



Mandana gives a customer a relaxing treatment during her successful Open Day on 30th June. Her salon is based at Jennie Mann, 63a Church Lane, East Finchley. Picture by Helen Drake

Letters to the editor

Where were the movers, wheelers and groovers?

Dear Editor,

This grumpy old woman went to the East Finchley Community Festival as she has done for as long as she remembers. The sun was shining, the people thronging, the stalls were bulging, the food was enticing and the music was ... loud.

But there was no sign of the performers from The Happy Go Lucky Social Dance Group. I feel very disappointed and sad about this.

My friend, the dancer and choreographer Lesley Chowen, who has worked tirelessly over the years with this group of disabled people, told me that they were cancelled this year at very short notice.

Having worked for months and months on the routine for this much cherished 2006 performance, they found themselves abruptly cut out of the festival along with other local groups. This was a huge disruption, let alone disappointment. Buses and carers and rota systems had been worked on to make the event possible, and the Happy Go Lucky Social Dance Group will have to wait another 12 months to perform outdoors for their friends, families and carers.

I wonder whose idea it was to pull this wonderful annual event, and for what reasons? Other performing groups (NLPAC to name but one) were also cut. Instead we were treated to two live groups all at once, and however talented they were, they were in the foreground throughout. And boy, were they loud!

Yours faithfully,
Carolyn Pickles,
Address supplied

A poem for summer...

Love a Bug

By Wally Leeds

Everyone cares about the dolphins and whales,
Swans and ducks and all the wild fowls.
Twitchers twitch at the sight of rare birds,
While naturists admire wildebeests herds.
Lions and tigers are viewed with delight,
With elephants and giraffes we gasp at the sight.
But why I ask, and I must be bold,
Are creepy crawlies left out in the cold?
Why don't we change and give it a try,
And gaze more kindly at the common fly?
Help out the spider trapped in the bath,
And tickle his tummy to make him laugh.
Invite wasps to our picnics, to feast on jam,
Encourage the ant to invade our ham.
Love the flea and make him feel good,
And scratch more gently than we normally would.
Show a woodworm that we care,
And place him carefully on our favourite chair.
Now we must learn to love the bug,
Go search the garden for a slug to hug...

Commercialism v community

Dear Editor,

Please pass my congratulations to the parties concerned for yet another very successful East Finchley Community Festival at the end of June.

Yet I would like to ask one question: where were all the dance troops and children's choirs that in previous years have been on the second stage?

It appeared to me that at times the music from both stages clashed. In previous years, it was a pleasure to sit quietly watching the youngsters enjoying themselves as they performed, and glancing around at the proud parents' faces. It really was in the spirit of a community festival.

To have a couple of DJs just blasting out music this year rather smacked of commercialism.

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied.

Stop and shop scheme will harm Muswell Hill

Dear Editor,

We are enclosing a copy of our objections to Haringey Council about the proposed "Stop and Shop" scheme in Muswell Hill. The letter was sent to Councillor Brian Haley, Executive Member for Environment, Haringey Council Traffic and Road Safety Group, River Park House, 1st Floor South, 255 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8HQ

Pay and Display parking scheme at £2.40 a go. How will this help Muswell Hill?

1. It will clear the streets of cars.
2. It will see the shops go from a vibrant shopping area to an area struggling to exist.
3. It will kill off the small businesses.
4. It will not even help the local residents, as CPZ will cause two-car homeowners immense difficulty in parking even near their own property.
5. Restaurants in the area will be sorely affected, as most social dining lasts more than the two-hour slot envisaged.
6. An afternoon visit to the cinema will be affected too.
7. Having brought in the Pay and Display scheme, Muswell Hill will have more than enough parking, as nobody will venture to Muswell Hill to shop. Brent Cross - here we come!
8. Why is Fortis Green Road's parking restriction so long compared with the Broadway?

Introducing a Pay and Display scheme is nothing other than another form of taxation on the motorist. Let us not lose sight of the fact that we live in a conservation area. Do we really want parking meters at regular intervals down all the streets? Not a pretty sight!

Now is the time to stop and think of the consequences of introducing a Pay and Display scheme. We may achieve easy traffic flow and adequate parking, but we will kill off the businesses that still exist, and Muswell Hill will become a backwater as shoppers and diners take their custom elsewhere. Think before it is too late.

Yours faithfully,
The staff of Hair Lab,
Fortis Green Road, N10

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.



Shops that sell nothing but dreams

By Ann Bronkhorst

Betting's a fact of modern life, for some a kind of addiction and, for others, an occasional harmless amusement. I don't feel strongly about betting shops. I grew up in Newmarket, centre of British horseracing, where betting was normal. I walk past the two in the High Road without pursing my lips or averting my eyes.

But we don't need another one: not here, not now, not in the heart of East Finchley. And we're going to have one, like it or not.

A lot of people don't like it, for various reasons. At least 10 letters of objection arrived at Barnet Magistrates' Court before the cut-off date; more probably came later. Three objectors attended the hearing in person and were heard politely. But by the end of the day, Better Betting's application to run a betting office at 90-92 High Road had been granted.

So that's that. Two more 'units' become non-shops selling no goods (unless you count dreams) to a tiny proportion of residents. Nationally, only 3% of the population places bets regularly in a betting shop. Will East Finchley go betting-mad and raise it to 4%?

Apparently Better Betting hunted for premises in East Finchley for over three years. Flattering, isn't it? Makes you wonder why we're so desirable.

If you were designing your ideal village or town centre, would it boast three betting shops? Timidly I'd suggest that we could do with a butcher once again, and a bookshop, and maybe somewhere to buy everyday clothes. Once upon a time we even had a draper's...

What angers me is that we have no say about the non-shops in our High Road. Who has an overview? Certainly not the residents. Another vacant 'unit'? Surprise, surprise, yet another restaurant opens.

Our children will soon be walking past the brave new betting shop and taking it for granted, while the local branch of Gamblers' Anonymous gears up for new members.

Have you got a hot topic that East Finchley needs to know about? Get on our Soapbox by sending up to 300 words to Soapbox, The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or by emailing the-archer@lineone.net

OBITUARY

Vic Nutting

The Archer is sad to announce the death of Albert Victor (Vic) Nutting at the age of 87, on 6 June. Vic was born in Islington and with his parents came to live in East Finchley in 1936 and was still living in the same house until he died.

Vic worked for many years at the Simms factory and had great recall of East Finchley over some 70 years. Readers may remember an ARCHER article about his survival of one of the worst troopship disasters in British Maritime history, the HMT Lancastria, which was bombed in St Nazaire Harbour on 17 June 1940 with enormous loss of life.

Our condolences go to his wife Gwen, to whom he had been married for 56 years,

their son Chris, daughter-in-law Eileen and granddaughter Charlotte.

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Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, at publication.