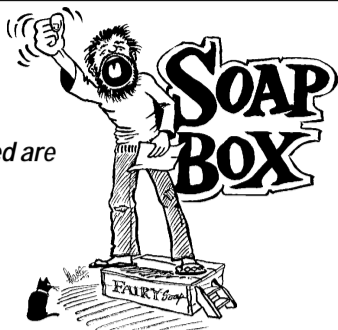




LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.



Stop these maniacs

By Len Willcocks

Just two months after the accident on Fortis Green that killed Mrs Bussandri of Summerlee Avenue, some drivers are still using this stretch of road as a speed lane.

These speed maniacs have been observed recently, one in a souped-up car, also one on a motorbike similar to the one involved in the recent accident. I saw it accelerate to 40-50 mph as soon as it turned the corner from the High Road.

These maniacs must be stopped. Once again we are appealing for a pedestrian crossing with lights and also for speed restrictions. Residents make your voices heard: Sign petitions, attend road safety meetings and pressurise your local councillors.

People power can make this road safe for pedestrians and all other road users.

Travel hold-up

An East Finchley resident, who has recently moved to Suffolk, had a frightening experience when she made one of her regular return visits.

She writes: "I went to Thomas Cook, North Finchley to get some foreign currency. I waited my turn in the queue for the Bureau de Change at the back of this shop. I reached the front of the queue with my back to the rest of the shop. Then I heard a voice behind me saying "Get to the back of the shop." I turned round and for a split second thought, "This can't be real." However, from the expression on the man's face and the fact that he had his arm under the chin of one of the young assistants and his other hand holding what I assumed to be a gun in the girl's back, I realised it was for real!

The girl's face was saying "Just do as he says" and she was obviously terrified. As instructed, I walked to the back of the shop with the other members of staff. All the other customers had left by then. After what seemed an eternity, but was probably only a couple of minutes, a lady, who appeared to be the manager, walked in and said, "He's off the premises the police have been called"

I felt a tremendous relief - I hadn't known whether the robber would be back if he hadn't got

what he wanted from the cashier. The poor hostage was initially very upset, but she soon calmed down. I found out later that the weapon was a very large bread knife. Whilst waiting for the police, I lightened the atmosphere by saying, "I hope you've still got some Belgian francs - I couldn't bear to go home with out any after all that" Everyone seemed amused for a moment.

I was given a police escort to the Thomas Cook branch in Muswell Hill (wishing I had gone there in the first place). I got my francs and was then driven to the house I was staying in - four hours late. Quite an experience!"

Church News

Parishioners of St Mary's RC Church came together on Thursday 24 June to remember and celebrate the life of the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal George Basil Hume.

Cardinal Hume, 76, passed away peacefully from cancer. He was loved and respected by people of all faiths as well as four million Roman Catholics in England and Wales.

Caught out

Dear Editor,

So Ricky's been savaging cricket. What a brave, original little lad he is. Just a bit careless with his facts, though. Still, it must be tough recycling all those ancient clichés.

An upper class game? Well, we have had plenty of classy English players, but most of them never went near a public school. Traditionally, it has always been played by people from all backgrounds.

Ricky didn't learn much on his famous trip Up North. Didn't anyone tell him about the Lancashire League clubs? He wouldn't have found many toffs in them.

There are certainly a few in the sport's administration, but I've even heard of some in the echelons of football.

Isn't Ricky sounding rather like a patronising imperialist himself? Does he really think his so-called "bunch of countries once colonised by the Brits" get their kicks from beating England? Sorry, Rick, they've got some pretty healthy rivalries going among themselves, and they won't bother about us until we have a halfway decent team again. (Which won't happen till our schools start teaching cricket again.)

Meanwhile, that "bunch of countries" is getting bigger all the time, and millions of people on five continents followed the World Cup.

Ricky should have seen the packed grounds and the wonderful support from the fans of all the teams. Those fans included women, teenagers and children. I didn't notice many Buffys and Codgers among the painted faces and waving flags and mascots. (And as for drinking Pimms, I don't think that was the drink the Aussies showed their toy kangaroo.)

I'm beginning to feel sorry for Ricky. In his desperate desire to seem "cool", he's swallowed the tedious old anti-cricket propaganda - and missed some thrilling games.

