

Barnet backlash for anti-eruv candidates

By SIMON ROCKER

Orthodox Barnet voters appear to have punished councillors who last year voted against the establishment of an eruv in the borough.

Although the Conservative vote fell in most wards, it plummeted in Hampstead Garden Suburb, scene of the fiercest eruv debates.

The Suburb Tories — including Jewish anti-eruv councillors Frank Davis and Roy Shutz — had their majorities slashed from 2,000 to under 200.

"The eruv was definitely a big issue in the ward," said pro-eruv councillor Julian Czarny, who retained his Conservative seat in Edgware.

A week before the poll, eruv campaigners had published a list of pro- and anti-eruv councillors. Two influential rabbis also encouraged local Jews to take the eruv into account when voting.

Labour's Ellis Hillman — who could become Barnet mayor — also felt that pro-eruv voters had demonstrated their displeasure. "It played a substantial part in the voting."

Although the Tories remain the largest party, they lost control of the borough. Mr Hillman hopes to take the chain of office next Wednesday, aided by Liberal Democrat support.

Good news for the Conservatives was that marginal Golders Green, targeted by the Liberal Democrats, was won by Melvin Cohen. Other wards with large Jewish populations remained Tory.

There are now nine Jewish Conservatives on the council, compared with 14 four years ago. In contrast, Labour's Jewish representation has increased.

The other Jewish Tory victors were Malcolm Lester, Victor Lyon, Anthony Finn, Eva Greenspan and Leslie Sussman. Labour successes included Gina Marks, Nicholas Kissen, Helen Gordon, Gillian Sargeant and Kitty Lyons, while Jack Cohen and Susette Palmer were returned for the LibDems.

Ham & High

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Eruv moves step nearer to reality

Belief grows that Gummer has been told: No grounds to refuse poles plan

SPECULATION is growing that the planning inspector examining the eruv boundary has told Environment Secretary John Gummer that there are no technical grounds for rejecting the controversial religious plan.

Mr Gummer returned this week from holiday to weigh up the moral arguments behind the eruv proposal, which has bitterly divided Jews in North London. He will have considered a report from his inspector that is thought likely to have left him with no planning reason to turn it down.

Supporters and opponents of the plan — for the demarcation of a symbolically enclosed Jewish area of six-and-a-half square miles of Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hendon — are bracing themselves for a result this month of the public inquiry held by the inspector, David Bushby, last November.

Mr Bushby's judgment was completed at the beginning of the summer. The delay in Mr Gummer's final decision has given rise to speculation that Mr Bushby

has reached the same conclusions as those of Barnet Council's planning officers last year — that on planning grounds, the network of 85 poles and accompanying wire within which Orthodox Jews could push prams and wheelchairs on a Sabbath could be erected.

The Environment Secretary, himself a religious man who left the Anglican Church to join Rome in protest at the ordination of women, is understood to be sensitive to the religious debate.

He is also believed to be conscious of the wide range of opinions on the eruv among prominent Jews in the Tory Party.

According to sources, it is highly unlikely that he would have delayed his decision for so long had Mr Bushby found planning grounds to reject the proposal.

Hendon South MP John Marshall said: "He is a man of very deep religious susceptibilities and it may be taking him longer than most planning issues would."

The Department of the Environment said that although the Secretary of State returned from his holidays this week, he flew straight to South America for a 14-

day conference.

But a DoE spokesman said it was not inconceivable for him to make a decision and complete the paperwork on the eruv proposal while abroad.

Mr Bushby said at the inquiry that his main consideration was whether planning objections outweighed the need for an eruv.

But the DoE spokesman emphasised that it was up to Mr Gummer whether to accept the findings of a planning inspector.

The eruv controversy has been fiercely contested for more than two years, with its proponents accusing even Jewish eruv opponents of being anti-Semitic and opponents claiming that it threatened to divide a multicultural community.

The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, and his predecessor, Lord Jakobovits, both gave evidence to the public inquiry supporting the eruv. Among opponents who appeared were the Rev Lord Soper, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Lord McGregor, and the former Labour Trade Secretary, Edmund Dell.

Victory for Jewish 'freedom zone'

ORTHODOX Jews were celebrating a historic victory today following a bitter six-year battle to set up Britain's first Sabbath "freedom zone".

Environment Secretary John Gummer overruled objections from council planners and the symbolic enclosed area — known as a *eruv* — is now to be officially recognised across Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Controversy centred on a series of tall poles, linked by wire, which will mark part of the boundary.

**London &
Finchley**

FROM SELECTED NEWSAGENTS

TIMES

Thursday, September 22, 1994

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Comment

TIMES

VOICE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

FEW could have predicted how eighty poles stretched across the borough would arouse such passion among Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Two years ago few people knew what an eruv was. And even now, many people are still baffled at just how telegraph-type poles linked by fishing wire can free Orthodox Jews to leave their homes on the Sabbath.

However, no-one witnessing December's public inquiry into the United Synagogue's application for an eruv could fail to have been impressed by the depth of feeling evoked on all sides.

For some, the eruv controversy has presented a striking example of what happens when an immovable object meets an irresistible force. Every argument for has had a counter-argument against.

The inspector has stuck to the planning merits of the case; not whether it would create a ghetto or become the focus of anti-Semitic attacks. The heat may not go out of the debate just yet. But the conciliatory note struck by one of the eruv's most vehement opponents this week is one to be commended.

This country has a tradition of religious tolerance which has at times seemed under threat. It also has a tradition of fair play.

Some won't like the inspector's ruling but it should be accepted by all.

holligan drivers and poor planning

YOUR AWARD WINNING FREE NEWSPAPER

School fined for fouling stream

A TOP private school has been ordered to pay out £5,000 for polluting Mutton Brook in the Garden Suburb.

The spillage of red diesel oil, delivered to the £2,200 a term

Highgate School by Independent Petroleum Supplies Limited last October, was reported to the National Rivers Authority by a member of the public.

The suppliers, of Philip Lane, Tottenham, were also

fined £2,000 on Tuesday at Haringey Magistrates Court. Both parties admitted the summons brought against them by the rivers watchdog and were ordered to pay £260 costs.

contd. on p 4

Gummer approves eruv plan

CONTROVERSIAL plans to set up the country's first large-scale eruv in Barnet have finally been given the go-ahead.

Environment Secretary John Gummer has endorsed the recommendation of planning inspector David Bushby that planning permission be given to put up 80 18 foot high telegraph-type poles linked by nearly 1,000 metres of wire to denote part of the eruv boundary.

The decision marks the end of a saga which deeply divided the Jewish community and culminated in a week-long public inquiry nine months ago.

It represents a victory for the United Synagogue Eruv Committee, whose plans to put up the poles for its symbolically defined six square mile area encompassing Hendon, Golders Green and parts of Finchley, Mill Hill and the Garden Suburb, have been five years in the making. It appealed after councillors refused their application in February last year.

Within the eruv, strict Sabbath restrictions on pushing prams and wheelchairs are relaxed, freeing the disabled and young mothers who are Orthodox Jews to leave their homes and travel to synagogue.

The Secretary of State said arguments over "social harmony" were not strong enough to refuse what was a "very unusual" application. Opponents had claimed the eruv could become the focus for anti-Semitic attacks.

by PAUL FRANCIS

Inspector David Bushby said the poles would not prove an eyesore. "While the proposed poles would add to the street furniture, there is no location where the overall impact would seriously harm the character and appearance of that particular location," he said.

The inspector said his conclusions on these two issues meant he had not considered the question of how many people would use the eruv. Some disputed the estimates of how many would use the amenity.

Reaction to the decision has been mixed but one of the most outspoken critics urged the community to set aside its differences. Garden Suburb councillor Frank Davis said: "When the umpire has made a decision, you should accept it. I hope this will put an end to the internecine warfare."

Hendon South MP John Marshall said: "I hope that the heat the debate generated can be moderated. This has been an issue which has split families." See comment, page 12

Officers swoop on £5m drug haul

A MAN from Woodside Park and a teenager from New Barnet have been charged in connection with a £5million cannabis haul found on a yacht in the North Sea.

Dominic Solari, 22, from Chancetonbury Way, Woodside

Park, and Alan Watson, 19, of Berkeley Crescent, New Barnet, were both granted bail when they appeared before magistrates in North Shields on Friday. Both were charged with possessing cannabis with intent to supply.

Their boat was stopped in a

joint operation by the Navy and Customs and Excise in the North Sea, off the Yorkshire coast.

The boat eventually crashed after gale force winds hampered attempts to retrieve the haul. Customs officers sealed off a beach amid fears the drugs could wash ashore.



Rich pickings: Former Finchley resident George Pierce, 95, travelled from Chelmsford to enjoy the anniversary flower show

NIFTY needlework, bulging beetroots and bags of beans were just some of the attractions at the 60th Finchley Methodist Church Annual Flower Show on Saturday.

Adrianne Booth, wife of Finchley MP Hartley Booth, was on hand at the church, in Ballards Lane, to reward many hours of painstaking work in homes and allotments locally with prizes for categories ranging from flower arranging to photography.

According to flower show committee member Margaret Michelmore this year's show boasted a record number of entries despite adverse weather.

"Considering the difficult season, we

Flower power for the 60th year

have had exhibits of a very high standard," said Margaret.

"The summer has been very dry which makes things difficult because the flowers are over so quickly and without water the fruit doesn't mature. Then we had a load of wind and rain which blew everything over."

"All things considered it was a very good show and a nice opportunity to bid farewell to our vice president of 30-years' standing Marjorie Stringer," she added.

Winners on page 7

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First Jewish 'freedom zone' wins approval

By John Grigsby, Local Government Correspondent

BRITAIN is to have its first major "eruv"—a designated area where Orthodox Jews can move freely on the Sabbath—after a decision by Mr John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, yesterday.

