

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Go green and make a difference

By Yvonne O'Reilly and Camilla Hodgson
Millions of people still don't recycle and they are slowly killing our planet. It's time for them to start.

Did you know that 60% of the rubbish that we throw away every day can be recycled? That's a lot of rubbish that goes to landfill unnecessarily, polluting the surrounding area, damaging the landscape and devastating the natural habitats of animals.

Recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than paper made from raw materials, and it takes 24 trees to make just one ton of newspaper. Not only would it benefit the atmosphere if more paper was recycled, it would help prevent deforestation, a problem that will result in serious consequences if allowed to continue.

Recycling also helps to prevent desertification, so you are not only helping the planet but also contributing to sustainable development that will benefit generations to come.

Not recycling is wasting the world's resources. This will eventually lead to them running out. We rely on oil for everyday activities and trees are necessary for our survival. With these gone we can't survive and the world's economy will eventually collapse, not to mention the devastating impact it will have on our planet.

It's essential for everyone to do their bit for the environment in as many ways as they can. A simple way to start is to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. What you don't need, don't use. Buy products that are environmentally friendly, for example those without unnecessary packaging, and look for recyclable materials. Reuse unwanted items by giving those that still have life in them to charity shops or donation centres. Recycle and refrain from throwing everything straight in the bin. Much of what you don't think is useful can be made into something new and beneficial.

Recycling is the number one way to help save the planet, so don't hesitate; do your bit for the world and go green.

OBITUARY Mrs Winnie Hanton

Mrs Winnie Hanton was buried at the St Pancras cemetery on 31 January, which would have been her 97th birthday. Winnie had lived in Leicester Road for over 40 years and was well known to residents and shopkeepers in the area. She used to enjoy sitting on the seat outside the Iceland store to have a chat with local people. A tribute to her popularity was the collection made by neighbours, which provided flowers for her funeral and a generous donation to the North London Hospice.



Mrs Winnie Hanton. Photograph courtesy Diana Cormack

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Letters

Not a pretty site

Dear Editor

In her article ('Not a pretty sight', The Archer, February 2008), Diana Cormack rightly draws attention to the detritus greeting travellers arriving at East Finchley station. Not only are the upturned newspaper stands a venue for discarded rubbish (possibly an East Finchley entrant to the Turner prize?), but the general dilapidation of the forecourt to the Grade 2 listed building really gets my goat.

Wherever you look, poor planning, neglect and indifference to the townscape show through. Pedestrians have to fight with cars as each negotiates the entrance. Litterbins have lost their black outer casings. The so-called plant troughs are weed-abundant. Of the six trees established in the 1990s, only two and a half remain. The crumpled street sign gloriously scribed as 'beware of rising bollards' is worthy of a Carry On film script.

The list of problem areas is very long so I do hope the recently established Regeneration and Enhancement of East Finchley group (REEF) might like to put their weight behind this worthy project. After all, first impressions do count.

Yours faithfully,
David Tupman
Leicester Road, N2

Check up on your MP

Dear Editor,

Those with access to the internet may be interested in the following website which will inform you of everything your local MP does within Parliament; things like questions in the House, and voting history, to name but two. The website is www.theyworkforyou.com.

Yours faithfully
Andrew Taylor
Western Court, N3

Mixed wards and general misery

Dear Editor,

On arrival at Barnet General Hospital recently, the ambulance crew wheeled me to the nurses' station where I remained for two and a quarter hours. Meanwhile, there was no rest for the nurses and doctors who were busy attending to the needs of their many patients. Never mind claiming that when Chase Farm Hospital's A&E department is downgraded Barnet Hospital will work more efficiently. Won't there be more patients then and only the same amount of space?

Barnet General is a new hospital but still has curtained partitions which give very little privacy. I was finally allocated a bed in a mixed ward where I was the only woman. Initially it did not worry me but then something completely changed my attitude. My eyes were closed. I was just dozing, having been in pain for nearly 24 hours, when something suddenly caused me to take a look. There, standing beside me in the wee small hours, was a male patient.

Incidents like this render the patient insecure, hardly the environment to aid recovery. This is a brand new hospital but the Department of Health no longer aims to eliminate mixed wards.

I was discharged at 2.30am on a freezing cold winter's night wearing only a nightgown and dressing gown, totally exhausted with all the pain, lack of sleep and still too ill to eat anything. Luckily I could get a taxi but what happens to people who cannot afford one?

After just four hours sleep and still unable to eat, I had to return to Barnet General for further investigation, followed by a further wait of two and a half hours in the freezing cold Accident and Emergency waiting area. The latter was so badly designed that every time a patient entered, an icy blast accompanied him/her.

As I looked around the waiting area my eyes alighted on the Major

Incident Room. In normal times the hospital struggles to cope with all the patients and lack of beds so how on earth could it handle a major incident? The mind boggles.

The staff I encountered were caring, informative and industrious people, real professionals working in a very stressful situation of too many patients and insufficient beds. These were not the people who created these problems. How grateful I am that they managed to take the edge off the excruciating pain I had.

Yours faithfully,
Sheila Ertughrul
Leopold Road, N2.

Lights are no embarrassment

Dear Editor,

With reference to the article on page 3 of the February edition, REEF may think that the Christmas lights are an embarrassment, but I don't. They are an attractive way to imbue the High Road with the spirit of the festive season. While they may now be provided by Barnet Council, they are essentially the same lights that the East Finchley Traders' Association worked so hard to acquire in the not-so-distant past. If Lawrie Chivers and the other people involved at the time see that article they would, in my opinion, be entitled to be more than a little upset. Talk about biting the hand that feeds you.

Yours faithfully,
Richard Cranham,
High Road, N2

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the-archer@lineone.net.

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