Cricket is a great sport - a team game which gives all the individual players their turn in the limelight.

Open your mind, Savage! Find yourself a proper target next time, or we'll really think you're slipping.

Eveline Nicholas, High Road, N2.

Cherry Tree Wood

Dear Editor

I noted the concern in the current issue of The Archer about the Council's proposal to cease locking a number of the borough's parks including Cherry Tree Wood in East Finchley.

As Chair of the Community Development Committee that oversees the parks I wanted to tell your readers that this decision was taken after extensive consultation with the police, who assured us that there was no evidence to suggest that there is an increase in anti-social activity around unlocked parks.

In fact, we were advised that the police would not enter a park to deal with an incident if it was locked, because they would regard the locked park as private property. I am on record in a variety of places as saying that if there are problems in these parks and the only answer is to lock them again, then we will do so.

On a happier note I am delighted to say that Cherry Tree Wood is one of the parks taking part in the pilot project to reintroduce park keepers to Barnet. The keeper should be in place in time for the summer to offer a reassuring presence, help improve the appearance of the parks and get involved in local environmental projects.

Yours sincerely Councillor Susette Palmer Childs Hill Ward

Thumbs up

Dear Editor

Re the recent letter in THE ARCHER complaining about the new trains on the Northern Line, the on-train announcements do not annoy me at all and must be very helpful to tourists or newcomers to London. I also find the new coaches very smart and cheerful with plenty of space for rush-hour standing passengers. And you do not have to put up with cold blasts of tunnel air from open windows. So "thumbs up LTR" for the smart new trains. Len Willcocks Park Hall Road, N2.

Fortis Green crossing

Dear Editor

I fully support any campaign to persuade Barnet and Haringey councils to install a pedestrian crossing on Fortis Green. My son is now old enough to travel on his own to Cherry Tree Woods or the bus stops on Fortis Green but I worry that he and his friends will misjudge the speed and gaps in the heavy traffic. I am still crossing Fortis Green from the junction with Durham Road with my five-year-old and it is a nerve-wracking experience, especially if I am pulling a bike with me.

The main problem, as other residents have stated, is the speed and density of the traffic, but the problem of judging when to cross is also exacerbated by traffic constantly turning into Fortis Green from side roads such as Twyford Avenue, Summerlee Avenue etc. It is necessary to have more than one pair of eyes to make a crossing safely.

I believe that traffic calming is not a solution. Only an established pedestrian crossing, at which vehicles must stop, will give our families and us the necessary safety.

Yours faithfully Ms C L Petch Hertford Road, N2.

More Support

Dear Editor,

I would like to support any action which you may take to attempt to get a pedestrian crossing on Fortis Green Road.

Yours Sincerely Nina Wedderburn, Leicester Road, N2.

Advertisement for A1 Chivers Bros. Motor Accessories. Text: "Not just MOTOR ACCESSORIES at A1 Motor Stores, but all your DIY requirements as well". Includes an image of a power drill and the company name "A1 CHIVERS BROS." with address: 113 High Road East Finchley London N2 8AG 0181 883 8628.

Advertisement for Tom's Butchers. Text: "For that special occasion... or a simple meal. All your cuts of meat can be purchased from TOM'S BUTCHERS". Includes an image of a pig and address: 100 High Road East Finchley London N2 9EB 0181 883 8472.

Advertisement for Bowers & Co. Carpet Services. Text: "THE CARPET SHOWROOM". Includes an image of a carpet showroom and address: 111 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY, LONDON, N2 8AG. Services: Consultant, Design, Supply, Installation & Maintenance. Telephone: 0181 444 9911/2 Fax No. 0181 365 3791.

Advertisement for A. Scott & Sons. Text: "A. Scott & Sons Your local wet fish shop. For all types of fish and seafood". Includes an image of a fish and address: 94 High Road East Finchley London N2 0181 444 7606. Note: FREE local deliveries Tues, Weds & Thur.

Advertisement for East Finchley Electrical Contractors. Text: "All your DIY essentials: Brooms from £4.00, 5 set paint brushes £4.99, Roller kits from £1.99, All purpose filler £3.99, Gen. purpose sealant £3.25, White spirit £0.75". Includes an image of a paintbrush and Tel: 0181 444 5630.