



Young England to-day is thirsty for the written word. From Finchley Borough Library, where six-year-olds are frequent visitors, comes this evidence of modern youth's early interest in the world of letters. In a corner of the library children are choosing and reading their books.

Photo courtesy Barnet library archives.

Quality Refurbishment

By John Dearing

The Quality Tandoori restaurant at 158 High Road was first established in 1981, and the present proprietor, Jamal Miah took over in 1983. They have gained a reputation for serving the finest Bangladeshi cuisine, featuring dishes such as Chicken Surma.

In August they decided it was time to refurbish the restaurant to make it more contemporary. There is now a completely new layout with an increased seating capacity, an extra 7 tables making 19 in total, and a new bar area at the front of the restaurant. There is a raised area on one side and a new wood floor on the other. The decor is yellow, orange and gold.

At the beginning of September they had a big re-opening night. The response was impressive, with a packed house all evening. They are also planning a charity evening later in the year. To book a table, call 020 8883 1557



A friendly welcome at the Quality Tandoori

Why Do We Want Another Fat Library?

By Daphne Chamberlain

That's what I heard one angry teenager saying to another, but they can calm down now. The Arts Depot is going ahead, we will be left with our existing average-weight libraries, and a good many of us will raise a cheer for that.

Nationwide public libraries have been with us for only about 70 years, but already they are threatened. In too many quarters the idea of a local library serving its community is seen as pathetically outdated. The trendy ideal is one "fat" central building bulging with computers, while outlying areas make do with boxes of donations, videos and comic books, and unrealistically depleted staff.

Finchley has a tradition to maintain in this respect. In the 1930s, following its adoption of the Public Libraries Act, it was deliberately decided to build up branch libraries instead of putting undue resources into a central building.

Slender volumes for all

In fact, way back in 1904, local councillor James Wilde said, "If we are to have a free library at all, I think it should be established in East Finchley, which has a working-class population more than twice that of West and North Finchley combined."

By 1938, when our present library opened on an annexed corner of Martin School playing fields, perceptions of public libraries had developed. This new resource was planned for "the professional worker, the artisan, the student and the general reader". General readers are of all ages, as the local press soon reported. "Children use it when they leave school in the middle of the day, holding up the requests of their elders." Brilliant! The best children's libraries have always offered

entertainment and social interaction as well as information.

Some of the pioneers of that time were mentioned in dispatches. Miss K.B. Brown, librarian-in-charge during World War 2, ran puppet shows, while a Miss Monkton was singled out in the Libraries Report of 1939 for enthusiastic work, undertaken on her own initiative and often in her own time.

It would be interesting to hear from anyone who remembers them.

Libraries were intended for their local community; to provide a friendly service to local people, to liaise with schools and other groups, and to act as a local centre of information. The teenagers on the bus are not alone in resisting fat bastions of technology-for-the-sake-of-it.

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