



Letters

Buses are a bust

Dear Editor,

I write regarding the 143 bus route that is relied on by many people in East Finchley and beyond which must rank as one of the worst routes in the area. Firstly, there is the hopeless failure to run to the published timetable. Passengers frequently endure gaps of 20-minutes or clusters of buses arriving 2/3 minutes apart.

Then there is the severe overcrowding of the buses between around 3-4pm on part of the route during term times when they are filled to bursting point with school children since the operator abandoned putting on extra double deck buses to absorb the surge in passengers.

The new all electric buses may be planet friendly but it is doubtful the design was ever tested by real passengers. These new buses are a masterpiece of poor design and feature. They have oversprung suspension that rocks the body of the bus on braking, cornering and acceleration. This is made worse by some drivers who stab at the accelerator and brake (not all drivers by any means but a significant proportion). This regularly catapults recent boarders down the bus as it lurches away from the stop or pitches them towards the front of the bus as it brakes for a stop or in stop/start traffic. The buses have wholly inadequate ventilation, which is very noticeable especially in warmer weather,

when the larger windows act like a greenhouse and elevate the internal temperature. Soon after introduction of these buses, it appears that drivers' cabs were fitted with mini-fans, presumably because of driver discomfort. Meanwhile passengers are left to stew in excessive heat.

And they have a bizarre seating provision. There are only two non-priority seats which do not require passengers to climb up a platform of approximately 30cm in height. The rear sets of four facing seats are up a slope of the bus floor and then a further platform of around 30cm.

Preparing to disembark and approaching the exit doors is a dangerous gamble. A passenger carrying a bag has to climb down from the platform and then negotiate the downward slope with nothing immediate to hold onto.

Perhaps the operator would like to respond to these criticisms or, if sceptical, it could canvass its passengers to see what they think about the issues raised. Better still, the operator could take steps to sort out these issues.



Rough ride: An electric bus on the 143 route

Name and address supplied



Unique character: East Finchley High Road. Photo Mike Coles

Supermarket creep

Dear Editor,

East Finchley is a community that famously defeated McDonald's in the 1990s and saved our beloved Phoenix Cinema because stalwarts like Peter Hart, Roger Chapman, Kate Brown, Dame Frances Crook and the late Rudi Vis understood that representing N2 is about more than just administration—it is about protecting a soul. They didn't just manage our streets; they championed our identity against corporate overreach.

Today, that identity faces an insidious and equally relentless challenge: 'supermarket creep.' With two Tescos and a Sainsbury's now occupying a single stretch of the High Road, we are becoming a 'clone town', a

transit zone of self-service checkouts rather than a unique community 'village' with a backbone.

We felt this most keenly with the loss of our unique bookshop, Black Gull Books. It was the perfect antidote to cynicism and a cultural hub for residents and artists alike. However, there is real hope in the new Community Right to Buy powers which give us the legal teeth to rescue empty units and save them for the community. I would love to see these powers used to facilitate the return of a community-led bookshop to our High Road, a place where ideas, rather than just plastic-wrapped groceries, are traded once more.

Denise Wyllie-Ballard,
Address supplied



Chris Berlingieri, second right, and family at his celebration party

My party to celebrate life

Dear Editor,

Five years ago to the day when I had a near-fatal accident, I had the pleasure of hosting a celebration party at Madden's Ale House in the High Road in April, the same venue where my band Sound of the Suburb played many times.

After the accident, I was in an induced coma for three months, in a hospital bed for a year, then in a wheelchair. Thankfully, I no longer need a wheelchair and not even a walking stick. I walk with a limp, but that is hardly a problem, considering that I had come very close to dying.

I must thank all the surgeons, doctors, physios, and fellow chiropractors who have enabled me to make such great improvements. Most of this was done with the help of a GoFundMe campaign that my sisters kindly set up for me.

And I want to say thank you for all the very generous donations from my family members, friends and even former patients of mine. I will soon be getting back to the chiropractic profession that I love.

Unfortunately, I will never be able to play guitar again as I did in our band Sound of the Suburb, but luckily after three surgeries on my left arm I can bend my left elbow fully, which allows me to play drums. So watch this space for a new band I will be forming soon.

Chris Belingieri
Address supplied

Re-Griddable solution from page 9

Across:

- CRAW
- RACE
- AGES
- PEST

Down:

- CRAP
- RAGE
- ACES
- WEST

Not for resale

Dear Editor,

What a pity that the welcome return of the book exchange in East Finchley Station is being spoilt by two separate individuals who come and sweep everything from the shelves for their own use. They've been spoken to, but take no notice.



The station bookcase

I now write inside the front wrapper of my book donations: "East Finchley FREE Book Exchange, NOT FOR RESALE" and add a small spine label "Free Book Exchange". It may deter the thieves, but they obviously have no shame.

Jacky Wood
Cherry Tree Road, N2

Unnamed path

Dear Editor,

The walkway that runs alongside Long Lane Pasture, between Long Lane and the junction between Rosemary Avenue and Tangle Tree Close, parallel with the noisy North Circular Road and crossing the Northern line, does not, as far as I am aware, have a name.

It is an important and busy thoroughfare, not least for pupils on their way to and from the schools on East End Road. I think it deserves a name. How about 'Pasture Passage'?



Needs a name: The path alongside Long Lane Pasture. Photo John Lawrence

John Scadding
Address supplied



Dawn light: Long Lane Pasture in the early morning. Photo Linda Dolata

Dawn delight

Dear Editor,

3rd May, 4.45am, and Long Lane Pasture was open for a chance to hear the dawn chorus. Amazingly a total of 17 species was identified (using the Merlin app for accuracy). For a two-acre nature reserve like the Pasture, this is outstanding.

A wide range of habitats, native woodland, meadow, ponds and scrub boosts the biodiversity. The list of species included wren, blackcap, blackbird, song thrush, great tit, robin, chiffchaff, blue tit,

garden warbler, carrion crow, ring-necked parakeet, jackdaw and coal tit.

House sparrows, dunnocks, black headed gulls, wood pigeons and two species of bat were also seen. All this against a background of traffic on the North Circular Road, running alongside! Sadly it was too cloudy to see the sunrise, but it was still well worth the early start.

Linda Dolata
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.