



Letters

Arson attempt in Cherry Tree Wood

Dear Editor, I was in Cherry Tree Wood with my children on the August Bank Holiday at around 2.30pm when we noticed three young men and a young woman, all aged about 18-19, messing about in the children's playground. They were drinking beer from cans and had a carrier bag full of beer cans and cigarettes.

They headed off into the back corner of the woods by the railway line. At about 3.30pm I went into the woods in the same direction with my children and we met the teenagers coming out. When we got to the back corner near the fence, we found a fire burning. We tried to put it out by smothering it with logs but were unable to do so. We went to the cafe where we got two large jugs of water, and we succeeded in putting the fire out with these.

I have reported this incident to East Finchley Police Safer Neighbourhood Team and to Barnet Council. I am very concerned that had we not found the fire and acted when we did, there could have been an extremely serious outcome involving extensive damage to the woods and injury to some of the many families who were there for Bank Holiday Monday.

This disturbing incident suggests to me that there is an urgent need for the permanent park keeper to be restored to Cherry Tree Woods.

Yours faithfully, Name and address supplied

Shrimp on the barbie

Dear Editor, Barbecues have become a nuisance in Cherry Tree Wood, especially because of the fire risk they pose. If they are so popular with youths, I wonder if the park could set up a designated area for them?

It has been suggested, with adequate safety measures, to install fixed barbecues in the picnic area by the park's cafe, as with some parks in Australia. Like all the improvement proposals, however, Barnet Council would need to pull its finger out and pay attention to the smaller parks' needs, not just the big 'premier parks'.

Already there have been some improvements in Cherry Tree, mainly thanks to Sally and Ryan, who tend

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the cafe. For example, after the council wanted to remove the empty flower beds, Sally paid gardeners herself to replant them. The pair have also put up a clock outside and are trying to improve the park's toilets.

After all the work and support from local residents, showing how much they care about the park, it seems only fair that the council should acknowledge this and help out.

Yours faithfully, Jake Eiseman-Renyard, Fortis Green, N2.

Life could be easier

Dear Editor, I love living in East Finchley and have lived here for many, many years. I saw your article about raising the status of East Finchley (REEF LOVES N2, THE ARCHER, August 2007). But what has gone wrong here? First of all, after 60 years, Barclays Bank here is closed. Secondly, the post comes after four o'clock most afternoons. Thirdly, the bus service is so erratic: 25 minutes apart, then two together. Fourthly, there are no decent shops here; there's no Sainsbury's, no WH Smith, no Boots. Can't we do something to make things a bit easier?

Yours faithfully, Mr Burgess, Creighton Avenue, N2.

Bigger and better

Dear Editor, Finchley has got bigger! At least so it appears if you walk along Creighton Avenue from the High Road. A 'Haringey' sign now stands some 36 feet east of the 1934 borough of Finchley boundary marker, and a house formerly in Haringey is now in Finchley. Has anyone else noticed changes in territory?

Yours faithfully, Robert Winton, Creighton Avenue, N2.

October at the Phoenix

By Paul Homer, Phoenix Cinema general manager Our first major film of the month will be Control on 5 October, the biopic of troubled Joy Division singer Ian Curtis. Directed by Anton Corbijn, it was rightly praised at this year's Cannes Film Festival and is one of the best British films this year.

To mark the recent death of music guru Anthony H Wilson we're playing a double bill of Michael Winterbottom's 24 Hour Party People and A Cock and Bull story on 7 October.

Moving forward to the middle of the month we present The Counterfeiters, more proof of the recent resurgence in German cinema. The film looks at a little-reported incident when the Nazis forced Jewish counterfeiters to create copies of British and American currency in an attempt to destabilise their economies. It's a terrific picture and one that deserves to be seen.

We've a double bill on 14 October bringing back La Vie en Rose for those of you who missed it the first time. It's playing with a portmanteau film Paris Je T'aime, which features a slew of great directors including the Coen Brothers, Walter Salles, Gus Van Sant, Tom Tyker, Gurinder Chadha and many others.

Finally we close October with the controversial but always entertaining Michael Moore. His new film Sicko opens at the Phoenix on 26 October. Call our box office on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk.

Creighton Avenue speed control plans

In 2008 drivers may face slower journeys along and near Creighton Avenue, if current proposals are approved.

The scheme, designed to improve safety for drivers and pedestrians, includes speed cushions, road humps, a 20mph speed limit and a mini-roundabout at the junction with Beech Drive.

Haringey Council has written to residents of Creighton Avenue and surrounding streets to outline the traffic-calming measures. A public exhibition displaying the plans was held on Saturday 22 September at Fortismere School, with council officers available to answer questions. The deadline for responses was Friday 28 September.

A new garden begins to grow

By Betti Blatman "A flowerless room is a soulless room ... but even one solitary little vase of a living flower may redeem it." This quotation by Vita Sackville-West, novelist and creator of Sissinghurst Gardens, expresses the philosophy of Jackie Ettinger, proprietor of Jackie's Garden at 119 East End Road.

The official opening of her flower and plant emporium on 2 September was well attended by friends, neighbours and customers who enjoyed refreshments to the sounds of Kletzmer duo Balabustah.

"I am bowled over by the response to the shop," said Jackie, who, after leaving school, spent a year working on a kibbutz and then obtained a B.Ed in Art and Drama. After a varied career which included teaching, working for an export company in Paris and then ten years on a national newspaper, Jackie decided to formalise a lifelong passion for flowers and plants by studying Horticulture and Planting Design at Capel Manor College, Enfield.

Jackie intends to introduce people to unusual plants and flowers not usually found on the High Street. In addition to a wide range of cut flowers, bouquets and arrangements,

contemporary and vintage vases and containers are on sale with books and magazines to inspire her customers.

If required, Jackie can draw complex planting plans but also offers a service which she refers

to as the horticultural equivalent of a start up course for people who wish to develop and maintain their gardens themselves but don't have the confidence to begin. Jackie can be contacted on 020 8444 0153.

OBITUARY

Derek Ball, 1937 - 2007

A celebration for the life of Derek Ball was held at St Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road, on Friday 3 August.

Local people became aware of what a special person Derek was when he received a top award at Barnet's Annual Civic Awards ceremony in 2005. But one section of the community already knew and had reason to be grateful for the gifts Derek possessed, namely the children and staff at Martin School. In fact, they nominated Derek for the award in recognition of his amazing contribution to the school.

After retiring from his job as a carpenter and wanting to do something for the community, Derek became a volunteer reading helper at Martin School, which his children Steven and Jennifer had attended in the 1960s and 1970s. As his time there gradually expanded, Derek was able to use his wide range of talents. He regularly accompanied educational visits

where his skill with a camera was revealed and soon he became the official photographer, recording school events for posterity. Derek had a knack of being able to find things that were needed and fix things that weren't working properly. This even included computers, about which he knew a great deal, and he was able to pass on this knowledge to pupils and teachers. In short, Derek became an important and invaluable member of the school community who went out of his way to help others and who will be remembered as a lovely, warm and caring person.

Derek had lived in Brackenhurst Avenue since 1962 with his wife Doreen, whom he married in 1960. No doubt his neighbours will share similar memories of this man, of whom one child said: "He was always prepared to give up time for anyone who needed help."

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