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Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, on request at publication.

Letters

Happy ending for bench

Dear Editor,
How sad I was to notice that, in between all the good work being done in Cherry Tree Wood at the moment, the Millennium Bench donated by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood had been replaced by one of the standard Barnet Council benches. Although the plaque was still on the shiny new bench it seemed inappropriate in these days of recycling that a sturdy oak bench should be discarded. Having contacted Barnet Parks, THE ARCHER and Barnet councilors, imagine my joy this morning to see our old bench reinstated, looking a bit shabby but very comfortable basking in the sun! So, thank you THE ARCHER for your help, and thank you Barnet Council for listening.

**Yours faithfully,
Fenella Reed,
Eastern Road, N2**

Ask and you will receive

Dear Editor,
A few issues ago it was reported that in February 2009 Barnet Council would provide plastic and card recycling for flats. Well our estate (The Grange) was still waiting till just now. I contacted the recycling dept at Barnet and was told that individual residents should contact them to request such facilities. This I did, and very quickly they came to install the new recycling bins. The contact is: Paul Woodward on Paul.Woodward@Barnet.gov.uk

**Yours faithfully
David Alexander,
Address supplied**

Flight of fancy

Dear Editor,
Would it be a flight of fancy to preen pigeon disease denial from Meg Mattinson (Letters, THE ARCHER, May 2009) homing in on a citation of ailments spread by avian vermin, fed by those who might scoff at health concern? I wouldn't relish hovering in wait for someone to die before seeds of doubt disperse.

However, catering for Ms Mattinson's apparent appetite for the fluttering intonations emanating from her laurel tree, I agree such cooing to be lower in the pecking order of aural pollution than the common or garden hedge trimmer, the lesser-spotted builder and occasional nest of road-diggers.

**Yours faithfully,
Malcolm Griffiths,
Midhurst Avenue, N10.**

Pigeon post

Dear Editor
Congratulations to Diana Boyd for her article about the pigeon post at Pigeon Corner (THE ARCHER, April 2009). It was obviously a wind-up but it made a pleasant change from some letters which have appeared recently in THE ARCHER condemning the pigeons as public enemy number one. Dare I suggest that there was just a hint of sympathy for the pigeons in that piece? Perhaps not. Nevertheless it was most amusing.

**Yours faithfully,
Thomas McCann,
Hobbs Green, N2**

Cyclists invited to break out

By Nick Bloom
Keen cyclists are invited to join the annual 'Suburban Breakout' from East Finchley on Sunday 12 July at 9am. This is a 100k (that's 66 miles) ride starting at The Big Chef on the High Road, via Potters Bar into the rolling Hertfordshire countryside and back.

Sixty riders took part last year, with a wide range of age and ability, from sporting riders to commuters, and inevitably a few 'fixies'. I run the ride on behalf of the Cyclists' Touring Club and Audax UK, the long distance cycling organization, to show

local riders how quickly they can get out of London by bike.

Challenge yourself
It's not a race, and it's not a charity ride: more a personal challenge. Ride with others or on your own, flat out or steady. Anyone can take part on any bike, tricycle, tandem or recumbent, though under 18s need parental consent. If you finish within time you can buy a medal or badge. Although most of the route is on quiet country roads, there are a few nasty 'A' roads to cross, and there will be busy traffic on the way back through Barnet and Finchley. There aren't any mountains around here, but that doesn't mean it's flat.

You can take a break on the way at one of the many pubs along the route, so long as you are back within the time limit of 7.5 hours. That's only 13.5 kph (under 9mph) including any stops. You do have to look after yourself and follow the route sheet, and there's no pick-up if you break down or get tired.

Entry in advance is £4, CTC & AUK members £3. All on the line entries will be £5. Contact me for more information on 07768 354010 or nick@centrallondonctc.org.uk or ask at Bike and Run on the High Road. You can also find entry forms, maps and routesheets at www.centrallondonctc.org.uk/audax.php.

