

**Letters to the editor**

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail [the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net).

**Sanctuary at Ann Owens Centre**

Dear Editor,

Some 40 years ago Friern Barnet resident, Kay Jenkins, noticed several elderly people regularly sitting on the benches near Friern Barnet Town Hall. From then on, the Friern Barnet Day Centre was born.

Beginning with a Thursday coffee morning, set up by members of St. John and St. James Church in the Parish Hall, it progressed across the road to the Priory Hall, and finally to the Old Fire Station. Lunches, hairdressing, chiropody, exercises, outings, social events and, above all, friendship were provided.

Enabling this centre to exist was, the core element of the Friern Barnet Voluntary Care for the Elderly, our large band of volunteers.

Sad to say, our neighbour, Friern Barnet Town Hall, from whom we always had kindly interest, is no longer there, and local government seems not to value the importance of establishments such as ours in the new scheme of things.

Therefore, since 17 March there has no longer been a Day Centre in Friern Barnet, and the majority of our clients have moved to the Ann Owens Centre at East Finchley. Not an ideal situation, but the best of a bad job. It means large numbers in one centre, and many more administrative headaches, but at least the future of this purpose-built Centre is secure for the time being.

Not only the elderly of Friern Barnet, but such community-based organisations as the St John Ambulance Brigade, The Polio Society, The Local History Society and others have also lost their base. All this in the name of progress? I think not.

What of the future? FBVCE are still working towards serving the elderly of Friern Barnet.

**Grace Fensome, Vice Chair, Friern Barnet Voluntary Care for the Elderly.**

**Parking zone is plain wrong**

Dear Editor

Following on from your recent letter about the Summerlee Avenue parking zone, it is not just the way the "Zero Tolerance" is applied to the zone that is wrong, it is the very existence of the zone itself that is wrong.

Barnet Council introduced the new rules in the Zone, with scarcely any notice, for a "trial period". Previously the rule was that parking was free other than for an hour in the afternoon to prevent all day parking. This worked well for residents, who were exempt from the hour restriction (on payment of their permit) and also for visitors who came and went during the day, often for access to the park at Cherry Tree Wood and local shops.

The new system was introduced on the excuse that a new college catering to young adults, the Institute, opened opposite East Finchley station would generate lots of traffic and the need for parking. To test this the old system should have been left in place, to see if there was a problem.

Very few students arrive in cars

and there are many empty spaces during the working day, which suggests that the new rules in the zone were really only another way for the Council to extract money from residents.

What is more, the areas outside the zone (the county roads) are now more crowded than before. And visitors to relatives and friends in the zone find it an expensive process to park where before they had no problem.

The Council should reconsider the whole scheme. At the least, residents should be consulted and unless there is a real reason, the old rules should come back.

East Finchley is a pleasant place to live and the Council's aim should be the least interference with the lives of the local people, which includes the need to park their cars for short periods and go about their daily lives.

**Barry H White, N2**

**Where are our graffiti busters?**

Dear Editor,

I wonder if readers of THE ARCHER have read of local graffiti busters Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago, (reported in the Ham and High Broadway in April).

They are a marvellous pair, both retired, who should be congratulated on their sterling work removing illegal posters, tags and ties as well as graffiti in Muswell Hill.

No one pays them for their work; they just do it for the benefit of the local community. Indeed local residents of Muswell Hill may have seen them in action as I have.

We do have quite a lot of graffiti in East Finchley as I observed today as I walked my dogs along East End Road into the village. The question is has East Finchley got its own Dynamic Duo - people who are public spirited enough to do the same for us?

Maybe through the pages of THE ARCHER like-minded people could make contact to help tackle our unsightly problem?

**Sarah Travers, N2**

*Do you share Sarah's concerns about graffiti in East Finchley and want to do something about it? Then please contact THE ARCHER.*

**Treehouse travesty**

Dear Editor,

Your article (April 2005) on the Treehouse School in Woodside Avenue, unfortunately has not lessened my sadness on walking past this site. The plot of land on Woodside Avenue was once bursting with blackberry bushes, young trees and wildlife. The construction company tore up all the foliage and has left muddy tracks, broken fencing and placed a building which looks like a temporary toilet right in the middle. Although I would not wish to see autistic children going without school premises, was it really necessary to use all this land for such a small building, whilst basically vandalising what was left and couldn't Treehouse have converted some existing building instead?

