



China Repairers

By Betti Blatman

Tucked away in a corner of East Finchley at The Old Coach House, King Street Mews, is China Repairers which relocated to East Finchley from St. John's Wood five years ago.

The business was established there in 1953 by Angela Drayson and Pegeen Mair and was one of the first china restorers.

Virginia Baron joined in 1985 and took over the business ten years ago when Angela and Pegeen died. Virginia has one person assisting her in the studio and, as I observed, there were so many interesting items in different stages of restoration.

As one of the best-known and most reputable ceramic restorers in the UK, they specialise in restoring antique and modern pottery and porcelain, including making missing pieces and disguising the mend, so as to make the repair invisible. They can also carry out 'museum' restorations on domestic china or china which

is not valuable enough to warrant the full works.

They have been teaching their craft for a great many years and pride themselves on training students to restore to the highest standard to satisfy the needs of even the most difficult customers! Students will learn all aspects of china restoration, from the most basic sticking and cleaning off someone else's mess to making missing parts for rare antique figures. When time permits, fee-paying students can be trained in this highly skilled craft.

Items can be extremely valuable, or simply sentimental and of little or no value, so if you have any broken bits, contact Virginia Baron on 020 8444 3030 or email virginiabaron@cwcom.net

From Fortis Green to Paradise

By Mo Hort

They say moving house is the second most stressful experience of one's life after bereavement. I think ours was the most stressful (and we've experienced enough of both!).

One of the difficulties was logistical - moving from East Finchley to what felt like the other side of the country: Devon. And not just Devon, but the remotest part of Devon one could wish for.

We'd had to commit our kids to school in either one place or the other and so, when hitches occurred in the sale of our house, we ended up spending four months in a small holiday cottage. That's my husband Andy and me, two teenagers and two large dogs.

Unspoilt

All the trials and tribulations were worth it, as we are now the proud owners of Welle House bed and breakfast in the beautiful, unspoilt village of East Prawle, surrounded by fabulous scenery and unbelievable wild-

life, sea views and the moor in the distance. At night it's just the occasional owl, insomniac sheep or a ship's horn out to sea. There is virtually no light pollution and the night sky is a wonder to behold. On the other hand, it's about ten miles to the nearest town of any size (Kingsbridge) so no popping down to Budgens for the odd bottle of wine on a whim! And I believe the nearest NHS dentist is in Plymouth!

We do miss our old friends, however. We have just finished equipping our B&B business and holiday cottage, and hope to see some of our old neighbours down here soon. This place has got to be the best possible way to "de-stress". Look us up on our website www.wellehouse.co.uk and see what you think.

Going on a creative journey

by Betti Blatman

Learning to be more creative was the theme running through a Creative Journeys session, which I joined one Sunday afternoon at Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road.

Using voice, percussion, guided visualisation and painting, an enthusiastic group was led by Helen Allen and Robert Norton through a very enlightening course. It was a simple and enjoyable process inspiring positive

transformation with or without previous experience.

Breathing for harmony

There was an opportunity to explore our voices through the use of vowel sounds with diaphragmatic breathing, which produced what is known as 'vocal harmonics'. People were amazed at the resulting harmonies that were reached with their untrained voices.

Robert played live piano improvisations in response to the vibration of the people in the room, while Helen led the group on an inner journey, through guided visualisation. Several drumming and percussion sessions, where we played African and other ethnic instruments, blended well with the vocal play and inspired the painting session.

Gary Upstone, a participant from Brighton, had never painted

in his life. He said, "I found it to be a very safe and free space. There was a lot of positive encouragement and it was a wonderfully freeing experience for me. I'm definitely booking for the next one." Another participant had never sung before and was amazed at how beautiful her voice really sounded.

Visualising colours

A few days later, I went to Helen for a colour healing session. Her 20 years' experience was obvious when the session began. Working on the principle that everything is a vibration, colours from certain flowers are visualised and applied through the hands, to remove disharmonies in the body, restoring the natural frequencies. It was deeply relaxing!

Helen and Robert are currently on tour in Russia facilitating Creative Journeys



First ever painting by Gary Upstone, participant at a Creative Journeys session, at the Finchley Youth Theatre.

in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Robert is playing solo piano concerts and has been honoured with the opportunity of playing on Tchaikovsky's own piano in Udmurtia. Photos are on the website below.

The next Creative Journey takes place on Sunday 22 May from 2.30-5.30pm at Finchley Youth Theatre, High Rd, East Finchley. The cost is £35 and booking is essential. Call Helen on 020 8371 9333. The website is www.creative-journeys.co.uk

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