



Unemptied bins in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Litter problem in Cherry Tree Wood

By Diana Cormack

In the middle of March, following the first warm weekend this year, visitors to Cherry Tree Wood found the park in a deplorable state. Overflowing litterbins had been ransacked by animals, resulting in rubbish being scattered everywhere. This consisted not only of bin contents but also the waste which people had stacked around the full bins. One of the worst areas was adjacent to the children's playground.

Barnet Council acted quickly in clearing up the place on the Monday (including the removal of a broken white garden chair from the far side of the field) though amongst the wooded parts there was still some debris.

Bin design

This problem is not a new one, particularly during the summer, and over the years, questions have been asked about the number of bins available and their design. Apparently it is extremely difficult to make a bin with a slot big enough to take rubbish but which animals, particularly small ones such as squirrels, cannot get into. So packaging from picnics in the park would still end up being piled around the sides.

After Easter, when the summer schedule starts, cleansing operators should tour the borough's parks on Saturdays and Sundays thus reducing the chances of this recurring. Another solution would be for everyone to take their rubbish home with them.



Cherry Tree Wood pavilion as of 1st March. Photo Mike Coles

New café in the park

After almost 30 years of abandonment, the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood is being given a new lease of life. In February tiling work was done on part of the roof and subsequently the contents of the building were removed. At the time of writing undergrowth had been cleared from an adjacent area. Plans for the place, which is to be a coffee bar, can be viewed at [www.barnet.gov.uk/planning/reference F/02410/13](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/planning/reference/F/02410/13)

An English couple in China – again

By David Winton

In *THE ARCHER*, February 2012, David Winton wrote about teaching English for a year in Wuhan, China, a mega-city of 10 million people. Last year he and his wife signed up for another stint, this time in Ji'an, home to about a million people, 450 miles south west of Shanghai. Here he describes campus life.

In March 2013 my wife Rachel and I, both retired Barnet teachers, returned to China to teach English for two semesters at a university in Ji'an. We had 16 hours of teaching each week to classes of between 20 and 40 students who had already been studying English for a good six years.

Lessons started at 8am and most lasted 100 minutes. Most students, who were mainly female, came from the local province, and all without exception were very polite, friendly and eager to improve their English and learn more about western culture.

Topical issues

We taught some Writing lessons, for which there was a textbook, but mainly we were teaching Oral English, either in pairs or in small groups or before the whole class. We talked about what the students had done the previous weekend; read and discussed poems (Wordsworth's *The Daffodils* was a favourite); discussed a topical issue, or acted out a role-play, for instance: 'Bringing home an unacceptable girlfriend/boyfriend'.

The classrooms for Oral English were very basic: movable seats and a blackboard, with no heating. In winter students and teachers sit in class wearing their coats. Similarly there was no air conditioning in the summer, when temperatures often reach the high 30Cs.



An oral English lesson in full swing.

Spartan

The university campus was pleasantly laid-out, with several lakes enhanced by pagodas. We lived on campus in a typical teacher's apartment. In some ways it was rather spartan: for example, no hot water tap for the kitchen sink. For cooking we had a two-ring gas burner and a microwave but we often ate (very cheaply) in one of the two student canteens.

To help us with admin issues we had a young Chinese co-teacher with whom we got on very well. When not preparing our lessons we read a lot, took daily walks around the campus and socialised with the three

other foreign English teachers, an American and two from Ireland.

Rachel and I returned to East Finchley in mid-January with many happy memories and an increased understanding of life in China.

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