



Letters

Waiting for a hospital bus

Dear Editor,

I am a retired health professional who has lived in East Finchley for five years now and one thing I am so grateful for is the service at Finchley Memorial Hospital. It simply is a wonderful resource for the area, especially the walk-in medical centre.

I have had reason to use this resource many times. As well as getting my regular blood tests I am now a Warfarin patient.

The newly built hospital is such a pleasant place to visit with its landscaped gardens and ample car parking. One does need to work out the parking ticket machines... once done it's easy, but every time I go I see someone else standing there with a puzzled look on their face.

However, it is not so easy for those with mobility problems in that no bus service goes along Granville Road where the hospital is sited. I am fortunate in that I can drive there, or if necessary, take the bus and walk along.

I understand there has been something of a campaign to get something done about this issue. I just want to add my voice as it is becoming harder for those with mobility difficulties who find council services cut back more and more.

**Yours faithfully,
Name and address supplied**

Save our GP surgery

Dear Editor,

This is an appeal to the NHS to save our local GP surgery at 91 High Road, East Finchley (The Archer, September 2014). We need help to keep this surgery open. We have been attending it for almost 40 years.

Both of my parents are elderly and they have various medical problems. I am a doctor myself and I am their only son. Very recently I had to move away from London. As a result it is worrying for me to know that the surgery is going to be closed soon. Considering the vulnerable conditions of patients like my parents, please take action, so that we do not lose our surgery.

**Yours faithfully,
Arup Chakraborty,
Consultant in intensive care and general medicine, Milton Keynes Hospital.**

Public toilets are a disgrace

Dear Editor,

Barnet Council's management of the public toilets in Cherry Tree Wood is awful. Too many council officers, and a private company, have split responsibilities for the buildings, the cleanliness, the plumbing and the supply of toilet paper.

No soap has ever made an appearance in the 33 years I have lived here! Toilet paper is often missing, the toilets themselves are seldom cleaned and often smelly. WCs are blocked for days without attention.

In April this year after finding the gents' toilet locked with no notice I wrote to the council leader Richard Cornelius. It took him seven weeks to respond, saying blandly: "The

lavatories in Cherry Tree Wood are at last being worked on and so will be restored to a respectable state."

Scandalously, the toilets were still locked at the time of the East Finchley Festival on 22 June. They finally opened again in the last week of June. The outside of the toilet block looks good and new hand dryers have been installed. However, those are the only plus points.

On 1 July, the gents' toilet had no paper, no soap and no chain. Fast forward to August and the toilet has excrement all over it and I understand the ladies' was equally filthy. When a complaint was made to Barnet Council, the caller was told that nothing could be done because staff were "on leave".

The private company responsible for cleanliness and providing soap and water deserves to be heavily fined and then sacked.

**Yours faithfully,
Eugene Myerson,
23 Annington Road, N2.**

Noisy neighbours

Dear Editor,

I moved to Muswell Hill in 1993 as it was a beautiful, quiet area with nice and friendly neighbours.

This changed in 2011, when Eden Primary School was granted planning permission to occupy a vacant space adjacent to our back garden. Although local residents opposed the project, citing increase in traffic and noise from the playground, it was approved.

The school supplied a noise report based only on assumptions, as no survey was done. This report gave ambient noise at 50-52dB, and said that noise levels are already high because of another school nearby (in fact, Fortismere school has never been a problem).

As per the National Planning Practice Guidance on noise, this school should never have been built. According to ENV6: Noise pollution: "Potentially noisy developments should only be located in areas where ambient noise levels are already high", and paragraph 123 states: "Planning policies and decisions should aim to avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impact on health and quality of life as a result of new development."

One of Haringey Council's planning conditions was the erection of an acoustic fence to protect neighbouring residents from increases in noise. The school proposed a solid 2m fence which should reduce levels to 51-55dB. It is an ordinary wooden fence of mixed size panels, with huge gaps which allow sound to move freely. Unfortunately, Haringey Council certified it as adequate.