He allowed an application by the United Synagogue eruv committee to install 85 poles and wires to define part of an 11-mile perimeter in the Golders Green and Hendon areas of Barnet, north London, as an eruv.

Mr Gummer's controversial decision is likely to lead the way for applications for other eruven in areas where there is a large Jewish community such as Manchester. They are already common in other countries—the centre of Washington, for example, is an eruv.

Barnet's planning committee originally turned down the application. It had led to divisions within the Jewish and the wider community.

Opponents said that the posts would be ugly and the proposal would be seen as favouring a small part of the population. But Mr Gummer accepted the advice of his inspector, Mr David Busby, to decide the matter purely on town planning grounds and not take into account wider social considerations.

He agreed that the poles, just under 20ft tall, would not seriously harm the character and appearance of the area, including five sites within Hampstead Garden Suburb conservation area.

The eruv is a legal and religious concept which converts public into private space for the purpose of observing the Sabbath. While Orthodox Jews may carry objects inside the home, they generally cannot do so outside.

This means they cannot

take such things as handkerchiefs or keys to the synagogue or even push prams or wheelchairs. The poles and wire fill the gaps between normal boundaries to the zone such as buildings.

Yesterday, Mr Alan Williams, who became Labour leader of the council after the local government elections in May, said: "The decision is now made. All those opposed have had their day in court. I hope the whole community will allow the eruv to go ahead without disruption."

However, Mr Roy Shutz, his Tory predecessor, a member of the Reform Synagogue and a councillor for the garden suburb, an opponent of the eruv, said that he believed that many local people would legally try to take the matter further.

"The difficulty is that many people see the issue as being far wider than a simple matter of planning."

"Something is going to happen to the locality, even if the wires are invisible. By favouring a particular group of people, and one small section in that group, the decision is going to change the character of the area."

The United Synagogue was unavailable for comment because members were observing the Feast of Tabernacles.

However, speaking after sunset, Mrs Eva Greenspan, a member of Barnet's planning committee who supported the eruv, said: "It had to be judged solely on planning grounds, and I could see no planning grounds for refusal."

Poles and wire already designate a small eruv at the entrance to a private estate in the area.

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the manner of a television chat show host, so excelled.

But give Maclennan a pulpit, a cathedral and a hushed congregation and he takes wing. Yesterday his party gave him just that. And he was, by turns, funny, sharp, reflective — and even inspirational. His remark that European politicians look at Michael Portillo "as children look at their first giraffe", will

Gummer approves Jewish 'eruv' site

Britain's first "eruv", a marked-out area in which Jewish Sabbath laws may be relaxed, is to be established in north London after John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, yesterday overturned objections by Barnet Council.

Mr Gummer said that he agreed with the finding of a public inquiry that the scheme would not "seriously harm the character and appearance" of the area. Poles with wires high above street level will mark out two-thirds of a mile of the eruv's 11-mile perimeter, most of which coincides with existing boundaries formed by housing, fencing, roads and rail.

Jewish Chronicle

SEPTEMBER 23, 1994 — TISHRI 18, 5755

Eruv of reconciliation

The old joke inevitably comes to mind, about the Jew who chooses to go golfing on Yom Kippur, only to be punished by the Almighty with a hole-in-one. "Who," the punch line goes, "is he going to be able to tell?" When the Environment Secretary's long-awaited ruling on the North-West London eruv was announced, on Wednesday morning, most of the rabbis and lay leaders who had fought hardest to win approval for the plan were, of course, in synagogue. Even there — notably in the independent Orthodox Ner Yisrael congregation, a prime mover in the eruv proposal — word got out. Inevitably, spontaneously, a celebration ensued. Celebration — as opposed to a potentially divisive spirit of triumphalism — is entirely merited. For many months, a scheme which will greatly enrich the Sabbath for Orthodox Jews, notably for the parents of small children and for the disabled, without penalising or encroaching upon anyone else, has been mired in largely senseless controversy. Significantly, much of the opposition to the eruv has come from Jews. Some argued that the addition of several dozen nondescript wooden poles would somehow blight the environment. That argument was clearly about as thin as the filament between eruv poles — as John Gummer concluded in his decision to approve the proposal, and as even many opponents of the eruv must have recognised. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that other, unspoken concerns were at work — specifically, a fear among some Jewish opponents of the eruv that the scheme, and the debate surrounding it, might uncomfortably heighten the profile of Jewishness and Judaism in the wider community. It is equally difficult to ignore the lamentable fact that many of those Jews who bridled at the idea of an eruv would — quite properly — have reacted with openness, tolerance and empathy if an analogous proposal had come from another of Britain's ethnic communities. The similar calls this week, by both proponents and opponents of the eruv, for a spirit of reconciliation in Anglo-Jewry and the wider non-Jewish community are immensely welcome. In that context, the eruv plan should be implemented in the spirit that it deserves: as an example, in a truly multi-ethnic society, of a move to enrich the lives of one group — with care, sensitivity and respect for those who may neither need, nor want, its benefits.

Ham & High

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1994

Eruv: It's a yes from Gummer

ORTHODOX Jews in North London this week celebrated Environment Secretary John Gummer's decision to approve the eruv, but they face a concerted effort from Jewish opponents to stop the controversial religious plan.

As predicted in the Ham & High earlier this month, Mr Gummer could find no planning reason to reject the proposal for 85 poles demarking with wire an area of six-and-a-half square miles of Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hendon.

The decision is a victory for Orthodox Jews, who wanted an eruv so that children in prams and people in wheelchairs could be pushed within this symbolically enclosed area without violating Sabbath laws.

How quickly the eruv is erected depends on the United Synagogue Eruv Committee. It has to persuade the Department of Transport to allow wire across highways such as Lyttleton Road.

But Barnet's planning committee chairman Jack Cohen, himself an eruv supporter, warned the committee not to rush things. "There is some misunderstanding of the eruv committee's motives and these have to be tackled."

The proposal for the eruv has provoked huge controversy in North London since it was suggested more than two years ago.

Some Jews believe the eruv would divide a multicultural community — they were accused by some Orthodox Jews who want the eruv of being anti-semitic.

But after examining the report

of his planning inspector David Bushby, who held an inquiry last November into Barnet Council's rejection of the eruv, Mr Gummer agreed that the "social harmony" of the application was not a material planning consideration.

He concluded that the eruv would not seriously harm the character and appearance of the area, would leave the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area substantially unharmed and would not affect its visual impact.

Shell-shocked opponents of the eruv were this week licking their wounds and considering their options which include seeking a ruling in the High Court. Elizabeth Lawrence, co-ordinator of the 2,000-strong Barnet Eruv Objectors Group, described Mr Gummer's report as superficial.

"To say the eruv would make no difference to the environment is patently nonsense. To demarcate an area in London for minority use can't be compared with a normal planning application," she said.

She said legal advice would be sought and Barnet's view solicited, but it was too early to say whether the group would seek a judicial review. "I would feel inclined to do what we can. The eruv is a very dangerous idea."

Some opponents insisted that they would fight on. Jeffrey Segall, who can expect a pole to be erected outside his home in Child's Hill, claimed it would lead to "social disintegration", adding:

and worked in St Ives. The sculptor

Eruv

<From page one

"To me, it's the equivalent of a Nazi symbol."

But other opponents, like Hampstead Garden Suburb councillor Frank Davis, were prepared to throw in the towel. "When the umpire's finger goes up, I walk. I can take my black eyes as well as the next man."

Hendon South MP John Marshall, a supporter of the plan, said: "I do hope that it won't create a lasting schism in the Jewish community. Where there is a will to work together, people can do so."

Edward Black, spokesman for the United Synagogue's Eruv Committee, said that the decision would enable thousands of mothers, children, the elderly and disabled to enjoy their sabbath to the full.

"We do appreciate that the idea of a community eruv gave rise to anxiety among some people. We trust that all parties will now put their differences behind them, and move forward in an atmosphere of mutual respect."

"We are confident that once established, the eruv, like those in the United States, Canada, Australia, Belgium and elsewhere, will be appreciated by people who need it and not noticed by those who don't."

To back page▷

Viewpoint



Walled In: The ghetto people of Schindler's List, prelude to the Nazi holocaust

ENVIRONMENT Secretary John Gummer this week gave permission for an Orthodox Jewish community in North London to create an eruv, an area fenced off from the surrounding streets for religious reasons. Here, former Shadow Cabinet Minister GERALD KAUFMAN, who was brought up as an Orthodox Jew, argues that such isolationism could pose a threat to our integrated society.

ON THE wall above my kitchen stove hangs a picture of the Ghetto in Venice. I bought it when I visited that most beautiful of Italian cities last year.

For centuries, the Ghetto was not at all beautiful for the Jewish community in Venice. It was the area of the town to which they were stringently restricted. Ask Shakespeare's Shylock.

The word 'ghetto' has an ugly history for Jews. That heart-rending film Schindler's List has this year shown how, under the Nazis, Jews in the occupied Polish city of Cracow were first of all restricted to a ghetto and then massacred there.

Now, by giving planning permission for an eruv in Barnet, North-West London, Environment Secretary John Gummer has authorised ultra-Orthodox Jews to create their own do-it-yourself ghetto.

Within a six-square-mile area, a symbolic Jewish enclave is to be set up. Part of it will be enclosed within natural boundaries like roads and railway lines. But a section of the perimeter will be marked by telegraph-type poles linked by fine fishing line.

Why has an eruv been demanded? Because certain zealously observant ultra-Orthodox Jews accept the obligation to observe burdensome rules limiting what may be carried outside their homes on the Sabbath and on other holy days. The eruv is a device which extends the area in which objects may be carried, or strollers may be pushed, beyond the purlieus of the home to the whole area within the eruv's boundaries.

