



East Barnet Residents Association

March 2011

Thank you for the positive feedback about the new-style newsletter. This time we have again tried to present a varied and balanced assortment of articles in these austere times.

Our membership numbers dropped slightly in January when I removed from our lists those addresses which had not renewed their membership (our membership year starts in July, so we allow a six month grace period) but I am pleased to welcome the many new households which have joined us recently. If you know of others who might be interested, please spread the word! Thank you.

Rob White

Contacting the Association

Rob is our point of contact:
Email [rob \[at\] eastbar.net](mailto:rob@eastbar.net)
Web <http://eastbar.net>

Committee Officers

Chairman: James Bradshaw
Vice-Chairman: George Irons
Treasurer: Sheila Solbé
Newsletter Distribution: Yvonne Ward
Membership & Communications: Rob White

Committee Members

Joy Thornton; Lorna Doran; Pat Gladwin; Pauline Coakley Webb; Peter Robinson; Rosina Down; Susanne Hassel.

Dates for your Diary

All-Members Meetings: Wednesdays **16th March, 13th July, and 26th October** starting at 8pm at the Methodist Church Hall, 2 Cat Hill, East Barnet EN4 8JB.

Safer Neighbourhood Team / Neighbourhood Watch drop-in surgeries: Sundays **13th March** and **10th April** at the Oak Hill Park Café, 3pm to 5pm

Guided Walks with Paul Baker, City of London guide: (Walks are £7, under 12s £3.)

East Barnet Village walk. Sun **Mar 20th**, 11am. Meet outside East Barnet Library, Brookhill Road.

Battle of Barnet. Sun **Mar 13th**, 11am & Sat **Apr 2nd** 2:30pm. Meet at junction of Great North Rd and Hadley Green Rd.

For more walks and full details please visit www.barnetwalks.talktalk.net or phone 020 8440 6805, email pbaker54@hotmail.co.uk

Space Invaders

Nature Notes

Have you seen a parakeet in the park recently - bright green, with a long tail and crimson bill, squawking noisily? Well you are not imagining things. Rose-Ringed Parakeets, also called Ring-Necked Parakeets after the red rings round the necks of the males, have been breeding in this country since the mid-nineteen sixties, and are increasing in number. There are estimated to be several thousand in the south east, many of them in south west London, and they are expanding their range. There are small flocks in this area, probably attracted to Oak Hill Wood and Trent Park.



A parakeet scrumping in Rob White's apple tree last October

The first parakeets may have escaped from a film set, or, as legend has it, were deliberately released by Jimi Hendrix at a gig in the 1960s. They soon found our environment to their liking, with semi-natural parks, commons and gardens. There are populations along the Thames, such as at Richmond Park and in Kew Gardens. They are native to India, but as their range includes the foothills of the Himalayas, they can easily cope with our winters. They eat fruit, berries and tree buds like pussy willow buds, and are happy to visit gardens with hanging feeders. Parakeets tend to flock in large roosts at dusk, such as the 2,500 that roost at Wormwood Scrubs. In summer the flocks decrease, but many males continue to flock overnight, presumably while the females brood their eggs.

As with all introduced wildlife, parakeets can cause problems. They nest in holes in trees, taking over woodpecker holes, and are quite aggressive, scaring small birds away from feeders. They eat fruit and can be very destructive to orchards, and deprive native birds of food sources.

Feral parakeets are now officially accepted as British birds; love them or hate them, they are a colourful addition to our local wildlife.

Sylvia Javes

East Barnet Eco Team

Would you like to cut down energy use and save around £170 a year on utility bills? East Barnet Eco Team is a new community group that will try and help you do just that. And it's FREE!

If you are eco minded or want to find out how to be more green East Barnet Eco Team is here to help you meet like-minded locals.

The group will get together once a month, hopefully in the Brookhill Road library, to share ideas about saving energy, cutting water use and using less

rubbish, therefore saving money along the way.

This is part of a national project by Global Action Plan, an environmental charity, who says the average household saving is a whopping £170 a year.

