



New café is banking on its own style

By Diana Cormack

When the former NatWest bank building was being renovated earlier this year, the wooden palisade type construction along the front made passers-by wonder if the Wild West was coming to town! However, this turned out to be an innovative way for the latest coffee house on the High Road to accommodate customers outdoors within a narrow space, where a wooden counter along the front edge serves as a long table.

In fact innovation can easily be used to describe the set-up at Coffee Bank. Patryk Lipigorski, one of the five partners running the business, told *The Archer* that they are aiming for it to be their own creation and style. "We want it to be the way we want," he explained. "We have researched in more than 50 other outlets and are always looking for something different."

Finding the property was a bit of a fluke as Patryk was on the way to view another which had just fallen through when this one popped up on his mobile phone. He left the train at East Finchley and the deal was done virtually overnight.

Liquor licence

So cousins Patryk and Kristian with his fiancée Sandra and parents Anita and Roman set about designing the place themselves. Since opening in May they have built up a regular clientele and have recognised the special friendliness of the East Finchley community through their customers.

This may get even friendlier before Christmas as Coffee Bank is awaiting a liquor licence to add to its variety of bread, cakes, drinks and meals.



Patryk Lipigorski and Sandra Hemska at the Coffee Bank on the High Road. Photo Mike Coles

The lure of East Finchley

By Iqbal Ahmed

In 2007, I was living in a rented room on the south side of Hampstead. I was looking for a home not too far from central London, because I relied on a pushbike to get to the city centre. However, I wasn't prepared to move far from Hampstead because of my love of the Heath.

One day, I cycled up East Heath Road, past Jack Straw's Castle and along Spaniards Lane, which cuts through the Heath, before turning into The Bishops Avenue to explore East Finchley. It was like riding along a country lane in the middle of London to see a triangular traffic sign with an antlered deer painted on it, warning motorists to watch out for wild animals crossing the road.

First impressions

It was a summer's day and I sat in a coffee shop on East Finchley High Road to experience something of the local scene. A cinema in the High Road was showing arthouse films. There were a couple of bike shops and a second-hand



Author Iqbal Ahmed

bookshop. The bookshop's window display was very enticing and I was familiar with its sister shop in Camden Lock. I liked the neighbourhood. The shops in East Finchley looked a lot more useful than the boutiques in Hampstead

How healthy is our High Road?

By Peter Cox, author of *Growing Up in London 1930-1960* I had just embarked on a study of the shops in East Finchley and Muswell Hill for North London U3A, when out came a report into the health of our high streets from the Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH).

This looks at 70 major towns in Britain and every London borough and it ranks East Finchley 12th out of a total of 146 high streets in the capital. Muswell Hill comes top, North Finchley is 18th in a cluster behind Church End, Barnet and Crouch End, while ahead of us are Whetstone in 8th position and Hampstead in 6th. A similar study in 2015 put Whetstone top, Muswell Hill 7th and East Finchley 8th.

How the scoring works

Every kind of outlet is given a rating for 'health', made up of four components: 'healthy' choices, social interaction,

access to services/advice, and mental well-being. Top scorers are leisure centres and medical outlets, like pharmacies and opticians, followed by health clubs and libraries. Bottom come payday loan shops, followed by betting shops, fast food outlets and off licences. Pubs and bars, cake shops and cafés score comparatively well as places to socialise. But how do you score a take away that also allows you to eat in, like Poseidon? It's a simplistic system but it's all we have.

Making improvements

The RSPH report makes twelve recommendations, including reviewing business taxes to ensure shops can compete against online retailers, finding short-term uses for vacant stores and restricting the type of outlets that can open close to schools.

Our future

The key question is: does online shopping's dominance mean that in ten years' time the only outlets left will be those that provide a personal service? Will there be among them a fishmonger, like we've had on the Scott's site for over 80 years; will newsagents like Pacey's survive, still named after Fred Pacey, who owned it before the war; and will our pharmacies still dispense medicines and health services?

Peter thanks The Archer's Jane Marsh for sharing helpful historical research.

Cook start

A cookery course for beginners is starting on Monday 4 February at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, for men who have never cooked before. At the end of the course they will have a handful of dishes they can cook confidently at home.

For this and all other cookery courses for over 55s, contact Karen Williamson on 020 8150 0967 or email karen.williamson@ageukbarnet.org.uk.

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