



Letters to the editor

A-flutter over clutter

Dear Editor,
I was glad to see your piece on street clutter in October's issue. The delightful snap of the bent and twisted street sign in the High Road outside East Finchley station is a masterpiece. Congratulations!

The clutter in the station forecourt is presumably TfL's responsibility but could perhaps be made a community/council matter since the station is a listed building.

The action of those neighbours who took charge of the planters is very welcome, and the gates to the car park have been straightened, but bent signs, unruly shrubs, battered litterbins and generally ill-considered bollards still leave much to be desired.

I am a great de-clutterer and would willingly take a walk or two with like-minded colleagues on a mission to identify the council signs and street furniture elsewhere in the neighbourhood that could be removed without loss to travellers and with real gain to the visual character of our community.

Yours faithfully,
Robert Morris
Heath View Close, N2.

Ideas for Suburb Association

Dear Editor,
I am chair of a small Working Group looking at the future strategy of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association (The RA). We have identified a number of issues for the RA to consider. These include the ways in which it can better represent residents through its relationships with HGS Trust and the London Borough of Barnet.

In addition, communications between the RA Council, comprising 30, and its members (and indeed residents as a whole) are thought by some to be inadequate. We are considering how this can be improved through, for example, better use of the RA website, emails, etc.

It would also be helpful to learn whether members, and indeed other HGS residents, think the RA Council should more actively consult residents before they express views to the trust and Barnet on high profile proposals.

While the RA organises some social occasions which are well thought of (for example the annual fireworks display on New Year's Eve), some feel that we should be doing more to contribute to the social cohesion of the suburb. This will also be considered in due course, and your views would be welcome.

If you have any ideas about how the RA can better serve residents please write to me at 2 Hill Close, London, NW11 7JP, or email me at richardmwiseman@yahoo.co.uk so that the Working Group can take your views into account.

Yours faithfully,
Richard Wiseman
Hill Close, NW11.

Take care at junction

Dear Editor,
I recently witnessed the aftermath of another accident at the junction of the High Road and Creighton Avenue. A poor female cyclist was lying on the ground, not badly injured but in distress, after being thrown from her bike by a car moving across the cycle lane as it left Creighton Avenue.

This was in the morning rush hour and caused considerable disruption. Cyclists have been knocked off before at this junction by cars turning in or out, and parents of Martin School children are constantly worried by the speed at which drivers negotiate the turn, putting their young ones in danger.

I'm a driver and know that it can be difficult for motorists to pull out of Creighton Avenue across two lanes of busy High Road traffic. Sometimes you have no choice but to take chances you shouldn't.

This is not a good state of affairs. There needs to be some way of containing traffic flow at the junction. Until then, drivers just need to calm down and take extra care. Cyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable and need to be watched for at all times.

Yours faithfully,
David Melsome
Richmond Road, N2.

Last exit to Stanley Field?

Dear Editor,
I was not alone in being unsettled to see that Stanley Field was closed to the public again (*THE ARCHER*, September 2010). In September, however, I went by to take a look, and found one of the gates had gone. There was nothing to stop me walking in, so I did. The other gate was still padlocked (somewhat pointlessly). Little had changed inside apart from the mowing down of the brambles and shrubs at the rear of the field. Is this to prepare the field to be built over? And if so, hands off! The state it's in is far from ideal, but that's the last thing we want.

As the Friends of Stanley Field have demonstrated, it's still possible to have football matches there, and with the London Olympics just around the corner we are crying out for more sports grounds. Having attended the meeting in 2005 to discuss the future of the field, I was amazed by the developers' insensitivity. They didn't seem to realise the importance of being on good terms with the locals. We may not have the funding to restore the field at present, but we can at least keep it 'mothballed' until we do; after all, the Olympic legacy aimed to equip London with better facilities before AND after the games. It seems the company officially owning the field is private. If they sell the land for housing, they get all the money, and East Finchley loses a green space. Although it was expected to

reach five or six million pounds, I'd like anyone thinking of selling the field to consider how much it would cost in the longer term to sort out the London suburbs' lack of green spaces, and regeneration schemes.

Yours faithfully,
Jake Eiseman-Renyard
Fortis Green, N2.

