



Request for a better bus service: Brian Pearce

A bus service for our local hospital

Patients are asking for a bus route to be diverted by a short distance to take elderly or infirm people directly to Finchley Memorial Hospital.

Currently, the nearest services are the 263, which heads straight up to North Finchley, or the 382, which turns away from the hospital down Summers Lane.

Brian Pearce, of Richmond Road, is one regular outpatient who would like the 382 to turn down Granville Road to drop and pick up at the hospital, before resuming its journey towards Friern Barnet.

"Most hospitals have a bus route serving them directly but Finchley Memorial doesn't," said Mr Pearce. "For older or disabled visitors and patients, it's a long walk from the main road to the hospital and the same again when you want to catch the bus home.

"All we're asking for is a small diversion to take people straight to the hospital doors. There's plenty of room for a single-decker bus like the 382 to drive into and out of the

hospital car park."

TfL's response

Along with fellow patients, he has taken his request directly to Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer, who made inquiries with Transport for London.

The answer that came back is that the diversion would cost £180,000 "for additional buses and drivers" and that neither TfL nor the NHS was prepared to meet the cost. In addition, the diversion would "add to the journey time of commuters".

Mr Freer offered some hope that the request could be reconsidered if passenger numbers to and from the hospital seem to justify it.

Do you think the bus diversion request is a reasonable one? Write to us here at *THE ARCHER* and we will pass your messages on to Mr Pearce. Our contact details are on page 2.

Alzheimer's: the enemy within

By Diana Cormack

At the G8 Dementia Summit in London last December, leading nations committed to find a cure or an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia by 2025. Prime Minister David Cameron said that the UK government will double funding research from £66million in 2015 to £132million by then.

Ten years ago, after my mother died, I wrote an article which people still comment on. It seems suitable to re-use it following the proposed new plans regarding Alzheimer's.

I lost my mother recently. Looking back, she started to leave us almost imperceptibly at first, but slowly and silently over the years she has been stolen away by an invisible and invincible enemy. Gradually, as its hold tightens, more and more of her has disappeared into its cruel grasp.

The first signs could have been put down to acceptable aspects of growing old, things like forgetting what she was doing or where she was going in the house or losing the thread in a conversation. Things that many of us do anyway! Then she couldn't set the table or manage the shopping on her own or find her way to the toilet. Now all her motherly skills, which we sometimes took for granted, are heartbreakingly limited.

My organised, strong, reliable mum has gone and I am still trying to get used to the fact that I will never see her again. Occasionally I catch a fleeting glimpse of her, like when we have a good chat and maybe share a joke about a past incident. She can remember a lot about the past, but the present often puzzles her.

She was a highly intelligent, articulate and amusing woman who had a way with words. Her letters were wonderful. Sadly, her writing shrank so much it became indecipherable and she can no longer sign our birthday cards. Yet she did write a birthday note to her beloved granddaughter, such is her determination.

Mum is well aware that there is something wrong with her. She realises that the words she wants to say are not the ones which come out of her



ELSIE WARD MCNALLY, WAAF

mouth. She knows that she can no longer dress herself, that she fails to recognise people or sees people who aren't there.

Our mother is no longer there and yet we can still see her sometimes when this distressing disease deigns to loosen its hold for a while. There is no cure for Alzheimer's.

For advice or information telephone 020 7423 3500 or visit www.alzheimers.org.uk

Left: Diana's mum Elsie, one of the first WAAF's in the Second World War.

Support for dementia in Barnet

By Daphne Chamberlain

My mother, like Diana's, suffered with dementia. If you, or someone you are caring for, have this condition, you will know that you need all the support, advice and guidance you can get.

There are different forms of dementia, and sometimes a person with this condition has physical problems and/or other illnesses. People are affected in different ways, and we need to be aware of this.

In future issues we will look more closely into local provision, including Barnet's Advance Advocacy Service, which speaks up for those who have no other voice. We would welcome your input.

In the meantime, this is a run-down on what Barnet Alzheimer's Society is providing.

Dementia advisor

Our local advisor is Alison Evans. Call her on 020 8937 7171 or 07889 603708, or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk. Her brief is to discuss your needs, direct you to support services, and give you information to help make decisions. You can contact her as often or as little as you want.

Dementia cafes

These are social and practical sessions for dementia sufferers and their carers. The Finchley cafe meets on the second Wednesday of the month, 2pm-4pm, at the Memorial Hospital, off Granville Road, close to North

Finchley. The meeting this month is on 12 February, with music, dancing, chat, and advice on dealing with stress. For more details, phone 020 8937 7171 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

Carers' Support Group

This meets on the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 7pm at Community Networks, 27 Castle Road, N12 9EE. Just turn up on the night. Note: The bell is difficult to hear in the room used so please keep trying if you get no answer at first.

Singing for the Brain

Every Thursday from 10.30am for two hours at the Eversfield Centre, Eversfield Gardens, Mill Hill, NW7 2AE, you can join in songs of different styles, periods and cultures. Singing helps physical and mental well-being, and you don't need to have sung before. For details, phone 020 8937 7171 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

Carers' Information and Support Programme

This programme runs a series of free workshops. For more information, phone Margaret on 020 8732 6750 or email barnet@alzheimers.org.uk.

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