



Letters to The Editor

Ignorant

Dear Editor,
Having read the letters submitted by Pete Eiseman-Reynard about Brian Sewell's critique of stained glass in East Finchley, I felt that I must comment. I doubt the man has ever really explored stained glass and its history in North London.

As I am a professional stained glass artist and an East Finchley resident, I find these comments abhorrent. I design, manufacture, repair and restore stained glass, from 17th century windows to modern projects, and can assure you that the windows I have seen in East Finchley compare favourably with those elsewhere in this country in quality, value and design. In fact, I have seen some rather unusual and exceptional windows that would put the shoddy critique of this man to shame.

East Finchley can be proud of its heritage in stained glass. Don't be dismayed by the ignorance of someone claiming to know it all!

Ruth Levine
Long Lane, N2.

Barnet bias?

Dear Editor
Council Leader Victor Lyon continually points to the reputation and independence of the Research Company hired to run the library services consultation as if this were in itself a guarantee of a full and fair process (October ARCHER page 1). But everything hinges on how Barnet briefed them in the first place. Barnet had already stated that the outsize commercial development necessary for the creation of a new library space opposite East Finchley Station would not be mentioned. Refurbishment of the current library is only included as an option because residents forced it back onto the agenda. But the strong negative slant in the exhibition and throughout the questionnaire, which gives library users no opportunity to list its good points, shows Barnet is clearly biased against this option.

This exercise asks residents to make an important choice based on incomplete and misleading information – a choice

many would make differently, if they knew the full facts. The findings are therefore invalidated, as they cannot be guaranteed to feed back a true reflection of local opinion – the whole point of the exercise. It is Barnet's brief that is responsible for this, and Victor Lyon should acknowledge the Council's role in the design of the consultation.

Why, after such a swingeing Council Tax increase, has our money been wasted on such a shabby and apparently cynical exercise? The obvious conclusion is that it would further the Waitrose superstore application, which some elements at Barnet clearly want very much.

(Name and address supplied)

Learning's blessed abode

Dear Sir

I am both shocked and saddened to read of the demise of the Finchley County School. Shocked because it has not achieved listed status and saddened because a building of such character nears demolition.

I attended the school from September 1931 until July 1936 and, although I was far from being a brilliant scholar, I treasure the memory of those years. I made friends there and loved the sports activities and I remember taking every opportunity to climb the ropes during gymnasium lessons!

Over the years when I have passed by the building in bus or cab I have looked up at the windows of what were, in my time, the physics lab, the chemistry lab and the geography room (also used for our sewing lessons). On return journeys I have looked at the art room projecting from the rear of the building. I spent many a fruitless hour there trying to put on paper what my eyes were supposed to see!

I have great affection and appreciation for this building and Finchley will be all the poorer when it has been replaced by faceless flats. But always, whenever I pass the site, I shall hear in my head and heart the refrain of our school song: 'All hail to learning's blessed abode and to our friends and comrades hail'

Yours faithfully
Miss G E Dale
Leopold Road, N2.

Not the first time

Dear Archer

I thoroughly endorse Peter Eiseman-Reynard's criticisms of Brian Sewell's cheap gibes at East Finchley (September 2003).

It is not the first time that Sewell has made East Finchley the butt of his patronising and misplaced sense of his own superiority. I can recall, when I was Councillor for the area, taking him to task for a similar outburst, and my letter was published in *The Evening Standard*.

Such childish insults to our community must be discouraged.
John Davies,
Manor Park Road, N2.

OBITUARY

Catherine Devlin Hamilton

Catherine Hamilton was a valued member of THE ARCHER team, distributing the paper to the Great North Road area for several years, and she is sadly missed by us all.



Catherine Hamilton. Photo courtesy of Bill Hamilton.

In September 1955, Catherine was born in Catrine, a small town in Ayrshire, Scotland. She attended Catrine junior school where, with encouragement from her favourite teacher she achieved excellent academic results. From there she was admitted into the top stream at Cumnock Academy, and became Captain of her House and of the Hockey Team, and President of both the Sailing Club and the History Society.

Catherine went to Glasgow University, (MA Hons 2.1 Politics and Economics 1978) and City University, London (MSc Information Science 1979). She entered her chosen field of information science in the early days of computerisation. Her specialist area was text retrieval systems, and latterly she worked on the organisation of music information on the Internet. She worked for Solon Consultants, BRS, Whitaker and most recently for Muze, making it possible to search the internet and identify a vendor of music. She was widely respected and very well liked by her colleagues. She was a very active member of the Institute of Information Scientists and became a Fellow of the Institute in 1989.

Catherine always lived in North London: Muswell Hill,

Crouch End and, from 1998, East Finchley. Although she intended to return to Scotland, she loved London, readily making friends wherever she went. She was a keen swimmer and swam for many years in Park Road Public Pool. In recent years she ran regularly and her usual circuit was Great North Road, Cherry Tree Wood Park, Woodside Avenue, Bancroft Avenue. She enjoyed the Phoenix Cinema. She also tended her small garden area with great care and affection.

Catherine died suddenly from a heart attack at her home in East Finchley on 14 August. Because of her seeming good health her death came as a great shock to us all. Her funeral took place in her hometown of Catrine but was attended by many from the South. She is survived by her mother Annie, brother Billy, sister in law Liz and nephew and niece Michael and Judith, all of whom live in Ayrshire.


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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.



Mobile Mast
Outrage
By John Dearing
On Thursday 25 September, I, a resident of Viceroy Close, awoke to find scaffolding being erected in front of my windows. The following Sunday, at 8.45 am, builders crashing around on the roof not only awoke me from my Sunday morning lie-in, but exposed to me the sight of an enormous mobile crane, squatting in the car park. Very soon, sections of the O2 network mobile phone masts were being hoisted onto the roof, and installed on the side of the building. The roaring of the diesel engines and the shouting and banging of the builders carried on for most of the day.

Out of control
The following day, on calling the freeholders' agents (Messrs Brickman Yale of Whetstone) to protest at this outrage, I was told, "Sorry, we didn't know when they were coming", implying that they knew about this all along, but offered leaseholders no advance notice, let alone any kind of consultation; nor did the Council planning department know anything at all about it. Not that it is likely that they would have done anything – as witnessed by the fact that when Hutchisons installed masts as reported in *THE ARCHER* June 2002, they inspected the site and declared it "outside of planning controls."

Protest storm
Clearly O2 had learnt from the previous year, when they stirred up a storm of protest when applying for planning permission, particularly as the proposed array was just across the road from the Bobath centre for children with cerebral palsy. O2 swiftly withdrew their application, but this year it would appear they decided to sneak in on Sunday morning without warning and install their equipment before residents and people concerned at the irresponsible and uncontrolled spread of these masts, could do anything about it.

They are vandals, defacing the building with their vile masts and base stations and the result will be even more of their filthy microwave radiation to fry the brains of residents.

The real villain of the piece is the freehold company, Greentree Estates, who bought the block of flats in 2000. Since then they have tried everything they can to maximise their profits, selling the car park off to developers and inviting in the mobile companies from which they get fat rents. No doubt we can expect further outrages when the other three mobile networks arrive, depressing the value of our flats and leaving our flat block looking like a steel mesh Christmas tree.