



YOUNG ARCHER



Pile 'em high: Students bring their food donations along on the Community Day.

Buckets of packets and tins pour in

Students and staff at the Archer Academy in East Finchley supported two good causes at their recent Community Day. The school collected donations for Finchley Foodbank, which gives vital food packages to individuals and families in need, and also raised funds for the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, which helps young people and campaigns against inequality. Cathy Halstead, a Governor at the Academy, said: "Staff and students were delighted to make a hefty contribution to both causes."

Christmas code breaker

Solve these clues and then use the first letter from each answer to find the hidden message. Answers are below.

1. This has spiky leaves and red berries.
2. They sang to the shepherds.
3. Presents are wrapped in this.
4. The tree where a partridge was.
5. The old name for Christmas time.
6. Special hymns for this time of year.
7. Something to wear from a cracker.
8. This reindeer had a shiny nose.
9. There was no room here for Mary and Joseph.
10. This goes inside the turkey
11. Queen Victoria's husband brought this German Christmas custom to Britain.
12. We kiss under this.
13. Open this calendar daily in December.
14. Hang this up to hold your presents.

Christmas code breaker answers:
1. Holly, 2. Angels, 3. Paper, 4. Pear, 5. Yule tide, 6. Carols, 7. Hat, 8. Rudolph, 9. Inn, 10. Stuffing, 11. Tree, 12. Mistletoe, 13. Advent, 14. Stocking. Hidden message: Happy Christmas.

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Mice and men find a way to live together at Buckingham Palace

By Diana Cormack

Eighty-seven year old William Barrell left this country over 60 years ago but recently wrote a children's book featuring the Queen's home. He describes *The Mice Invade Buckingham Palace* as 'a story of how mice, who were chased out of their ancestral parkland when Buckingham Palace was erected, plan an invasion to reclaim their ancestral land, sneaking back in a few at a time and disrupting the household, even the kitchen cat. An agreement is finally worked out and the mice are granted by the Queen a section of the royal gardens. The agreement is signed by the Queen, the Prime Minister and Prince William.'

William Barrell sent Queen Elizabeth a copy to read to her great grandchildren and was delighted to receive a thank-you letter which he proudly displayed on East Finchley Community Facebook. Money raised from book sales will go towards educating his grandchildren Oliver 10 and Ruby 12. One provided the names and the other drawings of the mice.

Local boy goes west

The idea for the story dates back to World War 2 when William was evacuated to Scotland at the age of ten and came across Robbie Burns' poem 'Ode to a Mouse'.

William experienced the traumas of the Second World War when he lived in the High



Royal tails: William's book

Road and went to Manorside School. Leaving school at 14, he later served two years in the

RAF, then in 1954 emigrated to the USA. Here he eventually found his niche when at 24 he began learning to paint, becoming a successful artist (www.billbarrell.com)

For all the family

William wrote the book to show his grandchildren how an idea can come to be. He says: "This is not just a children's book. Adults who read it to their children may be a little enlightened too. It has social issues."

Published this autumn by Barnes and Noble, the book has been reviewed in many newspapers and translated into several languages. It could be a good one to read after the Queen's speech this Christmas.



Live and in person: Pauline Quirke Academy students in class before lockdown hit.

The show must go online

By Ellie Franklin

In common with most schools, The Pauline Quirke Academy has had an unpredictable year. The performing arts school for young people reopened in September after being shut for six months and was then forced to close again when lockdown returned last month.

However, their determination to keep the show on the road is strong, so staff and students alike have adapted to delivering and taking classes online.

The Academy, originally founded by the *Birds of a Feather* actress Pauline Quirke in 2007, runs classes in comedy and drama, musical theatre, and film and television classes for young people aged six to 18.

Unsettling times

Principal Floella Bird said the impact of lockdown on its work had been considerable. "Since Covid-19 we have lost half our students and have had to change venue location," she said. PQA moved to the Archer Academy in Eagans Close, N2, and was closed from 14 March to 19 September. After briefly

reopening, it closed again for lockdown 2.0.

Before the pandemic hit, PQA were working towards putting on a production of *Legally Blonde The Musical* but then had to postpone it until next year. Aims to become more community-involved have also been put on hold temporarily, as performances booked for both the Muswell Hill and East Barnet Festivals couldn't take place.

Performing arts workshops

However, staff and students were quick to adapt, bringing tuition online and running what they call PQA LIVE. Big names from all over the country have given online workshops to members. Industry professionals from

West End shows such as *Sister Act*, *Hamilton*, and *The Book of Mormon* have delivered classes ranging from dance to make-up tutorials, and Pauline Quirke herself has done story-time for the younger Poppets group.

Floella says: "The performing arts industry has suffered heavily. For young people and children performing arts is really important for confidence and it's really good for mental health. I think children need that break from school and from normal life. It gives them a safe environment to be who they want to be and express themselves in both a safe and a creative way."

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