



**Letters to the Editor**

**Library questionnaire raises questions**

Dear Editor,

When I asked Hampstead Garden Library if they were to be closed I was told that it was still not certain. Barnet was consulting with the public and they themselves had been told they might be amalgamated but did not know what that entailed. There were no forms to complete, only a questionnaire online.

I wonder if you agree with me that the questions were so non-explicit and it would be so easy to agree without having any idea what the implications would be. To me, it seems like getting what they want by stealth.

Firstly, there are many people who do not use a computer. One of the strategies is to make libraries fit for purpose. Well, they are! They have lots of books and CDs and talking books, knowledgeable, helpful, interested librarians, someone to have a word with for those who perhaps live alone and are isolated. Also chairs, tables and computers.

Maybe they would like to add coffee and tea machines to make extra cash but there is a good chance of spills and also dregs left in the paper cups. Or do they mean they want to spend money on rebuilding and refurbishment?

Are we in favour of more technology? Like what? Does this mean that you install those machines where you check out the books yourself? I think one library had them but they were so unpopular that people now go to the desk for the librarian.

Are we in favour of the premises being used by other organisations? Like who? If they are paying would they take more time away from library users?

Do we want volunteers to help people with their reading? Do they mean anyone who would LIKE to help but does not know the many ways that people learn and how to overcome the difficulties each individual has, and do they know that not doing it well could reinforce the person's inadequacy?

I expect you have observed many more questions about the questionnaire.

Yours faithfully,  
Lorna Harry,  
Address supplied

**Voice of the people**

Dear Editor,

After reading a letter in *THE ARCHER* about Barnet funding £15,000 on voice coaching for councillors, I can't help asking if it is legal to take money from the people and from improving life in the borough. If councillors need to improve, they should go to night school and pay for this like everyone else does. Misuse of money might be a good point to raise for the solicitor fighting the increase in parking charges.

Yours faithfully,  
Mrs M C Gallacher-Mackay,  
Leicester Road

**Therapy need not be costly**

Dear Editor,

I'd like to respond to the letter about NHS counselling, which I think makes the situation sound worse than it is (*THE ARCHER*, April

2011). There are many reputable, long-established training organisations that offer low-fee therapy and/or counselling. It is hardly the case that a person will need to pay extortionate rates to get help.

Anyone who is interested in receiving counselling or therapy should look up the following: British Association of Counselling, Lincoln Centre for Psychotherapy or Westminster Pastoral Foundation.

A good website is that of the Counselling Directory, which lists and gives information about many counsellors and therapists in your own area, depending on your income and needs.

It is true that there are many practitioners who will charge high rates but this is by far the minority.

Yours faithfully,  
Victoria Davenport,  
Address supplied.



A band welcomed tired walkers at the end of the Big Fun Walk. Photo by Peter Trumpiel

**Strike up the orchestra**

By Betti Blatman

On Saturday 21 May at 7.30pm, Finchley Chamber Orchestra and their conductor David Lardi are giving a concert at Muswell Hill United Reform Church, Tetherdown, N10 1NB, which will form part of the North London Festival of Music, Dance and Drama. The programme will include Schubert's *Rosamunde* overture and ballet music, Grieg's *Piano Concerto* (soloist: Asagi Nakata) and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*.

FCO believe they have found another "winner" in the prodigiously talented 15-year-old pianist Asagi Nakata. Born in Japan, Asagi began piano lessons at the age of three and since 2003, has studied at The Royal College of Music under Danielle Salamon, Ian Jones and, currently, Benjamin Kaplan, and is a pupil of The Latymer School in Edmonton.

Tickets are £12, £9 (concessions), £6 (under-16s) and can be reserved in advance on 020 8458 4719 or email: [tickets@finchleychamber.org](mailto:tickets@finchleychamber.org).



By Adam Justice-Mills

April's over and summer will be starting soon. Our garden's in all-out growth but our trees are thirsty, so it's always too dry. Water's an important part of sustainable thinking: moving water around and making it clean takes lots of energy.

Most (60%) of water used in the UK is for domestic purposes, including garden watering. We normally use around 140 litres each day. The average family's annual water use releases as much CO<sub>2</sub> as two transatlantic flights, so we can have an impact on water (and energy and CO<sub>2</sub>) use. Metering water can prompt a 4% reduction in use since, with a meter, you can see water usage directly: a shower costs around 9p and uses 35-40 litres; a bath is 18p using 80 litres; flushing is 2p for around 8 litres and a dishwasher cycle costs 5p for 20 litres. However, watering the garden with a hose for one hour costs £1.23 and uses 540 litres. Most hose water runs off the surface so is no good for plants or soil.

**How to reduce garden watering**

Big butts, mulching and micro-watering make sense. Muswell Hill was named after a Mossy Well and there are many underground streams locally. Unfortunately, wells are very costly and can lead to long-term problems if the underlying clay dries out.

Big butts collecting rainwater running off roofs are relatively cheap and viable, though the water soon runs out if you connect a hose. Mulching (covering soil with something that lets water through but slows evaporation) means any watering you (or the heavens) do lasts longer. Mulches include bark chips, old leaves, well-rotted manure, crushed shells and gravels, each with its pros and cons. Once mulched, try micro-watering. Basically, you can deliver the right amount of water for a shrub, tree or pot, reducing waste and over-watering. Micro-watering works with butts but only if they are raised well above the ground. A starter kit's around £100 but can be extended. Get a timer as watering in the dark is best for plants. It's a fit-and-forget solution (but watch out for frosts).

A band welcomed tired walkers at the end of the Big Fun Walk. Photo by Peter Trumpiel

**Musical finish to Big Fun Walk**

By Vivienne Bentley

Thank you to all the people who joined us for The Big Fun Walk on Sunday 10 April. This year we had a very large turnout of almost 1,500 walkers, starting at East Finchley Station and ending eight miles later in Hyde Park instead of Storeys Gate, which was closed in preparation for the Royal Wedding. Walkers arrived to the sound of a welcoming band.

The money raised so far is coming in faster and results are higher than in previous years so we're hoping this will be a bumper year: perhaps the best ever in support of the North London Hospice.

If you weren't able to join us but would like to help the Support Committee raise more funds for the Hospice, perhaps you'd like to throw a games or activities event. Anyone can volunteer to hold a bridge, Scrabble or whist drive, or perhaps the local archers, bowls, tennis or football clubs would like to arrange a tournament. All offers will be very welcome. Please email us at the Big Fun Walk address [bigfunwalk@netscape.net](mailto:bigfunwalk@netscape.net).

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