can be used to deliver new homes and new connections that help to make the site more accessible to local residents."

A third round of public consultation is planned this summer before final plans are submitted in the autumn. Find out more at www.gnlp-consultation.co.uk and www.regal-london.co.uk.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet Council

58 Church Lane, N2

Single-storey side/rear extension.

88 Church Lane, N2

Change of use of existing commercial unit (Use Class E) into one dwelling (Use Class C3). Associated rear refuse/recycling/cycle storage.

13 Fairlawn Avenue, N2

Roof extension, involving hip to gable with rear dormer window and one front facing rooflight. Single-storey rear extension with two rooflights, following demolition of existing rear veranda. Changes to side fenestration, involving replacement window (Amended Description).

Five Bells car park, 165 - 167 East End Road, N2

Installation of Virgin Media fibre grey equipment cabinets.

16 Hamilton Road, N2

Single-storey side extension with three roof lights.

133 High Road, N2

Installation of one externally illuminated fascia sign and one externally illuminated projector sign.

238 High Road, N2

Submission of details of condition 3 (cycle parking/storage) 4 (refuse and recycling) and 10 (amenity space, pursuant to planning permission.

40 Howard Walk, N2

Conversion of existing garage into habitable room, including infill extension, new garage doors and new rear area. Roof extension, including rear dormer window and one side facing conservation roof light.

13 Huntingdon Road, N2

Single-storey side/rear extension, with new courtyard and access steps to garden level. Roof extension, involving rear dormer with juliet balcony and two front facing roof lights. Rear outbuilding.

Land Rear of The Bobath Centre, 250 East End Road, N2

Submission of details of condition 27 (Enclosure/boundary treatment) pursuant to planning permission

8 Neville Drive, N2

Two-storey rear extension with balcony, hipped roof and part flat roof at apex between existing roof,

following removal of existing rear loggia and balcony. Roof extension involving front, side and rear dormer windows and one flat roof light. Conversion of garage into habitable space, including insertion of side access door, and windows to replace garage doors. Repositioning and replacement of front door and portico. Removal of one chimney. Replacement of existing windows and changes to openings. Replacement of rainwater goods. Replacement of soffit and fascia. Repositioning of boiler flue. Installation of CCTV cameras and EV charger point. Resurfacing of driveway and rear patio. Removal of swimming pool, replaced with new lawn. Repointing of brickwork.

10 Neville Drive, N2
Submission of details of condition 3 (Materials) pursuant to planning permission.

11 Trinity Road, N2

Enlargement of existing rear dormer window. Alterations to lower ground-floor rear extension door opening.

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

• **Re-engage** host monthly Sunday tea parties in and around Finchley for people aged 75 and over who are lonely, isolated or in need of companionship. Volunteer drivers are needed. If you would like to get involved as a driver or a coordinator please contact ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk. Find out more at www.reengage.org.uk

• **East Finchley Festival CIC** is seeking two coordinators to schedule children's and sporting activities and to liaise with external providers. The festival team also needs dozens of volunteers to sell raffle tickets in one-hour shifts on the day of the festival (Sunday 23 June). Please visit eastfinchleyfestival.org/ volunteer for details.

• **U3A** are looking for a pianist, for an hour once a fortnight. Their Singing for Pleasure group has between 25 and 30 singers at each session. The commitment would be to play a fortnightly programme of 10-12 songs (mostly popular songs from the 1920s to 1980s and also folksongs) during U3A term-times, with one repeat of each of these programmes. They have a good library of music scores. The sessions run from 5-6pm on Monday evenings and are held at the Free Church on Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb, NW11. They are also looking for an art teacher for a weekly or fortnightly beginners' class, hours to suit. For both roles please contact tina@groups.org.hgsu3a.uk

• **MS Haringey** is a local group of the national MS Society. They are looking to recruit a volunteer to manage all aspects of their financial activity, under Charity Commission rules. Initial training will be given. The role could suit a retired person with an accountancy or similar background. Interest in the welfare of people living with multiple sclerosis would be a strong recommendation. For details contact Jane Howard on Haringey@mssociety.org.uk

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column and listed on the East Finchley community hub website, please complete the form at www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it.







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Two more arrests in Anthony Littler murder inquiry

By John Lawrence

Detectives investigating the murder of civil servant Anthony Littler close to East Finchley tube station in 1984 have made two new arrests. One man aged 56 and another aged 57 were arrested on Thursday 21 March on suspicion of murder. Two men previously arrested in December 2023 have been re-bailed to a date later this month.

Anthony Littler, who lived in Leslie Road, N2, was killed after leaving the station at

Police believe Anthony was murdered in a random attack but despite an extensive investigation, no one has been charged. The motive for the murder also remains unknown.

Mr Littler's cousin Tricia McClure told *The Archer* earlier this year that his family were still hoping for justice even after 40 years. "The sadness never goes away," she said. "Anthony was a gentle giant; he wouldn't have hurt a fly. He didn't deserve what happened to him."

Det Insp Neil John, who is leading the investigation, said his team continued to make active enquiries and were hoping witnesses or anyone with information would come forward. Those with information can contact police on 020 8358 0100 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Murder victim: Anthony Littler

12.15am on 1 May 1984. He was found with significant head injuries in an alleyway close to East End Road, now the site of Deanery Close, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Hammer attack on busy footpath

By Janet Maitland

Police and ambulance crews responded after a man in his 20s was attacked with a hammer on The Walks, N2, on the evening of Thursday 14 March. The path is heavily used by pedestrians walking between Market Place and Church Lane.

The London Ambulance Service were called to the scene at around 7.30pm and sent a paramedic in a fast response car and an ambulance. The victim was treated then taken to hospital, where his injuries were assessed as not life threatening or life changing.

The Walks and nearby streets Leopold Road and Church Lane were cordoned off to enable police officers to search the area. "This incident was between two males who

are known to each other," said Jan Lovell from the Safer Neighbourhood Team. "It got out of hand and one of them was hurt. The offender is known to us and will be apprehended. There is little or no concern for the community's safety."

Enquiries are ongoing. Any witnesses or anyone with any information is asked to call police on 101 quoting crime reference number 6694/14Mar or you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Parking zone meeting

A reminder that East Finchley Town Team is calling a public meeting this month to hear views on the impact of Barnet Council's proposed new controlled parking zone (CPZ) in the area.

We reported last month that the council had postponed the implementation of the 11am-3pm residents-only parking scheme across the northern section of East Finchley after facing a backlash of complaints and objections. The council says it is listening to the feedback and is still planning to go ahead

with the CPZ at a future date. The Town Team's meeting will focus on the potential effects of the restricted parking hours on businesses along the High Road. It takes place at the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2, on Thursday 11 April at 7pm for a 7.30pm start and all are welcome.



A young life filled with love: Robin Samuel died last month, aged two

Robin brought inspiration and joy to everyone who knew him

By Lynn Winton

It is with immense sadness that we have to tell our readers that Robin Samuel, the young boy who many of you supported during his illness, has died of cancer aged two.