Risky crossing

Dear Editor,
Trying to cross over Church Lane at the junction with East End Road, opposite Nazareth House, is a risky business most of the time since the traffic comes racing towards you at breakneck speed from both directions on East End Road.

On any weekday evening from 4pm to 7pm it becomes a complete nightmare because Church Lane is a one-way thoroughfare for traffic heading down towards East Finchley High Road.

I would strongly suggest that Barnet Council's Highways Department installs a pedestrian crossing or traffic lights at the East End Road junction and traffic humps along Church Lane before someone is knocked down and injured, or even killed.

Yours faithfully,
Arthur J Palmer
Homefield Gardens, N2.

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.

Sparkling start for Gaby's jewellery

Creative Gaby Gassner has found her way from the photographic darkroom to the colourful, sparkling world of jewellery design. Gaby, who made her name as a leading black and white photographic printer, is now winning new admirers in her latest career as a jewellery designer.



She has been well received by local retailers, including the Cherry Tree gift shop at 172 High Road, who are now selling Gaby's eye-catching first designs.

She aims to create good quality, fashion-based jewellery that is "affordable, long lasting and can glam up any casual look instantly." Each piece is hand-crafted in Gaby's East Finchley workshop using Czech glass beads, semi-precious stones and sterling silver, vermeil or gold filled clasps.

Gaby's early career revolved around photography, first as a printer and then as a photographic producer. She worked with renowned printer Roy Snell and subsequently joined Metro Art's team of specialist printers, where she was responsible for photographer David Bailey's retrospective 1960's exhibition and book *Birth of the Cool*.

Happy accident

Gaby discovered, by happy accident, that the creative skills and talents she longed to express could be turned to jewellery design. A French

vintage necklace given her by a friend came apart in her hands. As Gaby gathered together the scattered pieces and set about repairing the necklace, a flood of ideas entered her mind, almost like a light switching on.

"I did not know what to expect when I first started showing my jewellery," said Gaby, "but the feedback has been overwhelming and I am thrilled that local stockists have been so positive and encouraging."

Gaby Gassner's handmade bracelets and necklaces are on sale at The Cherry Tree, 172 High Rd, London, N2 9AS, and Temptation, 1187 Finchley Rd, London, NW11 0AA. For further information or for special commissioned pieces, email gabygassner@btinternet.com

Why ballroom dancing is good for you

By John Lintern

Through my GPI recently volunteered to take part in a research project concerned with promoting physical activity in retired people. The exercise programme we had to follow for 24 weeks not only focused on increasing strength but also improving balance. Part of this research was to find ways of reducing the number of falls made by the elderly.

Happily, I found little difficulty with these balance exercises and was amongst the best in my group, which met at the Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road. My success, however, was easy to understand for the balance exercises involved heel raises and walking on the toes, toe raises and walking on the heels and leg swings from the hip.

Fancy footwork

I had been doing these actions, though not these specific exercises, for many years as my hobby was, and still is, ballroom dancing. These movements are the basis of footwork, which is part of the technique we learn to make our dancing look smooth and elegant as we glide across the floor.

Being a qualified dance teacher, I appreciate the many benefits attributed to regular ballroom dancing such as improved cardiovascular health and muscle tone, better posture, burning calories and delaying the onset of dementia. Now co-ordination and balance can be added to the list of improvements.

Tea dances return

Aware of these benefits, in some areas Age UK is starting

tea dances for those aged 50-plus to dance, socialise and enjoy refreshments.

Tea dances are currently held by J&B Dance at Christ Church Hall, near Tally Ho Corner, North Finchley, on Wednesdays at 1pm weekly and on Sundays at 2.30pm fortnightly. For further details please phone 020 8444 0280 or visit www.jandbdance.co.uk.

Recently some older mem-

bers there fondly recalled wartime dancing, remembering the dance bands of Victor Silvester, Mantovani and Joe Loss and the dance halls, long since gone: the Lyceum in the Strand, the Locarno, Streatham, and the Hammersmith Palais. Clearly dancing had brought them great happiness over those years. I wondered if they also knew how much it helps today with their physical and mental fitness.

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