



Dear Deirdre...

**When I'm on holiday abroad I always get plagued by mosquitoes. Do you have any advice to prevent this happening?
Tasty Thomas from Twyford Avenue**

Dear Thomas,

It's funny how mosquitoes seem to go for certain people and not for others, isn't it? They go for me too, so I can sympathise and share with you what I personally have found to be effective.

There are all kinds of insect repellents out there, but I go for Mosi-guard, which is natural rather than chemical. It comes as a roll-on or in a tube and is recommended by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Other natural repellents are lavender oil and citronella (you can buy the latter as wipes). Use any of these before you go out, especially in the evening, taking care to apply it to any part of you which is exposed, and remembering to do your neck, wrists, hands, ankles (and feet if you are wearing sandals). It also helps if you cover up as much skin as you can - although some mosquitoes seem determined to bite through almost anything!

Net gain

At night, use citronella or one of those tablets that you put in a little device and then plug in. And if you're in a really bad mosquito area, you might even consider taking a mosquito net with you - available from MASTA or from British Airways Travel Clinics. (Phone 020 7831 5333 for details of the nearest one to you.)

If you do get bitten in spite of all your precautions, wash any bites thoroughly with soap and water and apply an antiseptic. To relieve the itching, use calamine lotion, or salt or baking soda dissolved in water. If you react badly to bites then you may also need to take an oral antihistamine.

And remember always to check if you're travelling to or through a malaria zone and to take the appropriate anti-malarial tablets well ahead of your departure. You can get advice on this from British Airways Travel Clinics together with your mosquito net!

Happy plague-free travelling!

Deirdre

The Dear Deirdre column is written by Jane Revell, therapist and stress management specialist. If you have a problem you think I can help you with, please write to Dear Deirdre at THE ARCHER. All replies will be treated in confidence.



Making music - Duncan Mills, head teacher of Holy Trinity School.

Photo by Diana Cormack

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Tourist Trap

If politics is the last refuge of the scoundrel, then local politics is the last refuge of the incompetent scoundrel. The proof is in the latest madness to emerge from the primeval slime that is the local council and is the planned "development of the local tourist and day visitor industry". The question is why?

Do these people seriously think that Yanks in shorts and Hawaiian shirts are going to fit in East Finchley between Nelson's Column and the Tate Modern? Or maybe they reckon that the mere mention of the startling attractions that we have to offer will entice packs of Japanese in identikit polyester suits and laden down with several grand's worth of hi-tech cameras to add East Finchley to their itinerary. You know, if it's half-past three on a wet Wednesday in July then it must be time for our twenty-minute photo-shoot in East Finchley. Perhaps they're after the Aussie drinking market and look forward to the day when the streets are full of whinging Aussies doing wallaby imitations and falling drunkenly in the gutters at closing time. At least they won't get the Germans, they'll be up at the Lido grabbing all the seats round the pool.

Maybe I'm wrong, maybe the maniacs at the council are after the 'experience' traveller. The kind of New York lawyer who visits war zones for kicks could put his life into his or her hands by risking rush hour on the Northern Line. They could buy stickers of the 'I've travelled from Leicester Square in under two hours' type to celebrate their survival.

It's all fantasy, because East Finchley just doesn't have anything for the urban tourist to get into. We don't have the sex shops of Hamburg, the pavement cafes of Paris, or the hash cafes of Amsterdam. All we can offer is an old cinema, the place where the pigeons used to live, several pubs and several sites where there used to be pubs and which will soon be 'executive' money pits, a patch of woodland and a tube station. Not that this will stop some deluded marketing man coming up with something the other side of insanity, something like...

No visit to London can be complete without a trip to scenic East Finchley, a place where you can experience the delights of suburban living, eat traditional English food in one of our many Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Indian or Greek restaurants, amble through the 'green lung' that is Cherry Tree Woods, meet friendly locals in one of our traditional theme pubs and take in a movie at the fabulously exotic and ancient Phoenix Cinema before leaving on the modern, efficient, Underground Railway from the famed architectural masterpiece that is East Finchley Station.

If you're lucky on your visit you might even catch a glimpse of the wildlife for which East Finchley is famous. It might be one of the fabulous red foxes or maybe that rare and exotic bird, the pigeon, soaring effortlessly through the skies. Come to East Finchley, your holiday will not be complete without it.

Summer Syllabub

(serves six)

Try this easy recipe for a delicious lemon pudding.

Ingredients

½ pint of double cream
4 oz. castor sugar
Finely grated rind and juice of 1 large lemon
4 tablespoons of medium dry sherry

Method

1. Put the cream, sugar, grated lemon rind, strained lemon juice and sherry into a basin.
2. Whisk together until quite thick, which may take 2-3 minutes.
3. Chill for several hours, spooned into individual dishes if you like.
4. Serve with sponge finger biscuits or similar.

Squawking Heads

By Sonia Singham

How do you relax at the end of the day at a Headteachers' Conference in Brighton? Many answers may immediately spring to mind, but the answer is - making music. Some Barnet Heads decided to have a little singsong around the piano, with backing from those who had brought their guitars along with them.

From this, emerged the group known today as the "Squawking Heads". It consists of eight Headteachers, including Duncan Mills of Holy Trinity, and a governor (who is the drummer). The Heads play lead, rhythm and bass guitars plus a keyboard player (classically trained at the RCM) and four vocalists.

The main focus of the group is to have fun while making music. They rehearse at Mansorside School on Wednesday afternoons, when they leave behind, for a short time, the demands of Headship.

The repertoire at the moment is music from the 60s and 70s with a few numbers from the 90s.

When time allows, the members hope to compose their own arrangements.

Headline act

This enterprising group has attracted quite a lot of attention and the members have played at many events in the Borough.

The last big event was at the Multicultural Exhibition at the Professional Development Centre. The funds raised were donated to the Refugee Association. The group's reputation is spreading rapidly and they have been asked to play at the regional conference of the NAHT, which this year is being held in Barnet.

The emphasis is always playing for enjoyment and any money raised so far has helped to cover the cost of the instruments. Any profits made from future engagements will be donated to charity.

So to end on a high note, may the group continue to raise the roof for many years to come.

Clean Up After Your Dog

By Diana Cormack

New dog fouling laws are now in place in Barnet. Dog walkers who do not clear up after their pets foul any of the borough's streets, parks or open spaces will now face a £25 fixed penalty fine and prosecution if they do not pay.

There has been strong public demand to end the menace of dog fouling. New and simpler legislation makes it an offence to fail to remove dog dirt from any public open space.

Enforcement of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act will be in the hands of the council's Neighbourhood Management Officers, Park Keepers and Animal Wardens. They have the power to issue a £25 "on the spot" fixed penalty notice to anyone they see failing to remove the dog waste. Any person not paying the fixed penalty within 14 days can be taken to court, where the penalty is a maximum £1000 fine.

To back up the campaign,

lampposts across the borough will carry a sign reminding residents that dog fouling is an offence that could end up with a big fine for irresponsible owners.

Doggy Bag

With 500 dog waste bins in parks and open spaces throughout the borough, there can be no excuse for dog owners not using them, yet there are those who still persist in giving dog owners a bad name. Staff from Barnet Council visited Cherry Tree Wood to inform the public about the enforcement of the new litter and dog fouling legislation. They also handed dog walkers suitably worded bags to put to good use then dispose of in the bin provided.