Young or old, families, retired, new to the area or lived here for years; anyone welcome. Email Wendy and Sally at eastbarnetecoteam@yahoo.co.uk to find out more.

Wendy Alcock

Barnet Museum

The past couple of months have been extremely busy ones for Barnet Museum. We had been told on the 6 December that not only the running costs of the building but also the small grant we were given to run the Museum was to be cut. We were given six weeks to put forward our objections. We were fortunate that this news came just two days before the Barnet Christmas Fayre and we had planned to have the Museum open all day for that so we took advantage of that fact to put prepare a petition and to put up notices about the Borough's plans. We had the busiest day ever. It was standing room only at the Museum with queues of people wanting to sign the petition.

We followed this up with a day at the Spires taking signatures and again we were overwhelmed with people wanting to sign the petition. By the time we had to hand the petition in on the 17th January we had more than 2,000 written signatures and 800 online signatures. We have handed in a further 700+ hand written signatures and the online petition has reached 1,000. Despite a councillor's confident assertion that most of his constituents don't know where the Museum is, the response we got shows that more than 3,000 people not only know where the Museum is but care

enough to pledge their support for it to remain in its present location so that it can continue its work. We have requested that the Borough should allow a capital asset transfer of the building to the local history society. The society has put forward a draft Forward Plan and it is prepared to take on the running costs of the Museum that the Borough was to withdraw. At the meeting of the Council's Cabinet I tried to put our case. However it now seems that the removal of our funding and grant is not the only thing on the Borough's agenda. We now have mutterings about only being allowed to keep using the building if we paid an unspecified commercial rent. The goal posts seem to be changing. It almost seems that the Borough doesn't want to allow Barnet Museum to survive!

We have been granted a further three months to put our case. We need to convince our local councillors of the importance of keeping the Museum in Barnet and in its present premises.

Please visit our web site www.barnetmuseum.co.uk to keep abreast of what is happening.

Gillian Gear

Freedom Pass

- a call for help from The Greater London Forum for Older People

The Transport Committee for the EU Age platform has been holding meetings in Brussels and Barcelona and the benefits of the Freedom Pass to society have been the subject of discussion. Issues such as whether the transport and other inclusions offered to older people would also benefit society as a whole, and not just benefit recipients. It is being suggested that society benefits little and older people do not contribute and give reciprocal value in return. This is becoming increasingly a relevant issue with the talk of cuts.

Of course older people do give value: economically and within the community, quite apart from within the family and amongst friends. But we need to provide evidence to show this. We want to develop a big dossier of how you use your Freedom Pass, eg volunteering, childcare, avoiding isolation etc, etc. What would you stop doing if there was no Freedom Pass and you had to pay fares?

We need to overwhelm them with case studies and put a stop to the negative talk that is going on. You can send your comments to us c/o Sue Packman, 7 St. Augustin's Court, Somerset Road, Barnet EN5 1SZ or to Janine Aldridge, GLF, 21 St Georges Road, London SE1 6ES.

www.barnet55plus.blogspot.com

Enfield Light Opera & Dramatic Society

Some of our members are involved in this amateur dramatic group's productions, so we are pleased to include details of the next production:

Thoroughly Modern Millie at the Wyllyotts Theatre in Potters Bar from Tue 22nd to Sat 26th March.

For ticket prices and further information please ring 07770 871 140, or visit the website www.elods.org.uk

They are also looking for more men to appear in their October production, "Jesus Christ Superstar". For further information please contact the Chairman, Mark Shaw on 07711 316 474.

Don't have email / internet?

More and more of these items have links to websites, or email addresses instead of phone numbers. If you don't have a computer, why not visit your friendly local library where they can help you get started. You can use library computers free of charge.

Libraries are under pressure in these times of spending cuts, so the more people who use their facilities, the more they will be seen to be relevant in this modern age.

Community Farm Project

Want to help produce local food for local people?

We are two friends involved in horticulture in the Barnet/Hertfordshire Areas and have a passion for sustainable land management and local food production.

