



Local Teacher's Wedding

Julia Groom, former Archer deliverer and a Year 4 teacher at Holy Trinity School, got married recently in her home town of Peterborough. An unusual feature of the day was the cake, which was designed by the groom Jeremy Gibbs. It was decorated with shooting stars made of red and purple sugar, matching the colour of the bride's bouquet. After the wedding the couple shot off to Zanzibar for their honeymoon.

GARDENING

And sow to bed

By Zena Robson

If you are growing your own plants from seed, there is still time to sow fast-growers or late flowerers.

Convolvulus tricolor (don't panic it's not bindweed!) is a great container plant and easy to germinate. Go for the gorgeous royal blue one with yellow and white centre; the lacewings and hoverflies love it and will gobble up greenfly while they are at it.

Cosmos are also quick and easy but check which variety you are getting. Some grow enormous, up to 1.4m and almost as wide, when they are happy, but they flower like crazy! Look out for the smaller orangey-red and deep yellow ones as well as the more usual pinks and whites.

Vine extradiinaires

I like to grow things I can rarely buy and I have been concentrating on annual climbers. Worth a try are convolvulus 'Star of Yelta', ipomoea hederacea (Morning Glory - soak the seeds for 24 hours before sowing), tropaeolum peregrinum (Canary Creeper), cobeia scandens (cup and saucer vine - soak) and Asarina a very pretty climbing snapdragon. They are all easy and it is always worth trying something different.

Don't forget to pinch out growing plants once two pairs of true leaves have developed - you'll get bushier plants and more flowers that are visible without binoculars!

Plugged in

Or you might already have brought plant plugs, which you will need to pot on and nurture. They are great if you have a greenhouse but otherwise can test your powers of ingenuity

and organisational skills on the windowsill. One year I went berserk and had pots in every nook and cranny. This meant that I had to get up half an hour earlier every morning so I could clear the decks to get to the kettle! Be warned!

The latest hanging-basket craze looks like it's going to be woven willow with a plastic liner inside. I can't make up my mind! They are solid-sided so no side planting which I like, but they come in interesting shapes. They are a bit pricey so once you have taken the plunge to hang them out (for me not until early June) make sure you secure them to the brackets so no passing light-fingered types make off with your creation.

Take a trip

You can also take soft tip cuttings now from things like lavender, fuchsia, pelargonium, and penstemon. Just take odd non-flowering tips 5-10cm long. Remove lower leaves and cut neatly beneath a leaf node. Pot into free-draining multi-purpose compost. Do not let the leaves touch each other or the sides of plastic lids or bags - that way mildew dies! With large leafed things like hydrangea, take out very soft top growth and leave only a pair of leaves that you cut in half horizontally - sounds brutal but stresses the plant less.

Finally, if you are an iris freak like me, do plan a visit to Myddleton House in Enfield. Aim towards the end of May. There's the bonus of the truly magnificent wisteria - one of the oldest in the country.

Please send your letters to:
The Archer, PO Box 3699,
London N2 8JA or e-mail:
The-Archer@England.com

LETTERS

Near tragedy

Dear Editor

At 08.10 on 30 March my wife left our flat on Fortis Green to go to work. I work from home and I stand at the window to wave her on her way.

My wife got to the newly installed zebra crossing adjacent to Durham Road and waited for the flow of traffic to stop for her. The beacons, the hazard lines and the crossing are plain to see for vehicles travelling in both directions.

The driver of a 234 bus coming from the direction of East Finchley slowed and stopped for my wife. There was no traffic coming from the opposite direction (Muswell Hill). My wife commenced crossing the zebra, but just as she was about to emerge from in front of the bus a red Royal Mail transit came from behind the bus, overtook, shot out in front of my wife and tore off along Fortis Green.

To my horror I very nearly saw my wife killed in front of my eyes.

I rushed outside to see if I could get the number of the Royal Mail transit but it was nowhere in sight.

I telephoned the East Finchley sorting office and reported the incident to Manager, Mr Steven Hayden. I pointed out that whilst it was my wife, it could equally have been a child on their way to school or an elderly person. Mr Hayden was extremely concerned and promised to investigate as his drivers returned. Of course, the Royal Mail transit may have been from a completely different area altogether.

Watch out!

The newly installed zebra crossing was campaigned for after the terrible hit and run accident that took the life of Mrs Maria Bussandri a year ago on 6 April.

My wife was so shaken that she told me she will never use the crossing again, but instead will revert to walking along Fortis Green to the traffic lights at the High Road and crossing there.

By what almost happened to my wife and from what I witnessed, this letter is written as a warning to pedestrians using the new crossing. Pedestrians still need to remain alert when crossing and watch out for impatient or distracted motorists. Sadly, today, being on a zebra crossing is no guarantee of safety!

Anthony Tuck
Fortis Green, N2.

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.



Leave it alone!

By Karin Dale

Over the past few months THE ARCHER has devoted a considerable amount of space to the proposals for the "making safer" of the East End Road bridge.

Residents have come up with a number of suggestions ranging from the perfectly logical to the positively ludicrous.

However one thing has caught my attention: The people responsible for bringing the issue to the Finchley Forum do not live in the immediate vicinity of the bridge.

My point? Well, have they considered the effects of their campaign on the people living close to the East End Road bridge?

I believe the campaigners, Mr and Mrs Jenkins, used to live in The Causeway. So do they then remember the level of traffic congestion during the rush hour period across this bridge? Have they noticed the deterioration in air quality over the last few years? (The pollution level is noticeably higher, for some reason, over the railway line.)

Any narrowing of the road across the bridge would result in only single-file traffic being allowed; which means greater queues in each direction and, you guessed it, greater pollution levels along the affected stretch of East End Road.

Yes, the pedestrian footway is dangerously narrow across the bridge, as is the carriageway - a sure recipe for disaster. If Barnet Council and LUL's pockets were bottomless we could have a solution to suit all of us. But before we go blindly campaigning for change, we should consider the likely outcome - whether in fact that change would be for the better - and the possible implications of that change on the lives of others.

Mr and Mrs Jenkins - *if it ain't broke, don't fix it!*

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