



Darkness on the edge of town

Pedestrians and drivers using one of East Finchley's busiest roads were forced to suffer a month of darkness after the street lights went out.

Lights on both sides of Church Lane between the railway bridge and the High Road were affected by a fault in the electricity supply for most of January.

Surrounding roads and houses were unaffected but the absence of adequate lighting made conditions difficult after dark for the large number of motorists who use Church Lane as a route through from East End Road to the High Road, and for pedestrians navigating the narrow and uneven pavements.

One female resident of nearby Long Lane said: "I walk home from the tube every night and it felt quite dangerous walking down there in the evening. There were no lights on the road and none from surrounding buildings to help you see where you were walking or to help oncoming cars see you."

A spokesman for Barnet Council said six lamp posts had been out of action owing to a problem with the electricity supply. This had been reported to EDF Energy who carried out repairs at the end of January.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Pets cornered

Back when men were men, one man and his dog could keep a whole flock of sheep under control and everyone knew how to look after animals. I mean, they were either dangerous, or edible, or pets, and sometimes all three.

Now it is going to get strange because the Government wants a new pet protection act telling us how to look after pets. Naturally there will be consultation, but who will they consult? The pets? Well that's the problem. Have you ever tried asking your cat what it wants? I did. It wasn't pretty, but that's cats for you.

According to Thomas, the local Feline Federation spokescat, all a cat wants is its favourite food, favourite place to sleep and the right to torture small furry animals and birds. Oh, and the inalienable right to do exactly what it wants. Unsurprisingly this led to a threat of strike action from a mouse called Jerry. He demanded on behalf of the Rodent Liberation Front that all cats should be locked up, insisting on the right to scamper about eating cheese without the threat of becoming a tasty snack for Tom and his chums.

Which brings us to dogs. As Butch explained, in between barking and chasing parked cars, Bulldogs for Britain feels that any attempt to accommodate the wishes of cats goes against the rights of man's best friend to do what a dog does and chase cats. He insisted that in a fair and pet-loving society leads should be banned, there should be more lampposts and cats should not be allowed to escape up trees. And that was before he got onto the subject of walkies.

Away from the cartoon world of politics, pampering pets is a national obsession. Cats get Viking-style funerals complete with burning long-boats and enough cat food to get them to Valhalla. A well-loved dog can expect a mausoleum, and even if a mouse does not get the full requiem mass - that after all is reserved for hamsters - it does get its own grave in the flowerbed. Of course by the time the Government has finished with it, the whole thing will have been focused, consulted and sponsored by some pet food company. And the result? You'll run the risk of being arrested if you don't let your cat do exactly what it wants. So no change there then.

THE ARCHER needs volunteer distributors for Strawberry Vale and The Grange.

Distribution takes place once a month.

A typical round takes 30-45 mins to deliver.

Other rounds are available in the East End Road and Long Lane areas. We also require drivers to drop to our distributors (average 8 drops each). Please contact 020 8883 0433 or distribution@the-archer.co.uk for details

London Borough of Barnet Special Treatment Licence

NOTICE IS GIVEN that Mariana Arando, Debbie Felgate and Mette Knudsen on 15th February 2006 applied to the London Borough of Barnet for a special Treatment Licence to offer body massage at Utopia Health and Beauty Clinic, 1a Leicester Mews, East Finchley, London N2 9EJ.

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to:

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
BUILDING 4
NORTH LONDON BUSINESS PARK
OAKLEIGH ROAD SOUTH
LONDON N11 1NP

within 28 days of this notice, specifying the ground of opposition, and must be prepared to attend a hearing before the Appeals Panel of the Council.

Letters to the editor

Mystery buildings

Dear Editor,

I am wondering about the possible existence of a farm in Cherry Tree Wood in the 19th century. The 1895 Ordnance Survey map (Godfrey edition, 1885) clearly shows piggeries right up against the railway embankment. Three other buildings close by can be seen with a magnifying glass.

Were these just barns for storing hay and straw from fields in North London/Middlesex/Hertfordshire, in exchange for soot and horse manure from inner London? (This is how the wood acquired its earlier name of Dirthouse.)

Or were any of these buildings used for processing watercress from the extensive watercress beds in what is now an open grass field? Two elderly East Finchley residents (both born around 1912) once told me that that part of Cherry Tree Wood was wet - possibly flooded in winter - which is confirmed by the existence of a large willow tree, recorded in 1930.

Were some of these buildings lived in? By 1930, in my recollection, there was no trace of them, since the whole of that area was covered with grass and hawthorn bushes. Presumably they were wooden structures. Were they burnt down by accident, or were they demolished and removed for timber?

