



Churchgoers are still singing after 200 years

By David Isaac

Anyone who has noticed the handsome red brick building that sits on the High Road, opposite the end of Creighton Avenue, may have wondered what goes on behind its doors.

That building is the East Finchley Methodist Church and it's been on that site since 1897 when Queen Victoria was on the throne, a loaf of bread cost tuppence and Aston Villa won the FA Cup.

Many years before this, however, in 1822 an earnest young man called John Freeman set up the very first Methodist society in East Finchley, singing his heart out in a cottage on Strawberry Vale.

Two hundred years later, we Methodists are still here and still singing; celebrating our bicentenary this year with gusto and inviting the good folk of N2 to get involved. What we lack in numbers we make up for in noise, cake, enthusiasm and the warmth of our welcome.

We plan to hold a series of activities (social, instructional and hopefully inspirational) throughout the year and will be delighted to welcome everyone from the mildly curious to the fervently committed.

We meet every Sunday at 10.30am. Our preachers vary from week to week, but our aim remains the same: to offer fellowship, friendship and an understanding of faith to all those who come along. Our main bicentenary celebration will occur in June with a service of commemoration and

rededication and a party to which everyone will be invited. We look forward to welcoming you through our doors and, in

the meantime, will keep you posted on what's happening through our website: www.eastfinchleymethodist.org.uk



Welcome in: Worshippers are marking 200 years of East Finchley Methodist Church

Concert season strikes up again

East Finchley Methodist Church is restarting its popular programme of Sunday evening free concerts after pausing them during the pandemic.

The first new date in the diary is Sunday 13 February at 7.30pm when cellist Maryan Balkwill, violinist Junko Ishigaki and pianist Caroline Soresby will perform Glinka's *Trio Pathétique*, Josef Suk's *Elegie for Piano Trio* and Dvorak's *Dumky Trio*.

Admission to the Sunday concerts is free and in this case there will be a collection in support of the Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy charity.

The church, situated on the High Road opposite the junction with Creighton Avenue, is fully accessible. Please note that the appropriate Covid precautions will apply.



In business: Touba Bakhtiary and Shiva Karimi in their spa studio. Photo Mike Coles

Friends set up their own spa venture

By Ruth Anders

Enter the door at 98A High Road, N2, walk up the wooden staircase and you will find yourself in a luxurious world of fragrance and calm, candles and aromatic oils. Here, Touba Bakhtiary and Shiva Karimi have launched their new spa-style venture Serene Wellness, offering the citizens of East Finchley and further afield a variety of treatments from body massages to nail care.

Both single mums and originally from Iran, Touba and Shiva met when working at a London spa. Having been employed extensively by agencies and organisations, they decided they would prefer to run their own business and, when the space came up at Yogalogy, they jumped at the opportunity.

"We were putting in such long hours at spas in Central London," Touba told *The Archer*, "and we wanted the freedom that comes with working for ourselves, despite the inevitable challenges." The two business partners trained and worked for years in the many different disciplines embraced by the heading of Beauty and Wellness, Shiva in Iran and the US, and Touba in Dubai and London, most recently at Barnet College.

"The pandemic hit the industry badly," said Shiva, "and this new opportunity is so exciting." Touba moved to East Finchley almost ten years ago, and her

son, now studying computer science at university, was a student at Bishop Douglass. "He helped us put the website together," she added, "and Shiva's daughter modelled for some of the photos, so it's a family affair."

Winter special offer

Their list of treatments includes body massages including hot stones and maternity therapies, facials, manicures, pedicures, waxing and threading, and even birthday packages with a glass of Prosecco.

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, this representative from *The Archer* was captivated by the scent of the special essential oils the pair use, so much so that it was difficult to leave. Touba and Shiva are offering *Archer* readers a 20% discount until the end of January, by appointment only. Full details can be found at www.serenewellness.org and you can email wellnessserene@gmail.com. East Finchley could always do with a taste of luxury and we wish them every success.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Give the dog a phone

Back when this whole pandemic and lockdown scenario started, the whole world discovered its inner baker and the joy of exercising in the front room. Home workers found that they only needed to dress from the waist up for meetings with their boss. All that was needed was some actual company, and naturally many got a dog.

Now many of us are heading back to the office, we've binned the baking bibles and are using the exercise machine as an additional clothes rack. And the dog? Well, we've discovered that the cute puppy has now grown into a demanding shoe-chewer who whines when you leave for work.

What to do? Battersea Dogs' Home is crammed full of sad and disappointed lockdown accessories, but fear not, what you need is a dog phone.

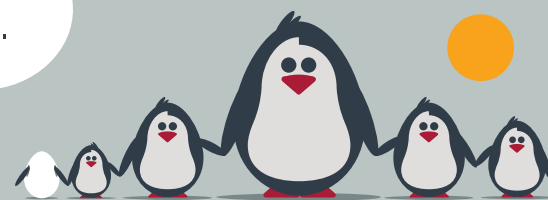
This new must-have for the exhausted dog owner is a soft ball that when moved, chewed or sat on sends a signal to your laptop and launches a video call, complete with the sound of a ringing telephone. Now your dog can call you whenever it gets lonely, bored or just feels like winding you up.

Never mind naked Zooming, this could be worse. You are in the middle of a major presentation and your screen goes blank to be replaced by Rex barking and slobbering. When you have a deadline, your best friend will have you on speed dial just for the hell of it. He may not even want to contact you, he may have just run out of shoes to eat.

What next? Technology that will let your labrador call the poodle down the road for a mutual bark-a-thon? Luckily for me, I've got a cat and cats are just too smart to get bored. As long as you're home to give them their tea at the right time, there will be no trouble.

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