



Saddle up

By Nick Bloom

Keen cyclists who want to explore some of our fabulous local countryside are invited to join the 'Suburban Breakout 3' from East Finchley on Sunday 25 June.

Starting at 9am, the 100km (66 mile) ride begins from The Big Chef on the High Road, travels up to Potters Bar and goes into the rolling Hertfordshire countryside and back. Sixty riders took part last year with a wide range of age and ability.

The ride – on behalf of the Cyclists' Touring Club and Audax UK – hopes to encourage riders by showing how quickly you can get out of London by bicycle. It is not a race, and it is not a charity ride. Ride with others or on your own, flat out or steady. Anyone can take part on any bike, tricycle, tandem or recumbent, though under-18s need parental consent.

You can take a break on the way at one of the many pubs along the route, so long as you are back within the time limit of seven-and-a-half hours – only 13.5kph (less than 9mph) including any stops. You do have to look after yourself and you have to follow the route sheet. There's no pick-up if you get tired or break down.

Entry in advance is £4. For all CTC&AUK members, it is £3. All entries on the day will cost £5.

Just a warm-up

For some, the Suburban Breakout will just be a warm-up for a new challenge, the Muswell Hill 200k that starts at 8am on Sunday 23 July, again from The Big Chef.

The route for this later ride will take cyclists north of the Chilterns via the Tea Rooms at Aldbury, to the turn at the top of Brill Hill with a view from the windmill of Muswell Hill. It is a 202km route with about 1,800m of climbing and a time limit of thirteen-and-a-half hours. Entry in advance is £5, CTC & AUK members £4. All entries on the day will be £7.

For further information on both rides, contact Nick on 020 8365 3806 or nick@saddlesore.org.uk or ask at Bike and Run on the High Road. You can also download an entry form from www.saddlesore.org.uk.

Is East Finchley for real?

By Diana Cormack

"We're from Finchley!" declare the children in the film *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, prompting speculation in February's *ARCHER* about the connection between the author CS Lewis and this area.

Unlike Lewis, local author Cathy Hopkins does mention East Finchley in some of her books for young readers, which are published in 22 countries.

Twelve to 16-year-old fans of her *Mates, Dates* series, about the angst and adventures of four teenage girls from north London, often ask Cathy if East Finchley really exists. One of the main characters lives here but not for much longer as the 12th and last book in the series, *Mates, Dates and Sizzling Summers*, has just been published. Cathy is neatly amalgamating them with another group of imaginary children, based in Cornwall, from her popular *Truth, Dare* series written for ages 10 plus.



Cathy Hopkins

Not that Cathy would dream of moving herself. She loves East Finchley and her home in Southern Road, where she has lived since 1991. She works in what she describes as "a posh shed at the bottom of the garden". It is comfortably furnished and equipped with everything a writer could need, including a bed.

It is only latterly, however, that Cathy has been able to afford such surroundings and she has a pile of rejection slips to prove it. Previously

a variety of jobs ranging from aromatherapist to TV presenter helped subsidise her writing.

After some success with self-help books for youngsters, Cathy's teenage fiction took off in 2000 when her new agent rightly suggested she was perfectly suited for this market. (The *Mates, Dates* stories are

particularly successful with girls who rarely read books). Cathy now has her own shelf and label in Waterstones, her sales are soaring in the States and a film company is interested in her *Dead Dudes* series about happy, hip ghosts written for ages nine plus.

Her stories would make excellent TV series. Should that happen, East Finchley could become as well known as EastEnders!

Find out more about Cathy on www.cathyhopkins.com.

Electronic artist

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local fundraiser Sippy Azizollah was using her laptop one day when she accidentally clicked on a program that has helped her forge a new hobby - computer-generated design. Her electronic pictures will soon be displayed in some of East Finchley's cafés.

"Cutting corners", "Sugar candy", "Beach balls", "Bakerloo line" are some of Sippy's pictures' titles. They are all abstract shapes, but you can see how they got their names.

"Finding the right colours is the most difficult bit," Sippy told me. She usually goes for strong and vibrant shades, but some designs are in black and white.

Selecting the width of defining lines around the shapes is really important. "Whether those lines are thin or thick can alter the whole picture."

Sippy, who lives in Fairacres, is well known for her fund-raising work, especially for Lupus UK, and she hopes to benefit her favourite charities if she sells her pictures. Brian Hefferman, a friend who lives locally, is helping to introduce the designs to a wider audience.

What really excites her, though, is the joy of creating. Her cousin, Liz Maxwell, recently exhibited paintings at Chorak and the Phoenix, and Sippy herself is now also working with a conventional brush. She says, "My creative spirit is alive and kicking at the moment, so I'm just going with it – and I haven't come down to earth since I started".

Sippy's computer-generated pictures are on display at Dr Hunger in East End Road throughout June. East Finchley Library, Chorak, the Phoenix and the new Cherry Tree Shop have expressed interest in exhibiting them at a later date.



Sippy & Brian with some of Sippy's pictures. Photo by John Dearing

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