



Are we there yet?

East-Finchley based journalist Jeff Robson and his partner Sue Bayford are about to step out on a staggering 50km walk to raise money for a veterans' charity. They will be trekking the distance from London to Cambridge on Saturday 2 July as part of a charity event in aid of Blind Veterans UK, which provides support for vision-impaired ex-servicemen and women.

Jeff, who works as a sub-editor for the 'I' newspaper and volunteers as a sub-editor for *THE ARCHER* too, said: "We're doing it because Sue's 91-year-old dad, Jack, served in the RAF during World War Two and has had vision problems for some years now. "Blind Veterans have made a huge difference to his life through an amazing range of gadgets and support services, as well as the support of a new circle of friends. "But they also help ex-service personnel who were wounded during more recent conflicts and terrorist attacks or have simply developed problems with their sight. They're a terrific organisation and we want to raise as much for them as we can. We've never done anything like this together before, but we're really looking forward to it."

Follow the blisters

The couple have set up a JustGiving page and would welcome all donations large and small. They'll also use the page to keep everyone updated on their progress. And they plan to post the odd picture of their blisters on Facebook too. Find Jeff and Sue's page at www.justgiving.com/Jeffrey-Robson.



Kitted out: Jeff and Sue start their training. Photo Sian Bayford.

Multicoloured workshop

By Daphne Chamberlain

"Loosen up! Have fun! There's no right or wrong way. Just enjoy it." Words from a smiling Laura Fishman to her mixed group of anxious novices and practising artists. It was the start of a watercolour workshop in Stephens House and Gardens last month. Did her easygoing approach work? Undoubtedly yes.



Laura Fishman's water colour of *The Bothy* at Stephens House.

Formerly anxious novice Pamela Ojok summed up the day as "Fun, informative, positive and encouraging", saying, "I now have a new hobby!"

It's a hobby which is easier to pursue now there is no need to lug around water containers and large palettes. We practised working with brushes designed like fountain pens, with an inbuilt reservoir of water, and folding mini-palettes the size and weight of a diary.

Out in the grounds we sketched flowers and shrubs, looking for shapes and outlines, not details. Back in the house we had a free hand, with the less experienced playing with the many different ways of using brushes. This is a wonderful way of producing abstract pictures. Laura demonstrated and gave us handouts of the various techniques.

Laura Fishman was Artist in Residence at Stephens House and Gardens last year, and is now their Art Curator. She is a member of East Finchley Open, many of whose pictures are on display in the house.

Catch up with more of EFO in their Open House programme in July, and Laura herself will be running an Autumn Colours Workshop in October. For further information, see www.laurafishmanworkshops.blogspot.co.uk and www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk. Stephens House and Gardens is at 17 East End Road, N3.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

In. Out. Shake it all about!

We can't pretend any longer that it's not happening. Yes, the time has come to decide which old Etonian you loathe the least and to choose between cheddar and camembert.

According to the stayers, leaving Europe will lead to a total meltdown of everything. The rich, super rich and stupid rich will move to Monte Carlo leaving abandoned investment opportunities all across the country. No more will the sound of gold-plated Bentleys be heard echoing down the canyons of Kensington and the only sound will be of wailing property speculators leaping from half-finished luxury apartments. All of which sounds pretty good to me.

But it won't all be good news as foreign companies move their factories to parts of Europe where no one goes to on holiday. And seeing as hardly any factory is not foreign owned, Birmingham will look like the more run down bits of Detroit.

Blond Boris, mad Nigel and the Smith twins (Ian and Duncan) want to sell you a different story. If we leave, the country will be great again. We will be able to go back to the good old days of Victoria and Empire complete with poverty, injustice and child labour.

We'll be able to kick out foreigners, save the pound, the monarchy and Blond Boris's career. Not sure if I want to save anything of Boris, let alone his career. And if we don't leave, Nigel Farage will discover his secret Scotsman and demand referendum after referendum until he gets the answer he wants.

But let's not get too hung up on the downside. Here in N2 we have French food fairs, the Continental stores, good Italian coffee outside the station, great restaurants of all nationalities and, as Time Out concluded, we're the happiest people in London. So why don't we just ignore the politicians, declare independence and then we can decide to stay in Europe or leave and become an offshore tax haven that welcomes not just hedge funds, but gardeners from everywhere.

Big Local public meeting

People who live, work or volunteer in the north west corner of East Finchley are invited to the first Annual General Meeting of the Grange Big Local (GBL) on 5 June at the Ann Owens Centre on Oak Lane, N2, from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

The GBL project team recently launched plans for how it will spend £279,000 of lottery money to transform local estates and surrounding areas in the area bounded by Church Lane, East End Road, the North Circular and the High Road over the next two years (*THE ARCHER*, May 2016). The remainder of the £1 million award will be spent over the following eight years.

The project team is looking for people interested in becoming members of a new GBL Partnership Board, who will be elected at the AGM. The board will have up to 17 people, at least nine of whom must live in the GBL area. If you would like to put your name forward for election, please email Jon Woolfson at info@grangebiglocal.org or ring him on 020 8364 8400, ext 241. Please also get in touch if you're planning to attend the meeting, as this will help with arrangements on the day. A programme can be found at www.grangebiglocal.org.

Needle match duo

By Sheila Armstrong

Sewing is still a popular hobby as demonstrated by the return of the BBC TV series *The Great British Sewing Bee*, from the same stable as *Bake Off*.

For this series, there have been two contestants from East Finchley to root for: Charlotte Newland and Duncan Carter.

Charlotte lives with her husband and three children. Her day job is working as an editor for a medical research journal, but after hours she sews anything and everything and has done from an early age. Taught by her mother, grandmother and at school, she can be recognised by the tattoo of a needle and

thread on her arm.

Duncan hails from Scotland originally and teaches physics and maths by day. A newcomer to sewing, he took it up three years ago because he was bored with men's clothes in the shops. His interest is in modern men's wear and designer clothes. He is also an online vlogger.

Unfortunately the judges decided to say goodbye to Duncan in the first week, leaving Charlotte to carry the banner for N2.

EAST FINCHLEY 

ARTISTS' OPEN HOUSE WEEKENDS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
2/3 & 9/10 JULY 2016
11am - 6pm Free Entry

In and around East Finchley Look out for posters and brochures
www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk

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