



But is it art? Pacey's photo by Femke van Iperen

## Art attack

By Femke van Iperen

One Friday afternoon in late August local shopkeepers and shoppers on the High Road found themselves surprised by a group of youngsters busily spraying graffiti on a newsagent's shutter. No one, not even the police, stopped them. It was only when the police were shown a piece of paper by the boys that bystanders began to understand what was happening. This was not vandalism, but authorised artwork.

Mehmood Ghazanfar, the director of Pacey's Newsagents at 103 the High Road, explained to *THE ARCHER* that two teenagers had persistently entered the shop for the last two months to get permission to paint its shutter. He said how initially he had not shown any interest, worried about the result. But he changed his mind. "Personally, I think it's a good idea, instead of having something silly on your shutter, you can have something done properly."

Mehmood explained how

example photos of the boys' designs had encouraged him, particularly one that was made in Holloway Road. He also said he had been surprised they did not want money for materials. He just left them to it, after they had asked for written permission. The shutter, which includes the shop's name, has remained free of new graffiti so far.

Barnet Council, which has been leading a battle to clean up the streets of nuisance such as graffiti and abandoned vehicles, has so far remained unavailable to respond to the issue of artwork graffiti.

## Use it or lose it...

The Finchley Society is hosting a talk by Martyn Gerrard on the changing face of the high street at Avenue House, East End Road, N3 at 8pm on 29 November.

He will describe how the high street has been affected by the introduction of shopping malls and out-of-town shopping centres, and why high street shops ought to be encouraged and preserved.

Martyn Gerrard founded Martyn Gerrard Estate Agents in Whetstone in 1964 and now has six offices in Barnet. Thirty-seven years later he is still the chief executive.

You can obtain information on the Finchley Society and how to join from Robert Winton on 020 8883 2633 or from the web site, [www.finchleysociety.org.uk](http://www.finchleysociety.org.uk).

For further information on the talk please call Martyn Gerrard on 020 8346 0102.

## Finchley Forum

The last Finchley Forum tackled another busy schedule with issues concerning East Finchley such as a new Neighbourhood Warden Service, the deteriorating 263 bus service, graffiti nuisance, and the effects of local CPZ.

### NYPD East Finchley

A new Government-granted Neighbourhood Warden Service is to assist the police. Representative Paul Lamb said, "We are one of the safest boroughs, but some pockets need to be addressed." The organisation aims to fulfil a highly visible role in community development and environmental improvements.

The wardens will not replace the police, but work on a non-interventional basis. "We are not just about hitting with a stick, we would look at a situation and work out how to approach it", Paul Lamb concluded.

The service, which starts in February, is already operating in Burnt Oak, North Finchley and Grahame Park.

### Slow Bus Service

Councillor Kathy McGuirk reported that passengers have to wait for up to 80 minutes and locals wonder if it is sufficiently monitored.

Matthew Preston from London Buses, responsible for the reliability, quality and safety of the contracted private bus operators, said his company employs intense monitoring methods; undercover surveyors and a radio controlled method (Automatic Vehicle Location) are increasingly used, but training lies with the private contractors.

The 263 bus service standards have fallen mainly due to recruitment problems and will be replaced in February by Metroline with low-access double-decker vehicles.

### Graffiti Battles

One resident criticised the Council's fight against graffiti. The councillor addressed budget complications and limited powers of the police. Stan Dean from Neighbourhood Management said problems are with removal itself, which can damage private property, and with tracing re-offenders due to a lack of witnesses. However the Internet can provide some information about tagged graffiti.

### Controlled Parking

Bedford Road residents condemned the implementation of CPZ in their area. Like many other streets, Bedford Road has no garages or driveways and drivers are now forced to park on the High Road or elsewhere, whereas paid parking bays are hardly used.

Chris Chrysostomou from Highways promised they would look into dual parking with residential parking permissions for locals.

## Phoenix rebirth

At last, our long-awaited refurbishment is about to commence. The builders are due to move in on 12 November and work will last just over 12 weeks (excluding the Christmas break), with the all-new Phoenix re-opening in February 2002.

From then on you will be able to enjoy anything from crisps to cappuccinos in our spacious new foyer and won't be transported back to Victorian times when you visit the Ladies! Cinema seats will be refurbished to help you survive even the longest epic. We

will have changing exhibitions of young artists and space for meetings and talks.

All of this may give *The Phoenix* an unusually new, slick look, but the cinema's essential character will remain the same; this is a face-lift for the future, preparing it for a new generation of film fans.

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