I am very well aware of the rules limiting what Orthodox Jews may carry on restricted days. My father was such an Orthodox Jew, who refused to carry door keys or even a handkerchief outside our home on the Sabbath.

HE WAS so devout that he lay in wait for the postman and hid my letters on Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement, the holiest Jewish day of all — because to him tearing open the envelopes was a sin.

I am proud to be Jewish, in my own more relaxed way, but I believe that Mr Gummer has made a sad mistake in allowing this plan to go ahead. By permitting one group to set itself apart from the rest of the nation, he is inviting every other group to seek similar treatment.

Once that process becomes active, it threatens to undermine all the efforts made over a century to turn Britain into a contented multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. The

The danger of creating your own ghettos

by GERALD KAUFMAN

herculean work performed by so many ethnic and religious groups, including Jews, to draw communities together could gradually be undone and our nation could become fragmented.

My feelings are not influenced because I am opposed to religious and ethnic minority groups being allowed to preserve their special identities. Far from it. I believe that they should not only be allowed, but assisted to maintain their identities.

I support religious education — whether Church of England, Catholic, Jewish or Moslem — within the state system. I believe that Jews and Moslems should have the right to eat their kosher and halal meat and that Sikhs should not be prevented from wearing their turbans, even in place of motorcycle crash helmets.

Minority groups, in preserving their identities, can contribute to the richness of our diverse society. We can all enjoy St Patrick's Day festivities, and folk dances performed by Polish and Ukrainian teams. Asian food — provided by Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi restaurants — is hugely popular. So is Chinese.

But Hongkong Chinese caterers do not run only Chinese restaurants. They also supply some of the most succulent English-style fish and chips at what we have come to call Chinese chippies.

Minorities, whether religious or ethnic or both, should be part of the wider society, respecting and carrying on their own customs but not shutting themselves off from that wider society. They should celebrate themselves, where they came from and what they stand for. They should not isolate themselves. For from isolation can come misunderstanding and hostility.

Today it is a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews who have decided to build a fence around themselves. Tomorrow it could be another group or sect. Tolerance — on both sides — requires understanding — on both

sides. Fences stand in the way of understanding. Yes, of course, the creation of an eruv will remove certain inconveniences for those ultra-Orthodox Jews who will take advantage of it. But religious observance sometimes involves inconveniences, and a test of religious commitment may be whether people are ready to accept those inconveniences.

Last week, from Wednesday evening to Thursday evening — the sunset-to-sunset period which covers Yom Kippur — thousands of Jews fasted. They took neither food nor drink of any kind for 25 hours. During Ramadan, Moslems fast during daylight hours for 30 days. In a hot climate, that must be an ordeal. But Moslems accept that that ordeal goes with being a Moslem. Many pious Christians volunteer for self-denial during Lent, the 40-weekday period between Ash Wednesday and Easter-eve.

TRUE religion is not a game, in which you bend the rules to suit your convenience. It is a belief-system, in which you abide by all the rules — or else, like me, you abide by some rules and disregard others, knowing that you are accordingly an incomplete and unsatisfactory communicant of your faith. A multi-ethnic society should be a pattern, not a patchwork. It should not consist of groups separating themselves from each other, but of communities which respect themselves but are part of the wider community, too.

I support maintaining religious and ethnic identity within an integrated multi-ethnic community. But I am dead against racial and religious exclusivity, and I am against using the planning permission laws available to all law-abiding citizens as a way of enshrining that exclusivity.

I am against religious and ethnic minority groups being walled into ghettos. I am just as much against such groups walling — or fencing — themselves into ghettos.

That is why I am against the creation of an eruv in North-West London or anywhere else.

Eruv opponents consider making legal challenge

ERUV opponents were this week weighing up whether grounds existed for challenging the Secretary of State's ruling allowing the proposal to go ahead.

Opinion among some, however, appeared divided over whether a potentially costly legal challenge — possibly in the form of a judicial review — was realistic. The inspector's verdict on the eruv, an area where Jewish Sabbath laws are relaxed, was based entirely on planning grounds, which many believe would make it difficult to argue he acted "unreasonably" in reaching his decision.

The Barnet Eruv Objectors Group, which expressed dismay at the ruling, plans a detailed scrutiny of the report before deciding what, if any, action to take.

"We are not ruling anything out and we're not ruling anything in. We are still opposed to it but we have to consult lawyers," said spokeswoman Elizabeth Lawrence.

The United Synagogue Eruv committee, meanwhile, echoed the call of Garden Suburb councillor Frank Davis, one of the eruv's most outspoken critics, in appealing for differences to be set aside. Spokesman

RULING DISMAYS GROUP

Edward Black said: "We appreciate the idea gave rise to anxiety among some. The Secretary of State and inspector considered all the relevant issues and concerns in reaching their decision."

by PAUL FRANCIS

"We therefore trust all parties will put their differences behind them and move forward in an atmosphere of mutual respect."

It will be some time, possibly months, before poles and wire go up.

The chairman of Barnet's town planning committee, Jack Cohen, accepted there would still be some resentment. "It is not going to be easy but I hope people will accept they had a fair hearing and this decision is the right one," he said.

Garden Suburb resident Alan Jacobs, an opponent, acknowledged it would prove difficult to dispute the inspector's verdict. "He's torpedoed things by deciding on planning grounds. Now we have to broaden the debate — though I'm not sure how."

LEGAL CHALLENGE COULD BE NEXT MOVE

Eruv opponents consider options

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"We are still opposed to it but we have to consult lawyers," said spokeswoman Elizabeth Lawrence.

The United Synagogue Eruv Committee, meanwhile, echoed

the call of Hampstead Garden Suburb councillor Frank Davis, one of the eruv's most outspoken critics, in appealing for differences to be set aside.

Spokesman Edward Black said: "We appreciate the idea gave rise to anxiety among some.

"The Secretary of State and inspector considered all the relevant issues and concerns in reaching their decision.

"We therefore trust all parties will put their differences behind them and move forward in an atmosphere of mutual respect."

It will be some time, possibly months, before the poles and wire go up, marking out the area in which strict Jewish sabbath laws will be relaxed.

The chairman of Barnet's town planning committee, Jack Cohen, accepted that there would still be some resentment.

"It is not going to be easy but I hope people will accept they had a fair hearing and this decision is the right one," he said.

Garden Suburb resident Alan Jacobs, an eruv opponent, acknowledged it would prove difficult to dispute the inspector's verdict.

"He's torpedoed things by deciding on planning grounds: Now we have to broaden the debate — though I'm not sure how," he said.

News extra

Attack charge

A BUILDER from Edgware is among five people accused of attacking a man outside a Paddington nightclub.

Eugene O'Neill, 36, of Harcourt Avenue, appeared with four others at Marylebone Magistrates Court on Friday.

All five are charged with causing violent disorder in Queensway, West London, in the early hours of August 20.

O'Neill is charged with maliciously wounding Garth Stainforth with intent to cause him grievous bodily harm, while another man, Robert Burns, 31, is charged with assaulting Mr Stainforth, causing him actual bodily harm.

The five were bailed unconditionally until October 7 to seek legal advice.

COUPLE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMEBACK



Half-century: Robert and Iris Ramsay at their golden wedding anniversary celebrations

picture by: DANIEL MARTIN

A RETIRED Stanmore postman and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary after their children organised a dinner at the Hendon Hall Hotel.

Robert and Iris Ramsay, who lived in Edgware until their retirement in 1976, met at the end of the war when Robert was stationed on army search-light duty in Wembley. But living with Robert's parents proved too cramped so they moved to Wenlock Road in 1948, where they remained for the next three decades.

Their son, George Ramsay, of Stoneyfields Lane, who is a church warden at John Keble Church, said: "Although they now live in Norfolk, we decided to hold a special meal with all their old friends and neighbours in Hendon because this is where they spent their working lives and where my sister and I grew up."

Robert worked the borough's streets as a postman at the Stanmore office after leaving the army, while Iris was a secretary at National Cash Register on the North Circular Road, before Brent Cross Shopping Centre was built around it.

George added that growing up in the area must have left an impression on him and his sister, Denise Piddington, since they both still live a mile apart. George runs his own cafe, George's Kitchen, on Deans Lane, while Denise is a teacher at Edgware School.

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Letters extra

Lunge against fencing

THIS IS the very first time in my life I have written to a paper, so I must feel very strongly about this.

The eruv is disgusting and humiliating to the people who do not want it, and these must number thousands. I already live in a housing association where I feel fenced in.

Why do we have to segregate ourselves and turn the place into a ghetto, or should we all start singing that song Don't Fence Me In?

Mr H Nathan
Harmony Close
Temple Fortune

Stretching belief

I WRITE in absolute amazement that the Environment Secretary and his inspector have decided the matter of the eruv on purely planning grounds.

Since when has a vociferous religious minority attained their purpose on 'planning grounds'?

Mr Gummer and the United Synagogue have done Barnet a great disservice. It will be opposed and minorities in Barnet will all demand public show of their beliefs.

Twenty foot poles with adjoining wires do not absolve sin in the eyes of God! Orthodox Jews have accepted their rules.

It ill becomes the United Synagogue to further racism with the Monty Python concept of poles and wires to absolve sin!

Mrs Muriel Marks
Purley Avenue
Cricklewood

Eruv ruling out of line

FOLLOWING the go-ahead from John Gummer, the Finchley Society will be in the forefront of any future eruv protest.

Acting under our 1971 constitution, to 'secure the preservation, protection and development of public interest in the area,' we will continue to protest at this monstrous proposal that has devastated the harmony between religious groups.

This was never a matter of religious

freedom and I despise all councillors who supported the application from the United Synagogue and the Chief Rabbi, who represent only two per cent of the Jewish population.

Our president, a planning expert, objected at the inquiry to the fine wire stretched between 'gateways' and the potentially lethal consequences of broken lengths becoming entangled with vehicles, or simply caught around the legs of the elderly or infirm.

