



War on graffiti

By Lawrie Chivers

What did Sir Winston Churchill say during the battle of Britain, 'Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few'.

What a contrast, 'why do so few do so much to spoil the environment for so many'. I'm talking about the spate of graffiti that has exploded and defaced almost every available empty space in East Finchley.

I cannot think for the life of me what satisfaction these aerosol artists get from their obnoxious efforts. The sad thing is that most of the young people that I speak to are decent, well behaved and very environmentally conscious. They say that they deplore this wanton defacement as much as I do.

So what could be the reasons for wanting to squirt your monogram at the clean piece of somebody else's property. Is it perhaps stacking out their territory as dogs do when they mark trees and lampposts or is it that the one who gets their initials in the most places wins?

Whatever their reasons, there must be many people who could identify the perpetrators. So how about it? If you know one of these aerosol artists, why not tell them that enough is enough and that we would all like to get back to living in a pleasant graffiti free East Finchley.

Emergency action

If you see graffiti - or any other vandalism - actually being carried out, ring 999. That's police advice, relayed to you in *THE ARCHER* last month. If you are reporting graffiti or vandalism which has already occurred, contact your local police station - 020 8209 1212 for Golders Green.

You can also report graffiti to Barnet Council's Customer Care Unit at Environmental Services, Barnet House. Tel 020 8359 4600 (answering service outside office hours), Fax 020 8359 3058.



Is it art? Sadly not. Photos by David Tupman

RSPCA offer

It's a snip!

Spring is approaching and, like young men, cats turn their thoughts to love!

Last year the local RSPCA clinic arranged the neutering of 130 young cats, preventing the birth of hundreds of unwanted kittens. They hope to repeat the scheme this year.

Special offer

Commencing on Monday 3 April, for the whole month, anyone in receipt of Government Benefit can come along with their book and cat to the RSPCA Small Animals Clinic, Park Road, N2 to arrange the snipping or spaying of their pet. The duty vet will check the general health of the cat, then, if all is well, the receptionist will issue a voucher to be taken to a veterinary clinic on their list for the small operation to be arranged. The cost to you is £3 for a female or £1 for a male cat.

The clinic is open on Monday and Thursday evenings from 6.30 to 7.30pm. Remember you must bring your benefit book with you. Any queries, telephone 020 8444 8366.

A lovely man

More tributes to Arthur Wood, former Chair of the East Finchley Allotment Association, who died recently. Compiled by Daphne Chamberlain

Angela Zambito, Nursery Nurse at Martin School: -
"We take the Nursery children round the allotments twice a year. Arthur was absolutely fantastic with them. He had a lovely way of talking to them, always knowing just what to say, and really capturing their attention. The children loved him.

In spring, he showed them the allotments being prepared. On our second visit, we saw what had been grown.

Denis and Donna take us round now, and they are very good with the children too. In fact, all the allotment owners are. They give them berries, pumpkins and apples to cook at school. The children love their visits, and we were very sorry to hear of Arthur's death."

Donna Phelps, Secretary of the East Finchley Allotments Association: -

"He was a beautiful man. He would often come over and talk to me while I was working my allotment. I miss those interruptions!

When he couldn't continue gardening himself, his neighbouring plot-holders - John, Anna and Costas - used to help his wife. They took produce to his home and sat with him.

The church was packed for his funeral. It was too full for all his mates to get in. Everyone on the allotments contributed to a big wreath for him."

The thinning blue line

The ratio of police to public in Barnet is dropping to 1:14,500 people from about 1:5,000 in 1996 and there are presently only a handful of recruits going through police training.

Local groups consider Barnet is being penalised despite, or because of, our success in fighting crime and urge people to write to our MP and the Home Secretary to protest about these cutbacks.

The local consortium of Neighbourhood Watches, Fincord, covering East Finchley, Woodhouse, Finchley and St Paul's Wards, are at risk as Finchley is being broken up and dispersed into the Golders Green and Barnet/Whetstone sectors. However an attempt will be made to deal with the new split regime for a trial period.

Police farce

100 police are being lost from Barnet to Hertsmere but there will be a little less area for the remainder to cover. Our local Liaison Officer PC Maretta McNulty is being replaced by a general Beat Officer Paul Carter who will be fully stretched and unable to devote much time to coordinators. Although 19 new Council Officials are going to be checking environmental issues such as fly-tipping and graffiti, they will not be linking to crime hotspots in any way.

Finchley Police Station is about to undergo a 12-month refurbishment during which period it will be closed. Other stations are closing overnight

and generally our local crime fighters are feeling pretty hard done by and morale is low.

Emergency stop

The Community Safety Strategy needs to be put to the top of the agenda to stop the haemorrhaging of money and people. Janet Durrant of Agenda 21 has called a closed meeting of local groups at Avenue House for 9 March to produce a fact-finding report for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. Besides police manpower, the brief will include fire, ambulances and health, and as well as the Press, ITN may be there.

On yer bike!

East Finchley is to get a new cycle lane. It will continue the present lane, which runs down the High Road from North Finchley to the North Circular.

The East Finchley extension will be on both sides of the High Road, between the North Circular and Creighton Avenue. On the east side, it will begin at Lewis Gardens.

The lanes will run outside existing parking bays.

Barnet Highways Department did a letter-drop public consultation in the area at the end of 1998, and say they have resolved local queries. Because the lanes are on the A1000, the scheme has had to be approved by the London Traffic Director.

Implementation begins on February 7th, and should be finished by the end of March at the latest.

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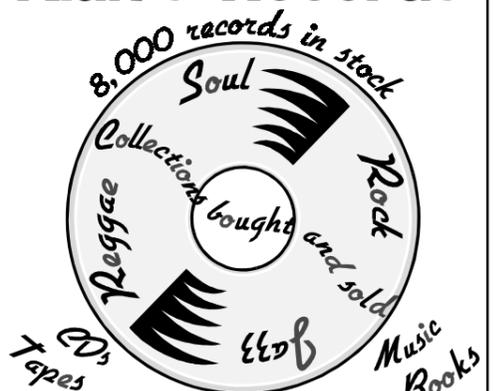
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