



Letters

Car park confrontation

Dear Editor,

On a recent Tuesday at about 5.15pm, I pulled into the car park at East Finchley tube station on my way out for an evening in the West End. As it was near to the end of the working day, there were dozens of empty spaces and I was able to park just across from the pay station.

A couple of minutes later, while I was still sitting in my car, a huge Tesla reversed into the space next to mine, so close that it prevented me from being able to open my door. I lowered my window and politely explained that I couldn't get out.

The woman driver, aged about 40, said that she was legally parked as she was within the white lines and that she was in a hurry as she had an appointment. She locked her car and started to make her way to the trains.

I had to yell out of my window and insist that she pull forward to let me out. Grudgingly she pulled out but as soon as I was out of my car, she reversed back in again, just a few centimetres from my door. I told her there was no need to have parked so close to me as there were dozens of other spaces available.

She and her son then ran into the tube station. She knew she was wrong. If I had returned from my evening out to find her car still there, there is no way I could have got back into mine. Why are some people so utterly selfish?

This is actually a problem in a lot of car parks these days, where the spaces are too small for many of today's cars. However, this does not excuse this kind of selfish behaviour.

Joss Woolf
Church Lane, N2

Cut-through consideration

Dear Editor,

Whilst walking on the All Saints Church cut-through from Durham Road to Twyford Avenue, I was shocked to be clipped by a cyclist, riding two abreast with a companion. At my protest he declared he was not only allowed to cycle through, but it was my fault for wearing headphones.

Silly me. It seems it was not his responsibility, when approaching from behind, to slow down, give space or indeed dismount. What if I had been hard-of-hearing I wondered, as he rode off gesticulating at me, or indeed less able to keep my footing and had been knocked over?

As a cyclist myself, his behaviour upset me. We are living in an ever divisive world. Let's not allow a them-versus-us mentality to play out on our local pathways too.

Sarah R,
Address supplied

Send your letters to:
news@the-archer.co.uk

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Praise for playground

Dear Editor

I am so impressed by the new playground in Market Place (*The Archer*, October 2024). Congratulations to the designers and everyone involved in making it a reality. What was once an unwelcoming and uncomfortable play area with run-down equipment is now an exciting and beautiful land of adventure for young ones to enjoy. Barnet Council have been involved in the project as I understand it but it's a sign of the times that the new playground only exists thanks to the hard work of volunteers and their determination to raise the money to pay for it. Facilities for young people should be a priority, not a luxury.

Tilly Milburn,
High Road, N2.

Walking football

By Diana Cormack

Our recent article about a local walking football club ('Find Your Pace at Walking Football', *The Archer*, August 2024) raised some recent memories for me. Not a lot of people know about the sport, but I had heard of it, as well as walking netball, and came across it again earlier in the year.

This was on a coach journey to Chesterfield, when some of my fellow passengers were a group of Australian ladies of a certain age. Of course, I needed to know why they were all dressed the same and why they were going to Derbyshire?

It turned out that they were participating in the World Walking Football Championships along with teams of 'oldies' from 17 other nations. More than 600 male and female players descended on the lovely market town for the finals held that mid-May weekend.

Why Chesterfield? Well, it turns out that walking football was created there by John Croot at Chesterfield Football Club in 2011. The game can be played indoors or outdoors. It is said that when first shown on TV news it was thought to be an April Fool joke, but coverage in later years led to it spreading rapidly. There are now estimated to be over 60,000 players in the UK and it is played in 55 countries.

With 17 countries represented in Chesterfield, there were many members of teams to be seen on the streets, but few local residents I spoke to knew about the event. Nor could I find any publicity before or afterwards in the press or on TV. This was despite the fact that walking football really did come home because England won the championship!



Top spot: Barnet's Deputy Mayor Danny Rich is surrounded by well-wishers as he officially opens the Market Place Playground

Families and dignitaries celebrate new playground

By Ruth Anders

More than 100 adults and children came along to watch Deputy Mayor of Barnet Danny Rich cut the ribbon at the official opening of the new Market Place Playground on Sunday 20 October.

Community dignitaries braving the rain included local MP Sarah Sackman, Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy Mete Coban, Leader of Barnet Council Barry Rawlings, London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden Anne Clarke, Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change Cllr Alan Schneiderman, Cllr Arjun Mittra (who

remembers playing there as a child), Cllr Alison Moore, and Roger Chapman and Kathy Batten, of East Finchley Community Trust.

Representatives from some of the funding bodies including Grow Back Greener, Betty Messenger Foundation and Grange Big Local also attended alongside the Playground's inspiration Tim Gill, play con-

sultant from the design team Phil Doyle. They were joined by Samantha Haycock and Michelle Frith, of the Friends of Market Place Playground, actor Carolyn Pickles and two head teachers, Ziz Chater from Martin Primary School and Lucy Harrison from the Archer Academy. All in all, it was an exciting and lively celebration, grey skies notwithstanding!

Henry Alder: 1941–2024, festival director and friend

By Ollie Smith

Henry Alder, a long-time resident of Cherry Tree Road, N2, and a former director of the East Finchley Festival, has passed away peacefully at the age of 83.

As a boy, Henry witnessed history first-hand when his school placed him at the front of the crowd for Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953. Not only that, his home was one of the first on his street to have a television, so he enjoyed watching the event twice, in person and on TV.

Henry had a long and successful career as a mechanical engineer, travelling to power stations across the UK. He loved being hands-on with machinery, a passion that led to an unfortunate exposure to asbestos, which later affected his health. One of his favourite stories involved a day he worked while he was ill, accidentally causing a power outage in Watford and the surrounding areas.

Henry moved into Cherry Tree Road in 1982 and quickly became an important figure in our community, including directing the East Finchley Festival for a couple of years in the late 1980s.

After taking early retirement, Henry pursued his long-standing interest in academia, earning a Master's degree in Energy Management Conservation from Middlesex University. This made him a pioneer in energy conservation and climate awareness long before these



Community stalwart Henry Alder

issues were widely recognised.

He also served as a senior exam invigilator at London universities, endearing himself to students with his humour and support. He was an avid sportsman, playing competitive squash and tennis, and he skied passionately, despite breaking a few bones along the way.

Henry never married but was a beloved figure to his friends and neighbours. He maintained a sharp mind and sense of humour throughout his life, even as his health declined. He will be fondly remembered as a dear friend and true pillar of our community.