The application symbolises nationalism and neo-Nazism where a very small minority foist their wishes on the community.

The erection of 'private' street furniture will set a dangerous precedent.

Speaking personally, I would have fully supported the painting of a thin line on the ground to denote the boundary.

Norman Burgess
Chairman of The Finchley Society
Vines Avenue
Finchley

Short-sighted, smug objections

EVEN in defeat Roy Schutz is unable to keep his clearly unwanted considerations on the eruv to himself. Few in the community share his view that the markings of the eruv would even be noted after its placing.

Those who offer criticisms will not be able to see the poles, nor will they be caught up on the wires, unless they just happen to be eight feet high.

On another point used against the eruv, birds have a greater strength of sight than humanity and can recognise objects from many feet above the ground.

One must offer congratulations to Mr Gummer for his late support of this harmless religious division. The only dangers come from those resting in their own smug conclusions, and their obvious misuse of power.

Michael Barak Kaye
Marsh Drive
West Hendon Estate

Eruv is much ado about nothing but votes

THE ERUV seems to me to be a terrible waste of somebody's money, probably ours. It is also unnecessary and will create trouble.

What about a simple idea such as a photocopy of a prepared map of the suggested area made available by the local synagogue to the Jewish community for something like 10p?

Even that is not needed. Wherever you live and who ever you are, you are aware of the neighbourhood that you live in, you get to the shops for example from your house without having to get the map out.

At the weekend one sees Jewish families making their way to the synagogue on foot. They know where they are and they seem to know what they are doing.

I wonder what Mr Gummer is up to; it couldn't be a few more votes could it?

Eruv letters extra p15

CH Good
Hamilton Way
Finchley

£50,000 needed for construction and start-up costs

North-West London eruv operational 'within a year'

By SIMON ROCKER

Britain's first eruv, approved last week by Environment Secretary John Gummer, should be operational within a year, according to its promoters.

But it will be some months before the installation of the first of the poles marking the boundaries of the six-and-a-half-square-mile zone covering Hendon, Golders Green and parts of Finchley and Hampstead.

"There are a number of bureaucratic hoops that still have to be jumped through," commented United Synagogue eruv committee spokesman Edward Black.

Most of the eruv will be marked by existing railway lines and highways. But there are 37 locations where the boundaries will have to be delineated by sets of poles linked by thin wire in order to comply with the strict requirements of rabbinic law.

In fact, only 85 poles will be needed overall, so most of the designated spots will require merely one pair of linked poles ranging from 16 to 20 feet high.

The eruv committee has already purchased the fishing line that will be used to wire the poles — for the princely outlay of £12.95.

Several technical details remain to be sorted out with Barnet council,

but should pose no problem — for example, what shade of green, brown or grey to paint the poles. Formal consent from the Department of Transport will also be required for poles erected on public highways.

The committee will also have to raise £50,000 to fund the construction and start-up costs, and launch a public information campaign to explain exactly what people will be allowed to carry on Shabbat within the eruv.

According to Mr Black: "We'll be producing educational material for schools, shuls and communal groups."

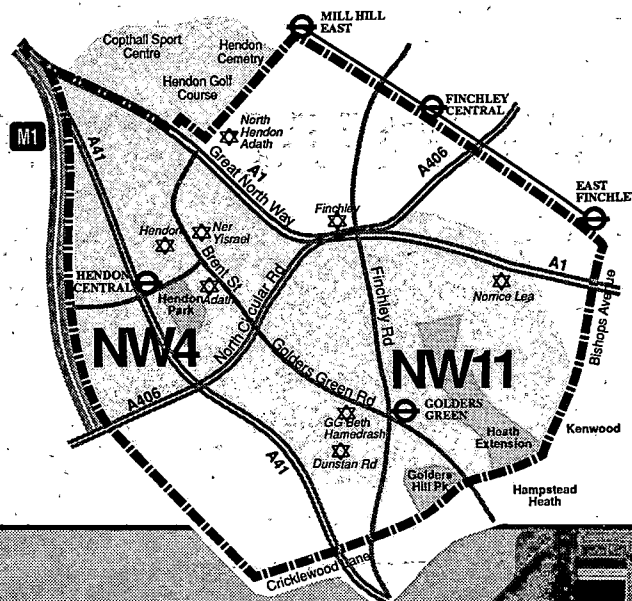
One suggestion for funding maintenance of the eruv is a premium-rate hotline which people would be able to call before the onset of Shabbat to check that the eruv is intact.

Responsibility for the religious supervision of the eruv will lie with the senior dayan of the London Beth Din, Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu.

It remains to be seen whether local rabbis from the Orthodox Union of Hebrew Congregations who have strenuously opposed the creation of an eruv, will relent

and allow their congregants to use it. A OUHC source said that no decision would be taken until after this week's festivals.

Mr Black stressed: "We hope everyone will put their differences behind them and move forward in an atmosphere of respect and co-operation."



Blink and you'll miss it: the arrow marks an eruv pole held up by a workman in Cricklewood Lane during an on-site visit by inspector David Bushby as part of last year's public inquiry. Top, a map illustrating the boundaries of the North-West London eruv

Women and children first among the beneficiaries

By SIMON ROCKER

Mothers, young children, the disabled and the elderly will benefit most from the eruv.

Under the religious authority of the London Beth Din, the eruv is designed to permit Orthodox Jews to carry items on Shabbat which

enhance the celebration of the day.

It will thus become permissible to push people in wheelchairs or babies in buggies and prams. Parents will be able to carry around what they need for baby care — nappies and food. The elderly will be able to take walking sticks or carry such items as medication or reading glasses.

It will also presumably be possible to take grapes to a sick relative or a bottle of wine to friends when visiting for Shabbat lunch.

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Yomtov. Nor would it be permissible for observant Jews to take a football to the park.

This is not because the action would technically violate the laws against carrying, but because ball games would still be prohibited as incompatible with the spirit of the Sabbath.

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September 1994: Synagogue on Succot as news breaks that Environment Secretary John Gummer has finally approved the eruv.

Objectors ponder action

By RUTH ROTHENBERG

Eruv objectors were this week considering their next step, following the government's go-ahead.

"We are taking legal advice," said Elizabeth Lawrence, co-ordinator of the 2,000-strong Barnet eruv objectors' group. "There are many procedures to go through and it will not all be all plain sailing."

The decision has also caused the resignation from a founder member of the Finchley Council of Christians and Jews, Norman Burgess.

Mr Burgess, a Methodist, said that while he was not against the concept of an eruv, he objected strongly to the form of its implementation.

"The erection of street furniture

for private purposes will set a dangerous precedent," he told the JC.

In contrast, other communities with eruv plans reacted with delight.

In Manchester, consultations have been taking place under the direction of Dayan Osher Westheim.

"With community consensus, maximum use of natural features, discreet use of posts or poles, and education on what exactly is involved, we hope to have an eruv within a year," said a Manchester Beth Din spokesman.

Outer London suburbs, such as Ilford in the east and Cockfosters in the north, are actively considering establishing an eruv.

Both Edgware and Elstree support the idea of a local eruv in principle, with certain halachic reservations.

What the papers said...

By JEREMY LESTER

Those looking to the national press for the real story about what an eruv actually is could well have got the wrong end of the pole.

In a hard-hitting Daily Mail opinion piece, Jewish MP Gerald Kaufman opposed the eruv under the headline: "The danger of creating your own ghettos." However, its introduction described the eruv as an area "fenced off from the surrounding streets" for religious reasons.

The Guardian headline, "Gummer allows first Jewish eruv," seemed to suggest the possibility of a non-Jewish eruv — or more likely, to explain the provenance of the idea for a wider reading public.

Indeed, the report did a fairly accurate job, until its last paragraph,

which said: "No Orthodox Jews were available for comment yesterday because of the festival of Yom Kippur."

The Daily Telegraph declared: "First Jewish 'freedom zone' wins approval" — news which must come as a great relief to all those hitherto "enslaved" in the Suburb.

After freedom zones and fences, maybe the most sensible reaction came from the Ham and High, which commented: "The eruv, after all, will exist almost entirely in the minds of the people who proposed it, will use it, and who will pay for the erection of and maintenance of its few poles and wires. Everyone else, as Mr Gummer found, should hardly notice its few physical manifestations, and will not in any way be affected by its theological implications."



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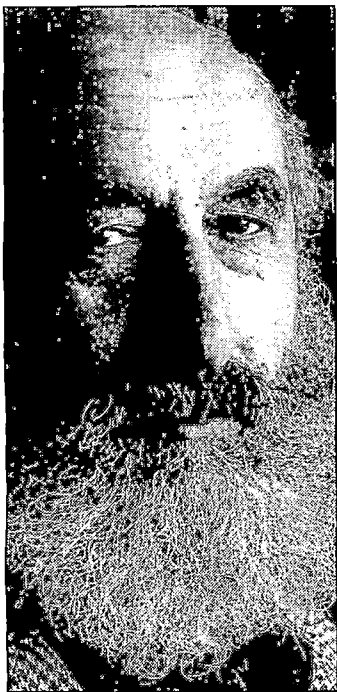
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Chaim Bermant

The Mib fail to cancel the high-wire act

AS THE WORD is likely to find its way into the next edition of the Oxford dictionary, I had better define it now.

An eruv is a device which renders permissible some actions normally forbidden on the Sabbath and festivals. Such devices have several applications, but the expression is commonly used to refer to a notional boundary, usually in the form of overhead wires, which symbolically converts a public domain into a private one, thus enabling Jews to carry on the Sabbath.

Once the word strays into general circulation, it will come to mean a licensed way of doing something you shouldn't. Thus, for example, a sprig of mistletoe at Christmas may come to be known as an eruv because it enables people to kiss complete strangers without being accused of sexual harassment.

