



Letters to the editor

Grass roots local council

Dear Editor,

From his comments about 'a chance to re-empower neighbourhood government' and to 'revitalise local control over city streets and services' perhaps Simon Jenkins in the Evening Standard is aware of a 'wind of change' blowing through our city.

A small group in the 'village' of East Finchley is looking at the possibility of establishing a local council. It is somewhat ludicrous for a London borough the size of Barnet with a population of 300,000 to have only one tier of governance compared with, say, Gloucestershire (or the country of Iceland) with a similar population which has a County Council, as well as a number of city, town, village and parish councils.

It is not realistic to expect councillors, responsible for a large population such as Barnet, to have sufficient detailed knowledge of or interest in the problems at a very local level in that borough or likewise any others in our metropolis. Economy of scale may be appropriate for mainstream services, but not when considering more local issues, such as provision of parks, involvement with local planning applications, support for local businesses, voluntary groups and similar organisations.

One particular advantage of a local council is that decision-making at grass roots level is not based on the whim of party politics. The elected councillors are part of the local neighbourhood and will know and be known by many more people, and have a greater awareness and 'ownership' of the area and its needs and problems.

Whilst not advocating disbanding our London boroughs, I believe they could be enhanced by utilizing the principle of 'Small is beautiful' with the addition of, perhaps not quite 'Passport to Pimlico', but perhaps an East Finchley town council?

Yours faithfully,
Harriet Copperman,
Diploma Avenue, N2

Seeking local knowledge

Dear Editor,

I have been researching the history of a particular branch of the Tofield family, who were residents in Archerland for 120 years from 1845. With the help of census returns and various certificates, progress was steady but I have had no success in identifying the exact location of several homes.

Where for example, in Church Lane (formerly Bulls Lane) were Field Cottages and Park Walk? Most of the existing property in Red Lion Hill was demolished 60 years ago but on which side of the road were Cockden House and Johnsons Cottages?

If readers can offer suggestions or be of any assistance, I would be most grateful. I can be contacted on 020 8346 1268 or Tony@mcteare.wanadoo.co.uk

Yours faithfully,
Tony McTeare,
Glenhill Close, N3.

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.

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.



Less important than animals?

By Vikki Chalmers

Almost every time the programme *Animal 24:7* appears on our TV screens, there is an incident showing dogs or cats kept in filthy conditions. We learn that the animals have been shut in tiny spaces for days on end, often without food or water and living and sleeping in their own mess. We are all appalled and rightly so. Why, then, are we treating our old people in a similar way, not in their own homes but in our publicly funded institutions?

Recently a friend, a lady of 90-plus, did the rounds of Barnet, Finchley Memorial and the Royal Free hospitals, following a fall. In each hospital, she was padded up with nappies and left to spend the night in her own mess. Attempts to attract the attention of a nurse were ignored.

In one hospital, two patients suffered from sickness and diarrhoea caused by something they had eaten. No-one else on the ward had eaten that particular food, and no-one else was ill. The obvious connection between cause and effect was not made. Neither patient was given medication to deal with the problem and, again, they were both padded up and left, with urgent requests for visits to the bathroom completely ignored during the day as well as at night.

Weeks later my friend is still feeling "shamed and humiliated" by her experience. She is really frightened of having another fall and having to go back, and who can blame her?

We all know there are many good, caring nurses but there are far too many instances of this type of unkindness and neglect. It is urgent that our new MPs take action to ensure that the older members of our society can rely, at the very least, on equal rights with our domestic pets.

Cyclists take the high road

By Maya Domb

On Saturday 19 June, East Finchley residents Mike Chilton and Malki Robinson braved Scotland's changeable weather and troublesome midges to walk and cycle 55 miles through the Southern Highlands of Scotland as part of the Martin Currie Rob Roy Challenge.

They were raising money for four charity partners, including the international development charity Sightsavers, for which Mike is a Trustee and Honorary Treasurer.

Mike and Malki, parents of three, juggled their jobs with a busy training schedule, which included cycling to work in central London, extended bike rides at weekends and, for Malki, completing the MoonWalk to raise money and awareness for breast cancer.

The Rob Roy Challenge has raised over £1.5m for good causes. Mike, Malki and two other charity employees tackled the route from Drymen to Kenmore to raise over £1,600 for Sightsavers, which works in developing countries to prevent and cure blindness, and to support the visually impaired.

"We were really excited

about taking part in this great Challenge for charity," said Mike. "Not only is this a chance to get fit, but it's also great to know that every £17 we raise will give someone the gift of sight in one of the countries Sightsavers operates in." You, too, can help transform lives by supporting Mike, Malki and their charities. Visit www.sightsavers.org/mikechilton.



Mike Chilton gets ready to set off on the Highlands challenge.

Obituary: Frieda Schweizer

11 April 1915 - 25 May 2010

By Diana Cormack and Daphne Chamberlain

Only a few weeks after celebrating her 95th birthday, Frieda Schweizer, a resident of Cherry Tree Road for seventy years, passed away in Barnet General Hospital.

Born in Switzerland, Frieda's parents, who were watchmakers, brought her to this country during World War I. She spent the rest of her life here, but still held a Swiss passport which was frequently used as Frieda loved to travel. She also kept up her membership of the Swiss Church in London for many years. An active person until relatively recently, Frieda was a well known figure locally as she was a great



Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

walker. In fact, up to the age of 93 she walked to the United Reformed Church in Muswell Hill for their "Friendship Club" meetings. Frieda put her great fitness down to walking and to swimming which she enjoyed into her late eighties.

It was because of her swimming that Frieda became a contributor to *THE ARCHER*. Introduced to the chilly delights of Highgate Ladies' Club outdoor pond ("my pond", as she called it) as a child, she supplied us with a lot of information about the swimming conditions and traditions there.

Then, when *THE ARCHER* became involved in the hunt for a name for the Green Man Community Centre, Frieda shared some of her memories of the smallholding her father ran on part of the land which is now the Strawberry Vale estate. He kept goats there until the 1960s.

Whenever we met, Frieda was lively, friendly, and both interesting and interested.

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