

Letters

Save our market stalls

HOW I deplore the closing-down of the Hendon Market (junction of Church Road and The Burroughs)!

Where can we pensioners buy cheap fruit and vegetables now, as well as nuts and raisins and other food? I know the Book Sale has moved to the Welsh Harp area, but what about the food?

All that because of the greed of the so-called developers. I suppose the building will be unlet, and stand empty, for years, like Centre Point and others.

Aren't there enough empty shops in Hendon already?

Please arouse public opinion so that we get other market stalls in the Hendon Central area. I understood that the market at Tally Ho Corner will also close down. Why?

Why should we have to pay fancy prices for fruit and vegetables in supermarkets and little shops? We want market stalls!

A Saville
Heton Gardens, Hendon

Eruv is opting out

AN eruv is a way for Jews living in Golders Green to opt out of the strict laws of Torah. If you really believe, you should be prepared to make sacrifices for your belief.

In the cold light of day all religious practices may seem ridiculous; people mumbling prayers, chanting mantras, crossing themselves, sprinkling holy water, spiritualists hearing voices from the other side, Buddhists believing in reincarnation.

Whatever you believe, if it does you good, it does you good, and that's what matters.

I understand the idea of the eruv, like political correctness, has come here from the United States; need one say any more!

Henry Rayner
Audley Road, Hendon

God-given or man-made?

MAY I state the following reasons for throwing out the planning proposal for an eruv?

It may be that all the arguments outside the planning issue will ultimately count for nothing but here are a few of my objections.

1. The erection of an eruv across main roads constitutes a danger. If the wires are brought down across the windscreen of a vehicle travelling at speed the most horrendous pile-up could result.

2. The eruv is a form of discrimination in favour of certain Jews who represent a fragmentary minority of the citizens of this country.

3. It is pointed out that the alleged reason for an eruv, i.e. freedom from repressive rules governing the Sabbath for Jews, could be equally obtained by a dispensation by a Jewish religious authority. The origin lies in the Ten Commandments "that no manner of work may be done on the Sabbath". But these commandments are not accepted as sacred by many of other faiths, and indeed the Jews have found it necessary to interpret many of them by means of the Talmud.

Thus what may appear to be "God-given" at first sight is nothing of the kind. This is one of those rules, made in other countries and at different times and solely for Jewish reasons by men.

Surely the Jewish authorities are capable of amending their own "man-made" rules without offending against the laws of the "host" nation.

Dallas Hugh Rose
Temple Fortune Lane, Golders Green

New ways to raise money

THANK YOU for publicising Deborah Lodge's support in your welcome campaign to keep Edgware and Barnet General Hospitals open. But the real import of my letter to the Times Group and your own acknowledgement of that letter was missed in last week's report.

The letters were not furious as such, they were merely asking your good offices whether it would be possible for Barnet Council and big businesses to get together and organise a borough lottery, namely a Barnet Hospitals Sweepstake similar to one run by The Irish Sweepstake.

I said in my letter to you there were a number of charity tickets being sold in shops which was bringing money into some charity or other, so why not get people together and organise a hospital sweepstake?

If these ticket sellers are making money for their respective charities, then why not apply such schemes for our own hospitals to benefit by?

Nothing furious in that, sir, merely asking you if it was a good idea for the right people to be approached.

People within my 85 group are thankful to our local hospitals; I had two minor operations some years ago, was a voluntary worker and sat on committees of Edgware Royal British Legion which supplied two heart units through public subscription, so my interest in Edgware's continuance is understandable.

In the days of our R B L heart machine contributions to Edgware General we always had the ear of the understanding Editor Dennis Signy and his staff, and they did us proud during our campaigns, just as you are doing with the present Save Our Hospital Campaign. I wish you the happiest of successes.

Our Edgware R B L have always supported their local hospital, and I was trying to suggest big businesses be asked to do the same now.

J White
Deborah Lodge, Edgware

What about the patients?

ON New Year's Eve five years ago I was babysitting my 10-month old grandson. Teething and with a high temperature, he seemed to me to be in greater pain than the average teething child. The next morning I noticed a rash of a kind I had never seen before.

I called the doctor but she was not sure what the spots were. She gave him medicine to fight the fever and told me to call her if he got worse.

The following morning, after a night of constant attention, the spots had developed into horrendous lumps. This time the doctor took us, in her own car, to Edgware General. He was admitted, having meningitis.

The standard of care given to him was fantastic. Despite this, on one day I believed he would not survive; in order to fight the infection his body had shut down peripherally and his arms and legs were as one already dead. The staff battled on and despite telling me later that the same fears had crossed their minds, they were very professional and didn't give up.

Today my grandson John is a bright, mischievous, lovely boy, suffering no long-term effects from such a horrible illness.