Robin lived with his parents Rachel and Nick in Tetherdown, N10, and they were frequently seen around the cafés of Muswell Hill, where I often saw Robin, who loved his croissants, leaving a trail of crumbs where he went.

Recently they had been living in Barcelona where Robin was having groundbreaking immunotherapy treatment for neuroblastoma, a high-risk cancer that in the UK still has one of the lowest survival rates.

Tragically, despite Herculean efforts by his parents to fund raise for his overseas medical bills and the care of a world renowned team of doctors who were optimistic, Rachel and Nick have let us know that their little son died at home, in their arms, on Friday 15 March.

The following Friday there was a service at the St Marylebone Crematorium in East End Road, N2. It was a perfect way to celebrate his life, with poignant memories of so many happy times told by his dad Nick, a beautiful poem written and read by his grandfather Ernest Samuel, interspersed with Robin's favourite jazz tracks and a huge quantity of croissants for everyone in the packed hall. The farewell ceremony ended with Kaddish, the Jewish mourners' prayer, read by the celebrant Jonathan Kustow.

Family's message

Rachel has asked us to send this message: "Our beautiful, brave boy passed away in our arms, at home in London. Robin lived a life filled with music, food, love and adventure. He brought joy and inspiration to all who knew him.

"We all fought so hard and

we cannot thank you enough for joining this fight and making the impossible possible. We are heartbroken and proud in equal measure. The leftover funds will go towards honouring this remarkable human who chose us as his parents. Thank you for being by our sides."

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Oven gloves on for return of the East Finchley Bake Off

By Fiona Doyle

Readers may remember the wonderful EAT Finchley Food Fest that took place last March along the High Road celebrating all things foodie in East Finchley. A particularly successful element of the event was the Bake Off competition, which was hugely enjoyed by all who entered and all who sampled the bakes!

This year, organisers from the East Finchley Town Team have incorporated the Bake Off into the East Finchley's Got Talent event taking place at the Phoenix Cinema on Sunday 21 April.

'The Silver Screen'

The theme this time is 'The Silver Screen' and you can be as creative as you like with your bakes. Perhaps you could make a cake to represent your favourite film, or something to celebrate a cinema or the movies

generally?

Entrants of all ages and abilities are welcome to take part. Bakes can be brought to the Phoenix anytime from 10am on Sunday 21 April. Entrants will be asked to complete a short form with their contact details and also a list of the ingredients used in the bakes.

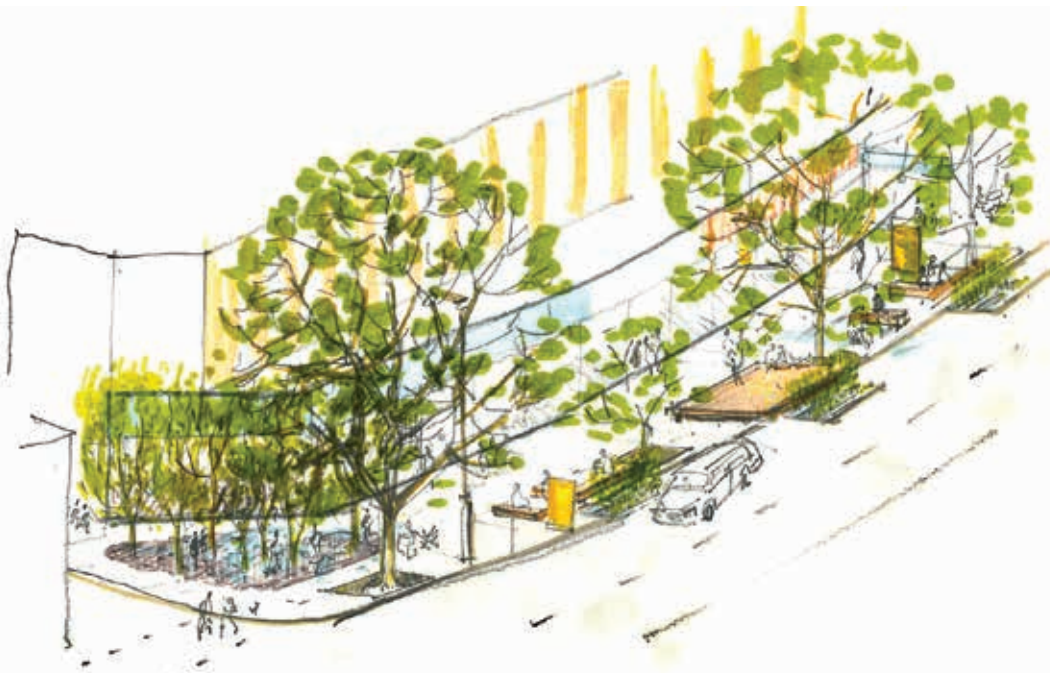
The competition will be judged by Councillor Arjun Mittra and 11 year old Essie, the winner of last year's Bake

Off. Judging will take place just before the interval of the talent show and the winner will be announced on the Phoenix stage.

Slices of the bakes will be available during the talent show interval and also at the end of the event. All donations raised will go towards the Phoenix Cinema charity. For more information, email EFtownteam@gmail.com, or feel free to bring a bake along on the day.



Taste test: Judging gets under way at last year's Bake Off event in the High Road. Photo Mike Coles



Green space: Trees, seating and performance areas feature in the vision for the pavement area outside Budgens and Iceland. Image LFA2023 © Kes-Tchaas Eccleston and MillsPower Architecture

Town square plans moving ahead

By Roger Chapman

Last month's *Archer* featured a new Town Square proposal for the area between Budgens and Iceland on the High Road drawn up by local architects Mills Power Architects for the East Finchley Town Team.

The plans have received strong support with a strong desire for the plans to be realised as soon as possible. There have also been very useful detailed comments about the type of trees to be used to avoid hay fever problems and leaf litter. All these are being taken into account.

Barnet Council officers

have told the Town Team that they "are reviewing [the plans] to understand the options and issues, and to give some early views on next steps", including in-person meetings to discuss the proposals further.

A bid has been submitted to the London Festival of Architecture 2024 to manufacture some demonstration staging

and bench arrangement, which could be in place this June.

Kate Brown, Chair of East Finchley Town Team, said: "We are pleased at the progress being made but know that the bureaucracy and fundraising needed to realise the whole scheme will take some time. We will keep the pressure up and ensure local people are informed of progress through *The Archer* and our website www.east-finchley.london

New round of community grants

Grange Big Local has announced the third round of Community Grants for individuals (up to £600), and for organisations (up to £10,000), who want to deliver activities in the Grange Big Local area. The activities should benefit residents, the environment, or the local economy.

Applications will open on 22 April. Latest details on how to apply will be available at www.grangebiglocal.org.

Extra support

You'll also be able to find

out about Grange Big Local's monthly grant-writing clinics providing support for those applying for the grants and anyone else looking for grant-writing support.

Air quality and parking tackled by Town Team

By Roger Chapman

A good crowd turned up at the Constitutional Club last month to hear a wide range of updates at one of East Finchley Town Team's informal monthly meetings.

