



## Fraudster jailed for illegally subletting council flat

By Diana Cormack

**A council housing officer has been jailed after illegally subletting a two-bed council flat in Prospect Ring, N2, for 10 years.**

Barnet's Corporate Anti-Fraud team acted on information received about Julia Miah, 45, who had continued to claim she lived in the property despite handing over the keys to a family member in 2007 and moving into a house she inherited in Luton.

Miah worked as housing officer for another authority. When interviewed under caution she admitted her guilt to council counter-fraud officers and agreed to hand back the keys to the Prospect Ring flat.

She appeared at Harrow Crown Court in February, pleading guilty to three counts of fraud by failing to disclose information and was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment. She was also ordered to pay £20,000 in compensation and £3,174 in costs.

### Abuse of housing system

Leader of Barnet Council Cllr Richard Cornelius said: "At a time of significant housing pressures, it is totally unacceptable for someone to abuse the system in this way for so long, without ever having any intention of living in the property. Council homes are there for people in genuine need of housing, not for personal gain."

"I hope the custodial sentence and order for compensation handed down by the court in this case sends out a very clear message about the consequences for anyone who might be contemplating something similar."

To report a fraud, email [CAFT@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:CAFT@barnet.gov.uk) or call the council's fraud hotline on 020 8359 2007.

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Sixty years on: Hazel and Bob Astley in Melbourne

## A white wedding at Easter and then a boat all the way to Australia

By Daphne Chamberlain

**We send our warmest Diamond Wedding congratulations to Hazel Astley (nee Spooner) and her husband Bob who were married in East Finchley 60 years ago on 5 April 1958. Six months later they moved to Australia and have lived there ever since but Hazel still has fond memories of growing up in north London. She told us:**

"I met Bob when I was 16. He lived in Hayes, Middlesex, but sometimes, when he was on leave from the RAF, we met in London. We got engaged when

I was 18 and he was 20, and married 18 months later. We had a white wedding at East Finchley Methodist Church on Easter Saturday, 1958, as the previous evening it had snowed!

"We had applied to emigrate to Australia and six months later we arrived at Station Pier in Melbourne as 10 Pound Poms! We got jobs, rented a furnished flat in Hawthorn, a Melbourne suburb, and saved up to buy a block of land in Doncaster, to build our first home together in 1965.

"We joined the local Methodist Church, making lifelong friends there, and have been blessed with 4 children and 10



White wedding: Hazel and Bob get married in East Finchley on Easter Saturday in April 1958.

grandchildren. In 1986 we took our children back to England, to see where we had lived and got married.

"We still read *The Archer*. It is sent to me by Brian Timms, who also lived in East Finchley. He shares it with other East Finchley-ites near him in New South Wales, and I in turn send it to my cousin in Tasmania, also from Finchley. When she's read it, she sends it to her brother, who lives in Melbourne, so it gets around!"

### Local links

Hazel's grandparents settled in 50 Leopold Road soon after they were married. Her mother, her two aunts and her younger

brother, Philip Spooner, went to Martin School, and Philip went on to Alder School, then at the Church Lane end of Long Lane, N2.

When her grandfather died Hazel's immediate family moved back to Leopold Road from Wood Green but 12 year-old Hazel didn't want to change schools so went to school in Bounds Green. However, she did go to shorthand evening classes at Alder.

She told us that one of her special places to go to when she was young was East Finchley Library and she is disappointed to see the changes that are being made to the library service.



## Highway robbery

**Archer reader David Adams sent us this photo of a glaring gap in the pavement in Twyford Avenue where it looks as though several slabs have been neatly lifted and taken away.**

David, who lives in Fortis Green, told us: "I've reported the problem to Haringey Council. It looks very much as if the missing paving slabs have simply been stolen. There are no works in progress and nothing to prevent the visually impaired from tripping or falling."

Happily, David reported

to us a few days later that the council had filled the gap with tarmac. However, has someone been repaving their front garden on the sly or is there a perfectly reasonable explanation? If you know, let us know by leaving a message on our freephone line 0800 6120748 or email us at: [the-archer@lineone.net](mailto:the-archer@lineone.net).

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