



Letters to the editor

Arts Centre parking problems

Dear Editor,

So, the Principal of the Institute did not anticipate any parking problems arising from the opening of the Arts Centre. What nonsense!

Since the Arts Centre opened its doors to the public, the eastern end of The Bishops Avenue becomes inundated each week day evening, after the CPZ time restriction lapses at 6.30pm, by cars stretching from the Deansway junction with The Bishops Avenue right up to the High Road. Those of us who reside in that part of The Avenue arriving home after 6.30pm have no hope of parking our own vehicles, and furthermore, any visitor or guest may as well come on foot.

Cars are now parked beyond the Institute's walkway, meaning others can only approach the High Road in single file, turning left or right. This causes considerable congestion and a traffic hazard.

What has the Council done about this problem? Nothing.

Dr M R Sheridan,
The Bishops Avenue, N2

Station stairway struggle

Dear Editor,

I live near East Finchley station. How many millions are being spent on refurbishing the station, taking down and replacing wall tiles etc? Yet in order to access the platforms there is a steep set of stairs.

Why in heaven's name in this day and age cannot a simple lift be installed for people who cannot use the stairs? Doesn't all the legislation about access apply to significant areas, or is it just supposed to be applied to small businesses which can't afford these things? There is an increasingly elderly population. Is the idea to keep them off the trains in case they cause problems? Is it a case of 'the buses are there for the elderly' (provided they can withstand being thrown around by the over-enthusiastic use of the brakes by many drivers)?

Yours faithfully,
Harriet Copperman,
Diploma Avenue, N2.

My top three spots

Dear Editor,

I know I am late with my opinion of the popular places of East Finchley but here they are:

1. Amici's coffee shop in the High Street – run by the gregarious and friendly Maurizio and staff, it serves fantastic coffee and foods, plus excellent service. Its main highlight to me is its openness to families, babies, toddlers, parents, the elderly; all are welcome. It is superbly family-friendly and my top spot in East Finchley.

2. The Phoenix. Best films at great prices. And what a cool atmosphere. A real treasure of East Finchley.

3. Cherry Tree Wood. Unspoilt and wonderful. It could be improved slightly, but it is just great for families (and for jogging).

My pet hate though in the High Road is the amount of disgusting betting shops. And, of course, a new one opposite Budgens is another blemish on the East Finchley landscape. Get rid of them all.

Yours faithfully
Richard Devey
Huntingdon Road N2

Boom or bust

Dear Sir

Perhaps all the residents who write to THE ARCHER every month bemoaning the glut of new betting shops, potential takeaways, residential developments and so on could club together and open a shop or business that they would like to see grace our High Road. I think, however, we may have to wait some time to see this happen. What would they prefer – derelict and empty shops or someone trying to make a go of a business?

Name and address supplied

Feeling positive

Dear Editor,

I was very excited to read the last issue of THE ARCHER. So many positive developments for the neighbourhood. Two of the main reasons I moved here with my family three years ago were The Phoenix Cinema and the wonderful library. I was happy to read in the last issue worthwhile plans for both of them in the renovation and further restoration of The Phoenix, and plans by the East Finchley Library Users Group to install a lift in the library and make better use of the upper floor.

I hope everyone in the community who values these two treasures will become engaged in supporting them whether politically or financially.

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Brown
Beresford Road, N2

Is this stealing?

Dear Editor,

A couple of issues back, it was reported in THE ARCHER that some local charity shops had been the victim of shoplifters. Whilst I personally would never steal goods from a shop, I have often found discarded items that could not be disposed of outside the shops. I do not feel that looking through these is the same as theft.

Donations that one of the High Road shops cannot sell are put in blue bags outside the premises. I often buy stock and donate to them, and seeing as unwanted stock probably goes to a landfill or an incinerator I find it illogical that a charity might object to passers-by scavenging these things. If anything we are helping to reduce waste by doing this.

They insist it is council property. However, one evening some council dustmen arrived to collect the bags and they weren't bothered by me taking things out. I understand a shop only has so much room for what it can sell but what right have they to complain if people take items they have discarded?

Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied

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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, on request at publication.

Shanghai surprise

ARCHER writer Sheila Armstrong recently travelled to China for a choir performance in the Forbidden City. Here, she recalls her impressions of this fast-changing country.

The chance to go to China with *Concerts from Scratch* was too good an opportunity for me to miss. With only two rehearsals, Brian Kay (ex-Kings Singers) managed to create a choir with singers from around the UK. They gave a great performance of *The Messiah* in the Concert Hall of the Forbidden City late last year, accompanied by an orchestra of accomplished young Chinese musicians.

Arriving in Beijing, it is hard to believe you are in China. The Olympics are to be held in Beijing in 2008. The amount of building work has meant many of the old districts have been swept away and replaced by high-rise blocks. Of the old China, there is little to be seen. There are now six ring roads round the city and the traffic is ferocious.

Very few bikes are in evidence compared with the old days; the car dominates. We had a police escort to get us through the traffic to The Great Wall. Beijing seemed to be disappearing under a cloud of pollution.

Its railway station is reputed to be the biggest in the world with good reason. It was nearly impossible to find the platform for the train to Xi'an, the old seat of political power, to see the Terracotta Warriors. But once we were there we were lucky enough to see the farmer who discovered the Terracotta Warriors, taking a chow mein break having just signed multiple copies of a new book.

For the tourist there are many wonderful heritage sights to be seen in Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai: the Emperor's Summer Palace and the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors, as well as Buddhist temples and Mosques.

Evening entertainment is the Peking Opera, the world-famous Shanghai Acrobats and jazz in the bar in the Peace Hotel on The



Seen on the Great Wall of China, Photo by Sheila Armstrong

Bund where something of the atmosphere of the 1930s still lingers.

China has taken to tourism in a big way, and facilities have improved. It is a fascinating holiday destination, but we didn't see many of the

ordinary people, cocooned as we were in a sort of tourist bubble. Apparently the Great Wall is the only man-made thing visible from space, but how long will it be before a cloud of pollution obscures even that?

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