



Mini Café Returns

By Diana Cormack

It could only be classed as a huge coincidence but, as the lorry bearing the building to replace the kiosk in Cherry Tree Wood made its way across the rock-hard field, the weather changed. Heavy rain heralding the end of the long, hot summer began to fall and continued to do so as the new café was carefully manoeuvred onto the site of the old one.

By the time it opens, almost a year will have passed since the previous one was destroyed by fire last November, but metal reinforced roof, doors and walls (hopefully treated with anti-graffiti coating) should help prevent it suffering a similar fate.

Time for tea

Eileen Cannon, who is planning to hire the café again, is of course sorry to have missed being in business during one of the best summers for years, including a record breaking East Finchley Community Festival. She is, however, delighted with the present premises.

"The council has done the park proud," she said.

For the first few months Eileen plans to trade on a tearoom basis, selling drinks, cakes and sandwiches before re-introducing hot food next



The café returns. Photo by Toni Morgan

summer. As the area in front of the serving counter is now partially sheltered, customers will no longer have to run for cover in inclement weather.

At the time of writing Eileen was hoping to have a celebrity open the café on 31 October with a suitable Halloween theme.

An Open and Shut Case?

By Diana Cormack

Despite the notices put up by Barnet Council announcing the night-time closure of Cherry Tree Wood, park users are still being kept in the dark. Apparently, the locking of Barnet's park gates has been contracted out, though this does not explain why our local gates are more often left open than not. Nor does it help the people who usually make their way via the park to East Finchley tube station and who suddenly find their way barred. There have been stories of this inconsistency causing commuters to climb over the gates.

No consultation

The stated opening time is not early enough for the many people who need to walk their dogs, go jogging or get to work well before 8 am. Why didn't Barnet Council ("Putting the Community First") consult the park users before deciding on the opening and closing times? One could be forgiven for thinking they were sorted out to suit the company involved, but that obviously isn't working.

It has been suggested that, if the park is to be locked, entrusting the key to a resident living nearby (and willing to undertake the responsibility) might prove more reliable; and they would probably charge less for the service.

Perhaps by the time this article is published the system will be working. If not, you could air your views by phoning the organisers Green Spaces on 8359 7381.

Christmas Shopping Bus to Brent Cross

East Finchley Contact is running a shopping bus to Brent Cross on Wednesday 19 November. If there is sufficient demand, another bus will run on Thursday 11 December.

The trip will cost £2.50. The bus will collect you from home (if you live in N2 or very close by), and will take you to the Brent Cross Mobility Centre, where you can borrow a wheelchair or power chair. If you need someone to push or escort you, Contact will try to arrange this. There should be at least two able-bodied volunteers on the outing. The bus will set off at about 10am and return by 2pm, allowing at least two hours at the shopping centre.

If you are interested, please book early.

Festive Lights

By Lawrie Chivers
Still the Best in Barnet, your local retailers are proud to support their community.

We are pleased to announce that this year the East Finchley festive light display will commence at the end of November and will continue to bring cheer to the High Road until January.



263 buses have a high frequency moment. Photo by Erini Rodis

Buses – The Next Stop

By Daphne Chamberlain

Whether you think that London Buses do a good or a bad job of monitoring the frequency of our services, what they come up with is average. To be more explicit, intervals between buses are averaged. The difference between the average scheduled waiting time and the average actual waiting time gives an average excess waiting time.

If you're still with me, this is a simplified version of how high frequency buses (officially five or more an hour in each direction) are monitored. Low frequency buses, on the other hand, are assessed against times on the timetable.

On target

The assessors' verdict is that the 263 is meeting its target. As we go to press, I am still waiting details of their monitoring system from London Buses – i.e. where the inspectors stand, at exactly what time, and how long they are there.

Why do so many of us think

that, after an initial improvement, the 263 service has worsened again? Metroline's Martin Fisher suggested that there might be problems with the change of garage. Moving the 263 from Potters Bar to Holloway has resulted in a shortage of drivers. There is also a lack of supervisors, though some are being trained.

On the buses

On-bus computerised traffic monitors, currently being pioneered on some routes, should be installed for every service by 2005, but Martin Fisher admitted that they might not suit every route.

He also told *THE ARCHER* that Barnet is less co-operative than other boroughs. Our Council liaises less on specific traffic problems, and appears to be against bus lanes and built-out bus stops.

Meanwhile, we all have a vested interest in keeping our services up to scratch. Metroline works to an incentive scheme, and we have to use the buses. The Agenda 21 Traffic Group is holding a follow-up meeting to the one in the library, but this time in the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane, at 8pm on Wednesday 19 November. Everyone is welcome.

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