



Letters

Turned away

by parking palaver

Dear Editor,

My husband and I were taking a friend out for lunch to our favourite local Thai restaurant in East Finchley. We parked and found a meter. It was covered with a black bin bag. We sought another meter. That too was covered by a bin bag.

We assumed all the meters were out of order and began to look for a parking warden. No luck. There was no information on the covered meters. We thought of putting a note on the windscreen, then we saw a man further along the High Road looking at a sign on a post. He was using a mobile phone to pay for parking.

We drove away and went to eat at 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.

Yours faithfully,
Susan Bennett,
St Regis Close, N10.

Savage criticism

Dear Editor,

Referring to Stuart Rising's letter (*THE ARCHER*, November 2011) about gradual change to the Kalashnikov Kultur column and whether it is now being written by a different Ricky Savage, I believe the answer is both yes and no.

The KK column has always been something of a hybrid creation since first appearing over 17 years ago, and of course, dear David (oops... I mean Ricky!), has aged in the meantime, although not enough to embrace the 'grumpy old man' mode, and perhaps this has spawned a dilemma about being taken seriously or not, despite the humorous approach?

As Mr Rising points out, coherent political satire is better left to the likes of Private Eye journalists, even though they occasionally produce weak outpourings themselves. However, it is easier to criticise the self-expression of others than to generate and sustain one's own work, so can *ARCHER* readers now look forward to perusing the inaugural 'Stuart Rising' column by way of comparison?

Yours faithfully,
Malcolm Griffiths,
Midhurst Avenue, N10.

Signs of Janes and Adams

Dear Editor,

I am an optician and have been following the correspondence about Janes and Adams with interest (*THE ARCHER*, October and November 2011). When I moved to 119 High Road this year and began the long task of turning the dilapidated and neglected shop into a beautiful, modern eye-care establishment, I was surprised and delighted to find Janes and Adams' old fascia sign in the cellar. It was a firm of good reputation as I recall from growing up in the area around 50 years ago. There's also a little, rusty safe in the cellar wall.

Yours faithfully,
David Hillel Burns,
High Road, N2.

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or e-mail
the-archer@lineone.net.

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From loft ladders to headstones

Dear Editor,

I could not believe my eyes when I saw what is replacing the old Loft Shop: Robertson's Memorials. Seriously, we already have the Co-op death shop across the road, now we have to look at a huge corner plot full of headstones.

"Welcome to East Finchley, death is what we do," that's what people will see every day when they drive through our high street. I would rather see another hairdressers, nay estate agent, or even a hairdresser and estate agent combo.

This is degrading to our High Road. They can stay where they are, near the Grange. We all know where they are and I, like many, will probably get my headstone there but I don't want to walk past this lifeless shop (pun intended).

Yours faithfully,
Ewan Roberts, by email.

Walk the Northern Heights

The Highgate Society has produced the first two of a series of five fully-illustrated pocket booklets, covering a nine-mile circular walk around London's 'Northern Heights', highlighting the unique character of the area.

The walk combines many of the less frequented historic streets of Highgate, along with the more famous stately houses, landscaped gardens and parks that surround Hampstead Heath and its environs.

Each walk starts and ends at a point easily accessible by public transport, and includes a detailed route map with places for refreshment on the way. The booklets cost £3 each and are available from local shops, or via the Highgate Society website www.highgatesociety.com.

Action at Avenue House

By Daphne Chamberlain
Alarm bells rang for Avenue House Estate at the beginning of the year. It was in a serious financial crisis, and there were fears that this historic building in East End Road, N3, would be sold, and its beautiful grounds lost to the public. A lot has happened since then.

The Avenue House Estate Trust has been working hard towards returning the House to a centre for local activity. Lettings are building up, which effectively preserve the grounds as a park, as AHET get no subsidies for ground maintenance.

True Friends

Meanwhile, the newly formed Friends of Avenue House are putting in a tremendous amount of time and energy in supporting AHET. An auction held by the Friends in September raised more than £7,500, which they say was "beyond our wildest dreams". They are deeply grateful for the generous support of many local businesses and individuals.

A quiz night in October alone raised £600. *THE ARCHER* team know that these contests are a real challenge as well as a lot of fun. Our team are going into battle again on 1 December. Keep an eye out for the next one.

Quizzes not your scene? The Friends also put on Archive Film Nights. The last one included the 1948 Olympics and London's last tram journey. Look out, too, for numerous events, not all run by Friends, some in collaboration with The North London Hospice.

The Friends acknowledge that Avenue House is not yet completely out of the woods, but they are doing all they can to support AHET. Since April they have organised more than 400 hours of volunteer labour, mainly working alongside the grounds staff and clearing litter. They are now looking at doing DIY jobs inside the house.

Keep up to date by checking the FOAH website, Facebook and Twitter, and *THE ARCHER*'s What's On, Facebook, and Twitter.

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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.



Shut out from school

By Cathy Halstead

I was talking to a friend who lives in Camden about my worries about secondary schools for my kids. "But hang on," she said, "You're in Barnet aren't you? I thought Barnet had amazing schools?" And there does seem to be this perception out there, that by living in N2 I'm overflowing with choice for my children.

But frankly, it's a myth. Barnet may indeed have some great schools, but if we stay living where we are now, my daughter won't get into any of them. She's not a genius, so Henrietta Barnett is out. We're not religious, so that rules out a few more. She's not a boy, so our nearest school, Christ's College, won't take her either, and as far as I can tell we're not in the catchment area for any other school within three miles of where we live.

So what are my choices? Private school is out of the question, and converting seems a little extreme. I can sell up and move, I suppose, uproot the family and try and inch as close as I can to a school that will take her. Or I could play the system: rent a house near a good school, and help make its catchment area even smaller. But surely I shouldn't have to resort to this kind of stuff?

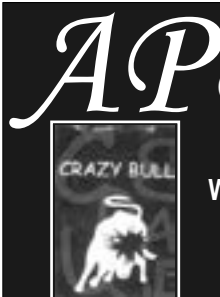
So I'm throwing my weight behind the Local Schools for Local Children campaign. They're working as hard as they can to try and persuade Barnet to redress this situation, and provide one simple thing: a good, mixed, non-religious local school for kids in N2 to go to. And if all of us who are in the same situation get behind them, we might just get somewhere. If you'd like to get involved, email the campaign on localschools@live.co.uk

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