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THE ARCHER




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Ale and hearty: Bald Faced Stag staff (left to right) Martin Walsh, Charlotte Woodley and Martin Garner. Photo by Nick Young

Bald Faced Stag in Good Beer Guide

By Nick Young

The Bald Faced Stag on the High Road is the only East Finchley pub to feature in the current edition of the *Good Beer Guide*, which is published by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Customers and staff at the pub have welcomed this. "We found out about it three months ago," explained Martin Garner, the pub's general manager. "We were assessed by CAMRA members who came in here, sometimes undercover, to find out about

us and taste our ales."

The guide notes that the Bald Faced Stag serves three guest ales on the hand pumps. "As we're not a tied pub, we get to choose which ales we serve," said Martin. "We generally choose beers that are unusual and different." Recently, the pub has served beer from London breweries such as Truman's, as well as regional breweries such as Sharp's (Cornwall), the Bristol Beer Factory and Windsor & Eton.

The pub, which has an

estimated 1,000 customers per week if you include the restaurant and was recently given a three-star review by *Time Out* magazine, has even introduced a guest ale voting card system, whereby patrons can vote for which ale they would like to see served.

At the time of writing, there were plans for the pub to host a real ale festival in late November, and Martin intends to host another one in the new year.

The *Good Beer Guide* is published annually by CAMRA and lists what members of that organisation consider to be the best real ale (cask-conditioned beer) outlets in the country. The Bald Faced Stag has never appeared in the guide before.

Dismay at new cashless parking regime

By John Lawrence

Shoppers and traders have told us of their despair and frustration at the introduction of a new parking payment system in the High Road and East End Road.

Barnet Council has replaced the former coin-operated parking meters with a 'cashless' system that allow drivers to pay only by calling a telephone number and registering their credit card details.

Shopowners claim this is a guaranteed way to drive away business at a time when local stores need all the trade they can get, and motorists have told us it's enough to stop them coming to East Finchley at all.

Threat to trade

Andy Panayi, who runs AP Gentlemen's Barbers in the High Road, shook his head in bafflement as he watched council staff covering up the old meters with black bin liners in readiness for the new system.

"It's the older drivers I feel sorry for," said Andy. "They don't all have mobile phones and credit cards so what are they supposed to do if they want to park for a quick bit of shopping? The council doesn't care about them.

"This will affect businesses all along the High Rad. We all need customers in these tough times when rents are so high.

This will damage us all."

Reader Susan Bennett (see Letters to the Editor, page 11) told us she and her husband had arrived in East Finchley with a friend to eat at one of their favourite local restaurants but didn't stay long.

Susan said sadly: "We drove away to a restaurant out of the area where we could park without needing a mobile phone. We were all pensioners, none of us felt competent to go through the procedures required. We will probably not return to that parade to shop or eat."

Payment alternatives

Barnet Council has already faced fierce opposition to the new cashless system after introducing it elsewhere in the borough. As a result, shoppers are now being given a wider choice of paying for parking: they can pay in cash at a shop that operates PayPoint, or buy pre-pay parking 'scratch cards' from libraries and other local outlets.

Council leader Richard Cornelius said that 107,000 people had registered for cashless parking but there had clearly been glitches with the new system. "The scratch cards will hopefully bridge the gap," he said.

Further information on parking payments can be found at www.barnet.gov.uk/parking

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Season's greetings

Everyone in *THE ARCHER* team wishes all our readers, distributors and advertisers a happy festive season and a prosperous 12 months ahead. We thank you for all your contributions and support in 2011 and look forward to the newspaper staying at the heart of our community in 2012.

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