



Music makers: Instrument players jam in the Windsor Castle pub.
Photo Helen Tierney

Join the great East Finchley folk revival

By Helen Tierney

If you stop by the Windsor Castle pub in The Walks, N2, on the last Wednesday of each month you'll be greeted with a warm folk-infused musical welcome. Thanks to the collaboration of co-landlord Eamonn England and local musician Liz Menezes, there's now a very healthy folk scene emerging in N2.

Musicians of all ages have brought fiddles, guitars, mandolins, flutes, tin whistles, mandolins, accordions and even uilleann pipes, jamming with each other and entertaining the regulars with a growing following.

Eamonn has a background in Irish music and grew up surrounded by folk music. He has worked in artist management and the music industry, and was keen to get a musical presence going in the Windsor Castle. It all started with a successful Burns Night gig in 2023.

"Having spoken to Liz after that night, she said she was keen to get a space for musicians to network, so I thought why not use the Windsor Castle for a regular monthly?" Eamonn said. "I like the fact that musicians can come together and play. It's folk-focused but flexible. My personal preference is Irish folk but there's room for lots of diverse musicians to get involved."

Liz, who lives locally, was classically trained as an operatic soloist but has always played the violin along with guitar.

She cites folk as an early influence musically in her northern childhood.

"I've always been into folk, and Scottish and Irish songs were very important in my northern upbringing. I have an early memory of my mother teaching me Danny Boy," she told me.

Liz's work ranges from teaching to playing and singing with the Blue Grass Archway Mountain Lightning Boys, the Aspidistra Drawing Room Orchestra and also leading two East Finchley baby music groups – Stepping Stones and Teddy Bears Music – both held at the East Finchley Baptist church on Creighton Avenue.

She also stresses the importance of making the Windsor Castle folk nights accessible and friendly. "It doesn't matter how much you know or don't know – you can just come along and join in what suits. You don't have to read music or know all the tunes, but there is music for those who feel more secure using it. Folk can come along, have a drink, join in whenever they feel like it or just have a listen."

Bench of memories outside deli cafe

By Diana Cormack

Towards the end of last year, a new bench seat appeared on the pavement outside Amici Delicatessen in the High Road. Those passing by on this busy thoroughfare close to the junction with Fortis Green may have noticed it because it is not a Barnet Council bench bearing the borough logo.

Or they may have been attracted by the garland of pink and yellow flowers decorating the back rest where there is commemorative plaque. But of most intrigue is the fact that the bench is not facing outwards looking over the High Road like all the others, but inwards with a full view of the popular Italian café.

Maurizio, who runs the deli, told *The Archer* that arrangements for the bench had been made with Barnet by the family of a former long-term customer following the wishes in his will.

Unfortunately, after it had been put in place, Barnet work-



Memories: The family bench faces favourite spot Amici. Photo Mike Coles

ers had to return and do a quick turn-around, for the bench was facing the wrong way. As the family pointed out, the will had stipulated that the bench should be facing Amici's, not the High Road.

The plaque commemorates the parents of this local family. It bears the message: "In loving memory of our parents Chander Veer and Dharam Veer Kapoor. Always and forever in our hearts."

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:

February 2014

A controversial plan to turn Martin Primary School into an academy was finally rejected in the face of fierce opposition from parents. Their particular worry was that the ethos of the school would be damaged by becoming an academy, as the scheme involved Martin's becoming part of a multi-academy trust. It was thought that the majority of staff were also against the proposal despite the then headteacher Helen Morrison claiming the academy plan was an exciting opportunity for the school.

15 years ago:

February 2009

We reported that officers from East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team had arrested a 54-year-old man during a dawn raid on the Strawberry Vale estate in late December. They had also seized nearly £7,000 in cash, a quantity of drugs and four shotguns. The arrest followed a long investigation into a spate of thefts from vehicles at the nearby Islington and St Pancras Cemetery.

23 years ago:

February 2001

The loss of another local pub was highlighted. The George in Market Place was to be demolished to make way for a development of 14 flats and associated parking spaces. Local residents were becoming concerned about the growing number of housing developments planned for East Finchley, already the most densely populated ward in the whole of Barnet. In the past 30 years at least eight local pubs have been lost to residential development.



Live on stage: Sara Pascoe

REVIEW: LIVE AT THE PHOENIX WITH SARAH PASCOE

Phoenix Cinema, East Finchley

By Mona Scott-Norman

One of the best nights out I've ever had was back in November of 2022... it was East Finchley, I was 'out out' and it felt electric. Finally, last month came the long-awaited return of the Live At The Phoenix with Sarah Pascoe' comedy night.

The first time, three of us had sat in the same row whilst our entertainers had ripped our middle-class lives into playful shreds. We'd loved every minute of it. This time, very cool host Alexandra Haddow warmed up the crowd and my girlfriends and I had already forgotten our January sluggishness by the time Leah Davis came on to give a cleverly written set brimming with sarcasm.

She was followed by Steen Raskopoulos, a phenomenal comic who expertly used audience members (thankfully not me this time) to create unscripted, physical hilarity. In fact, the physicality was such that his foot punched a hole clean into the architecture of

the historic Phoenix. He really made his mark.

Third up was Alisdair Beckett-King, a 'merman' with enviably long ginger, curly hair who was extraordinarily skilled at embodying people and imaginary comic situations.

Then headline act Sarah Pascoe arrived on stage direct from home where she'd been looking after her "two awful children". I was immediately hooked, and our group found ourselves giggling uncontrollably at the true human nature of her comedy.

Anight to remember thanks to the organisers of this show, who, I hear, are planning another show in March... probably to raise money to #fixthephoenixstage wall.



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Pilates

A new pilates class at Finchley Youth Theatre, High Road, N2
All levels welcome
Try your first class for free!
Fridays 10.30 am - 11.30 am
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