



Step-free station is years away

By David Tupman

Tube users will have to wait until at least 2013 for step-free access to East Finchley station, according to London Underground, and that would only be scheduled if a positive decision were made now in 2008.

Despite a recent large investment in the Northern Line under the controversial Private Finance Initiative, no lift was incorporated in the revamped station.

Vigorous representations have been made to local political figures and to Transport for London about the difficulties faced by passengers with mobility problems or with heavy luggage or pushchairs in negotiating the 30 steps to the station platform. Even men delivering supplies to the staff quarters above the tracks risk injury.

Brian Coleman, GLA assembly member for Barnet, has taken up the issue of access on behalf of local resident Annette Laycock, of Elmhurst Avenue, a keen reader of *THE ARCHER*. Not content with limp replies from the transport authority's customer relations people, Cllr Coleman went straight to the tube's managing director Tim O'Toole.

In his reply Tim O'Toole points to planning difficulties with East Finchley station's listed building status and to current funding priorities, though he highlights the fact that Finchley Central will have a lift by the summer of 2008.

Add 40 minutes to your journey

Obviously unaware of local travel congestion, Mr O'Toole suggests: "Finchley Central is nearby and is served by regular bus services from East Finchley and the High Street".

Yes, the message from the overlord of the Underground is that if you want step-free access to the tube, board the 143 bus at East Finchley station, which runs every 12 minutes, and alight at Finchley Central, a journey taking up to 30 minutes.

The message for readers of *THE ARCHER* is clear: get active and tell London Underground what you really think.

Joanna hosts for Spike

Actress Joanna Lumley, one of the patrons of the Spike Milligan Statue Fund, hosted a small dinner party at the home of the fund's chair Barbara Warren.

Seven guests were entertained to lively conversation and ate a delicious meal cooked and served by members of the committee.

Afterwards, Joanna was presented with a maquette of Spike Milligan made by the sculptor of the statue John Somerville.

While at the house in Wentworth Avenue, N3, Joanna opened the Copper Kettle Tea Rooms in Barbara's dolls' house by making a short speech and cutting a miniature ribbon across the doorway.

The evening raised £820 for the fund to place a bronze statue of the late comedian and writer at Avenue House in East End Road.

Joanna said: "The evening was just huge fun and happiness from the moment I arrived. It was great meeting Spike's supporters. Fingers crossed

that very soon it will become a larger-than-life reality."

The fund still needs to raise several thousands to meet its target. Contributions can be sent to the Secretary, Spike Milligan Statue Fund, 17 Abbots Gardens, London N2 0JG.

Civic Award winner

Belated congratulations to Tristan Green, school keeper at Martin Primary School, who was one of Barnet's Civic Award winners earlier this year.

Honoured for his services to the local community, Tristan was unable to attend the presentation ceremony at the Town Hall as it coincided with the birth of his third child.



Fire damaged the workshop and a car. Picture by Paul Dearing

Car workshop damaged in fire

By John Dearing

One person was hurt in a fire in a car workshop in King Street that caused extensive damage.

On 21 April a car being serviced at H&B Motor Engineers caught fire and burned fiercely. Despite the efforts

of staff working there, the fire could not be extinguished. The Fire Service attended and put the fire out.

While there was no obvious damage to surrounding premises, much of the workshop was severely damaged,

particularly the roof, and the car involved was destroyed. The owner suffered some burns and went to hospital for treatment but fortunately there were no major injuries. The workshop was back in business within days.

Longer route for 263?

By Daphne Chamberlain

Transport for London are considering extending the southern end of the 263 bus route beyond Archway to the Nag's Head, Holloway. However, they have not proposed any changes to the long "solo" stretch between East and North Finchley, where the 263 is the only through bus.

The 263 is one of several routes being looked at this year. The consultation period lasts only until 20 June, so East Finchley Bus Watch would like your comments soon.

The group is affiliated to Bus Watch West Haringey, whose Chris Barker has been consulted on local routes.

His reply to TFL was: "We are disappointed that you see no need to strengthen this service (the 263), particularly between East and North Finchley where loadings are often heavy. We are pleased with the proposal to link Highgate station with Holloway Road but would

prefer to see this done by an extension to North Finchley of the 17, which would also help with the East to North Finchley problem."

What do you think? Please send your thoughts to Hazel Burnett of East Finchley Buswatch, and / or *THE ARCHER*. Hazel can be contacted on 020 8444 6824.

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