Dave McCormick, from Barnet Friends of the Earth, ranged wide on a number of issues to do with air quality, active travel, buildings and energy, citizen science and all other issues connected with sustainability as part of Barnet Net Zero 2040.

Air quality monitors are being employed both inside and outside homes across Barnet to obtain pollution information. Town Team are thinking about how we can employ such air pollution monitoring, perhaps starting at the London Festival of Architecture event in June.

There was an interesting discussion about the Barnet food plan, along with healthy high street initiatives – including a good food charter for businesses and a new scheme being promoted by Barnet Council about eating legumes, beans, peas and lentils.

We heard an update about Asian hornets and the problems that they can cause. There has been a good response to the request for people to take traps into their gardens and nearly 20 people are taking part.

The next meeting of the Town Team, on Thursday 11 April, will focus on the pro-

posed CPZ in East Finchley extending to the North Circular. This will be held in the Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2. All are welcome.

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago: April 2014

The future of East Finchley Post Office in Viceroy Parade was in doubt and last ditch local efforts were being made to stop its closure. Despite a petition signed by 934 residents and representations from local disability groups, the Crown Post Office soon closed and services were relocated to UOE on the other side of the High Road.

15 years ago: April 2009

Princess Anne led a host of dignitaries attending a premiere at the Phoenix Cinema. The film on show starred deafblind people and was made to highlight the work of Sense, the national deafblind charity. The action followed the process of assessing a client's needs through to providing support and seeing its impact.

23 years ago: April 2001

Amidst the Foot and Mouth disease epidemic, Barnet Council announced a ban on public access to farmland and associated footpaths across the borough. Despite the crisis, local butchers reported no problems with meat supplies although some prices had risen and spring lamb was likely to be in short supply.



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World cuisine to help the hungry

By David Melsome

Two friends from their school days have gone into business together running supper clubs and have decided to donate money from their next event to a charity for refugees.

East Finchley resident Shanit Marshall-Strang and her friend Danielle Levinson, a cookery teacher from Crouch End, host Eat the Globe, a series of supper clubs presenting cuisine from around the world. They started with a South Indian theme and the next will be called Middle Eastern Promise, with an array of Levantine mezze and mains.

For this event, the pair decided to give 10% of all proceeds to the Refugee Community Kitchen in Camden, where Shanit volunteers. The charity project uses surplus food to create nutritious home-cooked quality meals for hundreds of people in various locations around London.



Global gastronomy: Shanit Marshall-Strang and Danielle Levinson in the kitchen

Shanit said: "Danielle and I are school friends since 1981 and have enjoyed cooking for each other for many years. I am the first generation in my family to grow up here and feel extremely fortunate to have a roof over my head and the comfort of not having to worry about where my next meal is coming from. In these fragile times, this feels like a blessing." The Middle Eastern supper club takes place at the Rosemary Café, Park Road, Crouch End, on Thursday 2 May from 7pm, and will include three courses plus a free cocktail. Book tickets at eventbrite.co.uk by searching 'Eat the Globe supper club'.



Wood work: North London Beavers practise their fire making skills

Beaver Scout group restarts sessions

By Derek Chambers

224 North London Air Scout group is relaunching its Beavers programme for six to eight year olds.

The group will meet at its Sheldon Avenue base on Saturday mornings during term time, starting from 20 April.

The sessions are packed with fun and learning and last about an hour to make them convenient for youngsters and their families on the weekend. Safety and security are also top priorities with all adult volunteers being first-aid trained and DBS checked.

For more details or to secure space, contact Del on 07707 763344 or email gsl@224northlondonscouts.org.uk.



High-kicking: Dancers from the Celtic Heart Irish Dance School entertain customers at the Cherry Tree Café. Photo Mike Coles

Celtic celebrations at café in the wood

Despite the dreary weather, St Patrick's Day was happily celebrated by many at the café in Cherry Tree Wood. It has become traditional for the two Sharons who run it and are of London Irish extraction to offer all things Irish on 17 March.

Decorated with suitable bunting and balloons, the Irish theme was reflected all day in the menu. An impressive list of Irish food and drink was on offer. Along with this, participants could admire the dancing skills of talented youngsters from the Celtic Heart Irish Dance School.



Winners: Pat Leacock, second from right with London Mayor Sadiq Khan, celebrates the culture award with the rest of the Barnet team

Culture award for Barnet team

Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock, host of the forthcoming East Finchley's Got Talent show and regular compere at the East Finchley Festival, was part of the Barnet Council team that won a £200,000 Cultural Impact Award bid last month.

The award was part of Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's London Borough of Culture Awards initiative, which was held at City Hall on Monday 11 March.

Pat says "I was truly honoured to have been asked by Barnet Council to represent the borough as the presenter on the five-minute film. It showcases the outstanding array of inclusive arts and cultural events that the incredible residents, volunteers and organisations within the Borough support every single day."

Organisations featured included Artsdepot in North

Finchley, carnival group Just InCarnival, young person's support group Unitas and Edgware-based church community One Stonegrove.

"Every person I had the pleasure of interviewing exuded pride and commitment to pro-

moting inclusivity and diversity in all forms," added Pat.

The London Borough of Culture award went to Haringey but winning the £200,000 Cultural Impact Award for Barnet will help Barnet to continue supporting arts and culture.

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Well earned: The wellbeing walkers take a break at the Cherry Tree Café with leader Louis fourth from left

One year of walking, talking and making new friends in the open air

Louis Victor is a well-known face in East Finchley, delivering The Archer, volunteering at Finchley Foodbank and the East Finchley Festival. A year ago he decided to organise a weekly wellbeing walk, open to all. Here, on its first anniversary, he reflects on its progress.

At the beginning of March participants in the East Finchley Wellbeing Walk celebrated a whole year of walking, talking and making new friends. The weekly walk began in March 2023 with the purpose of helping people to share the mental and physical benefits of walking and socialising in green spaces and it has been gratifying to see just how many people have benefited from taking part.

Walkers from a wide range of backgrounds and ages (seven months to over 90 years) and from all across the borough have participated, some to

rebuild fitness after medical problems, some to find activities between jobs and some just to enjoy being outdoors in good company.

When you start something new you have no idea whether it will actually be something that people need or want. It has been really pleasing to find that the walk is enjoyed by so many and, even more, to discover what a warm, friendly and inclusive group it has turned out to be. Here are just a few comments from Wellbeing Walkers:

“It’s a great success... with always a regular core that enjoy walking and chatting together.”

“As a fairly new member I was welcomed into this group... interesting and friendly people (and Pip the dog) keep me returning week after week”

“Each week we have new walkers, all of whom have an interesting story to tell.”

“Great group of people and so well organised and led by Louis and Caroline... Everyone is so friendly and welcoming, no pressure to walk at a fast pace or to walk for the whole hour.”

