



Letters to The Editor

Inaccessible

Dear Editor,
I write to you because of the strange juxtaposition of four articles in your May edition. On the front page [praise for] Barnet council [was reported] for their prompt action in dealing with planning applications and on page seven three new restaurants were reviewed.

None of these restaurants is accessible for people who use wheelchairs, despite Barnet Council having a planning policy, D25, which states "the council will require that new shop fronts are designed to be accessible for people with disabilities."

As a member of Access in Barnet, I reviewed the planning application for 100 High Road, which now accommodates the Poseidon Restaurant. Readers will remember that this used to be Tom's the butchers and a ramp at the front door made this shop fully accessible. A lobby was shown on the plan situated where the now demolished ramp was. I naturally presumed that the ramp would be maintained within this lobby but now a high timber threshold has made this restaurant totally inaccessible. Being an architect myself, I know that this threshold is not a structural requirement.

I did not review the planning application for the Thai restaurant next door; was there one? A new shop front with a similar threshold to that next door has been installed which has made this restaurant inaccessible also.

The situation at Chez Nous, though, is more complicated. This used to be Jerome the jewellers and a planning application would have had to have been made. The pavement level and the inside restaurant level are quite different but the recessed entrance to the flat at the side would have made a very appropriate ramp.

A restaurant that I can get into is the new Turkish restaurant at 214/216 High Road but this restaurant does not have a toilet for people with disabilities despite this being a requirement of part M of the building regulations.

One has to ask oneself whether there is any connection between Barnet passing so many planning applications so quickly and this lack of enforcement bedevilling our High Street, discriminating as it does against a section of our society. I totally support the development of these new restaurants, however I would also like to ensure they are inclusive. I know that in October, as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 I shall be in a position to take restaurants to court citing discrimination but would hope to avoid such a confrontational exercise.

I first wrote to Barnet planners on the 15th February. I have still not had a reply.

Yours sincerely,
Ann Inglis,
Huntingdon Road N2
Editor's reply:

We have to own up that access was not firmly in our mind when

we reviewed these restaurants and we are sorry to learn that the restrictions currently prevent some residents from sharing in the enjoyment of them. We would be happy to publish any response from the Council or the restaurants concerned. Ed

Stop press: we understand from Ann Inglis that she has since heard from the council, but at this late stage we are unable to publish details.

A nasty experience – be warned!

Dear Editor
Recently, I went out to meet some friends. Passing a bank, I decided to use one of the two cash machines. There were two men apparently using the right hand machine, and nobody else nearby. As the machine was about to issue the money, my left hand sleeve was tugged. I turned and a diminutive, moustachioed man waved a £20 note, asking me if I had dropped it. I told him it wasn't mine and turned back to the machine. My money was still in the machine, but my card had fallen on the floor. I retrieved both, turned around and both men had gone. I assumed I had been lucky, but later on checking via the Internet, to my horror I found that £360 had been withdrawn late that evening, in addition to the £140 I had withdrawn. I called the bank, who stopped the card immediately and arranged for a new one to be issued by post (they said).

Next day at a local branch, they told me I must obtain a crime reference number from the police. At the police station I was given a form for the bank to divulge my card details for Data Protection Act purposes. I went back to the branch to get the form completed, returning to the police station to report the crime, thence back to the branch to complete their fraud form, the whole process taking about four hours.

After two weeks and several telephone calls to the bank, I discovered that the card had apparently been sent out by courier. Having not received it, it had to be stopped, and another one issued. I was eventually notified of its arrival at the local branch six days later, one hour before leaving for the airport for a foreign holiday. They did, however, refund the stolen money promptly and without argument.

I was the subject of a sophisticated and well-rehearsed scam. Despite not being physically hurt I was shocked and frightened, but the worst part was the subsequent hassle; imagine the impact on someone less capable of coping. It has been unpleasant just reliving the experience for this letter, and I do not wish to discuss it with anybody – just beware.

John Dearing
Viceroy Close, N2

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mail the-archer@lineone.net.

Wonderful Wisteria

By Betti Blatman
Did you notice the wisteria covering the front of the house by the Five Bells Pub as shown in this photo?

No? Well you should get a second chance as, we are reliably informed, it will bloom again this month. The house dates back to 1893 when the original occupants, Mr and Mrs Thomas, had 'just a weed' growing, which flourished into the wonderful display seen today.

Photo by Tony Roberts



Archer Bridge
By Mike Graham



Last month we saw that most team events are scored by a method called International Match Points (imps), whereby your scores are compared, and the difference converted according to the IMP scale. At the lower end of the scale the differences are relatively small - a part-score swing of, say, 220 points converts to 6 imps.

Very large swings are rare. Most players "memorise" the scale and know the swings for up to about 1000 points, which is fine for practical purposes. After that, you need to look them up.

Last month we saw an 18 imp swing; the next hand, a distributional freak, saw an even larger one (and yes, it was dealt at the table):

Dealer South		♠	976		
Game All		♥	A9762		
		♦			
		♣	J10873		
♠	542	N		♠	AKQJ108
♥	J3			♥	5
♦	A109652	W		♦	K1873
♣	Q5		E	♣	6
		S			
		♠	3		
		♥	KO1084		
		♦	04		
		♣	AK942		

The bidding at our table (partner and I North-South) was:

N	E	S	W
4♥ (1)	4♠	1♥	Pass
6♠ (4)	Pass	5♣ (2)	5♠ (3)
		6♥	All Pass

- (1) We play five-card majors, so North raises to the combined trump limit.
- (2) Not really worth this on values (Four Hearts is pre-emptive), but to sell out to Four Spades with 5/5 shape and concentrated values is a bit wimpish.
- (3) A brave bid, but Five Diamonds is better. Having passed over One Heart, West must hold spade support to bid this. Note that East is much better placed now, as he knows about the huge double fit.
- (4) Lead-directing. Intending now to make Six Hearts (South is marked with spade shortage), and paving the way for a ruff against Six Spades. There was no defence to Six Hearts; North-South +1430. At the other table:

N	E	S	W
2♥ (1)	3♥ (2)	1♥	Pass
Pass	4♠	Pass (3)	3♠ (4)
		All Pass	

- (1) Conservative in the extreme. Only five points, but five card support and a void argues for a much stronger bid.
- (2) Showing a two-suited hand with spades and a minor.
- (3) Also conservative; Four Clubs, although a slight overbid, would show decent values and direct a good lead.
- (4) Assuming spades and clubs, and giving preference to spades. Four Spades could have been defeated (low heart lead, diamond ruff, club to the ace, diamond ruff), but very few teams defend like that and in practice North led the ace of hearts and switched to a club. South won and led a trump, so our pair came back with +650 to go with our +1430; a swing of 2090 and 19 imps.

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