When Environment Secretary John Gummer announced that he was permitting the creation of a North-West London eruv, I was phoned by two national papers which wanted to know how it would affect non-Jews and non-Orthodox Jews? Would it mean the creation of a ghetto?

I replied that the ghetto was

already there, self-created and self-preserved, and that the eruv would affect only about 4,000 or 5,000 Orthodox Jews, who accept the word of their rabbis as the word of God. As for non-Jews and non-Orthodox Jews, they wouldn't even know that the eruv existed.

I suppose if we had a Jewish honours system, the begetters of the eruv campaign — Rabbi Allan Kimche, and a range other figures, notably in the United Synagogue — would each get a knighthood, if not a peerage, for it cost them many a sleepless night, and a great deal of time, money and heartache.

Some of the heartache was self-inflicted, especially when some eruv-enthusiasts tried to steamroller the scheme through a meeting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb residents' association. It was a high-wire operation from the beginning, and a steamroller is not the best device to use on a high-wire.

But what nearly destroyed the scheme was not the objections of the HGSRA, or of non-Orthodox Jews who feared that the eruv would symbolise a return to the ghetto, but the evidence given to the public inquiry by the holiest of the holy, the men in black — known hereinafter as the

Mib — from Stamford Hill, Golders Green and Hendon, who argued in emphatic terms that the eruv was unacceptable in Jewish law.

That Mr Gummer nevertheless ruled in favour is, I am convinced, due less to the actual merits of the case than to his feeling that, if he had turned down the eruv, the word would spread that English society was riddled with anti-Semitism.

The word had already begun to spread after the HGSRA meeting, but the residents of the Suburb were merely as anxious to preserve the amenities of their neighbourhood as observant Jews are anxious to preserve their traditions.

Their fears may have been unfounded, but the high-handed attitudes of the pro-eruv party did little to put them at rest.

We are all careful to protect and assert our religious rights, but non-Jews also have rights. And so, for that matter, do even non-religious Jews, whom Rabbi Kimche, in one of his less felicitous asides, denounced as self-haters.

The affair has not enhanced the standing, or rather understanding, of traditional Judaism in the wider community.

It must have been a shock for

those who liked to think that Judaism was reasonable and compassionate, to be told that cripples and mothers with infants were incarcerated in their homes on the holy Sabbath — at least where they lacked non-Jewish au pairs — and that they needed a succession of high-wires over telegraph poles before they could take an aged relative out in a wheelchair, or an infant out in a pram.

As if that were not bad enough, there came the insistence of the Mib that even the measure of humanity evident in the eruv was not kosher. If ever there was an example of a *chillul Hashem*, this was it.

Well, it's all over now, bar the shouting, but there will be quite a bit of shouting.

It was, I think, the late Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie who invented the unfortunate expression, "Torah-true Jews." We shall now have Torah-true Jews who will make use of the eruv, and Torah-truer Jews who won't — or the *eruvim* and the *eruvless*.

The eruv will certainly make life easier for some. For others, it will provide a new occasion to be holier than the rest which, I suppose, is a benefit of sorts.

Women and children first among the beneficiaries

By SIMON ROCKER

Mothers, young children, the disabled and the elderly will benefit most from the eruv.

Under the religious authority of the London Beth Din, the eruv is designed to permit Orthodox Jews to carry items on Shabbat which

enhance the celebration of the day.

It will thus become permissible to push people in wheelchairs or babies in buggies and prams. Parents will be able to carry around what they need for baby care — nappies and food. The elderly will be able to take walking sticks or carry such items as medication or reading glasses.

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September 1994: Cheers in synagogue on Succot as news breaks that Environment Secretary John Gummer has finally approved the eruv.

MANCHESTER ROSH YESHIVA ZTL ON THE ERUV

Dear Sir,

Your correspondent, Akiva Aaronson, writes from Bnei Brak (which, of course, has an *eruv*) adducing the well known *Meshech Chochmah* on *Bechukosai* as a reason for not erecting an *eruv* in London and elsewhere (28 October).

The *Meshech Chochmah's* insight and near prophecy cannot be repeated too often, but it has, if anything, contrary relevance to the desirability of *eruvim*. Its effect on the marginally observant will surely be to intensify their adherence to yiddishkeit.

In absolute halachic terms no *eruv* ever recently constructed has fulfilled the requirements and stringencies of all opinions. The option of not making use of its facility is available for those who want to be *machmir*. In a discussion I had with the late Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal ztl, he made it emphatically clear to me, that those who oppose the *eruv* on the principle of its encouraging freer social mingling on Shabbos, with its inherent possible threat to *tznius* were fundamentally mistaken. He said that this

potential hazard had never been evoked in all the writings he had seen on the topic, and it should not be a consideration today. As for the practical halachic technicalities of the *eruv*, he added, these, of course, should be done under the supervision of Poskim expert in the subject.

To say that an *eruv* will "make us feel more settled and at home in England", when, in fact, we will share a *Mitzvah* in common with all *Kehillos* in Eretz Yisroel and many abroad seems contrary to *sechel hayoshor*.

Yours sincerely

L. REICH

27 Brodm Lane
Salford M7

Dear Sir,

Whilst I have no argument with the *Meshech Chochmah*, I cannot follow the conclusion drawn from him by Akiva Aaronson. Yirmiyohu (Ch.29) advises those in Golus Bavel to settle comfortably there until Hashem will remember them after 70 years. If the *eruv* makes life more comfortable and convenient and is within the *halocho*, why oppose it on the grounds suggested by your correspondent? As *halocho* forbids, so *halocho* permits. There are those who will not use the *eruv* and there are those who will use it — as I will.

Yours faithfully

(Rev) B. KOSCHLAND

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PARISH NEWSLETTER ANGERS JEWISH COMMUNITY

MP calls for vicar's resignation

HENDON South MP John Marshall has called for a vicar to resign after he suggested that plans for an eruv were only approved because of the government's reluctance to turn down requests from the Jewish community.

The MP said the Rev John Wainwright of All Saints' Church, off Lyndale Avenue, Childs Hill, should be transferred to another parish because his views on the eruv, a symbolic zone relaxing strict Sabbath laws for Orthodox Jews, were unChristian and anti-Semitic.

The MP said: "He should go to his bishop and ask to be transferred. Quite frankly, his views are unChristian and out of tune with those of his parishioners. It does seem to me that someone who holds anti-Semitic views should not seek to represent the church and still less should be a vicar in this part of London."

He found it offensive that the vicar had singled out the Jewish community and added: "We are all God's creatures whatever our religious faith."

Mr Wainwright insisted his remarks, made in a parish newsletter, had been misinterpreted and he was not implying the government was "beholden" to the Jewish community.

In the newsletter, the vicar wrote: "Because the Chief Rabbi spoke in favour of the proposal, it became inevitable the

by PAUL FRANCIS

go-ahead would be given simply because all governments are reluctant to turn down requests from this community." The newsletter, which has angered many of his Jewish parishioners, also said: "When and if the erection of an eruv takes place, Childs Hill will become part of the Jewish area of London."

On Sunday, Mr Wainwright, who spoke out at the public inquiry into the eruv last year, attempted to defuse the growing row by making a brief public statement in church.

He said he had the "highest regard" for the Jewish community and that he understood why the government had given the go-ahead for the eruv. His opposition was based on the eruv's aesthetic impact, not its "social implications", he added.

But this week, Mr Wainwright would not be drawn on whether he regretted the comments and said: "One should be able to say one is anti-eruv if one wants

to. The point I was making was not that the government was beholden to the Jewish community but because of the esteem in which it is held. An eruv will cause resentment...that is the tragedy of it."

The Bishop of Edmonton's office would not say if Mr Wainwright had been instructed to retract his remarks but issued a copy of the statement he made in church.

Parents win crossing for pupils

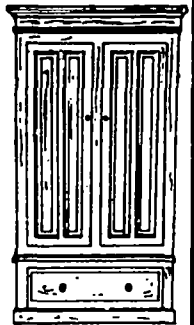
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LETTERS

Harassment threat of eruv

I WRITE to clarify your report in last week's paper concerning the proposed eruv posts in Child's Hill. I wish to make it clear that I have the highest regard for the Jewish community, both in this parish and elsewhere. It is important that all individuals and institutions work harmoniously together with each other for the common good.

My point that having the Chief Rabbi at the public inquiry was a tour de force insofar that he is held in the highest esteem in view of his community's contribution to the life of the nation.

Their values on the importance of morals and to family life are an example to us all. Any inquiry would find it difficult to turn down such a reasonable request from an admired member of the establishment insofar as it allowed for his people to push prams and wheelchairs on the Sabbath.

However, I believe that the wrong decision was made on the eruv, since it was based on the aesthetic looks of the poles rather than the social implications.

My fear is that the eruv could draw public attention to a clearly defined Jewish area, and possibly subject their

community to harassment and abuse. It is for this reason alone that I have consistently objected to the eruv since its inception.

THE REV J.P. WAINWRIGHT

All Saints' Vicarage
Church Walk, NW2

THE creation of an eruv will free orthodox Jews to push prams on the Sabbath and so to act more like Gentiles. Outwardly they will be more - not less - like the rest of the community.

Inwardly, though, their apparently profane behaviour will constitute a triple religious conformity - to the prohibition against manual work, to the ritual power of the eruv to free them from it, and to the ritual definition of the presence of Gentiles as a threat which the eruv is a defence against.

The irony is that the actual eruv has been approved by Gentiles precisely because not only will it not keep them out of the ritually protected areas, it will not even be conspicuous enough for them to symbolically acknowledge.

JOHN BIRD,

32 Swains Lane, N6

A LOT OF FUSS ABOUT A FEW POLES AND SOME WIRE? MIKE VERDIN INVESTIGATES

On the trail of the eruv

WHEN proposals to enclose much of North-West London in an eruv have created such an outcry, it seems strange that the two small versions of the scheme in Golders Green are accompanied by such silence.

