



LETTERS

Forum Congestion

Dear Editor

It's a poor reflection of the minds of the people of East Finchley that the chief concern of those who attended the Finchley Forum on 23 May was about how to get their cars in and out of the High Road.

If they spent half the time and energy they devoted to their cars to agitating for improved public transport, they would have better and easier means of transport for everyone, not to mention less congestion, collisions and pollution.

Yours truly

Frank Chane (82 years of age and never wanted a car!)
Park Road, N2

SA Society

Dear Editor,

I read, with interest, the latest newsletter from Paolo in South Africa and applaud the motives of wanting to go abroad and help others less fortunate.

May I take this opportunity to mention a society I discovered only recently and have joined? It is called The South Africa Society and is for those who have left South Africa but feel they would like to contribute to the country that has given them a good living in the past.

The Society has fun events, braais (barbecues), pub-crawls, open days, wine tasting, wine auctions and other fun events. En-

trace is a little more than might be expected and all profits go to charities in South Africa (including the SA Mission) to help the more unfortunate in that country. Here's a chance to put something back and have fun in the process - 19 August sees a huge outdoor event in Surrey with over 5000 SAs attending.

If you are South African, or have lived over a year in that country, phone me on 0709-221 9856, e-mail at andrew@taylor.co.uk or write to 2 Cumberland Court, London N3 3SA and I will arrange for full details to be sent to you.

Andrew Taylor
Cumberland Court, N3.

Brent Cross Appeal

Dear Sir

First, let me state that we fully support the decision by Barnet to appeal against the Brent Cross enquiry verdict.

Brent Cross is the biggest and best local amenity we have and is one we should be proud of. Even after all these years, property developers regard it as a role model, one that has stood the test of time and is still one of the best developments of its type.

Secondly, we are fed up with the perpetual bleat from local shop keepers that it will damage their trade, they do forget that we all live in London and that most of us regard the West End shops as local;

London is our village we just happen to reside in Finchley.

Thirdly, we have no confidence in Mr Prescott's competence - White City comes to mind - and feel any decision taken by him should be automatically challenged on principal.

Lastly, what is the logic behind protesting at the extension and then wanting part of it reinstated and wanting us to pay for it? The so-called Finchley Society has done us all a great disservice and should be ashamed of themselves; the local tradesmen involved, in objecting to the extension, can rest assured that we will not be making use of their services in future, we would rather go elsewhere.

Yours faithfully
Name and address supplied.

Safety Hazard

Dear Archer

I am writing to you as a last resort after years of contact with Barnet Council.

When we moved to Manor Cottage Approach in July 1995, we were told by the council that the land overlooking us was planning to be landscaped. In the last five years it has been left to the point of a safety hazard - the grass (weeds) are so long that it could be a fire

hazard - many of us have seen foxes/rats coming out of the undergrowth and the fence is rusty/sharp/half of it is down and quite a few of us have young children (20 houses in all here).

I have been pushed from post to pillar with the council - the last person I spoke to from pest control said we need to speak to our local councillor but I don't know who that is. Can you help?

Mrs Sally Mattis
Manor Cottage Approach, N2.

Worth the wait

Dear Editor

I should like to set the record straight about our "non meeting" with London Transport.

Brian Coleman and I were waiting to meet Howard Collins (who is in charge of all Northern Line Stations) and not Esther McNight. Mr Collins failed to turn up; we were due to see him as part of our campaign for the passage through East Finchley Station to remain open.

He did not turn up because his assistant had forgotten to tell him, but we did see him a few days later. Although the delay inconvenienced us, the important fact is that London Transport will not be inconveniencing others by closing the passageway at East Finchley. That

victory was worth the inconvenience suffered.

Yours faithfully
John Marshall
Town Hall, NW4

Archer's note: The version of events printed in our May issue was obtained from a London Underground Ltd spokesperson.

Constitutional block

Dear Sirs

In regard to the letter from the Secretary of East Finchley Constitutional Club last month which pointed out the popularity of the club as a venue for birthdays, christenings, wedding anniversaries etc.

A large volume of traffic is generated in the roads surrounding the club when these events take place which causes a nuisance to residents of Oakridge Drive and New Ash Close. Access to private parking for residents is blocked and, on occasions, the public footpath to the children's playground is blocked to pedestrians from Leslie Road.

Should not the Constitutional Club acquire land adjacent to it, which currently consists of rundown garages, in order to provide adequate car parking facilities for its guests?

