



Letters

Noises off

Dear Editor,

I don't mean to waste your time, but as the newspaper is an integral part of the East Finchley community, I thought you might be able to shed some light.

Do any of you know what causes the interesting noises which the tube makes as it leaves the tunnel from Highgate to East Finchley station? Is it a sort of sweeping, high to low frequency noise? I've never heard it anywhere else.

Yours faithfully,

Innes Johnston,

Address supplied

If anyone has the answer, we'd be happy to pass it on. Please email us at the-archer@lineone.net or by writing to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London, N2 8JA. You can also leave a message for the team on 08717 334465.

Blackbird or a dead ringer?

Dear Editor

A few weeks ago on my way to the High Road, I saw what I thought to be a nursery of baby blackbirds. There were about 30 babies fluttering and calling in a tree outside Holy Trinity nursery.

I took some video footage on my mobile, but unfortunately being in my wheelchair I was too low down to take a clear enough picture of them. Their call was like that of a blackbird.

I spoke to Daphne Chamberlain, who thought they were more likely to be starlings. Daphne says that blackbirds live in pairs in their own territories, while starlings gather in flocks. She also thinks that starlings can imitate other birds' songs, and I know that there are several very vocal blackbirds in and around East End Road.

I've seen this group of birds twice now, as I had to go past the nursery again. They were in the same place at the same time (about 2-2.15pm). I'd love to know if anyone else has seen them. If they are starlings, it'll be great to know that we have them living with us here in East Finchley.

Yours faithfully,

Sippy Azizollah,

East End Road, N2.

Technology worked for me

Dear Editor,

Regarding your article in the December issue of THE ARCHER which I received this morning, I must write and say how great this new service of the in-store digital printer is at C W Andrew Pharmacy.

I have never been one for taking photographs on holiday but I was going on a trip to Egypt including a Nile cruise and decided on the spur of the moment to buy a digital camera at the airport.

I returned on 29 November and just called in to C W Andrews to see if they were able to arrange for the printing of the photographs and was proudly shown their newly installed digital printer by Paresh.

He showed me how to work it, which is very simple, and having arrived back at Heathrow at about 2pm, by 4.30pm that same afternoon I had all my photographs beautifully printed. What a great service.

Yours faithfully,

Kate Barnett

Baronsmere Road, N2.

Petition power for the people

Dear Editor,

The new Action Plan for Community Empowerment is good news for everyone who signed the petition to protest about the neglect of Cherry Tree Woods by Barnet Council.

Hazel Blears, Secretary of State, has stated in the foreword to this recently launched government initiative that she has been "a firm believer in local activism" all her life. Concerned that most people are cynical about their capacity to influence politicians, the government is apparently now committed to "raising the status of petitions" so that when people "put their time and energy behind a cause or concern that time is not wasted". There is also a plan to open up a "direct dialogue with local activists".

I think it's time to lobby Barnet Council again, using the same petition that the Council so arrogantly dismissed a few months ago, quoting from the Action Plan, details of which can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/516935.

Yours faithfully,

Janet Maitland,

Trinity 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, on request at publication.

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Fanfare for flower bed

By Marjorie Harris

Having won an Awards for All lottery grant to fund a commemorative flower bed on Willifield Green for Hampstead Garden Suburb's centenary, the HGS Horticultural Society was proud to see the flower bed win two awards recently.

In October members were presented with a bronze medal and certificate by the London Gardens Society for 'a garden display in a public place' and in November they collected third prize in a similar category from the Mayor of Barnet in 'Barnet in Bloom' competition.

The flower bed itself has now had a winter makeover. The summer carpet bedding and Suburb Centenary commemorative lettering have been removed, having turned black in the first frosts of the season, and have been replaced with fresh turf under-planted by hundreds of spring bulbs. The society wants to continue giving pleasure to the local community by taking care of the flower bed at its own expense at least until May 2009, when the flower bed will take centre stage once again for the society's 100th birthday celebrations.

Volunteers needed for dementia research

By Diana Cormack

An appeal in THE ARCHER for volunteers to help with research into new tests to determine dementia caught my eye. Having seen my late mother undergo such testing, I offered to take part.

The sessions are held at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in Queens Square, near Russell Square or Holborn tube stations. They take place on a one to one basis in a small office and do not involve anything intrusive.

Establishing norms

The purpose of the study is to gather information from healthy individuals over 50 and includes word retrieval (naming items from their picture or from a description), conceptual knowledge (answering factual questions) and perception (detecting the position of objects relative to one another).

The results will be used to establish how volunteers perform in these tests and to examine how factors such as age and years of education influence their scores. Understanding how healthy people manage will help with evaluating whether the performance of those who suffer from neurological disease, such as dementia or stroke victims, is normal or below what might be expected for someone of their age.

The actual procedure involves answering simple spoken questions and completing paper and pencil tests. These

increase in difficulty and some are subject to timing. They range from naming a set of objects to answering a series of questions about people, places, geography, words and everyday general knowledge, to identifying the location of pictures, dots and shapes relative to one another. On my second visit another set of similar tests was followed by a brain scan.

Any information collected about volunteers during the study is kept strictly confidential and will be held for at least five years in case more research is needed. The results will be used to improve further medical and scientific research.

If you want to be considered as a volunteer, please call Mary Keilty at the Dementia Research Centre on 020 7837 3611, ext.3639 for more information.

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