



Tabitha, left, and Liz Tew with their new range of special items for the home. Photograph by John Lawrence

Amazing extras

It's never too late to try new ideas. Amazing Grates, the fireplace business that has been trading in East Finchley for 28 years, is branching out.

A new collection of home-wares and accessories is now available from their High Road showroom under the name of Amazing at Home.

Candlesticks, mirrors, glassware, vases, decorative flowers, clocks and sculptures are all part of the new range sourced by Tabitha Tew, daughter of Amazing Grates owner Liz Tew.

Wherever possible, Tabitha will be finding items made by

British or Continental European firms.

Tabitha says: "We have always styled our fireplaces in the showroom so that customers can see how they might look in a room setting. Now we hope people will walk in and buy many of the items that go on and around the fireplace too."

As well as these decorative items, Amazing Grates is also stocking those fireplace winter essentials, coal and logs.

Composer in good company

One of our local young composers, Beatrice Gauld, is to have a composition played in a joint programme with Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas*. Entitled *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, the work is for choir, tenor solo, string orchestra and organ and lasts 30 minutes.

Beatrice is a talented young composer who lives in Chandos Road and teaches violin and piano (beatrice@tscope.co.uk). Her first work, *The Lemon*, for Big Band was performed in 2001 by The Barnet Band. Since then she has composed several piano solos, *Prelude for Organ*, a violin sonata, *Impromptu for Violin and Orchestra*, a Mass in D minor and a symphony. She is presently working on a piano concerto.



Beatrice Gauld

In a recent interview she said that her favourite composers were Johann Strauss and Tchaikovsky. "My aim is to write music which the audience will enjoy listening to, and the performers will enjoy playing and singing, but which at the same time will allow the players to show off. One of my

ambitions is to write a ballet."

The performance will be on Saturday 8 December at 7.30pm at St. Paul's Church, Augustus Road, Southfields, SW19. It will be given by the Putney and City Philharmonic Choirs and conducted by Stephen Rhys, MBE.

No guarantee on library's future

By Daphne Chamberlain

Fears about the future of East Finchley Library were reinforced last month. As *THE ARCHER* has warned, Barnet Council will not fund library improvements planned under the rejected Big Lottery bid. They will also not guarantee to maintain funding levels in East Finchley and other non-leading libraries, and will not confirm that these libraries will be able to provide 21st century IT and community facilities.

Labour Group Libraries spokesperson Cllr Anne Hutton had these requests voted down in a Council meeting last month. She said that the Council's two-tier library system, focusing on six leading libraries, "looks very much like the failing premier parks strategy, where resources are pumped into a minority of high profile facilities and the rest are left to wither on the vine."

She was attempting to amend Cllr John Marshall's motion, which noted "massive improvements in library facilities, IT and disabled access", an upgrade to Burnt Oak Library, major works at Chipping Barnet and refurbishment at Edgware.

Cllr Marshall said that these improvements had been facilitated by the two-tier strategy which, he claimed, was "re-invigorating libraries as centres for community life". He defended the Council vote to *THE ARCHER*, saying that Labour's proposed amendment would have committed Barnet to substantial expenditure without indicating how it would be funded.

Labour Group Leader and local councillor Alison Moore told us she was "really con-



Local councillors Andrew McNeil and Alison Moore with MP Rudi Vis outside the library. Photo courtesy The Labour Party

cerned about the future of our much valued library" and reaction also came from MP Rudi Vis, who said: "East Finchley Library is at the heart of our community and I'm appalled that it seems to be neglected by Barnet's Tory administration."

Groanbox

Boys play on

By Betti Blatman

At the artsdepot's Sunday Buzz on 28 October, The Groanbox Boys, featuring New York and London-based musicians Cory Sezmec and Michael Ward-Bergeman, played a unique blend of what they call Old Time Mountain Gypsy World Folk Blues Music.

They used accordion, acoustic guitar, banjo, harmonica and odd pieces of percussion, including their self-made "Freedom Boot" (422 bottle tops donated by organic beer maker Freedom). The music is absolutely enthralling and goes deep into the roots of popular music.

The Groanbox Boys gave a fabulous performance, despite interruptions from noise and tannoy announcements. For details of their UK tour dates, check groanboxboys.com.

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