Yours sincerely
Mr S Wright
Oakridge Drive, N2

GARDENING

Soggy summer blues

By Zena Robson

OK - it was me who, like a fool, suggested that July would be summery. Whoever has been praying to the rain-god can stop now, thank you very much! Personally speaking, the webbed-feet are coming along great and it shouldn't be too long before I have mastered the art of underwater gardening without the snorkel. Dear reader, please understand that I write these articles a month ahead and so am meteorologically challenged!

Lawn order

Having got that off my chest, down to business. Lawns - mm, well gallop out with the lawnmower as and when. I have kept the cut at medium since April as I prefer to cut little and often, especially if the grass is damp or very dry. If you find that you have got soggy areas after downpours, get out there with your fork and aerate by pushing in to its full length and wiggling about. In really soggy bits it won't do an awful lot long-term and you may have to think about the possibility that you have a solid soil-pan underneath that needs breaking up; alternatively you may have an underground spring hurtling under your lawn in which case a herringbone drainage system leading towards an appropriate outfall or soakaway may be your only solution.

Plant-wise, I have been macheteing my way around herbaceous stuff that seems to alternate between reaching for the sky and lying prostrate in muddy slime! Fortunately, I had the presence of mind to slap a lot of plant-holders in around susceptible plants as they started growing. Anything that has escaped around the outside simply gets lifted back and hooked on with a piece of wire - sneaky, eh?

Daisy daisy

Looking at plants that will do you proud, think Asters! It took me a wee while to get rid of that awful Michaelmas-daisies-that-rampage-around-the-garden-and-get-mildew thing but now I'm hooked. Favourites are Aster x frikartii "Monch" that doesn't need staking, is mildew-resistant and produces masses of big lavender-blue daisies for weeks and weeks. Others that are a bit different are the ericoides types that have clouds of tiny, starry pink, white or blue flowers and the divaricatus that has black stems and tiny white flowers. Don't neglect to water because, for the most part, that is why Asters have had such a bad reputation on the mildew front. Plant in a sunny border.

Other late-flowering goodies are the Japanese Anemones; my favourite is "Honoree Jobert" - great at the back of a semi-shaded border and holding its white, open flowers upright all the way through September into October.

Well, I'm off to practise my back crawl now but I need to incorporate the Smash-the-Snail-over-the-Head technique in one easy movement...Happy Gardening!

Rare Fare

By Stella Burnett

About a year ago I acquired an allotment on Vale Farm and set about it, although I had never grown a veg in my life before. It's real fun. I swell with pride as I watch my kohlrabi swelling and my globe artichokes globing. Next spring I can have my asparagus in the steamer within 10 minutes of cutting it and I can smirk in the supermarket at people who pay a small fortune for organic miniveg while mine just seem to grow because I tipped a few seeds out of a packet.

Dig for salsify

I decided I would grow luxury vegetables or else vegetables that you hardly ever see - like salsify and seakale. Unfortunately, I am a novice. My seakale is growing. However it doesn't look too happy. I don't know why this should be. The germination rate on my salsify is none too good either. But there must be other vegetable fanatics in East Finchley who might be able and willing to diagnose the problems.

Heritage harvest

Next, I sowed from seed a lot of heritage vegetables. In my ignorance, I sowed far too many. I was awash with orange-, lemon- and brandy-flavoured tomato plants, varying in size from the world record-holder beef tomato to minute cherry tomatoes. I haven't even mentioned my next winter's vegetables. The gardening books tell you to sow them in a seed bed, then transplant them in July/August into their permanent site. So I currently have a row of baby red sprout plants left over - who says sprouts have to be green? - much more fun to have red sprouts for Christmas!

I dug up the rest of my surplus plants and threw them on the compost heap because I needed the space. But I minded. I feel responsible for them. I would have liked to have found them a good home.

A lot of fun

If you would like a chat or a look at what I am trying to grow, or could help, then head for Oak Lane; look for Tarling Road, follow it round the wiggles, don't go past the residential home but take the little path in front of you to the footbridge across the North Circular. You should find two pairs of double gates. My allotment is the first one you see if you look through the right hand pair of gates and I am around most mornings.

I just wondered if there was anyone around who could give me some advice, or who might co-operate in growing fun vegetables for next year. We could swap. I'll grow this and you could grow that and we could exchange plants and ideas.

Tanglefoot



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