



End of an era as KOKOS moves on after 49 years

By Ruth Anders

After a lot of soul searching, George and Maria Stavrou, their son Chris and the team at KOKOS shoe shop in the High Road are bidding a regretful farewell to East Finchley.



Shoe shine: George Stavrou at KOKOS which has been in the family since 1976

Listed two years ago as one of the best repair shops in the world by the Financial Times (The Archer, December 2023) KOKOS has enjoyed the patronage of customers across north London and beyond since it opened in 1976, when George was only 18 years old.

Now, after five decades, the shop is moving to a new address off the North Circular Road at Staples Corner. George told The Archer: "We've come to the end of our tenancy agreement on the High Road and, as much of our business is now online, it's time for the next stage of our journey."

Chris added: "We're re-locating to Staples Corner, near Brent Cross. The only change is our new address. We will of course continue to provide the same trusted, specialist shoe repair service that East Finchley customers

have relied on for decades. "To make things even easier, customers can use 'Send A Repair', our collect and deliver service, so their repairs can be picked up and returned to your door. No need to come out in the rain!"

The team recently posted details of their new address and thanked their customers for all the support and loyalty over five decades. George said: "Not only has East Finchley been our home for all this time but also the community has been our family."

KOKOS will be opening their new premises on Monday 5 January at Unit G14, Atlas Business Centre, Oxgate Lane, Staples Corner, London NW2 7HJ. Pop into the East Finchley shop before Christmas to say a personal farewell, and see more details on www.kokos.co.uk



Patron: Gail Norcliffe, centre, meets Queen Camilla at the celebration of flexible volunteers

Volunteering date with the Queen

By Gail Norcliffe

I had the wonderful honour of representing Bookmark, the reading charity, at a Clarence House reception on Wednesday 5 November hosted by Queen Camilla to mark the launch of GoVo, a platform offering flexible volunteering opportunities.

Approximately 10 volunteers from different charities plus celebrities Gaby Roslin, Ellie Simmonds and Tasha Ghouri were invited to the event. The morning's highlight was Her Majesty the Queen fully entering into the spirit of the occasion as she served baked potatoes to volunteers with pink-haired social media star Spud Man from a customised GoVo van, drawing attention to lunchtime volunteering.

A moment of personal pride came when my fellow

Bookmark volunteer and I were introduced to the Queen. My attempt at a curtsy went a little awry with nerves, but I did manage to chat and I was delighted that Queen Camilla knew all about our charity and was extremely supportive of its work.

To help overcome a national shortage of volunteers, many charities are focusing efforts on encouraging people to take up flexible volunteering during their busy weeks. This could be before or after work or during a lunch break or on days off.

GoVo.org has been developed by the Royal Voluntary Service and lists hundreds of flexible roles for volunteers. This initiative is being promoted by the Queen, the RVS's

patron.

As described in my June 2023 article in *The Archer* ("Joy of helping a child to read from my own home"), Bookmark volunteering can be online, in my case from my kitchen table in N2, and volunteers commit to reading with a primary school age child for two 30-minute sessions a week for six weeks.

Volunteering with Bookmark is very flexible and many volunteers read with children during their lunch breaks or before they start work. It's a fantastic way to help a child from one of the country's most disadvantaged communities discover the joy of reading and find a book that speaks to them. More information is available at bookmarkreading.org

Menorah to light up the High Road

A large Hanukkah menorah at the corner of East End Road and High Road, N2, will be lit at a special ceremony and street party on Tuesday 16 December at 6pm. The event is open to the entire community and will feature music, traditional doughnuts, and latkes, gifts for children and festive fun.

"The message of Hanukkah is that each person must be a light," said Rabbi Gancz, director at organisers Chabad of Finchley. "The nature of light is that it is always victorious over darkness. A small amount of light dispels a lot of darkness."

"Another act of goodness and kindness, another act of light, can make all the difference to brighten the lives of our families, neighbours and community."

For more information about the holiday and a local schedule of events visit www.chabad-finchley.com/chanukah



Mulled Cider

WINDSOR CASTLE

Mulled Wine

Annual

Community CAROLS

Windsor Castle
The Walks / N2 8DL

6pm to 7.30pm

Wed 17th Dec

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www.windsorcastlen2.com