For the last two years we have complained to the council and the school about unacceptable levels of noise. The school playground is immediately at the back of my garden, and we are not able to sit outside or open the windows during school breaks, which occur every two hours. Children are allowed to play in the playground until 6pm, when the school day ends. The shouts can even be heard inside the house. This is affecting our health tremendously.

We assumed that a good relationship with local neighbours would be a top priority for a new school. Sadly, it seems that we were wrong. The last correspondence from the headmistress is dated September

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page"

The Archer, PO Box 3699,
London N2 2DE or e-mail
the-archer@lineone.net.

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2013, with a promise to look into the matter. My emails from June this year have been left unanswered.

For the last 8 months I have been asking for an independent report to actually measure the levels of noise. It was provided on 4th July 2014, and confirms what we have been saying all along. The ambient noise in my garden is 48db, and school noise levels are 86.5db coming from 60-80 children. When the school reaches its full capacity in 2017, there will be 210 children.

The noise levels measured illustrate how loud, high pitched screams and shrieks are perceived by recipients. The noise is not a continuous monotonous hum, but intrusive and impulsive.

I am taking legal advice, but would appreciate any help. Is there anything we can do?

**Yours faithfully,
Yvonne Rybarczyk,
Ringwood Avenue, N2.**

Clutter and junk

Dear Editor,

When I pick up every recent publication which I have bought or have had delivered, a host of unwanted adverts falls out.

I pay for the deliveries and resent having these items thrust upon me. I am sure that the advertisers pay for the insertions but I don't want to.

I also have to throw these papers out and this clutters up my bins.

**Yours faithfully,
Deanna Kaye,
Address supplied.**

Editor's note: The Archer is delivered each month by volunteers and never carries advertising leaflets.

A boy too young to go to war

By John Lawrence

A pavement plaque was unveiled in North Finchley in August to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Private John Parr at the age of 17. The young volunteer was the first British soldier to be killed in the First World War.

Halfway down Lodge Lane, N3, is a modest terrace house, with a bay window, shrubs in the garden and a wooden fence. Just over 100 years ago, it offered cramped conditions for the two families who shared it, one of them the Parrs.

In 1912, at the age of 14, John Parr lied about his age in order to enlist in the Army. He may have been looking for a set of clothes that fitted him and three square meals a day or, as his mother's great niece Iris Hunt puts it, "He was looking for adventure and something to do with his life."

First of many to die

As the First World War broke out in July 1914, he was among the men of the Middlesex Regiment shipped to northern France to halt the German advance into Belgium. On or around 21 August, in circumstances that are still unclear, Private Parr was shot and killed just before the Battle of Mons and shortly after his 17th birthday, becoming the first British fatality of a war that was to claim the lives of millions.

Historians dispute whether he was close enough to the German positions to be killed by enemy fire. There is a theory that, while out on patrol, he might have been the victim of an unwitting



Remembrance: Wreaths of poppies alongside the memorial stone for Private John Parr in Lodge Lane, North Finchley.

Belgian soldier instead, possibly one who'd never seen a British uniform before.

Either way, he died in the service of his country and his grave is now in St Symphorien Military Cemetery, a few miles from the spot where he died.

Searching for the truth

In the confusion of this early skirmish no one knew John's exact fate. The captain of his regiment wrote to his family to say he was missing in action but, months later, his desperate mother still did not know whether her youngest son was alive or dead.

When the Lodge Lane plaque was unveiled, Iris Hunt read aloud from a letter that contained Alice Parr's response to the records office, pleading for help. "He informed [me] that my son Private John Parr has been missing from the regiment since August the 23rd 1914 and has not been heard of since. I should be very grateful for any information as to his whereabouts."

Named and honoured

He was buried by the Germans and it wasn't until a year on, after the Allied lines had moved forward, that his grave was found. Agonisingly, though, his family never learned the circumstances of his death and the mix of grief and guilt they must have been left with may be the reason he was rarely if ever mentioned. Family descendants have said they never heard his name.

But now at last the paving stone provided by Barnet War Memorials Association is a way of honouring his memory. Next time you visit North Finchley, perhaps consider taking the short detour down Lodge Lane to pay your own respects to Private Parr and the many soldiers who perished on the battlefields of Belgium and France.

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