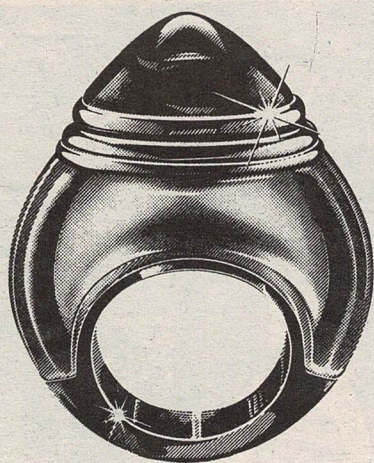
What will now happen to children such as John if there is no paediatric unit with such dedicated staff? How will the subsequent nursing — should a child survive — be done? Has anyone thought about this and will they please tell us?

Teresa Baldwinson
Highwood Hill, Mill Hill

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Attitude out of place

WHILE not wishing to take up yet more of your column inches on the subject of the eruv, I have to say that I find the attitudes of Lords Soper and McGregor quite frightening in their petty-mindedness and bigotry.

Given the lack of concern expressed when larger, and uglier, constructions have appeared in the borough over the last few years, the fuss being made over a collection of poles and wire is quite unbelievable.

In particular, a man in Lord Soper's respected position should be very careful about using words like "impertinence" and "arrogance" if they are likely to rebound on him.

While recognising that neither side will emerge from this sorry business with a lot of credit, such paternalism is wholly out of place in a heterogeneous society.

Simon Jackson
Granville Place
North Finchley

A fuss about nothing

THE eruv issue has generated a lot of ridiculous statements from its opponents. In particular Lord Soper should know better.

He said, "The proposal went against the common religious belief to 'love thy neighbour' because it provoked and advertised religious differences".

Perhaps he will be campaigning for an end to all public expressions of Christmas — the trees, the lights, etc.

Who is he to judge the proposal

"unworthy of the true interests of Christianity and Judaism" and to be trivial?

Jewish experience of Christian interest in Jews and Judaism has hardly been exemplary of love for thy neighbour.

Furthermore, for many Orthodox Jews the issue is not trivial, as it will radically alter their enjoyment of the Sabbath for the better.

The minimal boundaries involved are unobtrusive, will not lead to ghetto walls and will not radically alter the fact that the proposed area of the eruv is already populated with large numbers of Jews including a high proportion of Orthodox Jews.

Dr J F Bernstein
name and address supplied

Borough braced for anti-pasta backlash

AS a member of the Italian community, I wish to announce our need for a spaghetti circle surrounding North London.

It would mean 20ft-high poles erected to hold a chain of spaghetti. So as not to upset the Garden Suburb residents, green spaghetti will be used.

In this circle true Italians must observe the following:

1. Must wear Giorgio Armani (at least one article).
2. Eat five courses for every meal.
3. Watch world-class football religiously.

I hope Barnet take these proposals seriously, as a rejection of this

means there is an anti-pasta element in our midst.

Luciano Eruvini
Spaghetti Circle Society

Hazards on the road

I AM in full agreement with the letter from R Alexander (December 2).

The recently-introduced daily charge of one pound for leaving a car at Woodside Park Station carpark has resulted in very bad congestion in the neighbouring streets.

It would appear owners prefer to leave their vehicles in vulnerable positions rather than pay for the day.

Possibly double yellow lines on one side of a street only would ease the problem of traffic holdups.

I have also come to the conclusion that the cleverdicks at Barnet Council keep building traffic islands wherever they see a free space, notably around the Golders Green area, resulting in further reduction of the average speed of traffic (already low enough) as two lanes are now forced into one to miss an island much larger than necessary for pedestrians to cross the street.

Furthermore, many bollards are either unlit or have been completely knocked down.

I often wonder if the person responsible at Barnet Council has ever thought about, or talked through with his colleagues, decisions which make motorists' life in the borough more difficult than they need be.

H W Goldstein
Saddlescombe Way
North Finchley

Comment TIMES

VOICE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

No credit for eruv inquiry

THE ERUV inquiry was supposed to be about the visual harm caused by 80 telegraph-type poles linked by wire to form part of a boundary allowing Orthodox Jews to carry on the Sabbath.

But many who spent time at the public inquiry which finished this week would have witnessed a debate sadly tainted by prejudice, bigotry or racism.

Often the arguments were carefully couched in arguments about the necessity to preserve the so-called "social harmony" of parts of the borough.

It was, at times, an offensive spectacle from which very few emerged with credit. This country is supposed to have a long-established tradition of religious freedom and tolerance. We are supposed to live in a multi-cultural, pluralistic society which prides itself on its ability, where possible, to accommodate the customs, practices and needs of any ethnic or religious group.

There may be a case for considering what opponents perceive as the socially divisive nature of the eruv. But there is an even greater case now to show that this is a community in which religious freedom remains a genuine liberty — not just a casual principle to be dispensed with when we don't like the look of something.