The East Finchley Wellbeing Walk meets every Wednesday at 10am opposite East Finchley Station (behind bus stop H) for a gentle-paced, one-hour stroll through local green spaces. No need to say whether you are coming, just look out for the walk leader in a bright green tabard. Everyone is welcome and the walk proceeds at the pace of the slowest walker. For more details email efwellbeing-walk@gmail.com

Maureen gets taken away on Saturday night

By Diana Cormack

When East Finchley youth club leader Maureen Clemetson’s daughter arranged a guided black cab tour of London for her last month, the pair had no idea that this Saturday night treat would lead to Maureen being recognised everywhere she went. Maureen, who has run the Monday Club for 18 years, was somewhat surprised at the tour guide’s request to stop outside a large building to pick up some papers, but daughter Rochelle (who knew what was going on) assured her mother that everything was all right.



Surprise, surprise: Maureen Clemetson is greeted in the Saturday Night Takeaway studio by Ant and Dec

Her surprise grew as the cab moved forward into the building and magnified when the passenger door was opened by Dec Donnelly welcoming her to the *Ant and Dec’s Saturday Night Take Away* show in front of a cheering live audience.

As she stepped out of the cab, Maureen was quick to take off her jacket and casually hand it to Dec who dutifully carried it for her. He and Ant McPartlin accompanied mother and daughter to the two seats reserved for them, explaining Maureen’s support for young people in the community to the applauding audience.

“I thought I was in a dream,” Maureen told *The Archer*. “Since the show went out, I have been recognised by so many people.” How she handed

over her red jacket to Dec is what stuck in people’s minds. In fact, she was invited back to the studio the following weekend to record a voice-over link for the programme referring to the incident.

Regular readers will know that over the years Maureen has received awards for her work with the Monday Club youngsters who come mostly from the Grange Estate and Strawberry Vale. Now the ITV show has awarded her a holiday for four abroad.

Maureen regrets that she was unable to speak to Ant and Dec about the lack of youth clubs. She is passionate about the need for them and would love to air her views on ITV lunchtime show *Loose Women*. Watch this space!



Where to donate your unwanted household items for recycling

- Batteries to EF Electricals and Sainsbury’s, High Road
- Bicycle inner tubes to Bike & Run, High Road
- Cables and small electrical items to EF Electricals, High Road
- Crisp packets to Cherry Tree Café, Cherry Tree Wood
- Dental products (toothbrushes and heads) to Cavendish Dental Practice, East End Road
- Electrical cables to Everything Electrical, High Road
- Ink jet cartridges to UOE, High Road
- Lightbulbs to Amy’s or EF Electricals, High Road
- Make-up to Oakdale Pharmacy, High Road.
- Paper, cork, ribbon, foil, wood off-cuts, buttons, stationery, sequins, carpet samples to Amy’s, High Road
- Spectacles to Stewart Duncan Opticians and David Hillel Opticians, High Road

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Barnet launches plans for an age friendly future

By Diana Cormack

On Wednesday 6 March Barnet Mayor Cllr Nagus Narenthira opened a suitably named Advantageous Art Exhibition at the artsdepot, North Finchley.

Described as 'a celebration of age-friendly Barnet', impressive artwork, crochet, knitting and pottery provided by talented members of Age UK Barnet were on display. The majority of these came from art classes held at the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley and some had already been snapped up by buyers at this 18-day free entry event.

Action Plan

At the same time the Mayor launched Barnet's Age-Friendly Action Plan which had been put together after more than 1,000 residents completed a survey to help provide a better understanding of problems about ageing well within the community.

These included housing,

transport, public toilets, benches plus a lack of accessible and enjoyable activities, low levels of confidence in finding employment and in using digital technology. Eight new projects will be launched to address these and other issues identified, with initiatives being set up to raise awareness of what is available for older adults, including information pop-ups around the borough.

Last year Barnet joined the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Key to the scheme is that it should be led by the voices of older people. Headed by Age UK Barnet, the action plan includes recruiting volunteer Age-Friendly Champions. For more information visit: www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet

Become an age champion

By Pippa Mannerings

Age UK Barnet has started recruiting 'age-friendly champions' to inform, advise, and champion the newly launched Age-Friendly Barnet project.

Age-Friendly Barnet is focussing on seven key areas in our everyday lives that can impact the way that we age, from ageism and intergenerational inclusion, to transport, housing, and employment and volunteering opportunities.

The project has been shaped by the views of over 1,000 Barnet residents who completed the Age-Friendly Barnet Survey in 2023. The voices of residents are at the heart of this project, which is why the recruitment of the Age-Friendly Champions is so important.

Age UK Barnet launched a community Call for Action last month asking residents, busi-

nesses, leaders and the local authority to work together to make the vision of an age-friendly borough a reality. An accompanying booklet states: "Ageing may look different for everyone, but everyone should be able to retain and develop meaningful connections amongst their community as they age."

Age-Friendly Champions meet monthly at various locations across the borough to discuss issues and share ideas about how to make Barnet an even better place to grow older in. If you are interested in joining our great team of Champions, contact pippa.mannerings@ageukbarnet.org.uk.



Chef (Part-time)

2-3 days per week / 15 to 21 hours (£14.30 per hour)
Based in East Finchley and Hendon

Age UK Barnet are looking for an experienced chef to work in our vibrant day centres preparing nutritious, home-cooked meals for clients with early stages of dementia. Catering for up to 40 clients a day you would be involved with the preparation and planning of menus and ensuring food hygiene regulations are followed. We offer 5 weeks holiday per year and an occupational pension scheme.

For more information and an application form visit www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/about-us/work-for-us/ or email jenny.coomey@ageukbarnet.org.uk or telephone 0208 432 1418. No CVs, no agencies please.



Food bank support: The GoodGym Barnet runners are inviting everyone to bring food and household items

Run, walk or cycle to the food bank

GoodGym runners have been meeting for years at the Phoenix Cinema in the High Road, from where they run to give their man and woman power to a task that needs doing in the community. Now they have come up with an initiative to target help for Finchley Foodbank.

Everyone is welcome to turn up at the cinema at 6.45pm on Tuesday 9 April with their own donated food ready to run, walk or cycle the short distance, less than 2km, to Finchley Foodbank at the other end of the High Road. There will be run leaders showing the way.

Paul Salman, of GoodGym Barnet, said: "Simply bring along any tinned or dry food goods, toiletries, or healthcare

items in a rucksack. Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to chip in a few items from their cupboards. Together, we'll deliver these donations to the local food bank drop-off point. Let's all unite as a community to show we care and want to make a difference, be social and get fit."

Food bank manager Anna Maughan said: "We are always in need of new donation streams

and this is a really great idea to build more community spirit, be accessible to all, help others and be a positive experience in terms of mental health."

GoodGym welcomes everyone, regardless of ability. With a designated backmarker, no one gets left behind. Toilet facilities are available at the Phoenix Cinema. Dress appropriately for outdoor conditions.



A chance to talk: Eve Lewis gets ready to welcome Finchley Charities guests to brunch in East Finchley

Take a seat at the top table

Eileen Lewis, known as Eve, certainly knows how to put on a spread. She has started running a Brunch Club every month in East Finchley where a table full of delicious food helps to bring people together for a couple of hours of friendship and chat.

