



Letters

Litter lovelies

The residents living in Lincoln Road who picked up litter along their street (*The Archer*, March 2022) are a fine example to us all. In these days of social media, most of us could organise the same kind of thing in our own roads. Of course, it's depressing that the job is left to us rather than Barnet Council keeping the streets clean but that's the way of the world in this age of cuts and reduced services. Still, if we all took charge of the small patch of land outside our own front doors it would take hardly any effort to keep litter off the streets. It makes such a difference to the character and appearance of the whole area.

Michael Reid,
Creighton Avenue, N2.

Ponds swimming charges

Dear Editor,

The result of the judicial review of the over-pricing of swimming at Hampstead Ponds that began in February at the Royal Courts of Justice will be known this month. The charges have rightly been described as both discriminatory and without justification.

Swimming at the ponds on the Heath as a free activity was formally established in Victorian times for all the people of London to enjoy, though in fact the practice goes back much further than that.

Responsibility for the upkeep of the ponds was passed from the GLC to the City of London Corporation, a body that had no experience of providing public service of any kind. It is building a new concert hall at the Barbican costing £288million while asking visitors to the ponds to pay just over £4 for a one-hour swim that had once been freely theirs for the whole day.

While it is hoped that the case will be successful the ponds should in reality be returned once more to an elected and accountable body where such matters as their upkeep

and enjoyment can be properly addressed.

The benefit of fresh water swimming is well known but the unfortunate reality is that these facilities are under-resourced for the large numbers that will want to visit them during the coming summer, but that is where they should remain: under democratic control and free for everyone to enjoy.

John McPartlin
Creighton Avenue, N2.

Water, water everywhere

Dear Editor,

Well done to the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood for pressing the issue of the flooding there with Thames Water and Barnet Council (*The Archer*, February and March 2022). I was walking through Cherry Tree Wood with friends and our dogs this week and could see clearly how the water has spread across the field much more widely than in previous years. Despite relatively dry conditions it doesn't seem to be going away, which suggests serious problems with water levels and drainage underneath. I do hope the Friends and the authorities can get together and do some remedial work to restore this lovely green space to general usage. Of course not many of us want to be sitting around on the grass in the winter months but the spring weather can be glorious and it won't be long before we'll be unfolding our picnic rugs. Perhaps the ground will dry if the rain holds off but we can't expect to go without rain for months and what will happen if we get heavy downpours in May or June? We'll be back to square one and the East Finchley Festival will have to find somewhere else to go.

Laura French,
East End Road, N2.

Lip reading can help one in six of us

There are about 11 million people living in the UK who have hearing loss. Often they will rely subconsciously on watching lips to help them to follow conversations. Mask-wearing in the face of Covid-19 led to many people realising for the first time that they had hearing loss and needed help.

"Lip reading is a challenging but immensely rewarding skill," says Cora Newell, qualified lip reading teacher and East Finchley resident. She teaches a number of lip reading classes for all levels of learners: beginners, improvers and more advanced.

"Hearing loss is an inclusive club which doesn't discriminate. There are many different causes of hearing loss. Some are obvious at birth, some are genetic but manifest themselves over time, some are caused by accident, occupational hazard, injury, illness or drug-reaction and some hearing loss is age-related."

Learning online

Cora has been teaching



Lip reading teacher: Cora Newell

exclusively online over Zoom since the pandemic. Her online classes are diverse and she has students all over the country and overseas too.

Cora says: "Lip reading works very well online. I use Zoom features such as speech-

to-text live transcription, as well as chat and breakout room so that my students can work together and lip read each other as well as me. It's a great advantage for my students to learn in a class where there are a variety of accents as this helps prepare them for the real world."

She focuses in each class on specific consonant confusion groups, stand-alone consonants and vowels and says: "It is important for lip readers to aim to get the gist of conversations, not to get hung up on every word."

Cora is organising her spring term courses now. For further details and information, contact her at: cora362@btinternet.com

Too much of a haul to long haul?

