



# Winter leaves, crisp breeze, bike ride? Yes, please!

By Greta Brambilla

*Hello, fellow cyclists, I hope you enjoyed the route to Ally Pally in October's edition of The Archer. Here's a new one taking in Highgate, the Heath and Hampstead, which takes about an hour and 15 minutes. As before, start at All Saints' Church in Durham Road, N2, and be sure to dismount on any pedestrian-only paths.*

From Durham Road, head to Fortis Green and continue south down Western Road and the passageway into Fordington Road, then Woodside Avenue, and cross the Great North Road to reach Sheldon Avenue. Half-way up the avenue, turn left down Denewood Road, go all the way up and turn right at the end, then left past the school.

Once you reach Hampstead Lane, turn left, then right into The Grove (before Highgate Village). Almost immediately, turn right again down Fitzroy Park, which despite its gate is cycle friendly. This steep and sheltered lane has some really quaint houses to admire as you go. Continue past the Heath on your right down Millfield Lane, then turn right onto Highgate West Hill and pass the roundabout.

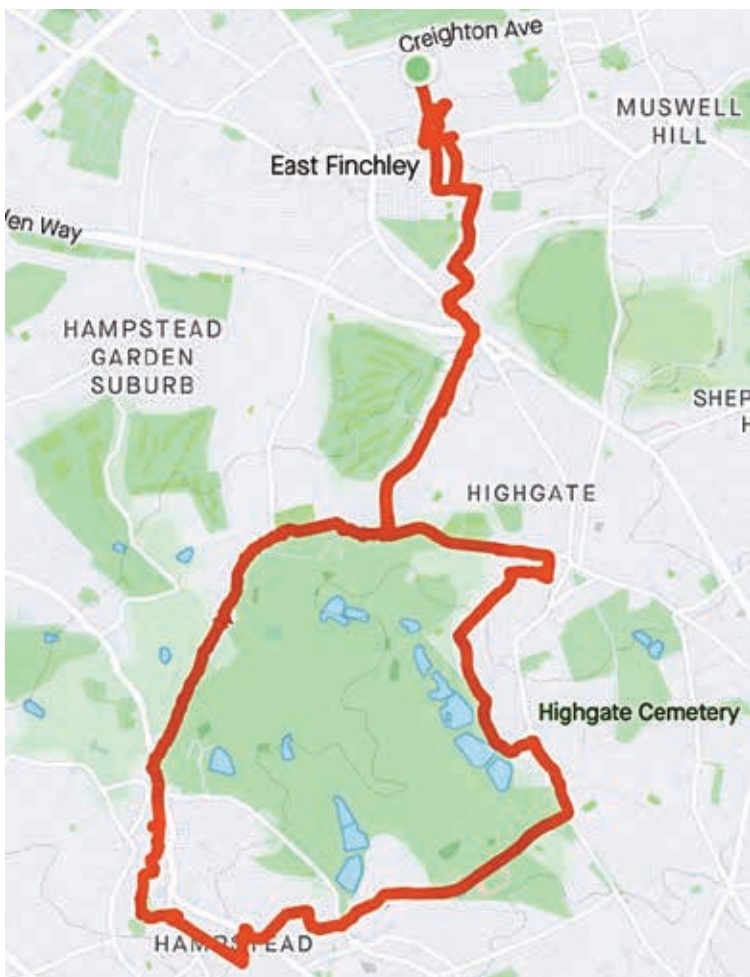
Once you see the Heath's tennis courts, turn right. You could stop for a match if you wanted or, if your timing is right, visit the fantastic weekend Farmers' Market. If you have children, there's a great playground past the athletics track.

Keep going through the park area, veering right at the fork onto Nassington Road. Go left



Round table: An interesting place to take a pit stop near Parliament Hill.

at the end onto Parliament Hill and find yourself at Hampstead Heath Overground station. Turn right and cross over before turning left onto Keats Grove (check out the poet John Keats' fascinating house museum). At the end, turn left up Downshire Hill, right onto Rosslyn Hill, then a quick left after the bus stop onto Shepherd's Walk, which turns into a path taking you to Fitzjohn's Avenue. Turn uphill and find your preferred way through Hampstead, stopping for refreshment of course, to reach Spaniards Road. Return past Kenwood House to find Sheldon Avenue on your left and finally retrace the start of the route to reach home.



Follow me: The route keeps to quiet roads with plenty of interest along the way



35 years behind the counter: Asghar Shaikh at Tops Dry Cleaners Photo Mike Coles

## A 1960s look... but not stuck in the past

By Diana Cormack

**In 1964 one of the first dry cleaners in East Finchley opened at 3 Fortis Green. It was one of four set up by the then proprietor of Coral Travel Agents on the High Road. About 20 years later the business was put up for sale and an advert in a trade magazine caught the attention of Asghar Shaikh.**

Having worked in the trade in Kensington for seven years, the 24-year-old judged it to be a good career move. He opened *Tops Dry Cleaners* on 22 July 1985 and, until recently, Asghar could boast that he had never missed a day travelling from his home in Forest Gate to work in East Finchley.

However, coronavirus put paid to that proud record, with the shop having to close at times, resulting in an inevitable drop in customers. Many have been with him since the start and one

82-year-old was a client of the original business.

Asghar has a cuttings collection of articles from our newspaper over the years which featured any of his customers and on the wall is a range of signed photos of celebrity clients. "Many of these have moved on now and East Finchley has changed," he said, "but I'm not going to alter the shop, despite being told I should modernise it."

### Gentle cleaning

So it remains with a definite look and feel of the sixties but

the cleaning routines are up to date. Asghar uses an eco-friendly, water based process with special liquids which are odour-free and kind to the most delicate materials. Improved methods for pressing have recently been introduced.

Asghar told *The Archer* how appreciative he is of all the lovely customers who have kept him going for the last 35 years. To celebrate this special anniversary he is offering a 10% reduction to clients who mention this article to him.

## Pat mixes with the million sellers for booming radio station

By Diana Cormack

**Over the years that Pat Leacock hosted the entertainment on the main stage at the East Finchley Community Festival, thousands got to know the sound of his voice. Now he is being heard by an even larger audience on hot97uk, the radio station he helped to create earlier this year (The Archer, June 2020).**

Pat says that, according to Google Analytics, the station now has 60,000 unique listeners and the number is still growing steadily both here and abroad. It runs for 24 hours a day with male and female DJs, plus newsreaders.

Pat has his own Saturday evening *Cheering up the Nation* show from 8pm to 10pm and he recently introduced a series of Tuesday evening interviews featuring some of the most influential British musicians, composers and producers from the world of funk, soul and beyond.

The list includes Dave

Ital, renowned session guitarist for artists such as Chaka Khan and Nile Rodgers, Lee John of British hitmakers Imagination, trombonist Ashley Slater and Red Bus Recording Studios co-founder Ellis Elias.

Pat's 'Million Sellers and Influencers' specials started on 1 December and runs through to mid-January, every Tuesday at 7pm. Interviewees to come are Roger Odell on 5 January and Adam Moseley on 12 January.

From the middle of January re-run times can be found at [www.hot97uk.com](http://www.hot97uk.com).



Host with the most: Pat Leacock. Photo Carmel Leacock Johns

com, some of which will feature unreleased tracks and nuggets not shared in other broadcasts. For more information contact [hot97uk@gmail.com](mailto:hot97uk@gmail.com) and find *hot97uk* on Mixcloud.