It takes a sharp eye to spot the 30 yards of wire running across the mouths of Woodlands Close and Park Way, declaring the eruv boundary and allowing orthodox Jewish residents to uphold less-strict Sabbath laws.

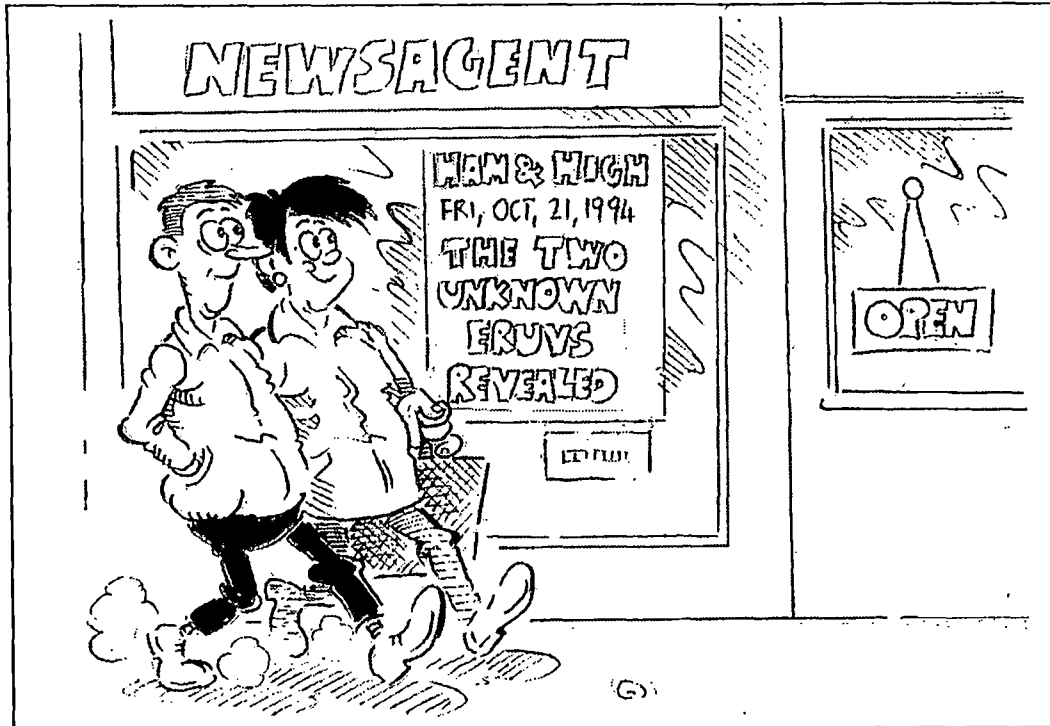
And it takes a keen ear to detect any disquiet in the cul-de-sacs, two of a worldwide network of eruvs decreed by some as "Jewish ghettos".

In Woodlands Close residents chatter about how the eruv has transformed their Sabbath life, allowed them to carry prayers books to worship, carry children and push invalid relatives in wheelchairs.

And in Park Way the air of peace amid the Neighbourhood Watch signs is even more pervasive.

"What eruv?" asked one man in orthodox dress with a 20-foot eruv pole sticking out of his garden.

"I don't know anything about it,"



And I thought only Damon Hill battled for pole position!

said another, more elderly, resident.

"We are not aware of granting a licence for putting a wire across the entrance into Park Way," said a spokesman for Barnet Council, which in 1990 gave permission for the Woodlands Close eruv. "We will be investigating the matter."

The existence of an eruv in Riverside Drive, a block of flats in Golders Green, was also denied by one orthodox Jewish resident, despite confirmation by another.

It is little surprise that even proponents of the main eruv, which would encompass six and a half square miles of Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hendon, pleaded ignorance of all but the Woodlands enclosure.

Indeed, fear of publicity stoking controversy over eruvs in Britain would appear to be nothing new.

"The idea was first aired in Golders Green some years ago, in the 1950s I think," said Mendel Kreditor, who with a fellow non-practising rabbi organised the setting

up of the Woodlands Close eruv. "But it did not get universal approval from the rabbis and so never happened. More orthodox rabbis believe the Sabbath laws should be upheld whatever, while others were worried about causing confrontation with other communities."

Mr Mendel proposed the Woodlands Close eruv to help him and his wife look after four young children. Sabbath laws upheld by orthodox Jews dictate that no work, not even carrying keys, can be undertaken on the Sabbath outside the home.

Woodlands Close resident Sharon Lazenga said: "You have no idea what a difference the eruv has made. It has changed my way of life and helped build up a real sense of community, between Jews and members of other faiths."

While the road boasts a non-Jewish Nigerian family, at least two Christians, and a Hindu who had not noticed the eruv wire in the two years she had lived in the road, it

was a woman born to an orthodox Jewish family in the East End who was the eruv's only opponent.

The woman, Gerry Myers, said: "What is the point of laws if you do not obey them? I certainly do not remember anything about eruvs when I was young."

Eruv proponents, however, argue that the enclaves date from at least the time of Christ and maybe Moses, some 1,200 years earlier.

But whatever residents' beliefs, it emerged there could be financial compensations. Mrs Lazenga reported "a number of offers" from people wanting to move into the Woodlands Close eruv, although her house is not on the market. Even Mrs Myers admitted an unsolicited offer had been made for her home during the summer.

Whether this attraction will be enough to realise fears of a "Jewish ghetto" within the proposed north London eruv, or to silence critics with homes on the market, remains to be seen.

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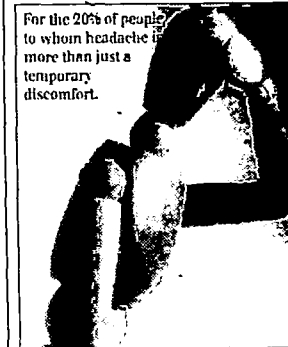
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12 MONTHS

INTEREST

DECIDE ON VACCINE THAT PRICKED CONSCIENCE OF SOME BELIEVERS

Public schools to measles jab

by PAUL FRANCIS
and SUSIE STEINER

evin McSharry, headteacher of St es Catholic High School in Orange Road, Burnt Oak, said the decision whether to accept the vaccination has left to the parents and very few had drawn.

The fact that as a school we accept the vaccine does not mean that we accept the original abortion," he said.

The tissue was taken from a foetus aborted 30 years ago and Mr McSharry said the remoteness of time was also a factor in the school's decision to accept the vaccine.

"Bishops have compared it to a person who was murdered and using that person's organs to help people in transplants," he added.

One girls' school, St Michael's Catholic Grammar in North Finchley, reported that a number of parents had asked for their daughters be withdrawn from the programme in the wake of the publicity over the vaccine's origins.

"We have had a number of parents asking for their daughters not to be vaccinated," said acting head Ursula Morrissey.

"We have given it a lot of thought but are following the teaching of the Catholic church, which says parents are the primary educators."

"It will be available but the right thing to do is let the parents make the decision," she added.

The debate had highlighted widespread disapproval of the use of foetal tissue to make vaccines, she added.

The immunisation of some 50,000 school children in Barnet got underway last week at Whitefield School in Cricklewood.

Withdrawn

Other Catholic schools reported few. If any, requests from parents for their children to be withdrawn.

And some criticised the decision by two leading Catholic public schools in the north of England to ban the use of the combined rubella and measles vaccine.

Public health chiefs defended the immunisation campaign this week and pointed out the vaccine was derived from a small number of cells from a single foetus aborted in 1966.

"The vaccine is highly purified and does not contain any foetal tissue," said Dr Maurice Sussman, Barnet's director of public health.

"There is no alternative source of rubella vaccine and to develop an alternative would take seven to ten years."



Get to the point: Barnet's vaccination programme arrived at Queenswell Junior School, Whetstone, on Tuesday

BRONWYN EVAN

Council's eruv legal bill tops £23,000 amid new opposition

BARNET paid more than £23,000 to the lawyer who represented it at the public inquiry into the eruv, the Times Group has learned.

The legal fees to barrister John Taylor QC totalled a massive £23,676 - amounting to some £4,000 for each day of the inquiry held last year.

The bill is likely to have made the inquiry the most expensive ever fought by the council. Officials' time in assessing the application, together with extensive public consultation, is thought to have pushed overall costs close to £100,000.

The setting up of the eruv, meanwhile, faces further delays.

Dr Jeffrey Segall, a longstanding opponent from Cricklewood, is trying to challenge in the High Court the Secretary of State's decision to allow the eruv, claiming the planning inspector failed to consider social harmony when he approved it.

Barnet's legal bill was so large that the former Conservative administration, whose decision to reject the eruv application led to the inquiry, was forced to cushion the blow on its planning budget with a one-off cash injection.

A council spokesman confirmed that the budget committee had agreed the extra allocation last year.

The largest part of Mr Taylor's bill was the £10,000 he charged to attend the

inquiry. But he also charged £6,250 for five 'refresher' sessions and £1,500 for advice on the case before the inquiry. With VAT, the bill totalled £23,676.25.

Councillor Jack Cohen, current chairman of Barnet's town planning committee and a supporter of the eruv, said: "The only people who seem to benefit from these situations are the lawyers."

"This is on top of the other costs involved in this application."

"It is a warning that when we look at applications we have to make decision's on planning merits - and those decisions have to be sensible ones."

News extra

Bubbly bursts

A BANK robber spent more than £1,000 on a night of champagne and prostitutes after the last in a string of armed raids that netted £55,000 - but was captured because his car containing evidence was clamped, the Old Bailey heard on Monday.

Steven Ifield, 25, of Ilford, was jailed for 14 years for firearms offence and seven armed raids including one at Midland Bank in Mill Hill on January 5, and one at Lloyds in Borehamwood on January 11. He denied all charges.