Safeguard our wardens, safeguard us

Dear Editor,
As a former tenant of Paul Byrne House, I knew many of the residents, in particular the very frail and vulnerable occupants. Should the site manager be removed (THE ARCHER, May 2009), the more severely impaired and frail will not find themselves the cover which currently provides for their needs, including those of a clinical nature.

The proposed mobile or "floating" support would be totally inadequate for those people classed as highly dependent. Further, there would be nobody to monitor the cameras put up at residents' expense.

One may ask why we are the most deprived sector of the public. Costs are being picked on, when there are other areas to be looked at. For example, able-bodied people who are well able to fend for themselves. Yet we seem to provide succour to those dysfunctional elements, who are a permanent drain on the public's fiscal resources.

The powers that be ought to be approaching this in a more positive and equitable way.

Further, the current culture does not give a benchmark to those who, in their life, have contributed to post-war prosperity. Right now, the two elements of greed and fear are negating any hope for confidence to be restored to Barnet's most deprived residents.

The current culture has to change in the public domain, if our elected representatives are to regain respect from the people of our generation.

**Yours faithfully,
George Shaw,
St Mary's Green, N2.**

Save our stroke unit

Dear Editor,
Five years ago I had a fairly severe stroke and was lucky enough to be taken to Barnet Hospital, and be given a bed for some weeks in their specialist stroke unit, where the careful care that I received was instrumental in my making a slow but full recovery.

It is therefore with strong misgivings, and some fear for many of us, that I await the outcome of the proposal to close the Barnet unit and transfer Specialist Stroke Care to central London.

Not only would the time to reach hospital in the first place be compromised, but also this would lead to visits by family and friends lessening (it is so VITAL for a disorientated stroke patient to reconnect with what is familiar).

Very little has been publicised about all this, so that few are aware of the NHS plans. In effect we are being disenfranchised by stealth. I can only hope that the unit remains in Barnet, where it is accessible to local residents

**Yours faithfully,
Linda Dolata,
Leopold Road, N2.**

Life after a stroke

At a time when proposed changes to the system of dealing with strokes in London are being fiercely debated, a book about after-care for stroke victims written by an East Finchley resident has been published.

Dr Mareeni Raymond is a GP in East London with an interest in elderly psychiatry, including strokes and dementia. Coping With Life After a Stroke was published in April by Sheldon Press and costs £7.99.

Linda Dolata, who suffered a stroke herself five years ago, has read the book and gives her thoughts.

This small book is an easy read, and the layout is extremely clear. It is quite possible to find just the sections that are relevant to the individual reader, without having to read the entire book.

Dr Raymond takes the reader through the causes of strokes and the preventative measures (such as good diet, and daily exercise). What is especially helpful is the clear explanation of what to expect in the aftermath of a stroke, and what measures to take to optimise the chances of recovery.

Most people are aware of the physical effects of a stroke, but I don't think many are as aware of the emotional and cognitive effects (poor memory and concentration) which are probably (certainly in my case) far more debilitating.

The book addresses all of these, and offers tips and strategies for coping, stressing the need for goals, and for recognising the achievements as time passes. I would strongly recommend it to anyone who has experienced a stroke and to their family.

My only quibble is with the endorsement of the use of statins for high cholesterol, as I think the side effects, which can be horrendous in some cases, are underrated.

OBITUARY

Ann Young

The death occurred on 27 March of Ann Young, formerly of 2a Sedgemere Avenue, N2. She lived at that address for almost 40 years with her husband, Brian, who died four years ago. Ann leaves three sons: Barry, Stephen, and Matthew, and four grandchildren.



Ann lived in East Finchley nearly all her life. She was born at 54 Park Hall Road as one of twins to Sam and Lilian King, and she spent most of her childhood in the same house.

Most of her married life was spent at Sedgemere Avenue. She passed away peacefully at the North London Hospice in North Finchley and is sadly missed.



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