Eve, who is a youthful 85 years old, has been running a similar club for the last 15 years at Christ Church, North Finchley, offering a warm space and something to eat for all faiths and denominations, and helping to beat the scourge of isolation and loneliness. The East Finchley club meets at Wilmot Close, off Tarning Road, N2, which is a sheltered housing property

run by The Finchley Charities. It is self-financing with attendees contributing just £1 to help cover the costs. Paul Hooper, of The Finchley Charities, said: "Eve is a superb negotiator and manages to enlist the support of many local shops and businesses who also help contribute. The work Eve does really comes from the heart and goes above and beyond any expectation."

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Rooted in nature: Tudor Primary pupils plant new saplings at Long Lane Pasture

Eco-warriors plant for the future

By Jacqueline Lotan

Children from Tudor Primary School joined hands with volunteers at Long Lane Pasture to plant trees, initiating the growth of a mini forest in the heart of our neighbourhood.

The young eco-warriors eagerly got their hands dirty, digging holes, placing saplings, and nurturing the beginnings of what promises to be a flourishing area of new growth in the green haven opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3.

By actively participating in the creation of the mini forest, they learned the importance of

environmental conservation, teamwork and community involvement.

Tudor Primary School is just a short walk from the pasture and pupils have been enjoying half-termly visits there to take part in creative outdoor learning sessions led by local artist Laura Fox.

Laura says: "The importance for children to spend

time outside in nature is indisputable for physical and mental health, so sessions have been designed to give time for play and open research of the environment. "For example, it is not uncommon for a child to be averse to touching mud. But by the end of the sessions, they love the sensation and have overcome a personal challenge."

Wayne Armsby: champion for the underdog

Volunteers at the Long Lane Pasture Trust last month announced the death of their much-loved Treasurer, Wayne Armsby, who died of cancer. Wayne was instrumental in saving the nature reserve from development 25 years ago.

After moving to Finchley, Wayne spent his spare time turning a dumping ground on the Pointalls Allotments site behind his house on Long Lane, N3, into two useful plots, complete with ponds to increase local biodiversity and offer a haven for wildlife.

This achievement proved fortuitous when a local campaign in 1999 to save Long Lane Pasture, an original two-acre patch of The Finchley Common between the allotments and the North Circular, succeeded and the Pasture was transformed by Wayne and others, from an overgrown wasteland into an organised reserve.

Wayne's vision of how the Pasture should look, the tremendous effort he put in and the time he committed was



Much-missed: Wayne Armsby

recognised in 2017, when he received a Barnet Civic Award at the Town Hall, from the then Mayor Cllr David

ardent conservationist and all-around good guy. He will be sorely missed."

Longstaff.

A little Archer

He was also the craftsman who created a companion to the famous statue of Archie on the top of East Finchley tube station (The Archer, August 2019). His slightly smaller wood version, called Alf, was displayed prominently on the roof of his outhouse and was visible to passers-by in Long Lane.

More recently, Wayne fought a protracted legal battle through the courts that eventually saw Pointalls Allotments move from a company back to council control.

Donald Lyven, chairman of the Pasture trust, said: "Wayne was always a champion for the underdog, a talented artist, urban farmer,

When can we get into Long Lane Pasture again?

By David Melsome

Reader Shan Magnusson wrote to us last month with these questions about Long Lane Pasture, the much-loved mini nature reserve run by volunteers on land opposite the fire station in Long Lane, next to the North Circular.

Shan wrote: "The Pasture is a beloved little treasure in East Finchley and one can find themselves feeling very at ease in the tranquillity of nature there. But why have its opening times been reduced so drastically to just two hours on a Saturday from once, six full days a week?"

"We are indeed grateful to the volunteers and understand the problems with vandalism in the past, however, the opening times are extremely restrictive. Can nothing be done to open for at least Sunday's full day?" We shared Shan's questions with the Long Lane Pasture team and here's what volunteer Harriet Copperman told us: "We understand the disappointment for many locals that the Pasture is not open as it used to be. However, at this time of year it has always been closed, except for 10am-12noon on Saturdays when we're working there."

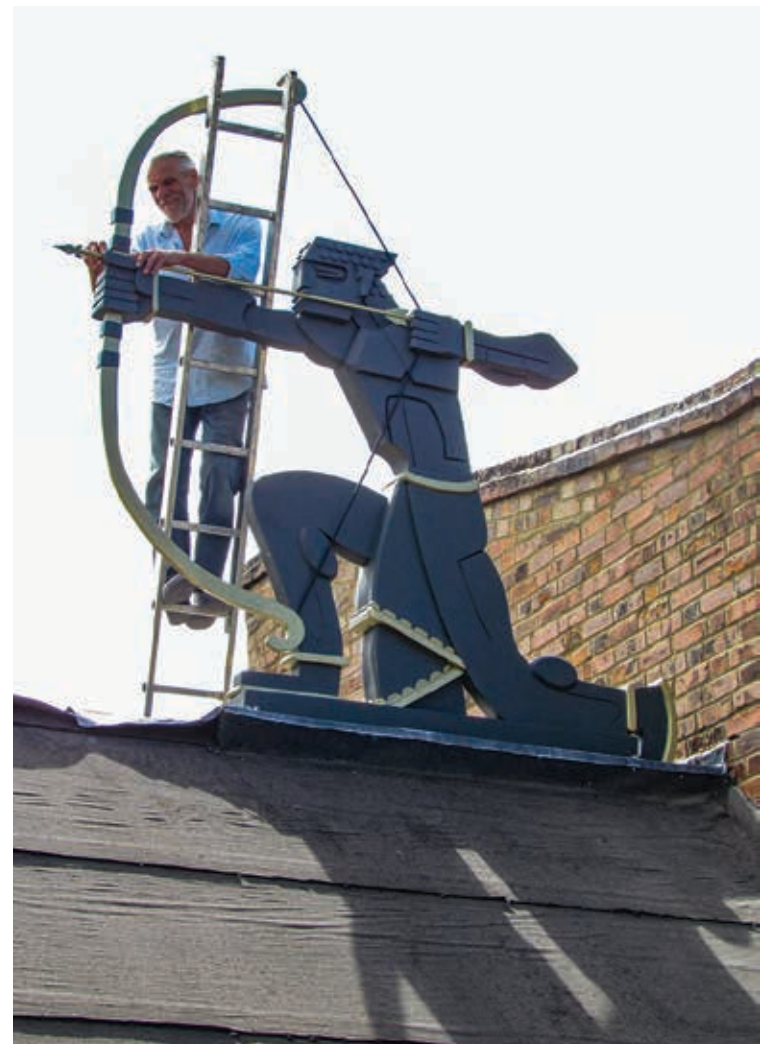
"This is because of the flood-

ing, which this year is really bad. Gradually as the conditions improve, we have then left the Pasture open, either for the rest of the day, or for both Saturday and Sunday, aiming for daily opening by or before Easter.

"However, while the week-day closure is partly because of the vandalism, it's mainly because the person who valiantly opened and closed the Pasture and kept an eye on it on a daily basis for around 20 years is now no longer able to do so.

