# A milestone for martial art club

By Matt Gidaszewski

**Practitioners of Capoeira representing around 18 nationalities came together at the Green Man Centre in Strawberry Vale, N2, this autumn for the first grading ceremony in Capoeira East Finchley's history.**

Masters, teachers and practitioners of the Brazilian martial art mixing dance, music and acrobatics travelled from across Europe, including Poland, Germany, France and Denmark, to take part in the event.

Organised by instructor Mateus Gato, the day included workshops covering Capoeira movement, music and history, followed by the school's first grading ceremony, during which seven East Finchley students received their first belts.

"The event was a massive success, and we're looking forward to making it a yearly tradition," said Gato. "We want to grow the school, help our students progress and share Capoeira with more people in the local community. It's about creating something positive through training together, singing together and being part of something bigger than ourselves." Capoeira East Finchley currently runs adult classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8pmwith children's classes on Fridays at 4pm. More info at **www.capoeira-cppa.com**



*Mixed martial art: Visitors and local practitioners of Capoeira at the Green Man Community Centre event*

# When anxiety gets in the way of learning

By Anne-Marie Conway

**I have spent much of my working life in classrooms: first as a teacher, then as a children's author visiting schools, and now as a child, adolescent and family psychotherapist.**

By this point in the autumn term, routines are familiar and expectations established. For many children, this brings reassurance. For others, the demands of school may be starting to feel harder to manage. I am reminded of a classroom observation I carried out before starting therapy with a young person, and of the emotional barriers to learning that some pupils carry each day.

It was a lively maths lesson. Most of the class seemed engaged and keen to learn. But my attention was on one child. While his classmates were halfway through the timed task, he was still writing the date. He rubbed his eyes and yawned. He raised his hand, then lowered it. By the time the worksheet was handed out, he had barely joined in. It would be easy to see this as time-wasting or a lack of effort. But I found myself wondering…Was he tired? Was something troubling him at home? Was the pace too fast or the prospect of being called on too frightening?

For some children and young people, the classroom is far more than a place of learning. It can be a place of constant alertness - to noise, pace, social rules, uncertainty and the risk of getting things wrong. When a young person is busy scanning for danger, there is little capacity left for fractions, French verbs or Shakespeare.

This anxiety can sometimes lead to school avoidance. It is not simply a child being wilfully difficult and there is no single explanation for emotional barriers to learning. A child may be living with family stress, trauma, grief, bullying, unmet learning needs or sensory overload.

What can help is a safe, consistent space in which a young person can make sense of what is happening inside them — through conversations at home, trusted relationships at school or therapy. With time and understanding, they can find words for distress that may previously have appeared only as tears, anger, tummy aches or silence.

The aim is not simply to get a child through the school gate, but to help them feel safe enough to learn, belong and believe that school has a place for them. Sometimes the most helpful question is not, "Why won't they engage?" but, "What might be making engagement feel so difficult today?"


*Psychotherapist: Anne-Marie Conway*

Anne-Marie Conway is a Child, Adolescent, and Family Psychotherapist working in local schools and private practice. Find more information at **www.annemarieconwaytherapy.co.uk**




# Fundraiser urges men to get tested

By Diana Cormack

**Fundraiser Brian Hooper speaks from experience when he urges all men over 50 to get themselves tested for the signs of prostate cancer.**

Brian, of Fortis Green, N2, had cryotherapy surgery on his prostate after his PSA levels shot up in 2017. Unfortunately he had to repeat the cycle after the cancer returned in 2020. Since then Brian has been cancer-free, though he still needs some PSA testing, and he is determined to spread the word.

He told The Archer: "I have kept on at all the men I know over 50 and men from Afro-Caribbean and Asian ethnicity to get tested. Some followed my advice and have acted positively upon it. I hope people reading this will make the effort to get a test."


*One step at a time: Fundraiser Brian Hooper*

Meanwhile Brian has made great efforts at fundraising for Prostate Cancer Research, undertaking sponsored walks to a variety of localities around north London wearing the T-shirt provided by the charity. With the challenge to walk every day throughout September, he achieved his initial fundraising target within the first week. Brian paid tribute to friends and neighbours in N2, neighbours, his ex-pupils, church, Freemasons, family and relatives (even in Australia) who contributed to the total sum raised at the time of writing - a fantastic £1,250.

In November Brian is walking for Young Lives Against Cancer. Keep a lookout for him.

# Buildings are stars of urban portraits

**North London artist Mark Woods has an exhibition of his urban portraits running at Burgh House in Hampstead until Sunday 15 November. Originally from Bridgend in South Wales and a graduate of Central Saint Martins, Martin's work is rooted in direct observation, often treating buildings and places as subjects with their own visual language.**

He has exhibited widely in London and recently received an award at the Chelsea Art Society Summer Exhibition. The Burgh House exhibition features 16 original images and entry is free. Check opening times at **www.burgh-house.org.uk**

