

There are three phases to the works. The first was to carry out repairs to the roofs to make the

two phases were complete. Because of the closure of Swiss Cottage we decided it was vital

vide the best possible service under the current circumstances. Prior to this work being under-

POLES APART ON THE ERUV ISSUE

YOU report the joy of Rabbi Jeremy Conway at the installation of the first eruv poles and his claim that "up to 10,000 observant Jews would benefit from the boundary" ("First eruv poles go up amid joy and opposition", Ham&High, August 23).

This interesting claim has been reiterated throughout the 10-plus-year controversy and surely needs some clarification.

The total membership of the United Synagogue and its affiliates in the area encompassed is currently about 5,000, and the synagogue's own research says that no more than 20 per cent of members, for whom the benefits are designed, are observant. Thus the maximum number of those "benefiting" seems to be about 1,000 members, of both sexes, young and old.

How then can we reconcile these numbers?

Perhaps there is a simple explanation. The rabbi and the Eruv Committee, as good planners, have been looking ahead and, using language a little bit loosely, are projecting the number of new observant members the "benefits" of the eruv will attract. With such clarification, their commentaries on the eruv will be better understood. It would, of course, have been helpful for the community's consideration of the issues raised by the eruv if the rabbi and Eruv Committee had been a little more precise in explaining how they arrived at their figures.

ALAN JACOBS
Sutcliffe Close, NW11

I RECENTLY arrived in London and have therefore missed the ruckus pertaining to the eruv. But I strongly feel that the complainers are missing the real

essence of what is at play here: never mind a few poles here and there, what the council is affirming is a respect for religious differences and a tolerance of religious and cultural practices.

This is a wonderful thing and the council members who have enabled this should be seen as the democracy-loving freethinkers they are.

London is the world's most cosmopolitan city – let's thrive on the idiosyncrasies of a mix of religions and cultures. Sure, that comes at a price, sometimes in our own neighbourhoods – a few poles here, a carnival there, a mullah calling mosque worshippers on Fridays... heck, even a Turkish restaurant.

These are the differences that make this place wonderful. Let's encourage that.

EVAN HOFF
West Hampstead

Vis-à-Visage and Swains 'gain'