"About five or six of our regular volunteers have stepped forward and shared out the task of visiting at 10am and dusk on Saturdays and Sundays for the main part of the year. If there are school or other groups who want to visit the Pasture on a particular occasion, we would do our best to accommodate those groups, as we do already.

"New or potential volunteers are always welcome to drop by on Saturday mornings to have a chat with any of us, or give it a try. We can usually find something suitable for all levels of energy and fitness. Please send inquiries or comments to longlanepasture@gmail.com."



A second Archie: Wayne with Alf, his rooftop cousin to East Finchley station's famous statue



New homes for unwanted uniforms

By Lynn Winton

When local resident Howard Skolnick retired a few years ago he did not waste any time filling his days with productive and fulfilling volunteer roles, and one of those has resulted in him being named a 'Volunteer of the Year'.

While spending time with the Jewish Volunteering Network, Howard, who has lived close by Cherry Tree Wood for 30 years, had a 'lightbulb moment' when his wife Wendy was packing up warm clothes for a transport to Ukraine.

Dead stock

"It's known in the trade as 'dead stock'," explained Howard. "Schools close, merge and change logos so schoolwear suppliers, from manufacturers to retailers, can be stuck with thousands of unsaleable items. Sometimes they are even incinerated."

Annually, a staggering 354 tonnes of uniforms are discarded across the U.K, contributing to the mounting burden on landfills, when much of this waste will be gladly received in other parts of the world.

Howard contacted the charity Goods for Good, who take donations of unsold essential goods from British industry, and pre-loved goods from communities and individuals, which are distributed to vulnerable people all over the world. Their philosophy matched Howard's: that nothing should go to waste and nothing should go to landfill.

Useful items

At the annual Schoolwear Show Exhibition attended by importers and retailers, Howard persuaded the organisers to give him a free stand for Goods for Good. This resulted in him sourcing half a million pounds worth of brand new goods,



Waste not: Howard Skolnick

tens of thousands of warm and useful items like sweatshirts and backpacks, which were sent to Ukraine, one of the 26 countries to which Goods for Good has sent essential aid. His efforts led to the Jewish Volunteering Network recognising him as their 'Volunteer of the Year'. He is hoping that by telling his story, other people or local business owners might have a similar lightbulb moment and contact Goods for Good. If you have any ideas he is happy to hear from you by email: hs@skolnick.co.uk.



Asylum seekers enjoy a touch of nature

The Friends of Coldfall Woods have been bringing the outdoors inside to a hotel in Muswell Hill currently housing 60 asylum seekers. Several of the Friends have been running Creativity in Nature workshops monthly through the winter, facilitated by local artist Laura Fox.

Laura said: "It's been an opportunity to build community relationships and take part in some mindful creativity whilst introducing them to the beautiful ancient woodland just down the road from the hotel."

It was hoped that as the weather got warmer in late spring the sessions could be run in Coldfall Woods, but there is now uncertainty around the future of the hotel and where the current residents may be moved to, so sadly this is unlikely to happen.



Demanding: Joseph Derrington as Dr Watson and Luke Barton as Holmes in a scene from Sherlock Holmes: The Valley of Fear

Review: Sherlock Holmes, The Valley of Fear

Artsdepot, North Finchley. By Jessica Holt

Adapted by Nick Lane and performed by Blackeyed Theatre, this production chose to tell the story of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's final Sherlock Holmes novel by alternating the action between an English village and an American small town.

In the original novel they were kept separate, but it was an effective theatrical device and helped with the understanding of a complicated plot as well as adding variety to the story. It also made considerable demands on the actors.

But this talented company was on great form, each actor playing from two to six different roles. They successfully achieved these transformations through costume changes, changes of accent and by creating distinctive characters for the audience to enjoy.

The decision to include Professor Moriarty as a threatening presence enabled Watson to question Holmes' friendship and provided some touching moments but it did lengthen an already long production. As you would expect, there are numerous comic moments – especially when Watson isn't quite clear about Holmes' theorising – and the interplay between them is one of the highlights of this production.

The many scene changes were smoothly done, with recorded background singing helping the change-overs along. The set design served to distinguish the many different settings within the play and the lighting successfully created mood.

Doctor Watson, played by Joseph Derrington, connected well with the audience. As well as playing two other roles, Derrington transitioned smoothly from character to narrator throughout the performance, helping the audience to follow the narrative. Alice Osmanski was delightful in all five of her different roles. The strength of the company lies in its collaborative nature, and their success in bringing challenging stories to life. Congratulations to the company on their 20th anniversary this year.

RICKY SAVAGE ... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Off the buses

It's March, it's raining and I'm at a bus stop waiting for that mythical beast, the on-time bus, to show up. And then looking about as incongruous in East Finchley as a Ferrari in Victorian London there comes chugging out of the mist that transport of delight... a 65-year-old red Routemaster. And everybody loved it, apart from me.

In the weird world of nostalgia, if something hangs on for long enough we all forget why we were pleased to see the back of it the first time round. And yes, I mean the Routemaster. It first appeared in 1956 and had its heyday in the 1960s when they built more than 2,700 of them. By 1970 London Transport had realised that there were better buses out there that were more comfortable and didn't have a leap-on, leap-off platform at the back.

It wasn't that it hadn't been modern once, what with power steering, an automatic gearbox and brakes that worked, it's just that times changed. When the Routemaster first lumbered onto the roads, Ford had just launched the Anglia, a slow cramped mini Americana with non-working brakes. By the time the last Routemaster retired in 2009 the Anglia's equivalent, the Ford Focus, looked good, went better and didn't try to kill you.

Ancient relic

But there are still people out there who love restoring something horrible from the 1950s, spending more on their ancient relic than the rest of us spend on something that works. And I blame steam trains.

Back in the days of boys in school caps and short trousers, men in hats and rationing, all trains were steam trains. They were usually cold, uncomfortable and smelt of smoke and soot. They weren't delayed by leaves on the line because they tended to chuck out so much burning coal that you had to have a 10-foot scorched earth policy around it so that the thing didn't set the fields alight. Maybe if you travelled first class on the Flying Scotsman with waiter service and all the luxuries, it was all cool and very Art Deco, but for the rest of the population train travel was never champagne and oysters.

After lagging behind countries like France and Germany who went electric in the 1950s, British Rail got rid of the pollution specials from their fleet in the 1960s and trains got cleaner, quicker and better. The rest is just schoolboy myth. It's the same with buses.

After a slow, uncomfortable crawl into Muswell Hill on the 2024 Routemaster, I walked over the road and got a warm, comfortable modern bus back. Nostalgic dreams of steam trains and double deckers are fun, just like pre-decimal coinage, pounds and ounces, chimney sweeps and Mary Poppins. It's just that the rest of the world has moved on.



Review: Beryl Cook: A Private View

King Alfred Phoenix Theatre, Golders Hill Park, NW11

By Jessica Holt

Kara Wilson's 'painter play' focuses on Beryl Cook, whose comical depictions of people in pubs, in the shower and sunbathing, to name a few settings, are all so easily recognisable to the public. Kara's one-woman show incorporates with great skill the history of Beryl's life at the same time as she reproduces on canvas her famous work *Ladies Night*, which portrays several women delighting in the performance of a male stripper known as Ivor Dickie.