Yours sincerely,
Peter Crockford,
Leslie Road, N2.

Readers with any answers to Peter's questions are welcome to contact him via THE ARCHER. Our contact details are on page 2.

East Finchley needs a full library service

Dear Editor,

I am writing to protest at the shortsighted attitude of the Libraries Committee of Barnet Council in wanting to reduce the opening hours of East Finchley Library (THE ARCHER, February 2006). It would appear that they have not bothered to consult with either the library staff or the residents who use the library.

They are proposing to close it at the times when most libraries are in greatest demand - the lunchtime and evening when people would visit their libraries during their lunchbreaks or on the way home from work. Not every resident of East Finchley is around to use the library in the limited hours they now propose to have it opened.

The proposed total of closed hours - eight hours per week - does not constitute a saving in the cost of the utility services (light and heating) serving the building and the true availability of the library for use by residents is reduced still further by the time taken to carry out closing duties (and subsequent opening ones) - a useless exercise for the lunchtime closure.

In addition, as East Finchley residents are all fully aware, the local schools make great use of the libraries, so they too will be penalised by the lunchtime closure, not just the adult readers. The annual loan use of this library - 128,200 loans - does not warrant downgrading the library from Town Centre to Community.

This is the first step towards closing the library, which we know is what

the ruling Tory Council really want, and reducing the library facility in the ward to possibly a travelling library, unless the Council decides to get rid of these vehicles too, depriving the disabled and housebound readers of their books.

It is essential that East Finchley Library continues to operate on its current opening hours and with its full complement of staff. Getting rid of 25% of the library staff is no financial saving. Come clean, Barnet Council. Disclose the total amount of redundancy pay you will have to give them. Far better keep them employed and continue providing a full library service to the residents of East Finchley.

Joyce M. Arram
Summerlee Gardens, N2

Narnia memories

Dear Editor

I was interested to read your article (When Finchley Went to Narnia, THE ARCHER, February 2006) about the Finchley connection to the Narnia children and the Rev. Peter Bide.

Mr Bide lived in Hampstead Garden Suburb whilst he was working with my husband, The Rev. Dr Kenneth Slack of the British Council of Churches, 1957-63. Mr Bide remained a very good friend to the author C S Lewis after his marriage.

Yours faithfully,
Millicent Slack
East End Road, N2

Bus service is letting us down

Dear Editor,

Your correspondent Roger Beeson (Letters, THE ARCHER, February 2006) will have struck a resonance with many of your readers with his complaint about the Northern Line.

People arriving at East Finchley station and needing to proceed along East End Road to Finchley Central are faced with another nightmare, waiting for up to 30 minutes in all weather, with the noise of trains overhead and inhaling fumes from four lanes of traffic, for the 143 bus.

During the daytime it is the patient pensioner, the children, and those with young children, who have to put up with an inadequate and unreliable bus service. Often, especially after schools come out in the afternoons, the buses are overcrowded. (I note a maximum of 30 standing is officially allowed. Let us hope there is not a serious accident when 30 schoolchildren are standing like sardines in a small vehicle.)

It is not surprising that boredom and frustration lead to graffiti at the bus stops, defacing the timetables (not that they are very relevant!).

Poor travelling conditions must contribute to stress, hypertension, depression, and requests for early retirement. A frequent, reliable public transport service is an essential requirement for a civilised society.

Can THE ARCHER campaign on this issue? Can your readers suggest what one can do? I have already approached our MP and the bus company.

Yours faithfully,
Marian Howard
East End Road, N2

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

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

THE ARCHER replies:

THE ARCHER has been publicising the plight of East Finchley's bus users for the past three years. We report regularly on our local Buswatch group's campaign for better services. Hazel Burnett from East Finchley Buswatch replies to Mrs. Howard below:

Sadly, Mrs. Howard's experiences with one of the only two buses which travel north/south through East Finchley are all too familiar. Perhaps she would like to know about our group, East Finchley Buswatch, which is recognised by Transport for London and affiliated to West Haringey Buswatch. We actively campaign for improvement in the bus routes which serve East Finchley. Mrs. Howard is not alone and if she would like to join us she will be very welcome; the more people who become actively involved the better.

Meanwhile, I am arranging for Mrs. Howard to be sent an information sheet, which gives guidance on who and where to contact to make complaint.

We ask all your readers who use the local bus services not to stand around grumbling at bus stops, not to give up and say "What's the use?" but get going - join our campaign. The louder our voice the more clearly we'll be heard.

If Mrs. Howard or any of your readers would like to know more about our group, or would like our information sheet, please ring 020 8444 6824.

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