



Feis-ty dance festival

By Ellen Galloway

For the second year running, Bishop Douglass RC School has hosted a major Irish dancing competition. Around 1,000 girls and boys, including three world champions, competed on four dance floors in the school's sports hall on 9 - 10 June.

The Seamus and Marie Moore Memorial Feis was organised by John and Phyllis Brooks, of the Brooks Irish Dance Academy. Accompanied by

pianists and accordion players, dancers competed in front of a panel of three judges.

Eight adjudicators were present in total, among them Kevin McCormack from the show *Riverdance*, and John Brooks' son Kevin, who for seven years also toured with the show.

John Brooks is proud of how Irish dance has moved with the times and said: "As with any discipline you have to have a proper costume." Clearly a lot of work goes into the eye-catching dresses worn by female



Irish Dancers. Photo by Ellen Galloway.

competitors. One elaborately embroidered second-hand outfit was advertised for sale at £550.

There is no lower age limit for the competition, with the youngest age group aimed at the under sixes, but contestants have to train hard. Some children train for 10 hours a week to achieve the standard seen in the contest, which is perhaps why this particular event has steadily grown in popularity and is now an established event in the Irish Dancing calendar.

Young cricketers live locally

By Diana Cormack

One of the most notable results in the Cricket World Cup, which took place in the West Indies earlier this year, was Pakistan's defeat at the hands of Ireland on St Patrick's Day. Though not usually noted for its cricketing prowess, Ireland has some young players of great potential and two of them are living in East Finchley.

Until the end of the season they are renting a house just a stone's throw from the Middlesex Cricket Academy in East End Road. Though they occasionally train there, they are more likely to be found in the nets at Lord's, the world famous home of Marylebone Cricket Club.

Twenty-one year old Eoin Morgan, born in Dublin, and twenty-two year old William Porterfield, born in Derry, opened the batting for Ireland. Both these left-handed batsmen play for Middlesex.

They share the house with another cricketer, twenty-two year old Shaun O'Brien, who plays for Marylebone and is training to play for Middlesex. Shaun was born in Liverpool but, as his parents now live in New Zealand, he escapes the English winter by spending the time playing cricket over there.

Who knows, one day these three talented players might be selected for the England squad.

Phoenix in June

By Paul Homer, manager of the Phoenix Cinema.

July seems to be European month at the Phoenix. We kick off with *The Golden Door*, an Italian film about a family leaving home to seek a better life in the New World. It premiered at Venice this year and should be one of the must-see films of the year.

While there have been many American films about the rise of Italian culture in the States, mainly from a gangster perspective, this is one of the first to look at it from the Italian side without the romanticising that is all too common and frustrating.

We're showing the biopic of Edith Piaf *La Vie En Rose* from 6 July, an unflinching portrait of her incredible and troubled life. To coincide with the film an accordion player will be hanging round the cinema for a couple of days, so keep an eye out for that.

Moliere comes to the Phoenix on 13 July, an account of what he was up to when he mysteriously disappeared for a few weeks in 1645. Moliere comes across as a wonderfully witty and handsome man, very much the toast of French society, in a great performance by Romain Duris. You may have seen him in *The Beat That My Heart Skipped*, so popular with Phoenix audiences early last year.

Finally in July we play *Private Fears in Public Places*, based on the Alan Ayckbourn play but with a Gallic twist.

Look out also for a special event on 29 July when we'll be debating the erosion of human rights in the UK and the worldwide decline of democracy in a talk accompanying the double bill of *Taking Liberties* and *The War on Democracy*.

Contact our box office on 020 8444 6789 or visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk.

A real page-turner

By Andy Shirlaw

At last, East Finchley has an independent bookshop again. Black Gull, on the High Road, will have its formal launch party early in July, having already received a warm welcome.

Chris Overfield, the owner, has been in the book business for 30 years. He started with a stall in Camden market and has a shop at the West Yard, Camden Lock, which is also open seven days a week.

Chris looked at various locations for the new shop but he said that East Finchley had more of a community feel to it and he had never before experienced this kind of enthusiasm and support. He said: "I prefer the feel of East Finchley to Muswell Hill as the Broadway is very homogenised."

Chris also plans to showcase artists' work starting with architect David Wild, who has a passion for Russian constructivist collages, and Merrill Rauch, who creates surreal assemblages of disparate objects.

Black Gull will have storytelling sessions for children on Sunday afternoons and a book club on a weekday evening,

as well as book launches. Chris will be assisted by his partner Janna Overfield, Brian Schwartz and Jean Hart.

Chris said: "We get a lot of books from house clearances and we get calls from people when they are moving; that is a good source for us. What we are trying to do is sell interesting books which have an intrinsic value."

Black Gull has antiquarian books dating back to the 17th century, signed books and rare or first editions. You could spend hours browsing and would surely discover several gems amongst the thousands of books.

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