Painterly: Kara Wilson

Bouncers, sailors and tattoos

Many of the events and inspirations of the artist's life are humorously told. Based on extensive research and time spent with her son and daughter-in-law John and Theresa, the audience hears about some of the funniest moments and her favourite things such as bouncers, sailors and tattoos. Through Kara's accomplished writing, the audience also learns about the artist's crippling shyness – from loathing parties to not having the confidence to receive her OBE from the Queen.

The set is simple and a visual delight. There is a screen, a table with paint pots, a chair from which she paints and two cameras, one placed either side of the stage. Kara/Beryl begins the show by addressing one of the cameras. She is too shy to be interviewed by 'George' in person, happier to speak to him via a camera. This device works well, reminding the audience of how incredibly famous and successful she is and adding another presence in the acting space, which enables Kara/Beryl to talk to us more directly.

Kara's play is a complex piece that succeeds in sharing Beryl's life story in depth, with great humour, skill and sincerity, all of which the audience enjoyed immensely. It comes back to King Alfred Phoenix Theatre on Thursday 9 May. Find tickets on Eventbrite.co.uk by searching 'Beryl Cook A Private View'.



All at sea: The cast of *Silver Lining* at the Gatehouse

Silver surfers ahoy!

Garden Suburb Theatre's next production *Upstairs at the Gatehouse* in Highgate will be *Silver Lining*, a comedy by TV host, comedian, and writer Sandi Toksvig, billed as *The Golden Girls* meets *The Great Escape*.

On a dark and stormy night at the Silver Retirement Home, five elderly women are trading stories of their (un)remarkable lives. But with a Biblical storm brewing outside, the flood waters rising, and no rescue team in sight, the residents are faced with the realisation that in order to survive they are going to have to do what they have done their entire lives – do it themselves!

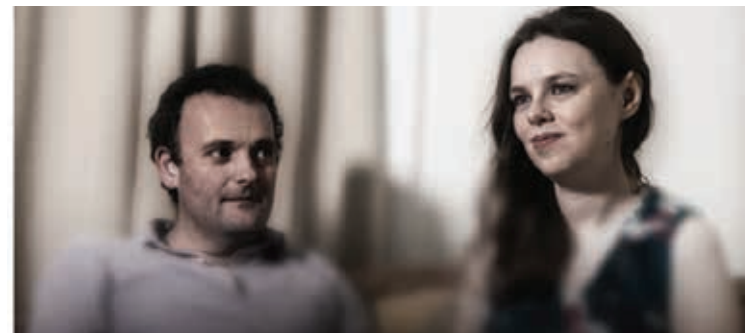
Director Daryl Hurst said: "Sandi Toksvig wrote this play as an antidote to not seeing

any great parts for women-of-a-certain-age in theatre and I am so proud to have a cast that are showcasing their incredible talent on this stage." The show contains strong language and adult themes.

The production runs from Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 April. Tickets priced £15 (with £13 concessions) are available from www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com. Anyone in groups of 10+ can contact boxoffice@gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk for group discounts.

What happens when two strangers meet

Theatre in the Square, who rehearse at East Finchley Methodist Church in the High Road, are performing David Eldridge's 2017 play *Beginning* this month. This is the first of a trilogy of plays looking at love and relationships and was first seen at the Royal National Theatre before transferring to the Ambassadors Theatre in the West End, where it enjoyed a sold-out run.



Encounter: Matthew Pert and Naomi Smallwood

In the play *Danny and Laura*, played by Matthew Pert and Naomi Smallwood, are the last two remaining after a party. Unknown to each other, they both have their story, and the baggage that goes with it. Can they connect? Audiences find out what transpires between them in an hour and a half of real time.

Performances are at The King Alfred Phoenix, North End

Road, Golders Green, NW11 7HY from Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 April at 8pm. Tickets priced £12 are available online at www.theatreinthesquare.org with the usual concessions. Formed 57 years ago to provide amateur drama opportunities in north London, Theatre in the Square puts on three to four productions each year. Find out more at www.theatreinthesquare.org.

What's On at the Phoenix in April

By Zalan Pall, general manager



An extraordinary foreign drama, an exciting romcom, a legendary biopic, live ballet, opera, and theatre and much more awaits you at the Phoenix Cinema in April.

A journey toward hope, *Io Capitano* perambulates through the ravishing Saharan landscape encountering the most sublime and debased corners of humanity. The story is told through the mind's eye and experiences of two Senegalese teenagers living in Dakar who yearn for a brighter future in Europe. Winning top directing and acting prizes at the Venice Film Festival and nominated for Best International Film at the Oscars, it plays from Friday 5 April.

The extraordinary story of Amy Winehouse's early rise to fame and the making of her groundbreaking album, *Back to Black* is on screen from Friday 12 April. Told from Amy's perspective and inspired by her deeply personal lyrics, the film follows the remarkable woman behind the phenomenon and the tumultuous relationship at the centre of one of the most legendary albums of all time.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have the Royal Opera House's production of three of Kenneth MacMillan's ballets *MacMillan Triple* on Tuesday 9 April, the Met's *La Rondine* on Saturday 20 April, the National Theatre's *Nye*, with Michael Sheen, on Tuesday 23 April, the Royal Opera House's *Swan Lake* on Wednesday 24 April, followed by *Carmen* on Wednesday 1 May, and *Macbeth* starring Ralph Fiennes and Indira Varma on Thursday 2 May.

From visionary filmmaker Luca Guadagnino, *Challengers* follows three players who knew each other when they were teenagers as they compete in a tennis tournament to be a world-famous grand slam winner and reignite old rivalries. It's on court from Friday 26 April.

Finally for April, set in 1858 in the Jewish quarter of Bologna and based on indefensible truths, *Kidnapped* from Friday 26 April tackles institutional abuse with cinematic pomp and political circumstance.

In amongst all these screen treats, the Phoenix is hosting *East Finchley's Got Talent* and the *East Finchley Bake Off* on Sunday 21 April. Come along to take part and enjoy a host of local performance and baking talent. To book tickets, visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or drop into our box office. We look forward to seeing you soon.



On show: Bento Box by Michelle Weiner

Collaboration of memories and form

A new collaboration will grace the walls of Lauderdale House in Highgate this April as north London-based artists Caroline Matthews and Michelle Weiner join forces to present their inaugural exhibition, called 'Rooted Memories – Lasting Connections'.

Caroline Matthews creates soft pastel worlds that immerse viewers in a tapestry of emotion, colour and texture, while Michelle Weiner's prints intertwine organic forms and human relationships.

Rooted Memories runs from Thursday 4 to Monday 29 April in the Upper Gallery at Lauderdale House, Waterloo Park, N6 5HG. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk



Letters

Town Square

Dear Editor,

Thank you for showing the plans for the new town square area outside Budgens and Iceland in the High Road (*The Archer*, March 2023). I agree that this area is in need of refurbishment. Those of us who visit Muswell Hill regularly will know they have made a success of the wide pavement area outside the Odeon Cinema, which is regularly used for market stalls and community events. We could certainly do the same in East Finchley. My only criticism of the designs you published is that the 'grove' of trees on the corner would take up valuable space. I appreciate that it's nice to have some greenery but they would be on the widest and potentially most useful part of the pavement. Trees around the edge of the square would be more than enough.

