



What will Tarling Road offer us?

By Janet Maitland

The new community centre on Tarling Road is finally becoming a reality after years of delays and disappointments. While GRAHAM the building company kits out the inside and landscapes the outside, City YMCA are busy talking to community groups about how it will operate the centre.

Although City YMCA have not yet signed a management contract with Barnet Council, the council has commissioned them to identify community organisations interested in hiring rooms so that momentum is not lost.

Several community groups expressed an interest long before work on the new building even started, but the council wants to make sure that every potential group has been given the chance to make a case.

"A range of community organisations working with children and young people, as well as those providing activities for older residents, attended a meeting on September 11th," said Octavia Findlay from City YMCA. "Our feedback so far

is that youth provision is a key priority."

Access and affordability

We asked the council whether the contract to run the centre has any requirements about access to the centre for everyone in the local community. For example, does it specify that the leaseholder should offer free and low cost activities? Will they be required to allow local people to hire a room at the centre, for, say, a birthday party?

A council spokesman told us: "The council intends for all the community to be able to hire the centre at a price that covers the running costs of the community centre. The council will not be making a surplus from the centre. However, the council is unable to subsidise the centre's running costs."

Café space

We also asked the council whether the leaseholder would be required to open a café at the centre. The spokesman said that the council will be advertising the café space and will respond to the interest that they receive.

For more information about hiring space, contact octavia.findlay@cityymca.org.

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The long struggle to settle after fleeing Cyprus

Review by Diana Cormack

Soulla Christodoulou's second novel *The Summer Will Come* was published earlier this year. It is one of the few written against the background of the 1950s troubles in Cyprus which involved the EOKA movement against British rule and the fight for unity with Greece.

Many families fled their beloved island, hoping to find a better life in this country. Soulla tells the story of two families and the challenges they face trying to settle in London.

East Finchley setting

For the most part they struggle through life, frequently recalling the loveliness of Cyprus. In contrast this city seems a bleak and unwelcoming place and it is quite a shock to realise that the families are living in pretty poor housing conditions in East Finchley.

Cherry Tree Wood plays a part (fittingly Soulla sold signed copies of her book there at this year's community festival). One character has a shoe repair business in Lincoln Road, as did Soulla's paternal grandfather, whilst her father had an electrical shop nearby. Other familiar names and places in the vicinity are mentioned too.

Friction between generations

Born in London to Greek Cypriot parents, Soulla often visited family in East Finchley. She describes the customs and traditions they brought with them, along with the disapproval and cultural conflict raised when the younger generation wanted to emulate the behaviour of their British peers. This features strongly in the story, where the many threads introduced eventually knit together to form a happy and hopeful ending but which sometimes seemed a long time coming.

Some sections could have been omitted as they did not add to the plot in general and a couple of rather gruesome events stretched my credulity somewhat. A word of warning: do not read the book when you are hungry as the most delicious food and its preparation are described throughout!



Author Soulla Christodoulou

Soulla was the first of her family to go to university and, after a variety of jobs, has spent several happy years teaching. She is now involved in many interesting projects. To learn more, visit www.soulla-author.com

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Off the rails

Back in days of old there was a glorious golden age of trains. Back then you knew that the 2.45 from Much Wittering to Paddington, changing at Bickering Junction, would be on time. There'd be cheerful whistling porters to carry your bags and a little old lady sitting in the corner knitting a howitzer.

Back then smiling school boys were at the end of every platform hoping to get the number of the new Wombat class as it puffed its way north to York. It wasn't just boys, you knew that if there was an accident ahead young girls would wave their red knickers so that the driver could stop the train in time. And when you got home you could get out your train set and relive the whole thing in the comfort of your front room. Except it never was like that.

The French, the Germans and even the Belgians planned their railways, but in Britain they just happened until we had a mishmash of conflicting routes crisscrossing the land. All was steam powered, dirty, smelly and pumping the kind of toxic rubbish out that took away the joy of travel. The cheerful driver who greeted small boys with a wave was probably under paid and destined to die of some nasty lung disease about a week after he retired.

By 1945 the whole lot was broken, out of date, losing money and in dire need of nationalisation. This should have been good, but somehow it took 30 years to get there. Then we got modern trains, new stations and an attempt at decent transport. After another 20 years, John Major decided to flog the whole lot off when he should have invested in modernising it further.

So now we have Great Northern Incompetent, Southern Cancellation, Western Ripoff and Verging on the Ridiculous. All with different fares and the style and charm of road kill. When my Incontinent Express ground to a halt outside Milton Springsteen, the driver was right when he blamed it on decades of under investment.

But at least the Wittering to Bickering line has reopened. It's run by retired bankers, an architect and a former teacher, all hooked on some weird nostalgia trip. I'm not using it though, because great aunt Edith was right when she said that if God had meant us to take the train he'd never have given us the Ford Cortina.

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