Oakhill College have offered us the possibility of renting several acres of land and we are looking for people who would like to work with us on this project.

Our aims are to produce organic herbs and vegetables etc, set up a box scheme and possibly supply local hotels and restaurants, co-operating with other producers locally to enable continuity of supply to customers. This could include not only the herbs, vegetables but fruit, dairy products and meat etc as the box scheme progresses, thus supporting other producers too.

We envisage an educational element to enthuse the

wider public about local food production.

We estimate that the set-up costs would be around £20,000 initially. As this is ambitious in its scale, we are looking for people who would like to act as co-ordinators with us and also participate in a practical way, people with horticulture experience or not are most welcome. We envisage a system whereby purchasing a box would be cheaper if you agree to work a few hours on the project, sowing, weeding, harvesting, boxing up, database/phone work or helping with deliveries etc.

As a first step we would like to arrange a meeting to expand the vision to interested parties further. Please email either of us to show your interest and we will contact you with a proposed initial meeting date, time and venue.

Please help make this a reality and email either:
 philfletcherx@yahoo.es or
 kevinpressland@yahoo.co.uk

Roadworks

There are still many roadworks going on, and we continue to publish the Council's weekly lists of roads affected by gas main renewals, street light replacements, resurfacing, skips, etc. on the EBRA website at: eastbar.net/roadworks.

As reported in the Spring edition of the Conservatives' *In Touch* magazine, improvements to the junctions of Russell Lane / Church Hill Road / Osidge Lane / Brunswick Park Road will widen the approaches to the junctions to two lanes.

Highways engineers identified issues of traffic congestion during peak hours along Russell Lane and Osidge Lane, inadequate pedestrian crossing facilities and obstructive parking which limited visibility on the approaches to the pedestrian crossings. Funding for these improvements was part of the planning consent given for the redevelopment of the Barnet College site.



Barnet First, the Council's newspaper, is intended to be delivered to every household in the borough. It's on recycled paper and costs "just over" 10p per issue to produce. Did you receive your Jan / Feb copy? If not please let us know as we have

been asked to report back to the Council. You can also find it online at the council website's front page:

www.barnet.gov.uk

Sunday Swimming Club

The Sunday Swimming Club is a small private club which rents the Church Farm Swimming Pool between 9 and 11 on Sunday mornings.

The first hour is for adults who want to swim lengths; the second hour is for families typically with young children starting to learn. We have never wanted too many members so as to retain a friendly and easy ambience, and the club has been going for seventeen years. However, over the last three years the club has seen a steady decline in its members, as children have grown up, and families moved away, and as a result we are looking for new members or unfortunately the non profit making club will have to stop.

The cost of swimming at the club is low, much lower than a normal swimming pool. For the current quarter (3 months) it works out at about £2.50 each swim for an adult, and £1.60 for a child (5-11). Children under 5 are free.

We are happy to invite prospective swimmers for a free come-and-try swim to try it out.

Please contact Michael Stephens by email at michael@quantum-communications.co.uk or on his mobile: 0754 0707 235

Planning Matters

Brunswick Park Health Centre

There hasn't been a lot of news about this, other than the latest idea is to replace the fire-damaged temporary buildings with some new temporary buildings by "the summer".

In the meantime, patients continue to cram into the temporary arrangements at a nearby surgery, or struggle across to another shared surgery in Friern Barnet.

We shall continue to monitor this unsatisfactory situation and bring any news as we receive it.

New Barnet Community Association

Following the defeat of the plans for another supermarket (or two) in New Barnet, the New Barnet Community Association are pushing ahead to develop a Town Centre Framework.

As a unilateral improvement in New Barnet could potentially have a negative effect on East Barnet, we have agreed with the NBCA to work together, so that East Barnet village is included in the proposed framework.

It's early days yet, but we will of course consult with our members as plans evolve.

