



Behind the scenes in the sorting room

By Lauren Fleishman

This is the scene in the sorting room at the Mind charity shop in the High Road, N2. Shop manager Tash Clarke, describes it as the place “where the magic happens”.

“We aim to sort through around 100 bags a week,” says Tash. “Anything from clothes and accessories to all kinds of bric-a-brac. We also get some lovely designer clothing and accessories. We have a new vintage rail, and they are a great talking point. “Our volunteers are really at the heart of what we do. Without their help, we could not function as a shop. Just yesterday, a lady came in who I know has had a very difficult time over the past few years. She just came in for a chat, and we ended up chatting for probably half an hour, which resulted in her decision that she would like to volunteer. “Another woman came in after her partner had passed away. She was emotionally attached to his belongings, but she trusted us to take care of them and price them appropriately.



Backroom bargains: Tash Clarke among the dozens of donations in the Mind charity shop. Photo Lauren Fleishman

That trust means everything.” Tash is mental health first-aid trained and, although she hasn’t had the funds to pursue

counselling as a career, she’s found that managing the shop allows her to support people in a way that’s very community-based. There is a local branch

of Mind in Edmonton where people can access free counselling and employment support. Tash adds: “I want this shop to be a place where people can

come in not just to browse our lovely second-hand wares, but also to have a chat. I want it to be a safe space, somewhere that’s not just about shopping.”

Gold stars for the kids... but some of our bricks are missing

By Frank Edwards

This is some of the news from East Finchley, 100 years ago, as revealed in newspaper archives.

So, summer is ending. That time of year when schools are out and children are about, having fun, or being irritating, depending on your point of view. In 1925 the perspective of the Finchley Press was surprisingly positive. Children are better behaved, it announced, noting a fall in offences committed during the holiday period.

Mischiefous pursuits such as apple stealing, incessant knocking on doors and joy riding on the tail-boards of carts had largely disappeared. Celebrating this change, the paper put it down to good parenting, improved teaching and the availability of play centres.

Plank pranks

Some children still went off script. A constable spotted teenagers Reginald Mills and Frederick Prowse, of Leslie Road, N2, carrying a 9ft long plank, value 2s/6d, along the road. The boys were charged with theft and appeared in court along with the plank. It’s okay, they said. They had been using

the plank as a see-saw and were taking it back to where they found it. The magistrates accepted Reg and Fred’s explanation and let them off with a warning.

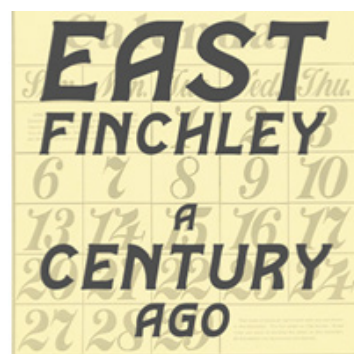
Nicked bricks

If children were usually better behaved, this did not always apply to adults. In June 1925, three horse and cart deliverymen stole 1,000 bricks from a depot at East Finchley station. The bricks were destined for the development of the Summerlee Estate, then in progress, but found their way instead to the premises of a local builder in East End Road, N2.

When apprehended, the brick-lifters readily confessed to the theft. In return for their cooperation, they received fines rather than imprisonment.

And finally...

The Hendon and Finchley Times was super excited about a new mansion halfway down The Bishops Avenue, with white stone walls and a green tiled roof. The paper was par-



ticularly taken by a rumour that the developer and future occupier was none other than Steve Donoghue.

Steve who? Steve Donoghue, champion jockey, victorious in the 1925 Derby and one of the most renowned sporting celebrities of his day. Think David Beckham but on a horse. What a lift Steve will give the area, enthused the paper, it will become as famous as Golders Green.

Sadly, East Finchley did not get to rival Golders Green. There is no evidence Steve unsaddled in The Bishops Avenue. Indeed in 1925, although still winning races, he was already facing financial difficulties which, a few years later, left him bankrupt with assets of less than £600.

Finchley in wartime

London Blue Badge and City of London Green Badge tourist guide Mark King will be leading a walk on Sunday 7 September to commemorate the First Battle of the Marne in 1914.

The gentle two-hour walk will see sights and hear stories about the local men and women who volunteered or were recruited to serve, as well as learning about life on the home front. It starts at Henly’s Corner and ends in Finchley Central. Book at www.eventbrite.co.uk by searching ‘Finchley Goes to War’.

Looking for volunteers?

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation? Our Be Part of It column is published on page 2 every month and gets results. Submissions are

free and are included subject to available space. Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to news@the-archer.co.uk, marking your email ‘Be Part of It’.

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