



LETTERS

Unwelcome changes

Dear Editor

I write to refute the arguments of your correspondents Messrs. White and Crockford on the Baronsmere Road Traffic Scheme, which is not, in my experience, a success; nor has it been welcomed by many local residents.

The scheme has been an abysmal failure when you consider the extraordinary turmoil which has followed the implementation of the plan, and which has been caused directly by the changes made. I have been made acutely aware of the additional congestion now in the High Road, tailing back as far as Archway Road, directly attributable to the changes in the High Road. I see this regularly, as a pedestrian, a driver, and a quite regular user of the 102 and 234 buses, where I particularly note the difficulty of turning into Fortis Green.

The plan is a totally Draconian solution to the problem for a small part of East Finchley, which I would point out, amounts to a nuisance for only two relatively short periods each weekday, and which could easily have been ameliorated by less disruptive means.

The use of emotive terms 'rat-runners, reckless' etc. levelled at, apparently, some special breed of people out there (not to be found, heaven forbid, in East Finchley) sheds more heat than light. If by some miracle traffic could be confined to the main arterial roads only, London would soon grind to a halt.

I would urge the restoration of this intersection to its previous state, and the introduction of traffic calmers in Baronsmere Road/Southern Road to dampen speeds along Baronsmere Road.

Yours etc.

Leon Cohen

Ingram Road, N2.

History repeated?

Dear Editor,

What has happened to The Archer's history column? I always read it with great interest and learned so much about the locality. Could I put in a plea for its return in 2001 to give me (and others, I'm sure) even more pleasure in your admirable publication?

Yours sincerely,

E.W. McNally,

Fortis Green, N2.

Tony Roberts, The Archer's history correspondent, replies:

I hope to be back in the New Year on an occasional basis. Meanwhile if you have any particular interests I'd be happy to hear from you.

On the buses

Recorded telephone message from Mr Evens, a former bus driver

You had an article last month by Daphne Chamberlain about bus drivers not being given floats. Well, I was a driver for well over twenty years, and we never, never had a float off London Transport, and that's when it was a bus service. These drivers today haven't a clue how to work the buses, and half of them don't know how to drive.

Not in my back yard

Dear Sir

East Finchley Plans - Farmers' Market and Drug Advice Centre

Following your most recent publication, I would like to comment on the above two issues.

Firstly, a farmers' market will, I am sure, be appreciated by anyone living around here who uses fresh produce. I cannot be the only one to have noticed the decrease in standard and variety of the fruit and veg on sale in Budgens recently!

Secondly, regarding your soapbox man's rant about the plans for a drug advice centre on the High Road. He raises his concerns that apparently drop-in centres for drug users cause more drug problems than they solve. To continue this logic is to say that provision should cease altogether.

It reminds me of the recent theory that providing soup runs etc to street homeless people encourages homelessness. Anyway, Mr Ricketts then completely contradicts himself by saying that "we certainly do not object to the facilities that such a centre would provide but seriously question the location".

Why doesn't he just admit that he is suffering from "not in my back yard" syndrome?

Yours faithfully

K Byrne

Elmshurst Crescent, N2

Customer Relations

The following is extracted from a copy of a letter sent by Michael Edwards, a local resident, to London Transport Customer Relations. Exact times and driver details have been withheld.

"On 27 October, a 263 bus drove past the Archway station compulsory bus stop without even looking at it. I then waited 45 minutes for the next one. Immediately behind him, direct from the Archway LT stand in Vorley Road, another 263 was following.

The first one should have stopped to pick up passengers, and the second one should have departed from Archway long before he did.

On Saturday, 28 October, I noticed an almost empty 263 ignore a group of passengers who hailed it at the request stop north of East Finchley traffic lights.

I am concerned that these men are behaving like taxi drivers rather than your employees, who should be under management controls. Apart from its usual service, the 263 is a direct hospital route to Barnet General, and is used by patients who cannot drive. It is a disgrace on these busmen who behave this way."

