



Everyone gets involved in Grange Big Local event

By Diana Cormack

The Grange Big Local's third community festival took place at Bishop Douglass School, Hamilton Road, on Sunday 27 September. The sun shone all afternoon on stalls representing a wide variety of groups, with members of charities, churches, dance and music clubs alongside people offering advice on art therapy, financial matters and setting up in business.

Youngsters explored a fire engine, had their faces painted and enjoyed the bouncy castle. There was five-a-side football, tennis coaching (provided by Chandos Lawn Tennis Club, who are building new premises on East End Road) and table tennis by the EFAB table tennis group.

Nail art was provided by 'Vale's Nails', a group from Strawberry Vale who recently received a grant from the Evening Standard. They are part of the 'Art Against Knives' scheme



Good food at the Grange Big Local festival at Bishop Douglass School. Photo Mike Coles

which delivers creative opportunities for young people.

One stall was full of soft toys knitted for Age UK by 90-year-old Myrtle Russell who has been a knitter for 86 years! Lately she has raised over £3,000 for charity.

Hot food was available from the barbecue and some stalls had home-made cakes, with Caserole Club members serving to

encourage volunteers to share their home-cooked food with needy neighbours.

Gathering ideas

The purpose of the main stall was to gather ideas for making the area better to live in, since it is one of 150 awarded £1million of National Lottery money to be used in a ten-year project. The scheme focusses on places of deprivation which have missed out on other funding and is intended to make a positive, long-term difference. It covers roads and spaces south of the North Circular, west of the High Road, north of Church Lane and east of East End Road, which includes The Grange, Font Hills and the Thomas More estates. People used sticky notes to add their suggestions to a map. They also voted on priorities by putting sweets into jars, with youth and children, open spaces and environment leading the field. Visit www.grangebiglocal.org for more information.



Award winning Thai restaurant now on the High Road

By Diana Cormack

Living and working in Bangkok for two years inspired Motin Miah to open his own Thai restaurant. He so loved the food there that on his return home to Harpenden he set up his first Bangkok Lounge in the town. Six years ago Motin opened another restaurant in Shefford and is now in business at 138 High Road, where Quality Tandoori used to be.

"We serve fresh, authentic food," he told *THE ARCHER*. "It's the real thing, prepared by three Thai chefs, all of whom live in East Finchley." The restaurant is open daily from 12 noon to 2.30pm with a seven-day lunch starting at £8.50, then from 5.30pm to 11pm. There is a take-away menu with a 15% discount on all orders costing more than £18.

Over the last ten years Motin has raised £20,000 for Macmillan Cancer Research. He plans to do more charity fundraising and says he would like to become involved in the community here.

To get to know locals he is

holding a welcome event on Sunday 22 November, where diners can choose from the lunch menu but when presented with the bill they pay only what they judge the meal to be worth. It is essential to book for this on 020 8883 1557 or 020 8444 1886. Visit www.bangkoklounge.com for more details about the restaurant.

Christmas fair

The Holy Trinity Primary School Christmas fair takes place on Saturday 28 November. Everyone in the community is welcome to go along to eat, drink and merrily raise funds for the school. There will be lots of home-made food, Christmas gift stalls, play areas for children and live music. The fun kicks off at 12 noon at the school in Eagans Close, N2.

Money raised from previous fairs has helped to re-landscape the infant playground, create all-weather access to play areas and boosted funds available for equipment and supplies.

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Big bang is pet hate

It's that time of year again, that two-month stretch when no weekend is complete without some pyrotechnic nut job deciding that it's the perfect time to annoy the neighbours. From Diwali to the Boris Big Bang on New Year's Eve it is firework season when every night is the chance to re-enact the sound of the Blitz.

And every dog, cat, rabbit and small furry animal from Alpha Centauri looks forward to it about as much as they look forward to a trip to the vet. On behalf of the combined Canine Confederation and Felines for Finchley, it is time to complain.

Everyone knows that dogs like noise, but as Butch explained in between walkies and chasing parked cars, the noise he likes is the sound of his own bark. Fireworks are right out and if you don't agree, he'll be round to nick your sausages and prove that his bite is at least as bad as his bark.

Felines for Finchley spokescat Tom is equally adamant that if humans want to chuck high explosives in the air they should find somewhere else to do it. When you like to sleep for 20 hours out of 24, being kept awake by an artillery barrage is too much to take. And it's hard to hear mice rustling though the school kitchens if the headmaster is running his own version of the 1812 Overture in the playground.

Cats and dogs aren't the only ones. The local chapter of the Coffin Cheaters, as the armed enforcement wing of the pensioners' alliance is called, aren't amused either. An anonymous spokesperson explained that being a Coffin Cheater doesn't mean listening to The Archers and eating hobnobs. Some of them like to listen to the music of their youth and having your Led Zep CDs drowned out by fireworks is a step too far.

So it's time to stop this waste of gunpowder and sky, time to attach blond Boris to the end of something big and explosive and launch him over his airport in the Thames. Maybe he'll do better than the seventh century Chinese astronaut who tried the same thing and didn't end up orbiting the earth. But then again, an orbiting Boris could be fun.

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