



### Letters to the Editor



Gill's giant visitor - see below. Photo by Gill Steiner

#### There's an elephant in my garden

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to read about the butterfly bonanza at Long Lane pastures in your September issue particularly as I have found the biggest British caterpillar, which is an elephant hawk moth. I found it on 13 September in my garden eating the leaves of my lythrum plant. I have to admit that initially I did not warm to it, but having discovered that it has such a great name I came to like it.

Being a maths teacher at a girls' school, I took the caterpillar into school to show my pupils. Luckily it was lively and I managed to show it to three small classes. The girls liked it very much. It was in a washing up bowl with a supply of leaves, some of which were wrapped in damp kitchen paper.

At about 11am one of the girls reported that it had vanished. We saw that it had climbed into the tunnel of the kitchen paper, dragged a few leaves in as well, but had also secured itself to the twigs by very fine silken thread, meaning it was well on the way to becoming a chrysalis.

It was so difficult to believe that one minute it was walking round checking out its habitat and the next so well tucked up that it was almost totally hidden from view. But, as my colleagues pointed out: "What do you expect if you subjected it to double maths lessons?"

So it was only on show for two hours and will spend the next EIGHT months as a chrysalis, I think. I raised cabbage white butterflies in East Finchley nearly 20 years ago from tiny caterpillars. Incredibly, all the chrysalises hatched out over two or three days and one flew across the hall and out of the window of Martin School as I was showing it to some children. So I do feel slightly confident that the moth might emerge if I keep it now in a very cool place. But May 2009 is a long time off...

Yours faithfully,  
Gill Steiner  
Via email.

#### Marathon runners wanted

Dear Editor,

The ballot for the 2009 London Marathon is about to be made and there will be some readers lucky enough to have been allocated a place. If you are one of them, why not join our team at the Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy and help us raise money for a fantastic local cause?

A baby is born with cerebral palsy every six hours in the UK. The condition affects around one in 400 children and restricts their abil-

ity to control their muscles, posture and movement. Simple activities like walking, dressing and eating can be difficult to do and it can leave children isolated and limit their ability to learn and interact with the world around them.

At the Bobath Centre we provide physio-, occupational and speech and language therapy that encourages children to develop a greater range and variety of movement and better control of posture, and assists them to improve the way they carry out different tasks.

Based in East End Road, the Bobath Centre has helped to improve the quality of life of thousands of children over the last 50 years so that they can grow up to make the most of their abilities and lead a full and independent life.

If you have a marathon place and would like to support such a worthwhile cause, please contact me on 020 8442 2275.

Yours faithfully,  
Kevin Gillespie,  
Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

#### What next - aliens?

Dear Editor,

I have lived in East Finchley for a great many years and have always felt very happy here. I supported your article a few months ago on 'Raising the profile of East Finchley' but recently I have considered that the quality and standard of life here has deteriorated greatly. Let us consider the facts.

After being open for many years, our bank Barclays has closed down and it is now a long way to the nearest branch, especially for elderly people like myself.

Our local sorting office has suspended its Sunday collections, which were in force for many years.

Our one and only bus service, the 263, is uncertain and erratic. There are long gaps between the buses and then two come along together.

Our postal delivery service frequently comes late. Several times last week, we had a delivery after 4pm.

Prices in our local shops are much higher than in the surrounding areas. I paid 27p for a banana in a local shop last week. Whoever heard of 27p for a banana? Also, sometimes the quality of goods is not up to standard. For example, I bought a packet of chocolate biscuits in a nearby shop and when I opened them they were covered in mildew.

So what next? Aliens landing and taking over East Finchley? Or have I just been generally unlucky?

Yours faithfully,  
Mr L Burgess,  
Creighton Avenue, N2.

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

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, on request at publication.

#### Everybody off

Dear Editor,

On Friday 12 September at approximately 2.10pm, I and three others were waiting at East End Road bus stop, opposite the cut through to Prospect Ring. The 143 eventually pulled up. The driver ignored us, did not open the doors and made no eye contact. This behaviour went on for some time.

The passengers already on the bus seemed agitated. After some time he drove a further four feet forward and, like fools, we followed. Again he ignored us. Eventually, after some considerable time more, one of the passengers asked what was going on and all the passengers were thrown off.

Those asked had no idea why. Fed up, I and others walked. Having passed the next stop, we saw the driver and bus fly by, closely followed by a second bus and all the dumped passengers.

How much longer do the British public intend taking such abuse and arrogance from so-called public servants? This is not the kind of person we want ferrying the public around and he gives decent bus drivers a bad name. Sadly it is becoming more prevalent. Enough is enough.

Yours faithfully,  
E Murphy,  
East End Road, N2.

## Gifts from the ark

The Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, which serves north London, has launched a great range of alternative gifts in time for Christmas. This initiative will help raise money for the community service fund and enable it to offer even more support to families.

For example, just £10 helps to fund two sessions from a family support volunteer, providing friendly, practical support to families who frequently feel isolated and need an extra pair of hands.

For further information about Noah's Ark and to order alternative gifts please telephone 020 8449 8877 or visit the website on www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk.

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## Gifts and glamour

As Jennie Mann gears up for its twentieth anniversary next year, the floral design and gift shop in Church Lane is throwing open its doors for another Open Day.

Customers can drop in any time from 9am to 9pm on Thursday 13 November and enjoy a glass of wine as they browse the new range of Christmas gifts and table decorations, many of them sourced from Paris.

Owner Kathy Stewart and assistant Barbro Kythreotis will be staging demonstrations and offering a 15 per cent discount on all items. Kathy said: "This part of the village has many attractions these days

and it comes alive even more on our open days."

Beautician Mandana will be taking part in the open day from 3pm - 9pm, giving customers a chance to find out more about her luxurious treatments as well as 20 per cent off any pre-paid booking.

Mandana, based at Jennie Mann, will also be opening on Sundays until the end of December to meet the needs of her clients during the busy party pampering season.

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