



Alexandra Palace Farmers' Market

By Nikki Joule

It feels a bit like stepping from North London into the South of France as you walk along the dusty tree-lined avenue towards the thirty or so stalls that make up the new Ally Pally farmers' market. A large part of the charm of this new Sunday morning market is the location; not, like many, in a supermarket or station car park or alongside a busy main road, but tucked away in the trees at the bottom end of the Alexandra Palace grounds (Hornsey entrance, bottom of Muswell Hill).

Make a day of it

Then there's the ambience of families enjoying a relaxed Sunday morning shopping trip. My children even said that they wanted to go back again soon which probably had something to do with the free samples (of home-made crisps, barbecued rare breed sausages, and organic beef burgers); they don't get as excited as I do by carrots with their tops still on. You can buy croissants or organic crepes and then sit at the tea and coffee stall and eat breakfast. Or, if you arrive later, there is the excellent and enticing Moroccan food stall. We saw people filling picnic baskets and wandering off into the park to have lunch. You could certainly make a day of it.

Of course there are organic

vegetables and fruit from farms in Kent, Essex, Sussex and Hertfordshire, home baked breads, goats cheeses, home made beers and wines, pickles and chutneys and a variety of stalls selling herbs and spices for both culinary and remedial purposes. The second time we went, there was someone doing head massages too.

The market is open 10am-3pm, but you need to get there early for some of the vegetables and the eggs, which sell out quickly.

Check first

Telephone 07780 520 610 or email chriselder@cityfarmers.fsnet.co.uk for more details. They hope to be open every Sunday, but check first as the market isn't yet fully established as a regular fixture.

Take a new look at Avenue House

By Diana Cormack

Not a lot of people knew that Henry Charles Stephens, the son of Dr Henry Stephens who invented Stephen's famous blue-black ink (still used today for signing legal documents) used to live at 17 East End Road. "Inky" Stephens bought the building in 1874. Built as a villa fifteen years earlier by the Reverend Edward Philip Cooper, it subsequently became known as Avenue House.

But these interesting pieces of information are becoming better known since The Finchley Society began expanding its educational activities there. They can now offer a talk by the house manager, after which members of the Society escort local school children on guided tours to look at the museum, the archives, the well and the bothy.

Nature, art and ice cream

They can visit the extensive grounds, and perhaps learn about the fish living in the pond. Avenue House gardens are well known for the selection of interesting trees growing there which support plenty of wildlife, so it is a good place for nature study.

It is also an ideal location for an art class, there is plenty of space for games and it is a pleasant setting for a picnic, plus there is a café supplying food, drink and ice creams.

Specific activities led by society members, which can include archaeology and art work, need to be made by prior arrangement and a pre-visit by teachers is also necessary, particularly as work sheets are not provided. These visits are free and are aimed at the primary age group. (It is also a nice place for parents to take children to during the school holidays).

For further details contact the Finchley Society's education secretary on 020 8445 1808.

A friendly welcome awaits you

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Tea before the off. The riders prepare. Photo by Diana Cormack

Bike Ride

At 8.30 on a Sunday morning, the few souls emerging onto the High Road expect calm and quiet. So the sight of sixty cyclists clad in multi-coloured lycra gathered outside The Big Chef caused a few shocks and stares. Welcome to the inaugural 'Suburban Breakout', a non-competitive 105 km cycle ride into the Hertfordshire countryside – which will now be an annual event for East Finchley.

Apart from one rider from Swansea, it was mainly a North London affair. Ages ranged from 20-somethings to well over 60, bodies from trim to... comfortable, bikes from superlight racers to steady tourers.

After a last-minute rush to sign on, the *peloton* left at 9 o'clock, with the first rider returning just after 12.30. That's an average of almost 20 miles per hour, over a 'rolling' course, negotiating traffic and junctions. By 5pm all were back bar one – who may be still out

there somewhere.

Thanks to Priscilla and Carlos at the start, to Geoff and Lindy at halfway, and to Ali at the Big Chef for a lot of tea!

If you are interested in sport cycling, visit www.saddlesore.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk for more information or drop into Bike and Run on the High Road.

Celebrations from Finchley to Enfield

By Erini Rodis

Watching Greece win the European Championship on 4 July was like witnessing a miracle in action; after weeks of red-and-white flags flowing through the streets came the green light for North London's Greek communities to wave their own and take to the streets in sheer pride and jubilant disbelief.

It all started off as a bit of a laugh really, this team with no real football reputation, putting noses out of joint by beating their hosts in the opening game. Ecstatic even to have made it to the quarterfinal, they played without fear against France and knocked them out too. (Some Greek Arsenal fans were beginning to feel a divided sense of loyalty at this point!) Then they stopped the Czechs in their tracks with an impenetrable defence and a cheeky header in extra time, to win the semi-final. England had already been robbed of a win against Portugal when the Greeks faced an unusual re-match with their hosts in the final. Both sides played at an energetic pace, Angelos Charisteas scoring with a header for Greece in the second half. Portugal had greater possession of the ball however, and though goalie Antonios Nicopolides

stood firm while bombarded with free kicks and corners, the Greeks were beginning to tire. At this point some fully clothed bloke ran onto the pitch and threw himself into the goal. This little stunt probably broke the host team's momentum, and Greece won the tournament with a disciplined defence and a physical stamina that was second to none.

Astounded

Nobody could quite believe it and some sat catatonic, before raising the roofs when the truth sank in. Celebrations beeped loud from Finchley to Haringey and up to Enfield with a sea of cars; blue-and-white flags hanging out of sunroofs along Green Lanes. Police blocked off roads in Southgate and Palmers Green, so that young and old alike could party till dawn.

Since then the Germans have dubbed Greece's coach, Otto Rehhagel, "King Otto" and are trying to lure him back. For England fans, watching Portugal blow their chances against a goalie that looks like George Clooney must surely be sheer poetic justice? And as for those pundits who put their money on Greece for a laugh? Well, they're still laughing.

Opening of playground for disabled children

By Daphne Chamberlain
The first play area in Barnet to include facilities for disabled children will be opened at Avenue House on 6 August, with celebrations led by the Chicken Shed Theatre.

The playground will be the first in Barnet to be entirely covered with a safety surface. The area, which cost just over £89,000, has received funding from outside agencies, including Living Spaces and Hendon and Muswell Hill Rotary Clubs. Over £10,000 has been raised from public subscription, leaving a shortfall of £8,750.

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