



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.



Creatures of the night

By Andrew Witek

Until they decide to do it on the pavements and highways, then East Finchley's graffiti merchants will soon run out of 'canvases' on which to daub their handiwork.

It seems to me that any pristine surface is fair game, and I particularly fear for The Bald Faced Stag, Bar XL and Domino's pizza parlour, now that they have had their exteriors freshly painted.

There are those that would have you believe that some of the graffiti has artistic merit, but I see nothing clever in wantonly defacing people's property with little or no regard for the consequences.

Having got that off my chest, I must confess that I have never witnessed the vandals at work, which leads me to believe that they are nocturnal creatures and I can only conclude that they must be eating an awful lot of carrots.

Though not quite as old as the hills, graffiti goes back a long way; though this modern stuff is about as much use to an anthropologist as a chocolate teapot.

Sadly I cannot foresee the culprits' enthusiasm waning in my lifetime, but perhaps the next generation could be a little more discreet.

Mission inspirational

Finchley Christian Fellowship who meet in the Holy Trinity Primary School in Eagans Close East Finchley N2 have organised a Non-Denominational series of special meetings under the title - HOPE 4U.

Each night Rev Jim Patterson and his Team will give reasons for hope in a meeting that will start at 8pm.

The HOPE 4U Mission will run from Saturday 20 - Friday 26 October.

Each evening's programme

will include a time of Inspiration Songs, followed by a Relevant Message, and there will be a special time of personal prayer ministry for everyone seeking Divine healing or help with personal problems.

GARDENING

Fall for colour

By Zena Robson

John Keats has a few things to answer for - all that 'mists and mellow fruitfulness' stuff - mm! OK, he's right, it is, but how I much prefer spring...I think it's something to do with knowing what's coming!

Never mind. I have determined to enjoy the colours coming my way, not to mention some of the late-flowering gems that can be part of your autumn garden. If you want to see some dramatic leaf colours, then take a trip to the Harold Hillier Arboretum near Saville Park, or Sheffield Park or Westonbirt, (a bit farther away but worth a day trip).

Autumn goodies

In your own patch, some autumn goodies include Amelanchier lamarkii, clothed with small, white flowers in early summer and wonderful colours in autumn, which can be grown as a multi-stemmed shrub or trained as a small tree. What about Rhus typhina, the sumach? Yes, it has a common habit of suckering but the beautiful reds and oranges with the furry cone-shaped flowers may help you to forgive it. Sorbus have already been putting out their berries. But don't settle for the usual reds and oranges - there are yellows, pinks and whites which are less prone to being stripped by birds. Acers are always worth a place and the palmatum type give you colour all year - crimson/purple and yellow/orange.

Winter draws on

In October, I shall be up at Crews Hill, scooping up armfuls of very pongy bare-rooted wallflowers. They're scented and reliable but don't forget that most are biennial so after flowering they need to be hoiked out. Be aware that some are perennial, and will be sold as such, but in the end, they too get leggy and won't flower.

Colchicums look like overgrown Crocus; flowering now they will keep going for a month or so. The flowers come way before surprisingly large leaves sprout when they can make use of light levels in spring: if you like 'em, buy 'em but make room for the leaves that could swamp areas planted with dainty mini narcissus! Replace summer bedding with winter pansies or violas, but be careful with cyclamen - most are not hardy.

LETTERS

Proper Policing

Dear Sir

I thoroughly agree with your editorial comments about the lack of policing in East Finchley, and would certainly support THE ARCHER were it to commence a campaign on this issue.

There are, I believe, only 25 police officers in this area. None of them are actually on the beat here but merely drive through at high speed on their way to somewhere else. There is a lot of vandalism and endless graffiti everywhere, and if you ring for the police in the event of an incident, as the residents of Bedford Road discovered, nothing happens.

Even the local church has recently been vandalised, with Christ's arms being wrenched off the Calvary figure outside the door. Of course the perpe-

trators of this will never be apprehended.

It is high time as ratepayers we had some proper policing; and I am sure you would get a lot of support for your campaign.

A. Osborn,
Baronsmere Road, N2.

Wheelchair awareness

Dear Editor

On many occasions when I have been out in my wheelchair, I am aware that able bodied pedestrians have either crossed the road to avoid me, or put themselves at risk by stepping into the road to give me space to continue my journey.

There is ample room for myself and any person walking along the pavement to pass safely. If

there isn't enough room, wheelchair users are able to pull in and wait for people to pass.

Please don't be afraid of disabled people in wheelchairs, as we are all able to judge a situation as it arises. I would like to thank pedestrians who move aside for me to pass.

Please don't put yourselves at risk by walking into the road to avoid a wheelchair user.

Yours sincerely
Sippy Azizollah
East End Road, N2.

Know a bit about your local?

The Church Farmhouse Museum in Hendon needs your help to create an exciting new exhibition on the history of pubs and breweries in Barnet.

The Museum would like to hear from anyone who has historic material relating to local hostleries and brewers in Barnet for an exhibition planned for the summer of 2002.

The Church Farmhouse Museum will provide an ideal location for the exhibition. It is one of the oldest surviving dwelling houses in the borough. Built around 1660, it was the centre of a busy dairy and hay-making farm until the first half of the last century and was opened as a local museum in 1955.

So if you've got anything from furnishings to bottles, advertisements to beer engines that you would be willing to lend the museum, they would love to hear from you.

Contact: The Church Farmhouse Museum, Greyhound Hill, Hendon, London NW4. Phone: 020 8203 0130.

Lighten Up

Thanks to Jane Revell (otherwise known as Dear Deirdre) the Lighten Up slimming courses will soon be running for the first time in North London. Lighten Up isn't a diet - it's the first (and so far the only) weight control course that provides the three essentials for successful slimming: motivation, healthy eating and an active lifestyle.

Lighten Up slimming courses have been attracting a flood of media interest over the past few months. Why? Because Lighten Up appears to be the only slimming programme that actually gets results.

The nation's largest private healthcare provider, BUPA, recently announced it had taken over Lighten Up which it sees as 'the solution to sensible, long-term weight management'.

BUPA chose Lighten Up simply because, unlike many other popular slimming programmes, it really works.

Lighten Up has a success rate of around 67% compared to a miserable 5% for other slimming programmes.

If you'd like to know more about Lighten Up - or sign up for one of Jane's courses - call 0845 603 3456 and check out the website at www.lightenup.co.uk.




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