



Zone 3 loses out

By Tony Roberts

With the latest fare increases, Transport for London is continuing the phasing out of zone 3 tube fares. There has never been a one-day off-peak travel card for zone 3. Now the single fare into town for zones 3 or 4 is combined at £2.80.

The situation for the new 3-day off-peak card, which replaces the weekend off-peak card, is even starker – the old card (for two days) was £7.00 whereas the new card (for three days) will be a staggering £18. The reason is that you must buy all zones.

One can be forgiven for questioning the Mayor's description of the fares rise as being slightly above inflation, as the following table shows for those travelling into town from East Finchley. The percentage increase figures are rounded down!

	Single	Prepay single	Prepay off-peak	Day card off-peak	W/E or 3 day	7 day
2004	2.50	2.30	1.80	4.70	7.00	23.80
2005	2.80	2.50	2.00	5.20	18.00	25.00
%inc.	12	8.7	11	10.6	157	5

Barnet's schools top of the class

Barnet's primary schools scored fourth best in England in English, maths and science, the Key Stage Two tests taken by 11 year-olds in May 2004.

The Independent Jewish Day School and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Junior School, both in Hendon, and St Paul's C of E Primary School in Mill Hill each scored a perfect aggregate of 300, which was a 100% pass rate in each subject.

The average aggregate score in Barnet was 255 (an improvement from the 2003 score of 248), while the average in England was 237.

The DES tables also showed Barnet as the sixth best authority in the country for improving pupils' performance from Key Stage One to Key Stage Two.

Cllr John Marshall, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, praised Barnet's children and teachers for their excellent achievement, adding, "We are not complacent, and will still be working hard to improve our score again next year."

So long samosas

After almost 30 years of tantalising the taste buds, the Mahavir Sweet Mart at 127 High Road has closed down. Customers will be aware that, despite its name, the shop was as celebrated for its savoury as it was for its sweet products.

Anyone with a sweet tooth would be well satisfied with the rich, fudgy assortment on offer. A variety of colour and flavouring made the sweets look as good as they tasted. The Indian snacks sold at Mahavir had a wide reputation and some members of THE ARCHER team

salivated when describing the exceptional samosas, the flavour of their home made potato chips and the various curry dishes on offer.

Sadly, this local store with a difference has gone, but the quality of its goods will long be remembered.

Recycle your Christmas waste

With the twelve days of Christmas now behind us it is reassuring to know we can help to "do our bit" by recycling that Christmas rubbish.

Christmas cards can be recycled at local libraries as of 5 January. The council is also supporting the national Woodland Trust Christmas card recycling scheme, which is supplying special recycling bins at all branches of Tesco and WH Smith. Last year, Barnet residents helped to recycle over 14 tonnes of cards in the North London area, and nationally the amount of cards collected helped the Trust save more than 15,000 trees.

Those who feel creative can

turn their old Christmas cards into next year's gift tags.

Real Christmas trees can also be recycled. Households that receive the garden waste collection service can leave their tree by the side of their green, wheeled bin for collection. Trees can also be taken to Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre, Summers Lane, N12 between 6 and 17 January.

For detailed information on the various recycling options available call the recycling hotline on 020 8359 7400 or visit www.barnet.gov.uk

Better luck this year

By Daphne Chamberlain

Customers of Michael Soper, East Finchley's *Big Issue* seller, will be hoping this year will bring him better luck. Last year, a gang of young boys robbed him of 10 years' savings, but Michael is staying positive. "It's gone, and nothing can be done about it," he says. "People have worse things happening to them – though, mind you, that wasn't what I felt at the time!"

The theft happened in Kentish Town. After he had picked up his consignment of papers, he was on his way to transfer his savings to a higher interest account. The money was in a bag around his neck, but when he removed the bag for a few seconds the boys grabbed it.

A brave man

"They were about 10 years old, on bikes. I chased them, and so did a couple of other men, but they got away, and they've never been caught. I've just got to build things up again, but that's life. Money can be replaced, but life can't, and I've been in worse situations. At least I didn't have a knife to my throat."

Life as a street-seller can be tough. Even in East Finchley, Michael has had three bikes stolen, but one of his regulars describes him as "a brave man, who continues selling despite all the setbacks. We wish him well." So does THE ARCHER.



Thumbs up for a good New Year from *Big Issue* seller Michael Soper. Photo by John Dearing

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