



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

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Pigeons should not be persecuted

Dear Editor,

I feel I need to respond to your Soapbox (*THE ARCHER*, February 2009). Not for the first time have I read a piece in the local paper about the supposed 'problem' of feeding the pigeons at the junction of East End and the High Road. I walk that way frequently and can't see why the few pigeons that collect there can generate so much odium.

Like most animals, pigeons are selective in what they eat, given the choice. But they spend much of the time scratching around for what they can get. Admittedly, there are some ignorant and irresponsible people who put food down there that the pigeons will not touch. If Mr P clears this away then he is performing a service. But it seems from what he writes that his mission in life is to rid the area of pigeons altogether.

I should point out that pigeons 'clean' the pavements of half-eaten sandwiches, baguettes, buns and the like, discarded by thoughtless individuals, that would otherwise attract rats. Also, as regards any health risk the pigeons might pose, are they any more of a hazard than the spittle, vomit and other bodily waste that some people deposit on the pavements? If our crusader is so concerned for 'the children and elderly who are most at risk' perhaps he might like to clean this up also.

Pigeons have served us well enough in the past during wartime. Now we have no more use for them they are classed as vermin. Perhaps this gentleman should learn to adopt a more tolerant and compassionate attitude towards these birds. He might not think so, but they have to live too.

Yours faithfully
Thomas McCann,
Hobbs Green, N2

Pigeons are a pest

Dear Editor

I concur with your correspondent, Chris Paul (Soap Box, *THE ARCHER*, February 2009). The pigeons that infest Pigeon Corner are filthy, disease-ridden vermin. It's a shame that these days it is not considered politically correct to exterminate them. However, to encourage them by feeding them, in direct contravention of the law, is not acceptable, especially as it does attract rats. I have seen them there, eating the food left by these misguided people.

Specifically, there are (at least) three people who regularly do this. One of them often leaves bread on the low wall, and then urinates on it! This is presumably designed

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to enhance the pigeons' culinary experience, but it does nothing for me, nor any other unfortunate passers-by.

The second collects bread from the bins behind Budgens and makes offerings in various parts of East Finchley, including here. I have remonstrated with them, apparently to no avail.

The third turns up in a car, jumps out and leaves a pile of neatly cut pieces of bread by the salt bin, then jumps back in and drives off. I have never been close enough to get its registration, but if I do, I will most certainly report them to the authorities.

I have heard it said that the mess we leave (litter, chewing gum, and other unmentionable substances) is far worse than that left by the pigeons. Maybe, but that does not excuse either the pigeons, or the people who feed them. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Yours faithfully,
John Dearing
Address supplied

Puddiford or Puddifoot?

Dear Editor,

In an ongoing search into my family history, I stumbled across a September 2005 edition of *THE ARCHER* containing a letter from Gwendolen Dale, of Leopold Road, N2, in which she talks of the Puddifoot family. My great-great-grandfather was a Joseph Puddeford (or possibly Puddiford), born about 1820, who was a policeman in Limehouse in the East End and later had a grocer's shop. He was married to a Mary F, who we know to have been born in Finchley, and they had eight children: Emily my great-grandmother, Louisa, Charles, Amelia, Ellen, Mary Joseph and Harry.

Emily married my great-grandfather William Wild and they lived in Heywood and Heap in Lancashire. There is a family story that Emily, or possibly her mother Mary, was Spanish and that she was, at some point, a matron in an asylum but there is no solid evidence and like many family stories it may have no foundation whatsoever. As Ms Dale says, the name Puddifoot and its derivatives are unusual and rare and possibly linked and therefore I hope that there may be some connection or that someone might recognise one.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Wild,
Cheltenham.

Do you recognise any of the names or connections in Michael's letter? Write to us at *THE ARCHER* and we'll pass your message on to him.

Milk of human kindness

Dear Editor,

I felt moved to write this letter commending Barnet Council for the concern shown during the recent snowfall on 1 February. On 2 February, I answered my intercom and was informed that as the refuse collectors were unable to perform their duties, they were visiting the elderly to help clear their paths. As mine had already been cleared by my neighbour, the bin man then said he would leave two pints of milk on my doorstep.

I wonder how many of the elderly were in receipt of this generosity? At what age is one considered to be elderly these days (I do have a Freedom Pass)? Anyway, hats off to Barnet for the kind thought.

Sonia Singham,
Leslie Road, N2

Mass appeal

Dear Editor,

As a local resident, could I just put in a word for Father Tony at St Mary's Catholic Church in the High Road. As a child of a Polish father and Irish mother, I was always going to be a Roman Catholic, but I did have some years when I stopped attending Mass.

A combination of the Polish Pope and the death of my parents brought me back, but I always hankered after the beautiful sung Latin Mass of my childhood.

For any wavering Catholics who would also like to hear the traditional sounds again, please try the 12pm Mass at St. Mary's. Father Tony is the most wonderful priest. He gives a sermon which explains the readings of the day and makes them relevant, coming down off the altar and speaking as if to friends.

He makes time to greet each person at the start and the finish of the Mass, and I feel that he is someone who is completely dedicated to his calling and to his parish. I have found the Latin Mass, but I have also found a fantastic priest.

Yours faithfully,
Linda A. Dolata
Leopold Road, N2

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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.



Not so classy: a blogger's view

Archer reader Andrew "Ampers" Taylor runs ampers.blogspot.com. Here's his personal take on the great class divide and who really are the "common people".

The problem with Britain is it concerns itself too much with class: the aristocracy, middle upper class, lower upper class, upper middle class, middle middle class, lower middle class, upper working class, middle working class and lower working class. It is a real nightmare.

It all started over a couple of thousand years ago with just working classes. Everyone was a peasant roaming the land, surviving as best they could. Then over the centuries some peasants gave themselves airs and graces and, in addition, when one tribe conquered another, the leaders of the conquering tribe would set themselves up a notch or two. This was how the aristocracy was born.

A thousand years ago, the aristocracy and their hangers-on referred to themselves as upper classes. As the centuries flew by more of the working classes did a little better for themselves and the middle classes were born. Most of this happened around the Industrial Revolution. By the 20th century, the middle classes were the working classes who had done better for themselves through trade.

This brings me to "common people". Common people are those the BBC and ITV seem to cater for. These are not just working class, they also include middle and upper class people. These are people with no real pride in themselves or their community. Those, for example, who either collapse in front of the box every evening or wander down to the pub, rather than help their community and neighbours. I think of people who have an inner pride in themselves as decent people, and those who don't have this inner pride as common people.

Nobody should be proud of being working class, middle class, or upper class. All this does is to create division among us. Everyone needs to develop an inner pride in themselves and then in their community. If they create inner pride in themselves, they will endeavour to build up their community.

Times are going to get hard for everyone. Those living in a tightly-knit community will have the best chance of surviving. Get to know your neighbour, invite them for morning coffee or evening drinks. Organise and take part in neighbourhood watches. Get your neighbours involved in keeping an eye on your house when you are away. Help the organisations within your community.

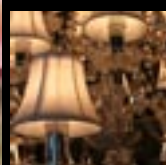
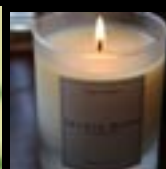
These are just a few suggestions of how members of a close community can help each other. Nothing here costs money (apart from coffee or a glass of wine). Involve your neighbours and take part yourself. This will help all of us to take pride in our community.

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