Gillian Best,
High Road, N2

One zone

Dear Editor

I agree completely with those residents opposed to the new parking zone restrictions. They are not necessary and just a money-making exercise for the Council.

What would be really useful for us would be to make the whole residential area homogenous, rather than splitting it up into mini area zones, as is currently the situation.

As Kensington and Chelsea have done this for many years, there is no reason why our council couldn't manage it also.

Norman Weiss
Address supplied.

Day in the life

Dear Editor,

I read the news today, oh boy. Four thousand five hundred holes in Barnet, Londonshire (Ricky Savage, *The Archer*, March 2024).

David Brindle,
Durham Road, N2.



Wildlife friendly: An example of a Suburb garden that harnesses naturally growing plants for biodiversity

Biodiversity on our doorstep

There are ambitious plans afoot to have Hampstead Garden Suburb officially recognised as the most biodiverse area of urban Britain. Dominic Rose, the resident spearheading the campaign, hopes that in turn other neighbourhoods will be motivated to nurture and support the wildlife around them.

"It is commonly thought that to impact diversity you must accept an unruly garden. This could not be further from the truth," says Dominic. The scientific lead on the project is ecologist Dr Stephen Head, who is the founder head of the Wildlife Gardening Forum.

Dr Head will speak at the

launch to be held at St Jude's Church, Central Square, NW11, at 7pm on Monday 29 April. The event is free and includes a drinks reception but booking is strongly advised on Eventbrite by searching for 'Britain's biggest living garden', or use the QR code below. Find out more at www.britainsbiggestlivinggarden.org

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.



Open to view: Susan Bennett and Earl Hyde's garden in Muswell Hill

Visit best back gardens in town

By Susan Bennett

"From those to whom much is given, much is expected." For my husband Earl Hyde and I, opening our garden for the National Garden Scheme since 1996 has been fundamental to that ethos. Last year, we contributed £8,500 towards the £3.4million donated to the scheme's beneficiaries, providing critical support to nursing and health charities.

So, I am thrilled that we are able to open our garden again this year. Described as "a cornucopia of sensual delights" and featured on TV's *Britain's Best Back Gardens*. A warm welcome awaits, whatever the weather.

Come and refresh your spirits, indulge in Earl's delicious home-made cakes and tea, peruse our pottery studio where many of the garden's architectural features were made, and take home plants from our plant sale to enhance your own gardens.

Our garden at 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road,

N10 2DE, is open on Sunday 28 April, Sunday 30 June and Sunday 4 August from 2pm to 6.30pm. Admission is £5, children free, and dogs on leads welcome. Groups of 10-60 are welcome by arrangement. Contact suebearlh@yahoo.co.uk and let me know if you are inspired to open your own garden for the National Gardens Scheme.

Other local gardens open this spring are 7 Deansway, N2, on Sunday 5 May, and 66 Abbots Gardens, N2, 92 Hampstead Way, NW11, and 5 Hill Close, NW11, all on Sunday 19 May. Find full details at ngs.org.uk

A helping hand for patients through the NHS maze

By Lynn Winton

Asmina Remtulla, who lives in East Finchley, is Chair of the Barnet Primary Care Group. This consists of a team of volunteers dedicated to improving care for patients in Barnet.

Recognising that there is a wealth of confusion and anxiety about how to get help when you and yours are feeling ill, she and her team have produced an easy-to-navigate leaflet with all the guidance and contact num-



Left to right: vc fxc vChair of the Barnet Primary Care Group Asmina Remtulla, Primary Care Group members Margaret Singer and Sue Blain, and CEO of Community Barnet Julie Pal

bers for when your GP practice is closed.

Asmina explained: "Patients need to know the right place to go when they need treatment, but when it is not an emergency. The outcome will save the NHS precious resources by patients

attending the appropriate facility."

Use the QR code here to download the leaflet to your phone or computer. You can also pick up a copy at many GP surgeries and pharmacies in the area.



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Email: vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com
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allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk



Market Place Playground - Design
 Disclaimer: This design is for illustrative purposes only and some details and equipment choices may change through the construction phase.



Natural adventure: The new play area design being shared by Friends of Market Place Playground

Playground begins its transformation

By David Melsome

Work began last month on the transformation of the Market Place Playground, close to Holy Trinity Primary School and The Archer Academy. What was once a long-neglected play area will become a landscaped green space with all-new equipment.

The major milestone comes after three years of hard work and fundraising by the Friends of Market Place Playground, bringing in £400,000 from grants and donations to pay for the project.

Diggers moved in to remove the existing rubber and hard surfaces, which will be replaced by grass, sand, paths and planting. There will be seating, outdoor table tennis and mostly wood-based play equipment to match the more natural setting. Work is expected to continue until the summer.

Michelle Frith and Samantha Haycock, co-chairs of the

Friends group, said: "We want to thank the community for their patience and understanding during the construction phase, especially the immediate neighbours."

"We are also thinking of children who will have even fewer play options in East Finchley over the next few months. There are small parks at Prospect Ring and The Mead as well as Oak Lane green space and of course Cherry Tree Wood. We have a list of options that are a little further afield on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/friendsofmarketplaceplayground

Family shows at Artsdepot

Artsdepot in North Finchley has lined up a run of family productions for the Easter holidays and beyond.

Book Buzz takes place on Sunday 7 April and is free for all ages. It will feature a book swap, craft workshops, storytelling and a playwriting workshop.

On Monday 8 April, English Touring Opera visit with their production of *The Great Stink*, a family show about poo set in Victorian London. On Tuesday 9 April, Lego lovers can join The Brick People for lots of Lego-related activities.

On Thursday 11 April, *The Showstoppers' Kids Show* is an improvised musical show for children of all ages. Then on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 April, Babette Cole's subversive adventure *Princess Smartypants* comes to Artsdepot, adapted by the Wardrobe Ensemble.

For details and tickets visit www.artsdepot.co.uk

Comedy stars come out for the Academy

The Archer Academy school is continuing its massive drive to raise funds for a new performing arts studio by hosting a comedy night this month at its site in Eagans Close, N2.

Top stand-up and former Archer Academy parent Ian Stone will host the star-studded event, introducing Ria Lina from *Mock the Week* and *The Now Show*, Ninia Benjamin from *3 Non-Blondes*, and Finlay Christie, from *8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown*.



Monday 29 April at 7.30pm and is open to the whole community. Tickets can be purchased via the Archer Academy website or tinyurl.com/archerraisetherooft



The school has run several comedy nights in the past which have always been huge sell-out successes. It is already over halfway towards achieving its goal to build a bespoke studio, having raised £270,000 through grants, donations and contributions from parents and students.

This latest 'Raise The Roof Comedy Night' takes place on



Host: Ian Stone (top) and funny folk, Ninia Benjamin and Ria Lina

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