384 Bus

The 384 serves a number of schools along its route. To encourage more children to use this bus route, which links Cockfosters and High Barnet Tube Stations there is a petition to lobby Transport for London and the Mayor of London to increase its frequency before and after school.

www.gopetition.com/petition/43072.html

Phone Mast Rejected

We are pleased that the plan for another phone mast next to the existing one at the edge of Saxon Field has been rejected following our complaint. However, if the process goes like last time, this is likely to be allowed on appeal. We just hope Church Hill Road doesn't end up looking like that stretch of road next to the old Saracen's ground in Cockfosters with a dozen cabinets and masts side by side.

Friern Barnet Waste Plant

There was an extremely brief consultation on the proposal to use land next to the North Circular (opposite the retail park) as a "waste management facility". Although not in our patch, there are concerns that mention of "gasification" of waste could perhaps result in a chimney stack – and this could potentially affect us when the wind blows.

There are no definite plans yet; these would be produced when a developer gets the contract. We will be monitoring the situation, of course.

www.pinkhamwayincinerator.blogspot.com



Gardening

I wonder if, like me, you have been wandering disconsolately round the garden or gazing at your window-box and noting the havoc left by the severe winter and snow. Shrubs and roses broken by the weight of snow (no, I am not one who, as advised by the pundits dashes out to shake the bushes to dislodge it). Phlox, penstemons with dead leaves and brown stems. Rockery stones dislodged by frost, and roots of rock plants exposed.

Cheer up! Take your time in cutting down and tidying up before late March or early April. Prune too early and any late frost could cause damage - and the birds love the old growth anyway for grubs and nesting material. I shall wait until I'm in the mood and the day is mild and inviting before I go out secateurs and fork in hand.

In any case the garden centres will soon be full of new stock. So why not take a leaf out of my book? Nature always catches up. Think of the pleasure of plant shopping and probably refreshments as well. Most garden centres are good at this - and so am I.

Yvonne Ward

Community Safety Engagement Group

Our Chairman James Bradshaw is a member of the Barnet CSEG, and recently attended a consultation with the Borough Police Commander regarding funding cuts to the Metropolitan Police. These are extracts from some notes James made:

- There is no doubt that in the future the met police will be a smaller organisation and everything is being done to ensure the cuts in staff are not frontline staff
- due to a freeze in recruitment the force will start to feel the effects of having 1000 less police staff by the end of March 2011
- Barnet has always had extra Safer Neighbourhood Team resources with 6 PCSO's to each ward rather than the standard 3. The force cannot guarantee that there will be a Sergeant to every ward. The police are also looking to work more efficiently with partners, by co locating with other services and by being flexible about working across wards
- no decision on the future of SNT's would be made without the joint agreement of the commissioner and the mayor.
- There may also be greater emphasis on working with other policing teams (Safer Transport Teams, Safer Schools and Safer Town Centre teams).
- More will be known about the situation when the results of the two reviews are published on the 24th March.

Reminder - 0300 123 1212 is the Police Non-Urgent Contact Number

In an emergency always dial 999

An emergency is when a crime is happening, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, or if someone is injured, being threatened or is in danger.

These examples are all in the present tense - something bad is happening now.

If your house has been burgled, or your car has been stolen, it is not an emergency happening now, so call 0300 123 1212.

"You can also call 0300 123 1212 when you need to speak to your local police, seek advice on police matters or comment on the service you have received from the Metropolitan Police."

This number makes it simpler to contact the Police and helps reduce inappropriate 999 calls

New - To review crime statistics, please visit the new website at www.police.uk

Thanks to our Road Stewards

Some of our senior road stewards will have had a call from me asking if they want to continue their deliveries. My question is not because we value you less but simply, as I have a brave new volunteer, I wanted to give our more mature stewards a chance to rest from years of service.

I'm very happy to say most want to carry on. I have recently given up the hillier part of my own round and opted for the level bit! Anno Domini catches up eventually but evidently not with our stalwarts.

Thank you all.

Yvonne Ward

Chas R **LOWE** ESTATES
EST 1876
tel: 020 8440 6449 www.chaslowe.com

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