**Name and address supplied.**

**A fashion show with a difference**

By Helen Drake



Photo by Helen Drake

"The models and other volunteers have been amazing," said Debbie, "and I want to thank them all for the effort they put into the show." Models from the Schools included Dave Day from the PTA; Sharon Harrington, a teaching assistant from the Junior School; and Adam and Spencer, lunch time play leaders and football

coaches, who seemed to have brought their own fan club with them! Debbie said she was "very pleased" with the amount of money raised on the evening.

**Moonwalk**

Helen Matthews, administrative assistant in the Infant School, used the opportunity to announce that she, along

Enthusiastic volunteers put aside their inhibitions on the evening of Thursday 12 May to strut their stuff on the catwalk in the Infant Hall at Martin Schools, in aid of Cancer Research UK. For Debbie Strachera, Martin Infant School mum and manager of the Cancer Research UK shop in Finchley Central, the idea of putting on a charity fashion show using clothes donated to the shop, had been a long-held dream.

**Super Models**

"I want to take away the stigma of charity shops being seen as thrift shops," said Debbie. "Many new items are donated to us with the price tag still attached, and we often get companies donating end-of-line stock."

A particular bargain of the night was a red, slinky Frank Usher evening dress, modelled by one of the compères, Vicky Levy, that had a price tag attached for £120 but was being sold through Cancer Research for £50. A new Emmanuel crocheted dress retailing at £50 was being sold for £20. No wonder (so it is reputed!) that supermodel Kate Moss loves rummaging around charity shops.

The Fashion Show, organised jointly with Martin Schools PTA, was put together in four weeks with no time for rehearsals.

with her husband, Paul Bate-man, will be taking part in the Playtex Moonwalk 2005 on 18 June in aid of breast cancer research, joining celebrities such as Victoria Wood and Nell McAndrew. If you would like to sponsor Helen and Paul, please contact Helen on 0208 371 5665 or mobile 07951 618 171.

The Cancer Research UK shop run by Debbie Strachera is at 69 Ballards Lane, Finchley Central. Tel: 020 8349 4962. Pop in and find a bargain!

**Protect your computer**

*Omar Idrissi, head engineer at IT 1-4 on the High Road, gives some handy tips on running a computer in your home.*

**Isn't it exciting when you get a new computer? You are thinking of all the applications and games you can now run, the music you can store, and the pictures you can share with friends. The new computer is delivered, you unpack it, and start plugging it all in.**

The computer boots up, the desktop appears, and by clicking on your web browser icon you are suddenly connected to the Internet and all the fun you can derive from it. Did I say fun? What I should say is danger!

**Virus**

You have now just connected your computer to the Internet with no protection and studies show that within as little as 24 hours there is a chance you may become infected with a virus.

According to statistics, personal computers have become domestic appliances, which makes them very common in most households. East Finchley has many small businesses operating on PCs from home.

Computer viruses are potentially a problem to them all. A virus is a programme maliciously designed to alter the way a computer operates, without your knowledge or consent. Here are some general guidelines to help to protect your

computer against viruses:

**Keep up to date**

1. Use a Firewall  
Install a firewall BEFORE you connect your computer to the Internet. Despite the millions of active computers, the chances of your computer getting scanned are extremely high as thousands of computers are scanning at any given time. Use a firewall; after all, when you leave your house, you lock the door to prevent burglary.

2. Be vigilant and alert  
Do not attempt to open any unsolicited e-mails or attachments that are even vaguely suspicious. They could be harbouring a nasty virus.

3. Use virus defence software  
It is important to install virus defence software on your machine and keep it up-to-date on a regular basis. Doing this minimises the chances of any new viruses breaking through your defences.

Contact IT 1-4 on 020 8444 2299 for a free computer health check (quote ARCHER/CS).

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