



Letters to The Editor

Doesn't add up

Dear Sir,

I was intrigued to read of Steven Norris' mathematical wizardry as to the supposed cost of crime in London. I have my own version: Subtract the alternative Tory London Assembly budget cuts from the past two years from the national Tory 20% cut to public spending across the board, and divide it by the amount of white wine and canapés consumed by our GLA member Brian Coleman. And you have your answer. 150 police officer cuts in Barnet and promises on crime are as worthless now as when Coleman promised extra coppers when he was elected in 2000. Who are you kidding Mr Norris?

Andrew McNeil, Author: 'World of Crime' (1968) Beresford Road, N2.

Talking Turkey

Dear Sir,

Haringey Council complacently defends its schools' poor record on pupils studying French, German and Spanish by highlighting the large number of local schoolchildren studying Turkish.

It would be interesting to know how many of those studying Turkish already have this language skill by family background. Their

understandable proficiency in Turkish has little to do with the quality or range of European language teaching in Haringey schools.

One is reminded of the failing secondary school, Hackney Downs, whose best GCSE results were also in Turkish - a subject it didn't even teach!

Yours faithfully, Peter Forrest Deputy Chairman Political Hornsey & Wood Green Conservatives

Stain on our reputation

Dear Editor,

Did anyone catch the reference to East Finchley by Brian Sewell in his recent series The Naked Pilgrim on Channel 5? He was walking about a church, and relishing the space and the light, in his usual manner, then suddenly broke off to complain about the stained glass in the windows, being "late Victorian, as bad as any in Tooting or East Finchley"! I would have emailed him to complain, had it been a BBC programme, but felt rather at a loss, as it was Channel 5.

Does anyone know of Brian Sewell's visits to the area? Was

he being precise and accurate in his critic of our ecclesiastical glass, or was he merely making a general and sweeping statement? I make no claims on the quality of our stained glass, but it might be nice to have someone so pompous say something nice about the area.

Pete Eiseman-Renyard Fortis Green, N2.

Sign for sore eyes

Dear Editor,

The Garden Suburb Residents Association is quite right; the new turquoise street signs in Barnet are a 'monstrosity'.

Not only are they totally not in keeping with other signs across the borough they are also distracting to drivers and in some areas are more dominant than other more important road signs. Since the erection of the 'Church Lane' sign at the junction of High Road, East Finchley there have been more violations of the ONE-WAY system than ever before.

Whoever thought these were either tasteful or useful is living in cloud cuckoo land.

Get rid of them.

P Kelly High Road, N2.

Send your correspondence to:

'Letters Page', The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA. (Due to space restrictions, letters over 200 words will be edited)

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.



Research Notes

By Stuart Rising of Durham Road

A survey of a cross-section of Barnet UK Independence Party supporters has produced some interesting results. It shows that the average UKIP activist is of noble demeanour, tall, distinguished, of equable temperament, totally fearless, and attired in subfusc elegance with a lofty disdain for modish claptrap.

He is happily married, fond of children although unlikely to suffer fools gladly, likes country sports and amusements, and does a good deal of gardening. He has taken part in at least one Himalayan climbing expedition and has a morbid fear of barometers, text messages, blow-up dolls, focus groups, and cheap jewellery. He keeps an average of 2.63 (recurring) domestic staff.

It is possible that some sampling errors may have crept in, and the results are being checked, but the final "identikit" is unlikely to differ markedly from the provisional one.

Oddly enough, an ad hoc Grauniad Readers' Outreach Team has been working on an "identikit" of the same subject. It finds that the average UKIP supporter is a squinting, bald, hunch-backed dwarf, who is semi-literate, holds extreme Fascist views, is a heavy smoker, takes baths once a month and wears a dirty vest with a large swastika on it but is too cowardly to reveal it.

He frequents public bars at closing time, drinking up any dregs he can find and occasionally wears women's clothes. (He is, of course, in extremely rare cases, a woman).

He habitually fails to pay his fare on underground trains, using considerable cunning to accomplish this.

His ambition is to be a hangman.

The discrepancy between the two "identikits" is striking. It is thought that some subjective non-scientific element may be involved.

Positive Thinking

By Sippy Azizollah

Remember back to when I was a kid at school, I wasn't one of those to go breaking rules. Staying out of trouble on the right side of the line A goody goody girl in a class of 39. The teacher took me to one side and told me "You've got to fight sometimes to win." And every now and then his words come back to me over and over again.

Positive thinking's gonna get you what you want your animal instinct's gonna lead you to the top Here's a lesson in survival, what I'm telling you is true I'll teach you all the rules and then you'll know what to do.

1969 is a year I won't forget I spent too many hours playing second best The world was my oyster, but I couldn't reach the pearl suppose I was still playing the goody girl. My tutor took me to one side and told me, "You've got to fight sometimes to win". And every now and then those words come back to me over and over again.

Positive thinking's gonna get you what you want your animal instinct's gonna lead you to the top It's a lesson in survival, and I'm telling you it's true. I'll teach you all the moves and then you'll know just what to do.

Now here I am at forty-nine, I've fought long and hard with both fists flying I've seen all my options as clear as day I'm taking every chance because I know

That positive thinking's gonna get me what I want my animal instinct's gonna lead me to the top. It's a lesson in survival, and I'm telling you it's true I've learned all the moves and now I know just what to do.

Archer Bridge



by Mike Graham One of the great, albeit infrequent, pleasures of bridge is extracting an enormous penalty from opponents who have bid too much. In a pairs event, close doubles can yield +200 and +500 and a top score. Pairs who like to double, and I speak from experience here, accept the occasional -730 as the price that must be paid for their approach. Indeed, if you do not concede the odd 670 or 730 it could be argued that you are not doubling enough.

In teams, however, these close doubles are very inadvisable; +100 as against +140 is a loss of only one imp (international match point), no disaster. If you double, you score +200 and gain two imps; but if the contract makes, you stand to lose up to 11 imps. Team-mates (well, mine, anyway) tend to be rather unsympathetic to these results.

However, when you think the enemy contract could easily be two or more off, doubling becomes an exceedingly attractive proposition. In the

following hand, from a league match, my brother and I extracted a huge penalty:

A take-out double Penalty pass. With a strong possibility of four trump tricks, this is a stand-out.

Two Diamonds Doubled and assumes that partner knows what she is doing - she quite likely has seven clubs.

The defence was merciless. Ace of hearts and a diamond switch; Andy, my brother, won and reverted to hearts. After

Table with 4 columns: Dealer North, NS Game, and two columns of card suits (Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs) with their respective ranks.

The bidding was:

Bidding table with 4 columns: N, E, S, W and rows for 2♦, Pass, Pass (5), Pass (2), Pass (3), Pass (4).

The pair we were playing against often open weak twos with only a five-card suit but with a four-card club suit in reserve. This possibility, together with the penalty pass, convinced South that partner had clubs. She was wrong

East-West are now playing for penalties. Eminently correct. We all know players who would bid Three Diamonds here; but North has heard a penalty pass of

getting his heart ruff Andy led the ace of diamonds; declarer ruffed and I discarded a spade.

outh now tried ace, queen, and another spade, but I ruffed and led a fourth heart. Andy ruffed and played a diamond, ruffed and over-ruffed; another heart was ruffed by East with the king of clubs and I was left holding A8 of trumps over South's Q7. South had come to three tricks, for down six. A penalty of 1700.