



LETTERS

Memories

Dear Editor,

A couple of weeks ago I received a copy of your March edition newspaper in which Jessie Turner was reminiscing about Martin School and had a school photo printed. I too remember my mother having a similar photo, although very faded as she was born in 1909, so was there a bit earlier, and I remember her talking about a Miss Beaupre! My mother's maiden name was Nellie Margaret Coombes and she went to school there until she was 14 and went to work!

We all lived in Leopold Road after my grandfather died in 1950, keeping my grandmother company; they had lived in that house all their married lives. My grandfather, Harry Coombes, was the local piano tuner and carpenter and was quite a character, spending quite a bit of time at the local pub!

My brother Philip (Spooner) also went to the Martin School and later the Alder School. He used to do odd jobs for Peter Sellers' parents who lived in a block of flats in High Road between Leopold and Leslie Roads. Sadly all have passed away.

Walkabout

I was also interested to see what was happening in East Finchley, and sad to think that the George Pub was being demolished. I used to walk through the Market Place passing it each day to the tube station. To think it was there before Australia was discovered is remarkable. I doubt if there's much I'd recognise in East

Finchley now, as I married in 1958 and emigrated to Australia.

My thanks to Ruby Cattle who used to live next door to us in Leopold Road for sending me your newspaper; she thought I'd be interested in it, and I was.

Many thanks.

Hazel Astley, Australia

Triffid alert

Dear Editor,

I was very surprised to read Dr. Natelson's suggestion (in your July 2001 issue) that the Borough Council should delay the spraying of weed killer on three patches of Japanese knotweed in Coppets Wood.

This plant is probably the most pernicious plant in this country and it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to spread it. Japanese knotweed can spread at the rate of an inch every day and its rhizome system can spread up to seven yards each side and up to six feet deep. It has ruined cemeteries and grows through tarmac and even through the floors of houses.

Unless we want to find this weed spreading through St. Pancras & Islington Cemetery, the allotments, playing fields and other nearby open spaces, it should be eradicated as quickly as possible. When first brought to Europe and planted in a garden which had nearly a thousand different species of plants, it overran the garden and killed off most of the other plants.

Yours sincerely,
Gerald Kirsh
Ossulton Way, N2.



Back to his roots

The late Mr. James Donald McCree returned to live in his old home ground of East Finchley at the beginning of this year. Unfortunately, although happily re-housed, he was unable, through ill health, to avail himself of his local hostelry.

When he died in April of this year, aged 89, his family were able to arrange for the hearse (A.W. Luck & son) to commence the journey to the local crematorium from the Duke of Cambridge public house; thereby fulfilling a final achievement (or as close as it gets). Family and friends gathered in the public house afterwards, welcomed by the landlord Mr. Paul O'Mahoney.

Free Workshop

As part of celebrating its 100th issue this autumn, THE ARCHER is running a free workshop where you could be setting the front page of THE ARCHER newspaper. Hosted by the Green Man Community Centre the workshop will cover all aspects of writing, creation and production of news, features and photography that go to make up a typical ARCHER.

Aimed at all age groups the workshop will be informal and fun, making use of professional software and IT equipment. Those attending will have the chance to create their own ARCHER pages, some of which could appear in the October edition.

The workshop will last 2 to 3 hours and is planned for Sunday 2 September. To enrol please contact us by email or telephone (using the enquiries number) listed on page 2. Regrettably places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so don't delay! We look forward to meeting you there.

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Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.

Sofa, so good

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last month I bought a new sofa. That was fine. It was getting rid of the old one that caused the problem.

Too old to have a fire certificate, its only future could be scrap. Too big to fit into a car, and impossible to dismantle, it would have to be collected. No problem, surely. Barnet Special Collection Unit would see to that.

They did - but I discovered some interesting facts in the process.

The collection bit starts outside your home. The men are not allowed to set foot inside, "because they are not covered by insurance". Suppose the householder is physically unable to move the furniture outside? "If the person is pregnant, or on the Assisted List, they'll come in." (To be on the List, you need assistance to get to your wheelie-bin.)

Doctor's note

How about the unListed with health problems, or the elderly, or people who live alone and don't know their neighbours? How about people with narrow doorways or treacherous stairs, or flats without lifts? "If it's impossible to move the item outside, they can always get a note from their doctor." People in all these categories? Apparently so. Most doctors, I was told, will play ball.

Mine didn't have to waste her time. I was lucky enough to have help, but manoeuvring a large, heavy piece of furniture up and down flights of steps, and along a path to the pick-up point was no joke.

You don't usually carry your own sofa home from the shop, so why should you mutate into a removal person when you have to dispose of it? Oh yes, and - unless you're exempted by means test - you pay £21 for the experience.



A Great inconvenience!

By Sippy Azizollah

Whilst out in my wheelchair in East Finchley High Road, I had the misfortune of needing a loo. Where do I go? I know; East Finchley station will surely have one...

There was nobody at the ticket collection booth and, having asked several passers-by where the toilet was with no success, I went to the ticket window. Nobody appeared to be there and, being in my wheelchair, my head just about reached the bottom of the counter. I called out a couple of times and finally a gentleman came to the window. I asked him if there was a disabled toilet in the station, to which he replied that there were no toilets at all. When I remarked at how outrageous it was, he recommended I try the pub round the corner.

Flush of success

More than desperation welled up inside me as I followed his directions to The Old White Lion pub. On entering the pub, I was greeted with a smile by one of the bar staff, who promptly guided me to the disabled toilet. They do keep it locked so that it isn't used by anyone other than disabled people.

I'd like to thank the staff at The Old White Lion for the courteous way I was treated. I know now that this pub is the only place in the whole of East Finchley where a wheelchair user can go to the toilet... unless you know better.

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