



Charlotte Newland at the sewing machine. Photo Mike Coles

## Charlotte still buzzing after Sewing Bee

By Sheila Armstrong

In early June *THE ARCHER* went to meet *Great British Sewing Bee* contestant Charlotte Newland, at the time of writing still in the frame on the primetime BBC2 show.

Charlotte said it was her children who made sure she filled in the forms and sent them off to the programme makers way back in February. It was quite a long process to get selected, with around 3,000 people applying. There were interviews, screen tests, and sewing auditions before the final 10 contestants were chosen.

### Taking the pressure

You need to be a good confident sewer who can work under pressure to last the course. And once you are on the show it is hard work, filming 80 hours over two weeks, with at least eight cameras filming all the time. But as Charlotte said: "It was amazing. I loved every second of it though it was physically and emotionally exhausting."

The three main tasks are the pattern, the alteration challenge and the made-to-measure task with a real model. The latter is pretty challenging and contest-

ants are given a list of them in advance so they can practise at home beforehand.

### Try something new

Sewing has changed from the days of the big pattern books in department stores. There are many independent pattern makers now and lots of online help and "sew alongs". Sewing is more accessible so it is not surprising that the *Sewing Bee*, now in its fourth series, has become such a popular programme.

Charlotte's day job is as a scientific editor for a medical journal. But she also enjoys teaching dressmaking to adults and teaching children to sew. She makes all her own clothes and some for her children too, as well as being able to quilt and knit.

On the strength of her enjoyment of the *Sewing Bee* Charlotte's advice to any would-be contestant, and to anyone in general, is: don't be afraid to try new things.

## Shopping... off the back of a lorry

By Nick Allan

Choosing, buying and wrapping gifts can be tiresome and frustrating for some, but local mum Nadia Flanagan hopes to make it easier with her new retail concept serving East Finchley and beyond.

Meraki Gift is perhaps London's first mobile shop selling gifts you can't often find easily on the high street. Nadia and her strikingly painted and artfully adapted vehicle will attend local fairs, festivals and even customers' homes or offices to help people choose individual gifts.

Nadia hopes to bridge the gap between the high street and online by offering the ability to view, touch and take in the scent of specially chosen gifts at her customers' ease. Transformed to resemble a boutique, the mobile shop will carry a range



Harriet Scott from Magic FM, right, and Nadia Flanagan launch the gift van. Photo Mike Coles

of gifts including candles, cards and jewellery carefully sourced and selected from innovative and unusual suppliers.

As for the name, Meraki is a Greek word which means 'the soul, creativity, or love put into work' and Nadia says it sums up the last few months of hard work it's taken to prepare, stock

and open her business.

Launching it on 9 June at the Clissold Arms on Fortis Green, Nadia was supported by her husband James and their two sons McKenzie, ten, and Leon, six, and she made her first sales to some of the many guests and friends who witnessed the ribbon cutting.

## Grange Big Local gets started

By Nick Allan

The Grange Big Local (GBL) project is entering an "exciting phase", more than 30 local residents were told at the organisation's first AGM on Sunday 5 June at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

Over the next two years, the first £279,000 of the £1m Lottery funding will be used to transform the area bounded by Church Lane, East End Road, the North Circular and the High Road.

### Free from constraints

"This is a really exciting phase," said Jan Stobart who opened the meeting. "We can actually start on this resident-led programme. It's great that there's an elected board with a mix of new and existing members with a range of experience and interests. As we're outside the constraints of local authorities, government or a national organisation telling people what to do, the challenge will be to be big, bold and creative."

Pat Murphy, who has led the project from its inception in 2012, was re-elected Chair. She will lead a new, 17-strong board of people who live, work or volunteer in this area. The

board will drive initiatives for children and young people, open spaces and the environment, community hubs and inclusion, information and advice, employment and enterprise.

Pat told *THE ARCHER*, "The GBL was a vision for a thriving, engaged, diverse community where people can meet, talk and play to increase opportunities and enhance our surroundings. I'm so pleased that with the help and support of everyone we have got to this point."

### Getting involved in GBL

Anyone who lives, volunteers or works in the GBL area is entitled to become a member and vote at the AGM, which many of those attending did. Jon Woolfson, GBL partnership manager, said: "We continue to welcome volunteers to get involved in our various projects". For details of these, and of AGM minutes and other board appointments contact Jon at [info@grangebiglocal.org](mailto:info@grangebiglocal.org) or on 020 8364 8400 ext. 241, or visit [www.grangebiglocal.org](http://www.grangebiglocal.org)

## RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

### Don't Instasnaptweet me

They say that in space no one can hear you scream. In cyberspace everyone can hear you scream, where you screamed, why you screamed and the name of the person you screamed at. Not just now, but for ever.

Why eat lunch when you can Instagram it to your friends, maybe as a kind of before, during and after the dining experience? Why meet someone when you can Snapchat sensitive parts of your body to your boyfriend/girlfriend/the rest of year 9? And that's before we get to Twitter and the world of trolls.

Twitter is meant to be the great new way to communicate. Well, the great new way to communicate last week, before everyone discovered WhatsApp. Why? Because it's the app that gives you everything your phone could want apart from a warning buzzer to stop you walking under a bus. So back to Twitter.

Twitter is great: for the first time ever you can electronically stalk someone. You can send threats to anyone you disagree with; it's the one site where you can get your insults and insanity down in 140 characters. Yes, folks, it means you can send death threats to the person who dumped you. Just think, if it had been around when Adele got dumped by her first love she wouldn't have needed to write songs and make three bestselling albums to get her revenge. She could have just trolled him instead.

Then there's LinkedIn, where anyone over 13 can post their CV and dream that they will get the job of their dreams rather than the dream of their nightmares. It's the best stalking site ever, because you can stalk companies as well.

Hey, this is the future, the way the world will be as we evolve bigger thumbs and lose the power of speech. So, as the world gets more online and out of sight, I'm going to. Yes, I'm going to stop tweeting, Instasnaptweeting and trolling, I'm going to start talking to people. Ok, I'll probably get arrested for not tweeting my lunch, but what the hell. It will be fun freaking people out.

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