

Rudi Vis MP in Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb

A word with Rudi

by David Hobbs

Born in Holland, educated at universities in Britain and America, this former economics lecturer and Barnet Councillor would seem perfect New Labour material. But Rudi Vis is far from that: A proud member of CND, Friends of the Earth and The Howard League for Penal Reform; he is Labour and, more to the point, a local man.

At 56 he considers that promotion is unlikely and that this gives him the freedom to speak his mind and represent his constituents without worrying too much about the government whips. Therefore, *THE ARCHER* wanted to know what he thought about the most pressing issues for local residents; policing, and the onward march of property developers.

Bringing back the bobby

Like most of London, East Finchley suffers from a lack of policemen, which has been made worse by recent reorganisations transferring a large number of officers to Hertfordshire. However, according to Rudi, things might be looking up now that a new Divisional Commander, Sue Akers has taken over. "I have spoken to a number of police officers who say she is brilliant. She is good at internal relations and will be a strong voice for obtaining more officers".

Numbers are not the only problem, and despite the establishment of a London Police Authority under Lord Toby Harris, questions of style and visibility will not go away as Rudi accepts. "The best thing in the world is a local bobby who knows people on the street, but now they all drive around in cars." Although he is firmly in favour of more visible policemen on the beat he says he is always beaten back by statistics. According to one report delivered at a recent conference

he attended, "it would take a bobby on the beat 7,000 minutes before he came across a crime. Police on the street hardly ever encounter crime - this is their defence of cars - that cars can respond more rapidly." Against this he says that local residents, especially the elderly, would feel safer if they knew the local policemen. "They do provide a visible deterrent and have a positive effect on local morale."

Are we prepared to pay?

At the moment it seems that the police are no longer able to police local streets effectively and, as Rudi points out, if we want more police we will have to pay for it. "People complain about the lack of policing, but when they are given a choice between lower council tax and higher spending on public services they tend to vote for lower taxes. We have to ask if we are prepared to pay for public services, we can't have it both ways." Although he feels that people would be prepared to pay more for better services, he fears that any party who put it in their manifesto would lose "and losing is a great disincentive".

Continued next month.

Lost Property

Left behind at the Five Bells Public House, was a book entitled 'The Life and Times of William Keith Parkyn'. The book is being kept safe behind the bar.

Recycling, still a burning issue

By Femke van Iperen

Are you one of those people who pass the bottle bank on their way to work, feeling guilty but can't seem to find the time to recycle? Or you want to dispose of your batteries but don't know where to take them? Since November, Barnet Council has taken on the challenge to enable residents to recycle from their doorstep with a new weekday service, replacing the usual fortnightly paper collections.

The kerbside recycling scheme, a joint venture with a non-profit recycling company, holds a distinctive position within the whole of Britain, which has had one of the worst recycling records in Europe. Up until 1998 the UK recycled less than 5% of its household waste, compared to 50% in some European countries.

Don't burn it return it

The Government has been aware of the waste problem on landfill sites and has been planning to build more incinerators. Opponents, however, blame incineration for wasting resources and creating more waste (the ash makes up 30-40% of the mass of the original waste). Mike Childs, Senior Waste Campaigner at Friends of the Earth, who promotes the kerbside recycling system, said, "Incineration is polluting, wasteful and deeply unpopular."

Barnet Council aims to take care of citizens' paper, cans, engine oil, car and household batteries, glass, aluminium foil, shoes and textiles. The collection crew separates the contents and the public are asked only to rinse bottles, bag clothes and shoes, and omit plastic and broken glass.

Teething troubles

However, the scheme has a few teething problems. Some residents complained that the Saturday paper collections still take place in certain areas. Another problem persists for flat-residents, who are not receiving any recycling boxes at all. Thirdly, not everyone has received the literature introducing the project. Barnet Council will, we hope, deal with these issues, to enable us all to partake in this unique sustainable waste action project.

On the level?

By Daphne Chamberlain
If you live in a block of flats read on, even though certain authorities think you couldn't manage it. You must have heard that new proverb - "People who live in blocks of flats shouldn't read newspapers, open cans or bottles, or use a skip".

Yes, we are talking rubbish here, rubbish which has been around too long.

Left flat

House and maisonette residents may not realise that their fellow East Finchleyans are not provided with any recycling facilities (not even the famous black boxes), and more often than not receive no notification of when skips are due in their area. Flat dwellers all over the Borough seem to be similarly neglected.

Now ECT Ltd are taking over Barnet's recycling. When I asked them whether they planned to provide any facilities for blocks of flats, I was told, "Yes - but at a later stage."

If you want to keep a handle on that, ECT's number is 020 8371 3670. If you want to know when a Council rubbish-collecting skip will be near you, ring Barnet on 020 8359 2000, and ask for Environment Services.

Creative Lettering

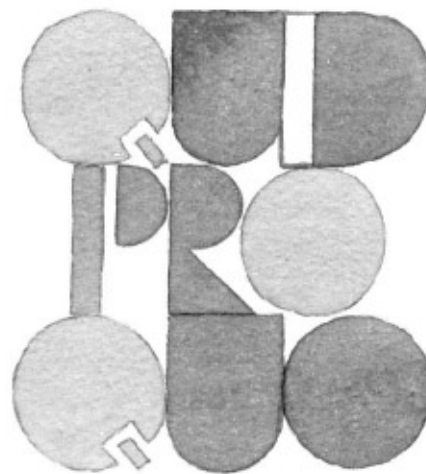
By Daphne Chamberlain

Priscilla Alstrop holds classes in creative lettering. "Creative lettering is definitely not calligraphy." Who said that? Priscilla - and so did I after seeing her work.

"Letters should be designed by an artist, not an engineer." Who said that? William Morris, one of the artists and writers who inspire her.

Legibility is not necessarily what it's about. Many of the pieces I saw were beautiful puzzles, with letters interlocking in an intricate pattern. Colours are used both to balance the design and to reinforce the meaning of the text.

Very few people practise creative lettering, but Priscilla assured me that anyone interested in art can try their hand at it, and one particularly gifted student soon devised her own alphabet form. More conventional letters are worked with a ruler, but otherwise designs are freehand. The basic tool is a pencil. Many pieces I saw were painted in watercolours, but a



couple of the most striking were in bleach on black Quink.

Letter perfect

Students can use their lettering for whatever they like. Very often that means designing cards, but Priscilla is delighted to help with other ventures.

She had an art college training, worked in fashion drawing and then gained a national

diploma in calligraphy. It was after attending a workshop run by Martin Wenham that her letters took a different turn. She belongs to the North London Lettering Association, and has exhibited for them, for the Finchley Art Society, and at Lauderdale House for the U3A.

Third age talent

Attentive *Archer* readers will remember that those two cryptic letters and a number stand for University of the Third Age. This is the organization with no exams and no entry requirements, in which people no longer in employment share their talents with each other. After paying a £20 fee, members can join as many classes as they like, almost always without further charge, as well as receiving newsletters and attending any meetings or get-togethers which interest them.

Priscilla had to stop giving U3A classes because of eye trouble, but this has now been sorted out and she starts a new session on Wednesday 16 January, 2-4pm, in Hertford Road. If you'd like to try your hand at something completely different (whether you are already a U3A member or not), please contact Priscilla on 020 8444 9081.

East Finchley Baptist Church

just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2
Sundays at 11.00 am and 6.30 pm
for more information contact 8446 3571

Visitors always welcome

FINCHLEY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Place to be - Every Sunday 11 am

**Holy Trinity Primary School
Eagans Close, East Finchley, N2**

For more information contact 020 8364 0469
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