



Generations come together to enjoy songs and smiles

By Gail Norcliffe

When Patsy Bailey was looking online for a weekly activity for her baby granddaughter Arabella her eye was drawn to Songs and Smiles, a music group in Muswell Hill that brings together the generations.



Span the ages: Old and young enjoy each other's company at the Spring Lane Care home in Muswell Hill. Photos courtesy The Together Project

Taking place at Spring Lane Care Home in Fortis Green, it welcomes families to weekly sessions, bringing young children and older residents together to share songs, laughter and moments to brighten everyone's day. Aimed at children aged 0-4 and their parents or carers, these intergenerational music groups were created by UK charity The Together Project.

manager at Spring Lane, said: "The combination of music, babies and shared smiles creates genuine moments of happiness



Years together: A care home resident and a young guest

resident who remembers the words to a song they haven't heard in years." Care home residents light up, reach out and engage with little ones, bringing comfort and a renewed sense of belonging. Robert, activities for our residents, supporting wellbeing, emotional connection and a strong sense of community."

Patsy feels that her granddaughter is gaining much from her participation in Songs and Smiles. "Having been a little reserved to begin with, Arabella now happily interacts with the residents and proudly shows them that she has learned to walk. Attending the sessions has increased my granddaughter's confidence in a very different environment."

For further information contact: songs@thetogetherproject.org.uk



Group fun: The lounge at Spring Lane is the setting for the Songs and Smiles sessions

Five-year milestone for High Road café

By Ali Dezyanian

East Finchley café and patisserie La Gourmandise did not have the easiest start, opening on the High Road in February 2021 just as the pandemic restrictions were affecting all our lives. Which makes it all the more cause for celebration that the business was able to celebrate its fifth anniversary last month.

"Reaching five years feels significant," said owner Riad Archour. "We opened at a very uncertain time, so to still be here is something we really appreciate." Opening during the pandemic brought immediate difficulties. "There were constant changes to regulations, and very little footfall," he said. "It was stressful, but it meant we had to adapt quickly."

The café team marked the anniversary during February with a small celebration for customers. "We wanted to acknowledge the people who supported us, especially in the early days," Riad said. "Without the local community, we wouldn't still be here."

Riad, who has worked in hospitality for more than 30 years, said La Gourmandise was set up as a neighbourhood café rather than a destination venue. "Hospitality is about people," he said. "The aim was always to create a space that locals could use regularly, not just somewhere for passing trade." The French name La Gourmandise was chosen to represent a refined, passionate love for good food, eating for pleasure rather than just sustenance.



Five years of flavour: The team at La Gourmandise. Photo: Mike Coles

The café is known locally for its pastries and coffee, with an emphasis on restrained sweetness.

"We use less sugar in our baking," Riad said. "The idea is to let the flavours speak for themselves rather than relying on sweetness. Over the last year, we have been working to improve our breakfast offering, opening for business as early as 7am."

Like many independent businesses, La Gourmandise has been affected by rising costs. "Ingredients, energy, and rent have all increased,"

Riad said. "It's an ongoing challenge trying to absorb those costs while remaining affordable."

Despite these pressures, local support has continued. "People in East Finchley really do make an effort to support independent businesses," Riad said. "That support has made a real difference and also I cannot emphasise enough how grateful I am to my staff. Their loyalty, commitment and consistent high standards have hugely contributed to our success. Here's to another successful and exciting five years."

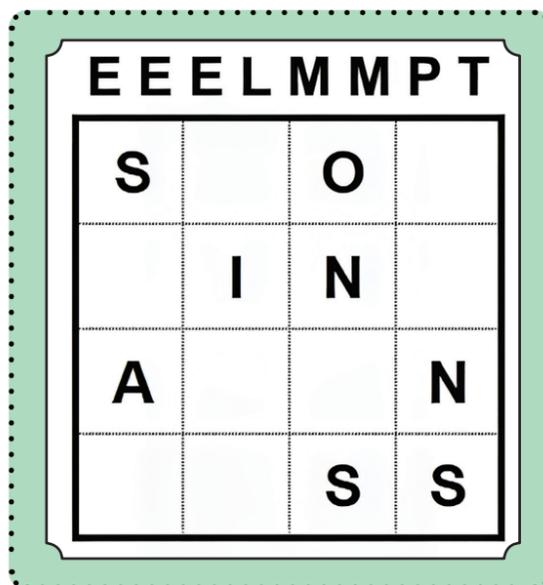
Griddable keeps growing... and a new puzzle for Archer readers

Readers may remember Griddable, the daily online word game created by local residents Stuart Miller and Matt Robinson, which we featured in The Archer last September. Since then, the game has gone from strength to strength, quietly building

In fact the game is now being played regularly in over 20 countries including the US, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India, alongside several more unexpected destinations like Japan and Indonesia.

Griddable is played on a simple 4x4 grid at griddable.co.uk. Players place letters over 16 rounds to try and make words both left-to-right and top-to-bottom, scoring one point for each letter in each word that they make. As with many good puzzles, it's easy to grasp but hard to master.

Thousands of games are now being played each week and an enthusiastic community of players sharing their scores on social media has developed. The site also has a new feature which enables players to create custom leaderboards and an East Finchley group has been



'perfect' solution. And so the idea for Re:Griddable was born. From this month, this new puzzle will be appearing regularly in The Archer for readers to try. We hope you enjoy it. Matt and Stu would also love any feedback on this or the online Griddable game. You can email them at teamgriddable@griddable.co.uk.

Re:Griddable No1
Place the letters provided to create eight four-letter words — four left-to-right and four top-to-bottom. 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 you may find the official Griddable word-checker helpful at griddable.co.uk/word-checker.

established which anyone can join with the group code (BUJRM4). The most prized achievement in Griddable is a perfect score of 32, made up of eight four-letter words in a single grid. It was those perfect grids that sparked a new idea. By partially removing some of the letters it was possible to create a new puzzle where the challenge is to find the original

Turn to page 11 for this month's solution