Four women jurors and a woman in the public gallery wept as he was sentenced.

	GOLDERS GREEN SCHOOL OF ENGLISH 11 GOLDERS GREEN ROAD LONDON NW11 TELEPHONE 0181 603 8328	
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Police officer dies in training session

A POLICE officer died during a routine training session after suffering a massive heart attack.

Gail Pirnie, 42, who was based at West Hendon, collapsed last Wednesday afternoon while training to use a new style of police baton.

Despite receiving immediate first-aid from colleagues she was pronounced dead at Edgware General.

A post mortem revealed that the condition of her heart meant the attack could have happened at any time.

Supt David Dadd said: "I would like her to be remembered as a very sunny and full-of-life sort of person."

A service will be held tomorrow at 2pm in the parish church of St Jude, Hampstead Garden Suburb.

EMPLOYEE IN INTENSIVE CARE

Safety executive investigates Barnet's refuse collection firm

THREE serious accidents have led health and safety chiefs to investigate Barnet's refuse collection company.

AAH plc, a national environmental services company, was issued an improvement notice by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after two accidents injured dustmen within the last year.

AAH was awarded the contract by Barnet three years ago without any approval of its health and safety record.

No one at AAH was available for comment.

Alan Williams, leader of the council, said: "This gives me great cause for concern that the council let a contract some years ago without having approved the company's health and safety policy."

A third incident, still being investigated along with the other accidents, happened in Edgware two weeks ago and left employee Daniel Macavoy in intensive care having been crushed by hydraulic equipment.

The accident came just three months after Barnet Council finally got round to approving the company's health and safety policy in July.

Virginia Monson, spokesman for HSE, said: "The Health and Safety Executive in the South East region has not prosecuted this company in the past but we have issued an improvement notice."

A APL contract with the council will run for

News extra

Accidental death prompts call for review

A CORONER is to recommend a review of how the Metropolitan Police use doctors following the death of Whetstone man.

Joshua Ward, 20, of Chandos Avenue, died in Barnet General on February 9, three days after he was arrested on suspicion of possessing cannabis and taken to Whetstone police station.

The jury at an inquest on Tuesday, found he had injured his head before he was taken to the station and recorded a verdict of accidental death.

But Mr Ward's father, John, a detective constable at Golders Green police station, said the family were disappointed with the verdict.

Joshua, a part-time supermarket cashier with Tesco, was held in custody at the police station where he was examined three times before a fourth examination prompted his admission to hospital.

Shoppers find it's only sometimes on a Sunday for Brent Cross stores

BRENT CROSS shopping centre spokeswoman said: "Sunday trading is

What price the eruv? £4,000 a day

BARNET paid more than £23,000 to the barrister which represented it at the public inquiry into the eruv, the Hendon Times has learned.

The legal fees to barrister John Taylor QC totalled a massive £23,676 — amounting to some £4,000 for each day of the inquiry held last year. The bill is likely to have made the inquiry the most expensive ever fought by the council. The time spent by planning chiefs in assessing the application, together with extensive public consultation, is thought to have pushed overall costs close to £100,000.

The setting up of the eruv, meanwhile, faces further delays. Dr Jeffrey Segall, a long-standing opponent from Cricklewood, has applied to the High Court

by PAUL FRANCIS

challenging the Secretary of State's decision, claiming the planning inspector failed to consider social harmony when he gave the go-ahead.

Barnet's legal bill was so large that the former Conservative administration, whose decision to reject the eruv application led to the inquiry, was forced to cushion the blow on its planning budget with a one-off cash hand out. A council spokesman confirmed that the budget committee had agreed the extra allocation last year.

"The planning department sets aside a sum of money for inquiries. With the eruv, they had to get the extra funding from the finance committee," the spokesman said.

The most expensive part of Mr Taylor's professional fees was the £10,000 he charged to attend the inquiry. But he

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Attention: MR.G.R.L.CRZER

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	TOTAL VAT £	3,526.25
	TOTAL DUE £	23,676.25

also charged £6,250 for five so-called 'refresher' sessions and £1,500 to advise the council on the case before the inquiry began. With VAT, the bill totalled £23,676.25.

Councillor Jack Cohen, the current chairman of Barnet's town planning committee and a supporter of the eruv, said: "The only people who seem to benefit from these situations are the lawyers.

This is on top of the other costs involved in this application. It is a warning that when we look at the planning applications we have to make decision's on planning merits — and those decisions have to be sensible ones."

United Synagogue Eruv Committee spokesman Edward Black said he was confident the High Court would uphold the inspector's decision.

News extra

Missing woman found dead

POLICE are appealing for witnesses to the death of a woman whose body was discovered in the River Brent last week.

Ivy Weaving, 86, of Franklin House, Perryfields

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Gremlins foil debt collection

MORE than £4 million in council tax owed from last year has yet to be collected by Haringey Council because of computer gremlins.

Software used for sending out bills and keeping tabs on payment has been dogged by problems, and compensation is being sought from the manufacturers.

But Highgate councillor Peter Forrest, one of two Tories on Haringey, claimed the problem had been dragging on for too long and blamed "ineptitude".

"The council blames the new computer system but it has been in place for more than 18 months. Soon they will have to come up with a new explanation," he said.

Nearly £3 million has been recovered since the end of March.

Total income is budgeted at nearly £56 million and Toby Harris, leader of Haringey, said the £4.6 million still outstanding at the end of September was not a cause for concern.

"The latest figures show we are taking up the shortfall fairly rapidly," he told the Ham & High.

Fury at £2m price for Roundhouse

THE ROUNDHOUSE is up for sale for about £2 million — more than twice the price Camden Council sold it for 18 months ago.

The move has fuelled Tory claims that the council is letting the family jewels go on the cheap. Conservative group leader Judith Barnes said the asking price for the grade-II listed Victorian former railway shed, in Chalk Farm Road, proved that Camden's properties were "always knowingly undersold".

She told the Ham & High: "It confirms all the suspicions that one had at the time that they had sold off the family silver pretty cheap and that we have probably thrown away an awful lot of money."

Property company Palacegate bought the Roundhouse from Camden for £900,000 in April last year, hoping to attract a partner prepared to invest money in the building, possibly to turn it into a centre for the arts or a live music

'Camden sold it on cheap'

venue. But there has been no satisfactory offer, despite considerable interest.

The property market is "firmer" so it will be advertised from tomorrow in property trade and entertainment magazines.

A top rock venue in the 1960s and 1970s, when Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones played there, the Roundhouse has stood empty for more than 10 years. Pop star Prince visited the Roundhouse last month for the launch of the new VH1 music television channel, but noise from other recent one-off music events has provoked complaints from residents.

Martin Walford, consultant

surveyor with Palacegate, says the company could only hope to make a small profit on the freehold sale because it has spent £500,000 on improvements.

"The company was seduced by the aura of the building, as many other people have been," he said. "It has an amazing feel to it. But, as a traditional investment company, we did not realise the problems involved in trying to get it up and running."

Labour councillor Ernest James said Camden had needed money and Government restrictions on borrowing left no alternative but to sell properties.

"Good estate management practice would dictate that when you need to raise money and you are at the bottom of a property market, you would borrow money rather than selling assets," he said. "But the Government refuses to allow us to do that. Therefore we sold off public properties at the price the market would bear."

Bid to stop eruv rising goes down to the wire

A LAST-DITCH High Court bid to stop the eruv was launched this week.

Permission was granted by Environment Secretary John Gummer last month, but on Tuesday, the last day an appeal could be lodged, resident Dr Jeffrey Segall initiated legal proceedings, challenging Mr Gummer's findings that the eruv would not seriously harm the appearance and character of the area it would enclose.

While Dr Segall, of Childs Hill, declined to speak to the Ham & High, it is understood the appeal has been lodged on the grounds that Mr Gummer did not take sufficient account of "social harmony" when making the decision.

Jill Foster, a legal adviser to the objectors, said: "This is extremely brave of Dr Segall. Perhaps the Government inspector's decision was not right given the evidence

presented, and there is a feeling that certain aspects have been overlooked.

"This is one of three routes objectors could have taken, and the one likely to create the most publicity. I would imagine it will be some time before it is settled."

Edward Black, spokesman for the United Synagogue's Eruv Committee, said: "We are confident that the carefully reasoned decision of the Secretary of State for the Environment will be upheld in the courts."

Police chief to attend group in BNP dispute

CHIEF Superintendent Linda Newham, of Kentish Town police, has warned British National Party official Michael Newland that racists have no place on a police panel.

And, despite previous reports from her colleagues that "if Newland is there we won't be", she has promised to attend the next meeting of the Kentish Town Central Sector Working Group, on November 17.

If he turns up, Mr Newland is expected to be drummed out of the

meeting when members vote in a new constitutional clause banning racism.

The Anti-Nazi League, which discovered that Mr Newland, who lives in Leighton Road, Kentish Town, had been attending the working group, is planning to picket the meeting.

In a terse letter to Mr Newland, Ms Newham said anyone who supported racism would hinder the group's progress. "This would not be acceptable to the Metropolitan Police."

LADIES - TRIM & TONE EFFORTLESSLY!



Exposed: raw deal forced on children in care

Polly Newton

CHILDREN in the care of Camden Council are paying the price for poor management and inadequate services, according to a highly critical report.

The District Auditor's report, which runs to more than 80 pages, reveals the rot in the service, a leading councillor said.

The report says the service needs a huge shake-up, alleging a widespread lack of planning by staff and a failure to meet young people's health and educational needs.

It also attacks the council's facilities for disabled children as "under-developed" and warns that there is no strategy to widen the range of services for the under-eights.

It says a number of children have been sent to inappropriate placements because of "inadequate care planning and controls", highlights the lack of specialist workers to cater for those leaving homes, and says there are no guidelines to help staff assess individual cases.

