



Veterans reunited

By Diana Cormack

Veterans of the Second World War can sign up to a programme that has awards available from the Big Lottery Fund. Veterans Reunited marks the 60th Anniversary of the end of the war in 1945. The programme, which commemorates those who served at home and abroad, has three strands.

Heroes Return

This provides lottery money to help UK resident veterans, their spouses or carers to revisit a country where they did active service during World War 2. Widows and widowers of veterans, even those whose spouses died after the war, may also be eligible. Applications must be received by 31 March 2005 and visits must take place by 31 December 2005.

For more information visit www.heroes-return.co.uk or contact the Veterans' Association on Freephone 0800 169 2277

Home Front Recall

This is intended to fund activities and events for groups in this country. Small grants are available to help commemorate all those whose work here was so vital to the war effort, including Britain's code-breakers. Money can be obtained for things like street parties, special services, parades, reunions and other events that bring the community together to enable

all generations to remember the great contribution made by people on the home front. Veterans who wish to organise or take part in reunions or other events may also obtain funding. For further information and an application pack phone 08457 458 458.

Their Past – Your Future

Young people are being given the opportunity to learn about the Second World War directly from those who were involved.

The Imperial War Museum has been developing an educational scheme to enable school children to research and learn about the experiences and roles played by both civilians and those in the forces. Museums, libraries and archives nationwide have also been encouraged to get involved in the Veterans Reunited Campaign.

THE ARCHER would be pleased to hear from anyone who is involved in any aspect of this scheme.

Fabulous fabrics

By Ann Bronkhorst

Two current exhibitions within easy reach of East Finchley will delight lovers of fine fabrics and fabric-crafts.

Head south quickly (it closes on 12 February) to catch the London Quilters' Winter Exhibition at The Gallery, Swiss Cottage Central Library, where fifty colourful quilts and patchworks are on display. One's the prize for the winner of a raffle for a breast cancer charity. For more information contact Steve Roper on 020 7974 6523.

Head north in a more leisurely way (it's open until 20

March) to see *Woven Splendour* at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Cat Hill, Barnet. MoDA is twinned with the Museo del Tessuto in Italy and this is their first exchange exhibition. Luxurious textiles from the fifteenth century onwards, such as sumptuous Italian silks and velvets, are on display. For more information contact 020 8411 5244 or www.moda.mdx.ac.uk

A change for the better

By Jonathan Blackstaffe

It's not easy to say what constitutes a good pub. So much is dependent on taste, mood and company. The best you can do is to apply the New York Times film-reviewing rule and ask whether the pub realises what it sets out to achieve.

So, do the re-vamped Five Bells and The Old White Lion accomplish what they set out to?

Ring the changes

Let's start with the Five Bells. With its garden, homely atmosphere and simple food, this has always been a family pub. And, having been renovated and the management changed, it is still a family pub, only a little larger, better-equipped and with much improved toilets.

A rear extension has created a spacious back room with lots of tables for dining and a reasonably sized flat screen TV, one of three TV's in all.

The extensive menu is modestly priced. The drinks selection isn't so varied but you'll find something to quench your thirst.

So, does the Five Bells achieve its aims? I'd say, yes. It feels friendly and comfortable, albeit uninspiring. But it's not trying to be inspiring, it's trying to be a decent local pub, and has changed for the better.

For whom the lion roars

The Old White Lion provides an interesting contrast. It is attempting to capture the zeitgeist – it's trying to be a gastro-pub. Gastro-pubs were very much in vogue last season but as soon as the average Joe (or, in this case, Jonathan) on the street describes some-



Kitsch or cool? The Old White Lion. Photo by Jonathan Blackstaffe

thing as in vogue it's become passé. Still, the Old White Lion hasn't missed the mark if the young, relatively stylish crowd it attracts is anything to go by.

The Old White Lion could be described as somewhat kitsch. The two stone lions flanking the porch suggest that kitsch was the aim. It probably wasn't. Cool was probably the aim. Not that there's anything wrong with kitsch, as the Old White Lion proves. Like the Five Bells it has become more spa-

cious, with décor now predominantly brick and wood plus the obligatory brushed chrome. There are also several interesting hanging glass objects that might be art, lights or something else entirely.

The chalkboard boasts an appetising range of food, cooked, a sure sign of confidence, in an open kitchen. Complementing the food is a wide selection of drinks. The overall effect is fairly stylish, making the Old White Lion the coolest local venue.

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