



Following the news that Barnet Council is cracking down on graffiti (see page 1), we look at how the problem is being tackled in Australia, and by another scheme here at home.

## Zooming in on graffiti

Barnet Council is taking the fight against graffiti into the classroom with a new six-minute educational film set to be incorporated into the curriculum for nine to 13-year-olds in the borough.

The council-commissioned film, using actors from Finchley Youth Theatre, based in the High Road, aims to drive home the message that graffiti can incur environmental and financial costs for the community and personal costs for the perpetrator.

The film will be accompanied by an education pack and complemented by visits to schools in Barnet from the borough's Graffiti Officer.

Shot in a number of well-

known Barnet locations during February, the film follows fictional 12-year-old Mark Jones and his friends, as he scrawls his 'tag' on walls, street furniture and pavements, before being spotted on CCTV and eventually arrested and accused of criminal damage.

Graffiti costs Barnet £250,000 each year, in removal and proactive prevention work. London-wide, the figure is in excess of £100million.

## Clean up down under

By Diana Cormack

**They say travel broadens the mind and I certainly learned a lot on a recent visit to Australia. Not wanting to forget all the things to see and do, I kept an on-going note of them in my journey jottings. This writing was for my eyes only, unlike the scrawl of graffiti from which parts of Australia seem to suffer just as much as Britain does. But I discovered that one of the places we went to was making an effort to eradicate this anti-social problem.**

In South Australia, particularly in the Adelaide area, there are Volunteer Graffiti Removal Programmes. For example, the Marion Council "acknowledges and accepts that graffiti is a crime that defaces the clean and safe image of this city. Rapid and continual removal of graffiti is the best method of reducing the chance of continuing attacks."

Residents who volunteer are given training, graffiti removal kits and personal safety equipment. They can look after a particular local area or undertake removal on a wider basis for other residents who are unable to clean the graffiti from their own property.

People who want graffiti removed have to phone the council and give them relevant

details of the size, surface and material used, along with permission for their phone number to be given to a volunteer. The volunteer then calls to arrange a suitable time to remove the graffiti.

"The rapid removal of graffiti maintains the image of the Council and also aids in the prevention of similar attacks," states the City of Holdfast Bay. They will remove graffiti on public property, including vandalism on the exterior of private fences and walls. Residents can also call the Rapid Response Hotline to report graffiti or to obtain a removal kit free of charge.

A volunteer graffiti removal scheme might be one way of dealing with the problem here. Surely it's worth a try?

## Raid Control

By John Dearing

**Raid Control, an initiative aimed at reducing robbery and creating safer shops, has now been adopted in Barnet after it was rolled out nationally, following its initial success in the Croydon area.**

Raid Control is a complete crime prevention package that includes a camera and a reactive dye that is activated if a robber attempts to steal money from a shop till. Barnet Council launched its part in the initiative with one store signing up for the service. It is hoped that many more local businesses will eventually join.

Participant Senapathy Narenthiran, of Yalnas, Ballards Lane, Finchley, has declared the scheme a success. Mr Narenthiran's business was chosen as a suitable site for Raid Control after the change in licensing laws gave him the opportunity to sell alcohol 24 hours a day provided he increased the security of the premises. With Raid Control, even if a robbery does take place, any stolen money would then be covered in a purple non-removable dye and the installation of the CCTV camera system enables extra security.

Retailers who join the Raid Control scheme receive a security-training package to improve staff awareness, with CCTV equipment and raid control branding to display both within and outside the premises. PC Stewart Satchell, Police Crime Prevention Officer, said: "A joint approach by the police, council and local businesses that helps to tackle and prevent crime is very worthwhile. Raid Control has proved to be a real success in other boroughs and we are expecting equal success in Barnet."

Anyone wishing to find out more about the scheme and other crime prevention can call the Barnet Police Crime Prevention Officers on 020 8733 5092.



Peter Oliver (Project Supervisor) and Peter Sharp (Production Manager) Photo taken at Talbot's premises in their Production Department by Talbot staff

## Staircase to heaven

By Betti Blatman

**A local firm has won a prestigious contract to supply a precision-built centrepiece for a major store in New York.**

Talbot Designs Ltd, hidden away in premises off Long Lane, was asked to build a staircase balustrade to be fitted in the Longchamp Paris store in Soho, New York City.

This project is the brainchild of English designer Thomas Heatherwick, who is based in London's King's Cross area. The concept was to give the staircase a 'slumped' or 'relaxed' appearance to match its surroundings.

Having sourced the project, he met with Charles Woolff, Talbot's Managing Director, and negotiated a price, after which production began in the Long Lane factory.

Talbot Designs was formed in 1947 and is one of the oldest acrylic and plastic fabrication companies in the country. Its other achievements include an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for producing the biggest beer bottle, and a contract to

make a replica Dunhill watch - an amazing 40 times life size for the Dunhill Golf Tournament in St Andrews, Scotland.

Working on the New York project were project supervisor Peter Oliver, production managers Sean Isaacs and Peter Sharp and ten production staff.

After the 47 unique staircase panels (each having its own drawing) were shipped to New York in time for Easter, assembly was due to be carried out by the firm that is refurbishing the store. The balustrade will be fitted but not relieved of its protective bubble wrap until late May, ready for the grand opening in June.

This latest project has been testament to Talbot Designs' origins in engineering, with highly accurate and precision machining a speciality. Their advice to customers is: "If you can design it, we can make it - perfectly!"

## Bird keepers urged to register

**Barnet Council is urging residents who keep poultry to sign up to the Great Britain Poultry Register as a precautionary measure in case there is a bird flu outbreak in the UK. It is a legal requirement for anyone who has 50 or more birds to sign the register, but those with fewer birds are being encouraged to sign up voluntarily. If they do they will be sent an information pack about how they can help protect their birds against avian flu.**

Barnet Council is also reiterating its advice to residents to contact the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) if they find one or more dead swans, ducks or geese, more than three dead birds of the same species, or more than five dead birds of different species, in the same place.

Residents who are concerned about the safety of eating poultry or eggs are encouraged to contact the Food Standards Agency. On

the basis of current scientific evidence, there is no danger of humans contracting bird flu from properly cooked poultry and eggs. Bird keepers can call the Poultry Register Helpline on 0800 634 1112, and Defra can be contacted on 08459 335577 or by e-mailing helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. A registration form can be downloaded from the Defra website at [www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/vetsurveillance/poultry/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/vetsurveillance/poultry/index.htm).

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## Take a minute to prevent crime

**Watch those plasma TV screens! There is currently a deluge of screen thefts in this area. They can be snatched within seconds of entry, so fasten them down with security screws. As with all objects of 'burglar desire', put them where they can't be seen from outside, and pull the curtains at night.**

It is also sensible to mark valuable property with secret DNA identification, and to check insurance provisos and locks.

Crime Prevention Officer Gavin Philips gave this advice to one of the best-attended meetings of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association.