The report was drawn up between January and March this year when the council was still suffering the severe after-effects of a year-long strike by social workers, which ended in June 1992.

Judith Barnes, leader of the Conservatives on Camden Council and a member of the social services committee, said the District

Auditor's criticisms could not be blamed entirely on the strike.

They were partly due to a lack of investment in children's services, she said. "It's obvious the rot has gone very deep."

Harriet Garland, chairwoman of the council's social services committee, said services for children in care had improved since the strike, due partly to an increase in foster carers.

She said: "We are in no way complacent. We see it as a priority and that is why we are putting more money into the budget."

The District Auditor's report, due to be discussed by the social services committee last night, acknowledges the changes made since the end of the strike and praises the commitment of staff in helping to make those changes happen. But it says there are still areas that require attention.

The role of foster parents in educating children should be given much more attention and the health needs of many young people in care are not being met, the report says.

Simon White, Camden's director of social services, said: "This is a useful report which accurately sets out where we and other councils are at and what we need to do." The council was already acting on the concerns raised by the District Auditor, he said.

Similar reviews of children's services are being carried out at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, Camden and Islington Community Health Services and Camden and Islington Health Authority.



● Employment Secretary Michael Portillo rose above jibes about Tory sleaze with the grace of a man keeping at least one eye on Number 10, when he visited Alexandra Palace last Friday.

The bright young thing of the Right was offered 10p to ask a question by at least

one teenager at the Jobscene London exhibition and declined a gift of a pen in case it were construed as a bribe.

The Army and Navy were among those with recruitment stalls at the exhibition, while the Royal Air Force upped the stakes

and caught Mr Portillo's attention with a Jaguar fighter.

"He took the time to talk to all the exhibitors and show a real interest," said a spokeswoman for TJW Exhibitions, the organisers of the event, which ended on Saturday.

Row brews over eruv property plan

Roger Blitz

A JEWISH newspaper plans to "exploit" the eruv in North London commercially by promoting it as an ideal area for orthodox Jews to buy property.

The move has infuriated eruv opponents, who say it supports their belief that the area would become a magnet for orthodox Jews and change the cosmopolitan nature of North London.

The Jewish Chronicle announced last week that it was launching a series of property advertising features called "Living Within the Eruv", the first of which is due to appear today.

Its advertisement manager Alan Rubenstein said: "The eruv is now a fact of life. It is going to happen and we have decided commercially to exploit that."

Last week, Childs Hill resident Jeffrey Segall launched a High Court challenge to Environment Secretary John Gummer's decision in September to allow the network of poles and wires to be erected around 6.5 square miles of Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hendon.

In Jewish law, orthodox Jews are only allowed to push wheelchairs and prams on a Sabbath if they are within an eruv boundary. The Jewish Chronicle is to run features promoting the advantages, for certain Jewish people, of living within the eruv.

Mr Rubenstein does not expect people to move out as a result of the eruv. "To those it affects, fine; to others, life will carry on as normal. People tend to overreact."

Elizabeth Lawrence, chairwoman of the Barnet Eruv Objectors Group, was surprised by the paper's eruv promotion. The group had warned at the inquiry that the eruv would lead to moves to change the area's demographic make-up. "We were told we were being hysterical and anti-Semitic, but what we suspected is becoming apparent," she said. "This is very premature on the Jewish Chronicle's part — there is a long way to go before the eruv is up."

Barnet councillor and eruv opponent Frank Davis feared that people would pay above real property values to live in the area.

But estate agents disagree. It might attract interest from minori-

ty groups and opponents might move out, said Glentree Estates chief executive Trevor Abrahamson. But a perceptible price change was unlikely.

"The increase in liquidity is good for the markets and is good for stability of prices and does no harm to the estate agents operating in the area," he added. "The only difference it will make

is to regularise house prices."

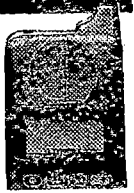
Howard Gold, of Winkworth's Golders Green office, said this area of North London would always attract the orthodox Jewish community regardless of whether it had an eruv.

"As such a large proportion of the area is going to be covered by the eruv, it is not something to highlight particularly."

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INSIDE

Clampdown on

maliciously retiring and reclusive writer
Alan Bennett. Amanda

Militant atheists back legal fight to stop the eruv

ANTI-RELIGION campaigners are being petitioned for cash to help fund the battle to stop the United Synagogue erecting an eruv in North-West London.

An anti-eruv legal action launched last month is set to be supported by atheists from as far as America and Bangladesh after protesters won the support of the Holborn-based National Secular Society, described by its president as "Britain's most militant atheist group".

In the December issue of the NSS's magazine *The Freethinker*, distributed to 2,000 homes worldwide, readers are being asked to "give generously" to an appeal fund set up to support Elizabeth and Dr Jeffrey Segall's legal costs in challenging Environment Secretary John Gummer's support for the eruv.

The Segalls' legal costs have been estimated at £20,000.

Barnet Council had refused permission for the poles and wires that would mark the eruv, a six-square-mile "domain" around Golders Green in which orthodox Jews would be able to relax sabbath laws. Mr Gummer overturned the decision in September.

The Segalls think Mr Gummer's decision can be overturned in the High Court on the grounds that he did not consider their refusal to have their house in Cricklewood Lane used as an eruv boundary.

"Our declaration, as non-believers, that we do not give permission for such religious use of our property, was ignored," Mrs Segall is quoted as saying in *The Freethinker*. "A key point in our

(High Court) case is that the 'hijacking' of our house for a religious purpose violates our right to manifest our secular beliefs."

She is also quoted as saying there are proposals for eruvs in other parts of the country. "Our court challenge is therefore not simply a local Barnet matter, but is also of national significance."

The launch of the appeal, called the Eruv Challenge Fund, was welcomed by the 2,500-strong Barnet Eruv Objectors Group, which is also considering a legal challenge.

National Secular Society president Barbara Smoker said: "We are taking the common-sense approach. People have rights over their own land, and the Segalls should have the right not to have their house used as a religious boundary.

"We do not want to crush religion. But we think people should be able to live free of the trappings of other people's superstition."

The 128-year-old society has campaigned for legalising abortion and banning crucifixes in public.

"They are symbols of torture, they upset children," Ms Smoker said. "You are not allowed to put pornography on public display. Crucifixes should be treated the same."

Edward Black, spokesman for the United Synagogue's eruv committee, said: "This news does not change the substantive issue on which the appeal was heard. We are confident that the decision . . . will be upheld."

Dr Segall declined to comment.

Community Chronicle

Board of Deputies' Inquiry Desk: 0171-387 4044.
Miyad Jewish Crisis Helpline: 0345-581 999
Jewish Women's Aid: 0800 591 203
Sue Harris bone marrow campaign: 0800 717 717
Tikvah Disability Helpline: 0181-455 9655. Jewish Social Services
volunteer helpline: 0181-458 3282. Ombudsman: 0181-458 9820.
Chai-Lifeline Cancer Support Helpline: 0181-202 4567

Project delayed by roadworks, not opponents

Council rejects protest by anti-eruv campaigners

**Ruth Rothenberg
GOLDERS GREEN**

Barnet council has rejected objections to the eruv put forward by a couple whose house frontage would form part of the eruv's perimeter.

But while Dr Jeffrey Segall and his wife, Elizabeth, continue their so-far fruitless anti-eruv campaign, the eruv itself has been held up by a completely different stumbling-block — roadworks.

Dr and Mrs Segall, who live in Child's Hill, at the southern edge of the proposed eruv, put their questions to the council's development and protection committee at its last meeting.

Their case rested on the change of use in existing house walls and similar structures which will form part of the eruv boundary. For this, they argued that the United Synagogue's eruv committee should have sought planning permission.

But their request was turned down by Jack Cohen, committee chairman.

Mr Cohen repeated the conclusion of the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environ-

ment at the end of 1993 to give the final decision on planning permission for the eruv's poles and wires:

"The eruv itself does not require planning permission, as most of it is not development in terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990."

In February the Segalls dropped a planned private appeal to the High Court. But they have continued their campaign against Barnet council and the London Beth Din.

"We are humanists and hold our beliefs with strong conviction and sincerity," Dr Segall said. "We see this an ethical battle."

Among his concerns is the eruv committee's payment of £4,000 to the council for a feasibility study.

Dr Segall claims that it was unethical to use the payment simultaneously as a symbolic rental on behalf of householders who were given no choice.

His right to withhold individual consent could not be overridden, he claimed, by the concept of a symbolic rental, as practised in several American communities.

He was also concerned that, in its guise as rabbinic rental, the money

was presented to Barnet council as an unsolicited gift. This could be construed as corruption, he maintained.

The Segalls still await Barnet's reply to their supplementary question.

Meanwhile, long delays on the major North Circular Road works in East Finchley have put off eruv construction until the end of the year.

The eruv committee has responded to calls from anxious potential eruv users with a statement confirming that it is alive and well and involved in detailed procedural matters.

These include implementation of several alterations recommended by the inspector.

The committee, which has generally sought a low profile since the issue first became public four years ago, also set out to allay fears that progress had been stalled through financial constraints.

Edward Black, spokesman for the eruv committee, said that most of the required funds had now been collected, following a "low-key campaign in January, which highlighted the popular response and widespread support across the Jewish community."



Matthew Granger (left) and Rishi Dattani, pupils at the Northwood preparatory school, work on their class's Anne Frank exhibition of letters and poems written to Anne. The idea came from their teacher, Linda Ward, who took her pupils to the RAF museum in Hendon to see the Anne Frank exhibition. Ms Ward, who is Jewish, said: "I think it is important to educate my non-Jewish pupils about the Holocaust" PHOTO: PETER FISHER

Synagogue burglar

Minister resigns in surprise move