



Darn It! Nothing to be ashamed of

By Margaret Crockett

Late June saw the N2 Knitting and Crochet Group hold its first workshop at its regular meeting place, the Bald Faced Stag pub in the High Road, N2. Hikaru Noguchi, credited with spearheading the recent revival in visible mending, led a class in darning techniques.



Make do and mend: Masami Yokoyama and Kazuyo Yasuda at one of the needlework sessions. Photo N2 Knitting & Crochet Group

Hikaru showed traditional woven darning as well as more innovative methods such as honeycomb stitch, based on blanket stitch. Her needlework expertise evident from the examples she brought along and from her demonstrations, she helped the class of seven women revive and transform their much-loved textile items.

In addition to cashmere sweaters, lacy natural wool cardigans and soft scarves, one mother set out to repair the stuffed pig she had knitted for her now-grown son.

Hikaru explained that she learned how to darn in the UK when she was studying. She learned that darning and repairing clothes was not something to be ashamed of and that the repairs did not need to be hidden.



Hikaru Noguchi displays her beautifully repaired garment

Visible mending allows us to embellish and transform clothing into something new and different. On her return to Japan, Hikaru introduced visible mending through her darning workshops. 'Darning' has become a new Japanese word.

Whether visible or not, repairing our clothes is also great for the environment.

According to Keep Britain Tidy, clothing production has roughly doubled in the last 15 years. It is estimated that the average garment is worn only ten times before disposal.

Less than 1% of all materials in clothes are recycled into new garments and 300,000 tonnes of used clothes end up in landfills or are incinerated annually in the UK. Hikaru's book Darning: Repair, Make, Mend beautifully illustrates one way to avoid the impact of clothing waste on the environment.

The N2 Knitting and Crochet Group was founded by Masami Yokoyama and Kazuyo Yasuda.

It meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 2.30pm to 5pm at the Bald Faced Stag. The next meeting is Tuesday 11 August. Everyone is welcome to bring along their project and chat with like-minded people.



One of the needlework sessions. Photo N2 Knitting & Crochet Group

Unsung hero says he's 'just doing his job'

Brookland Junior School teacher Simon Greenhouse, better known by pupils as 'Mr G', has been recognised as a National Unsung Hero of the Year after winning a silver award at the 2026 Pearson National Teaching Awards. He is now in the running for the overall gold award later this year.

Simon has worked at the junior school in Hill Top, NW11, for 22 years, starting as a teaching assistant before becoming a Year 3 teacher. Although he says he is "just doing my job," his dedication goes beyond the classroom.

He runs the school choir, organises art week, and leads the school's wellbeing programme. He also hosts parent support sessions on topics such as behaviour and social media addiction. During lunch breaks, he gives up his own time to run creative clubs for pupils.

Simon, who lives in East Finchley, says one of his biggest achievements is creating an in-school counselling service.

Working with volunteer therapists, the programme supports children dealing with anxiety, trauma, neurodiversity, and emotional regulation. He believes this support is especially important because NHS waiting lists are often very long.

Despite saying he "can't sing a note", he also started the school choir from scratch. The choir now performs at local festivals and community events, giving many children their first opportunity to sing on stage.



Recognition: Simon Greenhouse

Headteacher Jenny Aylen praised Mr Greenhouse for his passion and commitment, saying his work has transformed the school's approach to wellbeing.

She explained that children who receive emotional support often improve their attendance, confidence, and academic performance.

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Weird times

These are confusing times as heatwave follows heatwave and you don't need to go to the Costa del Lager for sun, sea and fish and chips; this year you can get that in Clacton. On second thoughts, maybe not, even if Count Binface is there.

It has been so hot that only mad dogs are interested in walkies, the average hound just wants to chill out in the shade and whine miserably. And what about the cat? Well mine has used its fridge-opening skills to find somewhere cool to sleep rather than to nick food. That said, I'd love to know where he ordered the tuna sorbet from.

For some people it has been glorious, a chance to holiday at home and get sunburnt without the dodgy food. But not for me. Take the buses. They are local mobile greenhouses and the perfect place to grow tomatoes, but hell to travel on. And the tube is just as bad, especially when some sadist has turned the heating on in case it gets cold later.

But there's always the pub, isn't there? Well, that depends on whether you want your ice-cold lager to boil in the glass before you've got halfway through it. And it's just been too hot for food. It's enough to drive a man to drink, but only if the car has air conditioning.

So cometh the time cometh the campaign. What we need is a return to proper British summers. You know, rain on alternate days and the Met Office forever promising the possibility of sunshine next week. A world where the average temperature never gets above 22C and at least one test match is lost to rain. Even Wimbledon has not had that traditional rain in the first week or with it the need for an al fresco concert by Cliff Richard.

I want a return to the summers of my youth where you piled in the car to head to the seaside to build sandcastles in the rain before eating sandwiches in the car. A summer when the only warm thing was the beer and the seagulls were as keen on sheltering from the rain as the rest of us. Back then you always took an extra jumper and an umbrella and hoped that next year you could go to Spain instead of Southend.

So please, rain gods, do not forsake us. Remember that Glastonbury is back next year and it wouldn't be Glastonbury without rain. Bring back the proper British summer.

Re-Griddable: Try our puzzle

Re-Griddable is a twist on the free daily online game grid-dable.co.uk created by two East Finchley residents, Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson.

There may be more than one solution to each Re-Griddable but there is definitely at least one, which comes from a maximum scoring game of Griddable.

If you get stuck the official Griddable word-checker may help (griddable.co.uk/word-checker).

If you like playing Griddable online, why not join the East Finchley Leaderboard? Go to Groups on the site and use code BUJRM4.

No.6

Place the letters to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four downwards.

EEILORVV

S	H	O	W
			E
			N
P			T

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution