



Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Disgraceful

By Gerry Ingram

What exactly is a "Community Festival"? Surely not the recent event held in Cherry Tree Wood!

I was always under the impression that the principal reason for holding a festival of this nature was to raise money for charitable causes and local projects while, at the same time, giving local residents a pleasant day out. Hardly the time or place for a blatantly political protest to be held, is it?

The hijacking of the festival by a "cancel the third world debt" protest march was a disgrace. Furthermore the large number of children present, many of them barely more than toddlers let alone of voting age, happily chanting political slogans of which they can have no understanding whatsoever as if they were part of a game, is nothing less than disgraceful.

I naively believed that political indoctrination of very young children was something that took place "elsewhere". It seems I was wrong.

The organisers of this travesty and the politically active parents who dragged their, thus far, innocent offspring with them should all be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

Tread Carefully

By Colin Goff of Barnet Association of Responsible Dog Owners, who recently did a clear-up operation in Cherry Tree Wood.

Having met up at the gates of the selected park, poo bags, leaflets and BARDO armbands are handed out, and the intrepid seekers of poo go off to work.

To cover the most ground and possibly because of the weirdness of what we are doing we tend to work alone; in silence, like some strange sub species let out of our underground caves to do the work that the daylight prefer to ignore.

Sniffers

We delve amongst the undergrowth, eyes peeled and noses on the alert. Not because we are so keen to find the stuff but because we don't want to tread in it.

When you're out on a BARDO Poop Scoop exercise your thoughts tend to wander, which is just as well as it doesn't do to dwell on dodos too much.

Alimentary my dear Watson

I wonder if Sherlock Holmes ever gave thought to the various types of dog poo that can inhabit the local park? Sherlock could identify the brand and origins of a particular type of cigarette just by the formation of the ash.

Being an experienced BARDO Poo Scooper I have developed similar skills. Per-

haps not so adept as Sherlock, but I reckon I am close to identifying the breed of dog and what sort of diet it has.

Less is more

This might upset some people, but I am of the opinion that owners of smaller dogs are less responsible than owners of larger dogs. I reckon to clear up far more small deposits than larger ones. Maybe 1 GSD and 2 Rotti's against 4 Yorkies and 6 Poodles. I couldn't begin to count the number of Jack Russells. Although I suppose in terms of weight 1 Lab equals 6 Dachshunds.

Caution

Of course these findings have not been subjected to any scientific analysis. I have not carried out DNA testing to positively identify the producers of the droppings, nor have I laid out the collection for counting or weighing. For this reason readers of this article should use the data with caution.

Barnet Association of Responsible Dog Owners can be contacted on 020 8449 5268.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Appalling

Dear Editor

I, too, am absolutely appalled with Barnet's rubbish collection - re: May issue article on "Barnet's Load of Rubbish".

Three months ago I lived in Haringey, East Finchley. My family and I moved just one mile into the realms of Barnet, East Finchley. On our first rubbish collection day, my wife informed me that the bin men did not collect ALL of the rubbish! (We have one bin).

So I called the phone number which is located on the top of the bin (stating Quality Services Guarantee) and a young Customer Service Adviser listened to my complaint...stating that this was because the bin lid was not closed (i.e. one inch above). The bin men are not expected to remove "excess" rubbish. (So the bin men took the extra bag out and put it onto the ground next to my freshly emptied bin). "That's outrageous", I exclaimed. "No", I was told, "it is part of the new trial of Quality Guarantees which 'ensure MINIMUM high levels of service'".

I explained to the Customer Service Adviser that this was surely not a Quality Service. He eventually agreed with me and went on to advise that if I wanted a larger bin, I could pay a one-off charge of (I think) £50, also advising as to what the Quality Service Guarantee actually was. It appears that the Council are making so many rules and exceptions about what covers the Guarantee that they will NEVER need to pay the £10 rebate and the service of rubbish collection will not get better, it will actually get worse.

Well, the following week, the dustmen arrived to collect my rubbish (lid closed completely, mind you) and I was horrified to see the bin men dragging two bins over and onto the bumpers of my car and a neighbour's. I will not bore you with the banter back and forth, but I was, in summary, TOLD "it won't hurt the car", to "mind my own business" and "clear off"! Great service, huh?

In conclusion, Barnet, your rubbish collection service is awful and your Quality Service Guarantee is just a public relations message with no beef and no guts!

Yours appalled
A "glad-to-live-in-Barnet" citizen
Name and address supplied.

Yes to Organic Market

Dear Editor

With reference to your article in July's Archer, I say "yes please" to an organic farmers' market.

By the way, the article by Ricky Savage was most distasteful.

Yours faithfully

June Randall

Edmunds Walk, N2.

Thumbs down

Dear Editor

So your "Thumbs Up" correspondent enjoys being screamed at every minute or so by a female robot who insists on missing out the 'a' in Highgate.

I should like to assure him that I have no wish to upset the thousands of tourists who regularly travel from Morden to Edgware, Barnet and Mill Hill East and need to have London place names firmly impressed on their subconscious.

But why not be really friendly and have the announcements made in all the languages of the EEC, plus Japanese and American. Then of course you could extend the whole system on to the buses, and how about the shouting street sign and the singing traffic light?

The tourist area is between Camden Town and Waterloo and announcements like those at Leicester Square could be made on these stations; thus not challenging the sanity of us non tourists.

Other suggestions for lessening the pain are:

- a) Have one speaker in a carriage with a button that people requiring information could press.
 - b) Cutting out the between stations announcements.
 - c) Reducing the volume by about 75 percent.
 - d) Removing: Either i) "Mind the doors" or the beeps that tell you to mind the doors or ii) "Mind the gap between the train and the platform". This may well cause problems for your average tourist who, expecting a hole discovers instead an excessive drop.
 - e) Cutting out all the announcements, and if this is done I shall go out of my way to assist any lost tourists I see wandering around the London Underground.
- Yours Truly**
Frank Gordon,
fg@gordon.free-online.co.uk

A standing joke

Dear Editor

This is the first time I have written to a newspaper, but I was so enraged by the letter printed in your July issue praising LTR and the new Northern Line trains. I found this letter uninformed and patronising. Does the writer realise that we, the rush hour travellers, pay more for the privilege of standing? Why the heck (I could use stronger language) should we?

As for the announcements - it may be all right except for the pronunciation Highgate not Highgit. Surely the LED boards are enough.

Does Mr Willcocks realise that if you are 5'4" or shorter then you can not reach the central bar that you are meant to hang onto whilst standing? Also there is no partition next to the pull down seats so if the train stops suddenly then you are more than likely to fall out of the seat.

As for the cold blasts, they are the only thing that keep some people from fainting in the rush hour. There are laws that state cattle can not travel in more than 86 degrees F; in a recent report temperatures of over 100 degrees F have been recorded on the underground, nearly the temperature at which the brain starts to cook.

There are several other points that Mr Willcocks did not observe: the height of the trains mean that anybody with a disability would have even more trouble trying to get on or off these trains, and now that the trains no longer have guards, any women travelling late at night have lost their sense of security.

I could go on for a lot longer but will for now say: Think again Mr Willcocks or at least be better informed before expressing an opinion.

Annoyed of East Finchley
(Name and address supplied)

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