



Letters



54% rent rise: The Retreat salon

No retreat on The Retreat

Dear Editor

I read in The Archer last month about the 54% rent rise that The Retreat Hair and Beauty salon in East Finchley is appealing against. Having been a customer of Alban there for the past 20 years, I wanted to put in a letter of support in their fighting against this.

This has undoubtedly caused enormous unnecessary strain, and in appealing against this Alban and his wife are also helping prevent this from happening to other businesses in the area.

Debbie Linton,
Address supplied

Save our cafés

Dear Editor

Help! The City of London is attempting to change the beloved cafés that have been serving Hampstead Heath lovers for many years and there is a large movement trying hard to stop this unnecessary process.

People who enjoy the Heath really love the two cafes concerned: the Lido cafe and Parliament Hill Café, which has been run so well by the Italian D'Aurio family for 30 years.

We all really appreciate the warmth and friendliness of all the staff and value of the food they serve and many hundreds are trying hard to stop any take-overs by large chains, which seems to be what the City of London wants to offer for some reason.

We are trying to keep these beloved family-run cafes, and we need all the support we can get before things go further. We don't want them to be replaced by faceless, more expensive chain restaurants.

So if you care too, PLEASE get involved or sign the petition by going to www.change.org and searching 'Save our local cafes'. Your voice will help! Thank you.

Lisa and Dick Robinson,
Beresford Road, N2

Who's knocking ?

Dear Editor

On Monday 8 September, a roofing company knocked on my door in East Finchley looking for work. I had a small bit of guttering to be cleaned, for which I was quoted a cost of £50.

My top front gutter also needed cleaning but I knew it would be a bigger job and a much bigger cost so I told them I didn't want that done.

The next day there was a knock at the door and the same roofers appeared, but I discovered they had already set up a ladder in my front garden to work on the top gutter.

A chap was at the top with a bucket and trowel, clearing it. I also heard roof tiles being moved. I told the roofer to come down and leave immediately with his two colleagues.

Needless to say, no money changed hands but it's impossible to know what damage they might have done by moving the tiles.

This is a warning story to other homeowners. Take care who you are engaging to do work on your property and make sure they never do more than you ask, or you might end up paying the cost.

Name and address supplied

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

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be printed. Contact details can be withheld on request at publication. We reserve the right to abridge letters for reasons of space.



Ocean to ocean: Nick Woodward setting off from Nordkapp deep in the Arctic Circle in Norway with cycling companion Pete Goulston; wearing a net to ward off midges in the midnight sun in Finland; and arriving with mascot Quackster at Tarifa on the Mediterranean

Arctic adders, soaring Sierras and high heat on my north to south journey on two wheels

By Nick Woodward

In May, we reported that East Finchley resident Nick Woodward was attempting to cycle more than 6,000km across Europe from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. Well, he did it, completing his epic journey in a remarkable 55 cycling days. Here, Nick shares the most memorable moments.

Our start at Nordkapp in Norway, Europe's most northerly point, was bitterly cold and windy, leaving us with frozen fingers and toes. I was with Pete Goulston, a friend from school days 40 years ago, who'd agreed to join me on the Arctic leg of the trip.

Heading south from there, with the Mediterranean as the target, seemed a near impossible prospect. However, the eight days cycling in the Arctic, much of it off-road through Finnish forests, camping wherever we fancied, with the midnight sun lighting our way, was very special.

Reindeer were ever present. We even woke to a group around the tent one morning. A big shock was nearly riding over an adder (a poisonous snake). We watched our step in camp after that! Worse, the infamous Scandinavian midges were horrific. We were never without our mosquito head nets whilst there.

Early starts

Pete departed as planned in Stockholm and the journey from there to the border of

Spain on my own was without major incident, apart from getting lost and ending up in a disused quarry on the outskirts of Paris, resulting in an unpleasant hour dragging my bike up muddy slopes and across fields to get back on track.

The final leg south though was a different matter. Spain was much tougher than I had anticipated. The European heatwaves meant temperatures were peaking in the high 30s and I had to make it through several mountain ranges with the passes over 5,000ft.

To cope with this, most mornings I left in the dark before dawn and had short days, finishing before noon. Early riding brings its pleasures though: empty roads; riding at sunrise is always special; and on a couple of occasions I cycled past groups of deer and flocks of vultures on the ground, waiting for thermals to soar on. The vultures were spectacular in size and unexpectedly prevalent in the Spanish mountains.

Made it

I had a great sense of achievement and even greater relief to finally reach Tarifa, the

southern tip of Spain, at noon on 24 August. The northern shores of Africa were just visible across the Strait of Gibraltar. I had travelled through nine countries, along 6,000km, up 40,000m of ascent and seen amazing sights along the way. The adventure of a lifetime.

All this was done to raise funds for the Wheelchair Football Association (WFA), which I have been involved with for nearly a decade. After two months on the road, the trip mascot Quackster and I took our final photo overlooking the Mediterranean.

We would be delighted if you used the QR code to learn a little more about wheelchair football and consider making a donation to help the sport and players.



Half term at Artsdepot

Artsdepot in North Finchley has announced a week of shows and creative activities to entertain youngsters during half term.

Running at different times between Friday 24 and Friday 31 October, there's the Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler puppet and song show ASquash

and a Squeeze, the inter-generational adventure Grandad Anansi, live game show WiFi Wars, mindfulness and creativity in The Little Yoga Art Camp,

and Little Terror, a fun show for three to seven-year-olds. Find the full set of listings and book at www.artsdepot.co.uk