



Letter to The Editor

Miracle Escape

Dear Archer, Unfortunately, you were incorrect to say in your recent front page article that none of the children in the playground at Cherry Tree Wood was "in the particular spot" when a huge bough fell down last month.

My three-year-old son was directly underneath it, but by some miracle the main bulk of the branch just missed him. I dread to think what would have happened had he been standing a few inches to his left or right.

The Council must bear some responsibility. They should have spotted the rotting branches long ago and removed those hanging over the playground well before they were at risk of falling.

In fact, after the bough had come down, it took them almost a week to remove it and check for other potentially dangerous branches, during which time the playground was left open. Railings, which were bent by the force of the falling wood, have still not been repaired. It's symptomatic of the Council's apparent lack of interest in Cherry Tree Wood playground, which urgently needs new child-safe gates and improved facilities.

Yours sincerely,
Danny Shaw,
Ingram Road, N2

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net.

Career change

By Sheila Armstrong

Robin Kiashek first got a place at The British College of Osteopathic Medicine at 18. But it was not till several years later, after a successful career as a commercial photographer in advertising, that he took up his place there. As a photographer he maintained an interest in healing and this gradually led him back to his first career choice. With the support of his wife he completed the lengthy course and qualified as a naturopathic osteopath in 1996.

While osteopathy seeks to detect and treat damaged muscles and joints, naturopathic osteopathy also tries to balance the various aspects of a person to enable them to return to good health. Naturopathy essentially believes that the body has the power to heal itself and the practitioner helps create the best conditions for it to do this. Treatment can vary. It may only involve manipulation of the body but can also be concerned with nutritional and emotional factors which may underlie the problem. To maintain improvements made by manipulative treatment exercises or a change of diet may be

recommended by Robin.

Not just for bad backs

It's not just for bad backs or neck pain: headaches, frozen shoulder, glue ear, osteoarthritis, IBS, skin conditions, heart and respiratory disorders are some of the conditions that can be helped. Robin treats both children and adults.

The Twyford Practice operates from Robin's home in Twyford Avenue, N2. He has carefully converted a space that was originally his garage, creating a restful, purpose-built, self-contained clinic. In the waiting room there is a set of his black and white photographs taken in Hungary – a reminder of his first



Robin Kiashek by Sheila Armstrong

career in photography.

He can be contacted on 020 8815 0979. Or visit his website www.robinkiashek.co.uk for

information about naturopathic osteopathy, conditions that can be treated, and testimonials from many clients.

BOOK REVIEW

London Born

Local history memoirs by a local author, a review by Hannah Eiseman-Renyard

London Born is a book like no other I've read. It is the story of Sidney Day's life, from childhood to the end of his service in World War Two.

Written up from taped interviews made by his granddaughters, it is an autobiography

that the subject never thought worth recording. Sidney is illiterate, and was bemused that anyone wanted to record, let alone publish, his story. The narrative is casual and chatty, alive with Sidney's own voice and colloquialisms, sometimes spelt phonetically, and charmingly flippant. It does take a little while to get used to occasionally sounding like an extended Radio Four broadcast, though you stop noticing once you're a few chapters in. The period details, referred to in passing, could have done with a little explanation for those who don't know what, for example, a 'copper' (something to do with washing) is. But, at the same time, the narrator's familiarity with his environment saves it from becoming a dry, history textbook.

Extra-ordinary

Living in the notorious 'Tiger Bay' area in Highgate,

he recalls the post World War One poverty and talks about customs now all but forgotten – such as catching wild birds to take to the pub on a Sunday.

The book describes many parts of London; from Covent Garden, where you could drink at all hours of the day, to our own East Finchley, which he rides to on a horse, then leaves the horse in an open field.

The happy-go-lucky Sidney gambled with the law on a regular basis – losing when he went to prison, with his friend Ginger, for theft. However, even inside, he was always looking for ways to get around the system. Rewarded for good behaviour, he is released early and returns to his wife-to-be, Mary.

Even in (reluctant) active service during World War Two, Sidney was still finding ways to keep his family back home well looked after, stealing chickens and petrol, and from American

soldiers – and each time gets away with it.

The book sparkles with character. His charismatic cheeky chappy nature makes this an extraordinary account of Sidney Day's early life, no matter how ordinary it may seem to him.

London Born is published by Old Git Publications, ISBN is 0 9547690 0 7.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

A good idea at the time

So McDonalds are not only going healthy but they're changing their logo. Just as Prince became a series of squiggles, so the world of the McBurger is becoming a question mark. All right, so it's a gold question mark, but it's still a question mark and not the famous golden arches. The admen reckon this is a really cool idea, especially as you can now get salads and other healthy stuff, but I don't go to McBurgers for healthy food, I go there for Big Macs and big fries, not lettuce. Still, I guess it must seem like a good idea...

The world is littered with 'good ideas' that ended up looking kind of dumb. The problem is where to start. Ford came up with the wonderful car of today and tomorrow, the Edsel, in 1957. This has gone down as the biggest disaster in motoring because it was ugly and no one wanted it. Dodge had made the same dumb mistake with their good idea, the La Femme. This came in pink, with pink seats and pink trim. Guess what? Women didn't like being talked down to by carmakers and the thing sold like cold porridge and was out of production inside two years.

Reckon that's bad? Well if you want seriously clever stupid look no further than Coca-Cola. With a touch of sheer genius they decided that the only way to beat Pepsi was to come up with a new, revised 'New Coke'. Guess what? Everyone hated it and millions of dollars later they dumped it and went back to good old Coke. Then again, what about yoghurt shampoo? This bright idea comes from 1979 and it's biggest claim to fame is the number of people who drank it and got ill!

There are others... Back when you could advertise fags on TV someone came up with Strand and it's catchphrase 'You're never alone with a Strand'. Naturally, no one bought them because no one wanted to be seen as a saddo whose only friend was his cigarette.

And finally, the blokes from Morris Motors who decided that it would be really dumb to ship back the plant and equipment to build a daft rear-engined German designed car in 1945. After all, who'd want to buy it? I mean, it looked like a beetle and they had the Morris Minor ready to go into production...

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.



Near to my heart

By E O'Riordan of Nazareth House, N2. I have just been reading "Pavement Disrepair" in THE ARCHER, and a problem very near to my heart, as I've tripped up a few times myself and not just in Finchley.

What I've been wondering for a long time is, why doesn't the Council get rid of paving slabs and use asphalt as on the roads? I would think it would be much more suitable.

I am enclosing a cheque to help with THE ARCHER's running costs,

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