



My hour of fame on the fourth plinth

When Victor Martinez (pictured on page 1) applied to be one of the people to stand on the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of Anthony Gormley's public art project, he imagined his chances of winning a place were slim.

But soon after submitting his name he was told he had been picked from thousands of entries to take a prime 5-6pm slot on the very first day of the project.

Art director Victor, who lives off East End Road, had to think fast about what he was going to do with his hour of fame because the date was only days away.

Celebrating London

He opted to explore people's ideas of Britishness and to trace the history of London through lyrics and poetry by reading poems by William Blake and playing music by The Kinks, Lily Allen and UK hip hop acts on a wind-up gramophone.

Artist Gormley's project for the fourth plinth runs until October. A different member of the public will stand on the plinth

every hour 24 hours a day. The only rules are that they must be alone on the plinth and can only use what they can carry.

Victor, 38, said the reaction from the crowds around him was exciting. He also met Gormley on the first day and received a lot of attention from the media.

"It was sunny before I started and sunny afterwards but it rained while I was on there," he said. "When I was playing some of the music, I had to compete with a bagpiper who decided to play down in the square.

"People down below loved it. One lady passed by when I was reading William Blake and recognised the poem but couldn't tell where it was coming from, until she looked up and saw me."



Photo by Margaret Johnson.

Litter patrol

Staff and eco-councillor pupils from Martin Primary School got out their grippers and sacks to take part in the national Big Tidy Event by litter picking in Cherry Tree Wood earlier in the summer term.

One moment in time

By Betti Blatman

On 7 August, we will all experience a very special moment in time. This isn't something that most people will care about, or even know about, but it's still worth sharing.

At five minutes and six seconds after 4am on 7 August 2009, the time and date will be (drum roll, please): 04:05:06 07/08/09! OK, maybe it's no big deal, except this will never happen again in our lifetimes. It will be the year 3009 before this moment comes round again.

Bus fight goes on

By Daphne Chamberlain

Has East Finchley given up the fight for another bus service along the High Road? The answer is an emphatic no, judging by last month's Bus Watch meeting at the Constitutional Club. The meeting resulted in several new members, who contributed some thought-provoking ideas.

The group intends to gain support from the three hospitals along the 263 route, and from business concerns such as the Leisure Park.

The Greens' Noel Lynch confirmed that his party are continuing their campaign for another route along the High Road from North Finchley to serve the Royal Free. They will argue the case again at next month's London Assembly and there is still time to sign their petition.

Opinions over the 263 Holloway extension were divided. Some called it useless; others welcomed it, but only if that elusive extra bus service could be added at this end of the route.

The verdict on the 143 service was that, after a period of improvement, it had deteriorated again.

Next step

The group decided that to keep up pressure on TfL the next step was to enlist London Travelwatch on their side. Secretary Hazel Burnett is inviting representatives to the next Bus Watch meeting.

Meanwhile, Hazel welcomes any ideas, suggestions or complaints. Please call 020 8444 6824 or visit hazel.burnett@freeuk.com. To support the Royal Free bus campaign, call 020 8445 6312.

Selling your car? Beware charges!

By Diana Cormack

Judging by a look round the area, not a lot of people know that in some parts of Barnet it is illegal to put a "for sale" sign in a vehicle.

Recently a young lady left her car in a Summerlee Avenue parking bay overnight with a notice in the window advertising its sale. The following morning she had been issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PNC) for "using a vehicle in a parking place in connection with the sale or offering or exposing for sale of goods when prohibited".

This ruling appears on the borough website and on the Conditions of Use for Visitor Vouchers, principally to prevent traders, resident or otherwise, from monopolising parking spaces. However, the borough became aware that residents genuinely selling their own cars were receiving PNCs. From August 2008 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) were told to place a warning on such cars to give a 24 hour opportunity for the sign to be removed before a PNC is issued.

Refund

Being an honest citizen the young lady paid the penalty charge, but subsequent investi-

gation proved that the CEO had not placed the required warning notice. As the correct procedures were not followed, Barnet Council has refunded her £50. They stress that if any resident feels they have received a PNC unfairly, they should contact the borough parking team immediately so that their case can be reviewed and a decision taken prior to making payment.

THE ARCHER asked why there were no street signs about the ruling and if any other London boroughs or local authorities had this policy. Barnet Council replied: "The Orders that introduced this parking contravention in May 2007 were published in newspapers and on the Council's own website. We are unaware of any other local authorities which use their powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to combat nuisance for residents of traders using parking places to offer cars for sale."

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