



Graffiti hell in Fairlawn Avenue

Who are guilty few spreading their graffiti poison?

The writing is on the wall for the graffiti artists, hopes David Tupman. The great writer Charles Dickens rather sums up life in East Finchley with his famous opening line from a Tale of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Well, looking at the scourge of graffiti in East Finchley you would be forgiven for thinking that the bad times are here.

And when you see these great wadges of incomprehensible daubings on, for example, Domino's Pizza's walls in Fortis Green, or the side of Budgens in East End Road or even in Beresford Road on the wall of the Abbey National offices what, you might wonder, is happening to our neighbourhood?

Wall game

Our community is witnessing an orgy of criminal damage, and it's going on all over London. Like other forms of vandalism the causes are a reflection of modern society where a small group of dysfunctional teenagers do not see what they do is wrong and socially unacceptable. They place their own search for personal gratification, sensation seeking and peer group recognition above respect for others' property and the life of the community.

Damage control

While we are agonizing over the causes or wringing our hands in despair, Barnet Council is at least trying to do something about this criminal damage with the establishment of a special team.

A new leaflet, available at East Finchley library, gives advice on reporting graffiti and the positive steps local people can take to help. Graffiti is criminal damage and should always be reported to the police.

If you see graffiti on a Council building call the Customer Care Unit on 020 8359 4600.

If you see graffiti on the Tube, phone box or bus shelter report it to the respective authority: Tube property - Transport for London on 020 8549 8305; Traffic lights - on 020 73443 5302; Bus shelters - on 020 8326 7777.

Chris beats the Wall

By Daphne Chamberlain

Chris Costi, from Takis general store, completed his second London Marathon last month.

Last year he picked up a leg injury in the later stages, but this time everything seemed to be going brilliantly. Then, at 20 miles, he hit "the wall". It took one and a half hours to cover the last six miles. "My knees hurt. Everything hurt", he said, but he made it to the end in four hours, 17 minutes (30 seconds behind Frank Bruno).

Chris certainly intends

having another go next year, when he hopes to dip under that elusive target of 4 hours. Meanwhile, if everyone pays up, he will have raised £1,500 for Kith and Kids, a society which supports disabled children by focusing on developing their particular abilities.

He told THE ARCHER, "I really want to thank all the friends and customers who supported me."

Oops lala!

By Sippy Azizollah

Does anyone on Barnet Borough council ever consider consulting people they intend to do things for?

One perfect example of this are the four new picnic benches in Cherry Tree Woods which were bought in France at great expense as whole benches.

When they arrived in Barnet, someone had an afterthought about the problems that wheelchair bound people might have getting close to the table and decided to cut off the seats on one side of two of the benches.

Why didn't they have the benches made up with one seat only on one side of the bench, and measure the height of wheelchairs before the benches were made?

It would have been cheaper and greener to make the benches from fallen trees here in our own back yard. Don't you agree?



Barnet's butchered benches. Photo by Diana Cormack

Spring Clean 2001

By Diana Cormack

Members of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood and other volunteers spent a sunny morning picking up litter in the park.

Black sacks and grippers were provided by Barnet Council as part of their Spring Clean 2001 campaign, in conjunction with the Tidy Britain Group. Park users who had not seen the publicity notices joined in too, like the mum who cleaned the children's play area and Marjorie Ross, a visitor from Alexandra Palace.

A dozen bags were filled with the usual sweet, crisp and cigarette wrappers, silver foil, bags, bottles and cans plus the inevitable disposable nappy. More unusual pickings included an unbroken pint glass, a doormat, a camouflaged sleeping bag and a whole car wheel!

TLC for Trees

On Sunday 13 May woodland management expert Lee Tyson will be leading a check on the progress of the trees and shrubs planted in the park earlier this year. Volunteers are needed and you do not have to be a member of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood to attend any of these events. Children are very welcome and it is an ideal opportunity to learn a lot about trees.

Meet at the double gates to the park at the bottom of Summerlee Avenue at 10am or join in when you can. Finishing time is 2 pm. For more information about this or to become a Friend, phone 020 8883 3846.

Foot and mouth action justified

Barnet Council claims that its decision to ban public access to seven public footpaths which cross or pass land which contains vulnerable animals has been vindicated.

The council has pointed out that with only a limited ban on access the call by the government for local authorities to consider re-opening footpaths closed under a blanket ban does not apply in Barnet.

This has meant that a large number of footpaths and walks have remained open during the foot and mouth outbreak. In addition, the council has mapped out two routes that walkers can use with a clear conscience.

Councillor Susette Palmer said that the council had considered the matter very carefully but "we didn't believe it was necessary to impose a blanket ban on all footpaths and open land".

Councillor Allan Turner said that the council had identified the land where vulnerable animals were kept and been able to ensure that land was not closed unnecessarily. The council has no plans to lift its restrictions at present and, where a

ban is in place, anyone ignoring the ban or removing the signs faces a fine of up to £5,000.

For further information on the closure of footpaths and bridleways in the borough contact Kevin Bishop on 020 8359 4698 or e-mail him at kevin.bishop@barnet.gov.uk.

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