As the world opens up again and long-distance plane travel returns, Archer writer Ruth Anders, pictured right, took a trip to southern Asia. Here she reveals whether it was worth all the hassle and Covid paperwork.

Long haul: before the pandemic, those words were familiar parts of my vocabulary – until I made it on to one of the last flights out of Sydney in March 2020.

Distant shores then became the stuff of fantasy, until January this year. A friend and I had booked a trip to Sri Lanka months ago, when countries were labeled like traffic lights, Sri Lanka being one of the few highlighted 'amber'.

Should I stay or should I go?

The list of non-negotiable instructions was seemingly endless. So much uploading, downloading, document printing, screenshot-saving, applications, visas, vaccine history, additional insurance, deadlines, sourcing appropriate face masks, to say nothing of testing negative in the 48 hours before departure. And that was all before we got to Heathrow.

So convinced were we that something would stop us from going, we did none of our usual research and pre-planning. At the airport, with the flight delayed a couple of hours and with sheaves of paperwork at the ready, we could not believe we'd made it to the departure lounge.

Smart phones or hard copy?

Sri Lankan Airlines finally flew us, heavily masked up for the 12-hour journey. Arriving in the capital Colombo, our pulse rates rocketed again: would we get through Immigration? We did, but not without a few tense moments explaining why one of us had been unable to upload her online health declaration form. In fact, hard copy proved the best way forward throughout, as unreliable WiFi often made electronic document demonstration impossible.

Before our return home, out came our smart phones again to complete our passenger locator forms. At least by then a pre-departure negative test and proof of a PCR test booked in the UK were no longer necessary.



Worth it or not?

In the past, all you needed were an electronic ticket, your passport and possibly a visa. Now it's very different. Was it worth the almost heart-stopping anxiety? You bet. Sri Lanka proved inspirational and, even with a nasty fortnight of having Covid on my return (probably caught on the flight), I'm already planning the next adventure.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

It's all over now

In the weird post-pandemic world, April 1st was celebration day, the day that Covid was officially over. Now we can go out, go to work and ignore every chunk of caution that has guided us through two panic-stricken years.

Temperature, aches, feeling seriously rough? Just grin and bear it, you know, like the soldier with his leg blown off who says it's just a flesh wound. Why? Because Covid is over. And even if it's not you've got to fork out £6 to get a test and who's going to do that?

It was back in March 2020 that Blonde Boris said stay at home and panic. So everybody did. They only went out to panic buy so that there was no food left for key workers, who were forced to live on applause. Your average Waitrose looked like it had been looted by angry members of Generation Range Rover terrified of running out of olive oil.

Next, no flour, eggs or sugar as everyone staying at home discovered their inner baker. Then, as one lockdown turned into another furlough and everyone got fed up with lounging around at home, they splashed out on expensive fitness kit because they couldn't go to the gym. Either that or they got a puppy.

Until finally the vaccine came to save us. So now it's all right, now we can look forward to crowded trains, pubs and shops again. We can look forward to the beginning of June and four days of celebrating the Queen's Jubilee. We will be able to join the other cheering millions crammed onto the Mall because it's all over now.

Well, until the next time, which could be any time as there is a new variant out there and infections were rising fast right up until they stopped testing on, yes, that's right, April Fool's Day.

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

You are welcome to join us for:

Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m. and Weekday masses as advertised on the website.

Join our live-streamed services on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsef/>

Holy Week Services:

10 April – Palm Sunday – 10.00 a.m.

Blessing of Palms, Procession and Sung Mass

14 April - Maundy Thursday – 7.00 p.m.

Mass of the Lord's Supper, followed by Watch until 10.00 p.m.

15 April - Good Friday – 3.00 p.m. Solemn Liturgy

16 April - Holy Saturday – 8.00 p.m. The Easter Vigil and First Mass of Easter

17 April - Easter Day – 10.00 a.m.

Parish Sung Mass of Easter Day (followed by Fizz and Canapés)

For more information, contact the Vicar, Fr Ian Chandler, on 020 8883 9315

Email: vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com

or check out our website:

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>