



Arts and Crafts Fair

By Helen Drake

"East Finchley is now firmly on the map in the London arts and crafts world," says Christine Watson, organiser of the first East Finchley Open (EFO) Winter Arts and Crafts Fair, held on Sunday 21 November at Martin School.

Sponsored by Eccentrics of Muswell Hill, and Prickett and Ellis estate agents, the Winter Fair attracted more than a thousand visitors, many of whom commented on the high quality of the arts and crafts, the relaxed atmosphere, and the excellent food, which was supplied by the Arts Café, aka Martin Schools PTA.

Business was brisk from the moment the doors opened at 10.30am, with many visitors saying that they had come with the intention of buying Christmas presents for others, but had actually been enticed into buying things for themselves.

Particular items that caught



Portrait artist Lisa Vallentin at the East Finchley Open Arts and Crafts Fair. Photo by Helen Drake

this writer's eye amongst the 38 exhibitors were evoc-

ative photographs of Cherry Tree Wood and Hampstead Heath by Eti Wade, exquisite stained-glass mirrors from Rosemary Thornton, and beautiful hand-painted silk scarves by Clara Hancock. An intriguing exhibitor was Eddy Levin and his Golden Mean Gauge, a metal measuring device that gives its user perfect proportions, essential for good design. Visitors were able to see the creative process in action with skilful on-the-spot portraits provided by artist Lisa Vallentin.

Christine Watson admitted that organising the Winter Fair was a step into the unknown. "We had no idea that it would prove so popular. But as it is, people have been asking me when we're holding the next one. We're hoping that, like the Chelsea Art Fair, the East Finchley Arts and Crafts Fair could become a regular on the London arts scene."

And if the Golden Mean Gauge has caught your imagination, visit www.goldenmeangauge.co.uk for more information.



Eddy Levin demonstrates the Golden Mean Gauge. Photo by Helen Drake

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

On the buses

I am a self-confessed petrolhead, I don't do diesel, I don't do buses and I try not to do tubes. Give me power under my right foot and an open road and the environment can wait. My other car is a bus? Not likely mate, I've been on buses, I didn't want to go on buses, but when some vile piece of slime did several grand's worth of damage to my car I had no choice.

Buses are not an alternative to a car; they are a sub-standard alternative to walking. They are slow, even slower when they've got a bus lane to dawdle down. They are cold because the heating is an afterthought and they are uncomfortable because they are designed that way.

Modern buses are proof that if you put wheels on a box you have a bus. They are the lowest common denominator of automotive design. You don't get buses designed by Pinninfarina or Bertone, they stick to Ferraris and Maseratis. Instead they get some fool with all the artistic talent of a dead cat to do the job, which means that buses are designed by people who can't design. So your all-new twenty-first century monster is so ugly that the kind of nostalgia freaks who long for steam trains, soot and pollution are in their element, hence the weird love affair with the Routemaster.

Routemasters are not nice. They are a cold, noisy and uncomfortable trip back to the 1950s. They should have been replaced by something halfway decent at least 30 years ago but were allowed to struggle on their noisy way for far too long. Their replacement by the bendy, burny buses was proof that, on the buses, things really can get worse.

The service is nothing to write home about, it's something to write vitriolic letters about. Buses don't bother about being late; it's not their fault, so why take responsibility for it? Customer service? Not on the buses where the passenger is always wrong and if you don't like it, you can walk. And who said buses were cheap? Ken the newt may think they are wonderful, but he would. Just as he thinks it's cool-and-funky to put the fares up by 20% as his New Year's gift to us all. And me? Well, I get my new car next week so normal service, for me at least, can be resumed.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Pedestrians have right of way!

By Kathryn Salomon of Gurney Drive

In Holland and Germany cyclists and pedestrians live in peace and share the pavement. If you inadvertently stray onto the designated cyclists' path a gentle tinkling of their bell and a smile reminds you. The cyclists travel slowly and don't mow the pedestrians down. If only this were true in Britain! Here many cyclists think that pedestrians, of any age, are motorists in disguise and therefore the devil's spawn!

Yes, some cyclists are considerate, but many think that the Highway Code does not apply to them; they switch from road to pavement to open park space as whim dictates and any pedestrian in the way must jump. In the park, grown men on bikes wearing cycling helmets weave in and out of families with small children. If you remonstrate the shrill mantra is repeated, "Do you want me to be killed on the road?" No, I don't, but neither do I want to be knocked down on a footpath or see children knocked down in a park. As to that old canard that cycling is the most ecological form of transport, not if the cyclist takes a short cut across park or Heath, churning up or eroding the terrain.

Should cyclists be allowed on pavements or footpaths? Yes, so long as cyclists don't speed, and remember that pedestrians have right of way and can walk at their own designated pace without being abused – surely not too much to ask?

Letter to The Editor

Tracing the Barker family

Dear Archer

I wonder if any of your readers can help me. I am trying to trace descendants of my great-grandmother, Kate Barker (nee Goddard) born around 1887 in Saxtead, Suffolk.

Kate gave birth to an illegitimate daughter, Violet Elsie (my grandmother), in 1909 and subsequently moved to north London (I believe the Finchley area) where she married and went on to have, I believe, four more children. Violet remained in Saxtead and was brought up by her grandparents.

Kate died at quite a young age (30s or early 40s) and Violet never had any contact with her half

brothers/sisters.

I would like to hear from anyone who has any knowledge of the Barker family.

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Bravos and bouquets

By Sonia Singham

Having seen a poster advertising Haydn's Creation being performed by the North London Chorus, some visitors to London decided to attend the concert at St James' Church, Muswell Hill N.10. So enthralled were they by the performance that they rushed out during the interval to buy a posy of flowers for the conductor.

Those who attended the concert agreed that it was of a very high standard. Much credit should be given to the Musical Director, Murray Hipkin, who has enabled the choir to flourish and develop since being appointed two years ago.

In addition to the customary bouquets presented to the artistes and conductor, there was a special one for Helen Collyer, the accompanist to

the choir since 1999. At the end of a six-month contract as trainee repetiteur at English National Opera, Helen has been engaged for six months as 'chef du chant' at the Atelier Lyrique of the Opera Nationale de Paris at the Bastille Opera House. The choir and conductor offer their warmest congratulations to Helen and look forward to welcoming her back to the NLC next autumn.