



Mercy dash: Runners head to Finchley Foodbank with their donations. Photo courtesy Paul Salman

Runners and walkers rendezvous at food bank

By Paul Salman, GoodGym run leader

What a turnout! More than 30 GoodGym enthusiasts rallied together for an evening of fitness and goodwill, all in support of the Finchley Foodbank. It was a sight to behold, with familiar faces as well as a plethora of new ones joining the cause.

Despite the cool breeze, the sun graced us with its presence, making our mission even more delightful. We gathered outside the iconic Phoenix Cinema, eager to embark on our journey but

not before a quick snapshot and some words of inspiration about the GoodGym spirit.

Who says it's all about running? Not us! Penny and Franky led an equally enthusiastic group of walkers, while Paul and Moya took the reins for the running squad. The runners dashed off first, blazing down the left-hand side of the High Road, while the walkers strolled along the right, all carrying their donations of food and essential household goods.

In a twist of fate, the walkers and runners reached the food bank at St Mary's Church Hall simultaneously. How's that for timing? Well, it turns out the runners had been making pit stops for some impromptu exercises.

Anna Maughan, the Finchley Foodbank manager, welcomed us with open arms and we wasted no time unloading our bounty of food donations. Join us when we do the same again on Tuesday 11 June, setting off from the Phoenix Cinema again at 6.45pm.

Music of charm

Finchley Symphony Orchestra with conductor Christopher Stark will this month give a concert featuring music from the 18th and 20th centuries.

The overture to Mozart's comic opera *Così fan tutte* will be a sparkling introduction followed by Haydn's charming London Symphony. Violinist Madeleine Pickering joins the orchestra to play Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto and there will be music from Malcolm Arnold, famous for his film scores for *Bridge on the River Kwai* and the original *St Trinian's* series.

The concert takes place at Trinity Church, Nether Street, North Finchley, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £18, concessions £15, under 18s £7 and you can save £1 per ticket by advance booking online at www.finchleysymphony.org.

Musical siblings to star at St Jude's

Organisers of the annual Proms at St Jude's Festival in Hampstead Garden Suburb have announced that this year's season will run from 22 to 30 June and will feature concerts, literary talks, comedy, heritage walks and a family fun day.

Headlining this year are three members of the famous Kanneh-Mason family: siblings Sheku, Isata and Braimah. Their programme includes Schubert's famous *Trout Quintet*, performed with friends Edgar Francis and Toby Hughes.

Other concerts include an American celebration, featuring the *West Side Story Overture* and *Rhapsody in Blue*, A Tribute to Motown and A Night of Tango Passion. There are free concerts at lunchtime and a free Blue Grass and Folk gig.



Sibling harmony: The Kanneh-Mason family will be performing at this year's Proms at St Jude's

Guided walks include a geology tour in Highgate and Queens Woods (for non-specialists) and a look at the females represented in art at Kenwood House. And in a special bonus event on Friday 7 June, sought-after conductor Sir Antonio Pappano will be in conversation with broadcaster Ian Skelly about his long-anticipated memoir.

Public booking for all events opens on Monday 15 April. Full details can be found at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk.



A year in nature: One of the artworks by Denise Ballard-Wyllie that are on display in her solo exhibition

Changing of the seasons

Painter-printmaker Denise Ballard-Wyllie has a solo exhibition of lithographs, screen prints, wood engravings and digital archive prints running at St Bride's Foundation, off Fleet Street, in central London.

The works were all inspired by a two-year art residency at Chelsea Physic Garden, where she observed the changing of the seasons as it celebrated its centenary. Denise's exhibition runs until Friday 28 June. Find out more at www.denisewyllie.com

RICKY SAVAGE ... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

This is my Waterloo

Here we go – the countdown to the camp fest that is Eurovision has begun, with 37 acts preparing to gather in Malmö and try to wow the jury with their latest attempt at sounding modern and contemporary. And it's 50 years since a bunch of Swedes turned up in Brighton out of the blue and turned pop music upside down – except they didn't.

Like all myths, the tales of ABBA arriving like a breath of fresh air are about as true as claims that the moon landings were created on a Hollywood backlot. It was all a lot weirder than that.

The four members of ABBA had been knocking around the Swedish music scene since the 1960s. They'd even entered the Swedish competition to pick their Eurovision entry in 1973 and came third. Besides they weren't even meant to be in Brighton, no one was. Luxembourg had won in 1973, but decided they didn't want to host it, so it stepped the BBC and it all came to Brighton.

ABBA had spent the previous year getting their act together and had decided that they wanted to be a worldwide sensation like The Beatles. They'd also watched too much *Top of the Pops* and decided that satin, platform boots and general glam-ness was the way to do it. I guess they were right about that, although it's a good job they didn't say anything about being influenced by The Sweet.

Anyone who watched the re-run of the 1974 Eurovision Final on TV will know just how different they were. Just about everything else was either some ballad or a catchy 'Ding, ding, bang, bang' slice of Euro folk pap. Olivia Newton-John was the British entry and appeared dressed in a cross between her mum's nightdress and a set of net curtains, singing about the Salvation Army. The young men who were the Israeli entry sang in Hebrew and dressed like a maths teacher trying to look trendy.

ABBA looked different, sounded different and seemed modern. And naturally the British jury gave them 'nul points'. Great start, folks, not noticing that this was going to be a worldwide hit.

Except funnily enough, for the next year you couldn't give ABBA away. They were just another one-hit wonder. It wasn't until *SOS* came out over a year later that they really began to make an impact. After that you couldn't avoid them and idiots said they were bigger than The Beatles. Although they split up in 1982, they didn't go away. There is *Mamma Mia* the musical, the film and the sequel, plus ABBA the museum, the avatars and the virtual reality. They are still everywhere and I blame Brighton. But they did have some damn good songs.

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