Mr Edwards went on to say that he didn't want a "we aim to provide a quality service" reply from London Buses. He wanted what he called these "aberrant practices" stopped.

His letter has been acknowledged, but at time of going to press he has not received a reply.



Chaos as usual. East Finchley Station photo by Bob Janes

Take the tube

Dear Editor,

Following the publication of my last letter (sent to you 21/9/2000) there was a brief flurry of activity and extra staff at the station to open all three ticket windows during the rush hour. This now seems to have ceased. Yesterday (9/11) there was only the large (very slow) machine working and only two windows in operation. One unfortunate member of staff wandered around the queue for the windows with occasional glances at the machine, all the while being berated by angry "customers" who wanted to know why he wasn't selling tickets. This cannot go on - there will eventually be a riot and the few staff there are will leave. Can you ask LU what they are going to do about this situation - not just to cope with the immediate problems, but in the long term? We need more machines!!!!!!

Bob Grove

Bedford Road, N2.

Airman Appeal

Regarding the airman that you mentioned being a pilot in the Battle of Britain, I believe he was a flight engineer. I'm not certain, mind you, but I'm pretty well certain he was a flight engineer with Bomber Command.

You've got to remember that whereas just a few hundred died in the Battle of Britain, Bomber Command took 70,000 casualties, and that's where I think he came from. In fact, in one bombing mission of six hours, you could lose more airmen in Bomber Command than in the whole of the Battle of Britain.

Recorded telephone message.

Daphne Chamberlain replies: Please will you contact us again? I would like to know more.

Thank you for drawing our attention to the losses suffered by Bomber Command. It's probably the case that they have not been given enough recognition. All war is horrible, but in the case of the bombers their courage and contribution have sometimes been overshadowed by political and moral controversy. I once knew someone whose father had bombed Dresden (on the orders, as we now know, of Churchill himself), and that man suffered appalling nightmares for the rest of his life.

The Church End Airman: Pilot or Flight Engineer? Was he in a film?

We have had an interesting response to the article inspired by a badly burned World War II airman who lived in the Church End area. Another reader thinks that his late wife may well have worked with him at GCetc?, in Squires Lane. If so, he was a pilot, and in fact appeared in the film, "Battle of Britain". I will check out the video, and report next month on whether I recognize him.

Back to the future

By Jane Revell

So what do London Underground have to say about all this?

7.50 am on Tuesday morning was remarkably quiet - having counted 56 people queueing at the windows and machines at the same time on Monday morning (see photo). Derek Harper, the Station Supervisor, was kind enough to take time out to talk to *The Archer*.

"People seem to be having trouble with that new machine." I said. "So are we!" Derek exclaimed. He explained that though some customers had been helped to use the machine by the company that installed it, the staff had been given no training whatsoever. "There are still some tickets I can't get," he sighed. "What we have been doing though, is to keep a careful check on it and make sure we service it every time it's 80% full - at least that helps to keep it working properly." (Though on Monday it went 'Out of Service' as a friend

of mine queued at 11 o'clock and was still shut down at three when he returned.)

"Are two ticket windows and two machines really adequate for the tremendous number of people travelling at peak times?" No, Derek doesn't think so, but English Heritage apparently won't allow them to have

more.

"So what's the solution?" I asked. "Surely this situation can't continue?" He led me down that long underpass to the back of the station and pointed to a photograph on the wall of some old ticket machines from the sixties. "Bring back these machines!" he said with feeling. "Cash in, ticket out. Quick and easy. That's what's needed!"

So, apart from the obvious need for London Underground to provide proper training to their staff in using the new machines (and maybe some feedback to the manufacturers, Prestige), the problem seems to be that English Heritage want to keep the station in it's pristine original form and the passengers want it abler to deal with 21st Century demands. Maybe we should ask for those old machines back? What do you think?

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