



KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

The ageing of rock

Welcome to rock without the roll, welcome to the new age of caring, sharing soft and cuddly nostalgia. Welcome to Spinal Tap meets Time Team, welcome to the seven ageing rockers, packaged, explained and gift wrapped for *The Seven Ages of Rock* on BBC2 on Saturday nights. Or, to put it another way, rock is dead.

Every time someone decides to turn rock'n'roll into the new history they end up removing anything exciting and unpredictable and producing a bland mixture of talking heads and film clips. So you get old men reminiscing about their dangerous youth and some professor of applied narcotics trying to analyse it to death.

They started with Jimi Hendrix, but it was hard to recognise Jimi from the ponderously reverential race through the life and career. It tried to explain the unexplainable and ended up missing the point. Hendrix was exciting because London had seen nothing like him before. He was the real deal, a black American blues guitarist pushing the limits that Brits like Eric Clapton were trying to find. He was exotic, cool and exciting, unlike the programme which was simple and dull.

As the hot air brigade dragged their way through the rest of British rock they did the same thing to punk and heavy metal and Bowie. It was remake and remodel time, the same clips of Johnny Rotten, the same disconnected slices of Bowie and the same drug crazed stories of Ozzy Osborne snorting his own weight in cocaine. Each week they got closer to today and closer to parody. It's like they never realised that Spinal Tap was meant to be funny, and if they did, they still missed the point.

But maybe that is the point; maybe all they were trying to do is give people too bored to bother going out to find something new a safely sanitised way of spending Saturday night. Maybe they are just incompetent. After all, there are hardly any rockumentaries that get it right but, if you want to see it done properly, go and see Julian Temple's film about Joe Strummer, *The Future is Unwritten*, because that makes as much sense as rock'n'roll ever needs to make.

Brush with Goldfinger

By Janet Maitland

Urban legend has it that Goldfinger, the notorious James Bond villain, is named after the Modernist architect Erno Goldfinger. Bond author Ian Fleming was one of the Hampstead locals who protested in vain when Goldfinger proposed demolishing a row of Georgian cottages to build his state-of-the-art house in the 1930s.

The house in Willow Road is now owned by the National Trust and is protected, like all its properties, "for ever, for everyone".

This was just one of the surprises to emerge at a presentation by Mike Watts to the Finchley Society on 31 May uncovering the secrets of the many National Trust properties in London.

The Trust is most often associated with opulent stately homes in the countryside. However, many of its London properties are small and quirky, such as the George Inn in Southwark, the last remaining galleried inn, and the "Roman" bath in Strand Lane, a workplace for prostitutes in the 18th century.

Some of the houses are even quite homely. Thomas Carlyle's house in Chelsea, for example, still contains the sofa his wife Jane bought second hand for £5. By contrast, Osterley House in Isleworth is a voluptuous monument to conspicuous consumption. Originally a modest Elizabethan house, the makeover by Robert Adam in the 18th century ensured that every overblown feature is startlingly impressive.

Mike Watts told his audience that the Trust believes in a "dialogue between past, present and future", each generation giving its own meanings to historic houses.

Friends open precious boutique

By Diana Cormack

Having moved into Creighton Avenue at the age of 12, Martha Behiri describes herself as an East Finchley girl. Though she continued her education in a neighbouring borough, her own children have been brought up and educated locally. Now they are older, Martha has taken the plunge and changed her occupation to something that has interested her for many years.

Twenty-seven of those years were spent working at managerial level for a building society, but last October Martha joined forces with her friend Dia Anastasi to find suitable premises for a fashion boutique. By chance they discovered that the tailor at 27 Fortis Green Road (next to the Children's Book Shop) was closing and launched their business there in May.

Though small, the shop's design and décor have been meticulously planned to maximise its potential. Clever use of lighting, and mirrors make it feel spacious and airy.

The name of the boutique, *Aziza*, comes from Dia's country of birth and in Swahili means "precious". This is how they want their customers to feel so they have selected finely crafted couture pieces from around the world, putting great emphasis on how the garments are displayed. On the home front, they also stock bustiers made by one of England's few remaining companies, Vollers of Portsmouth.

Aziza aims to provide exciting and glamorous evening wear and to be a place where "every woman will find a piece to make her feel special at any celebratory event". They also offer a free dress-finding service. Opening times are daily from 10.30am - 5.30pm and on Sundays from 11.30am - 4.30pm. Call 020 8444 5007 for details.



Martha Behiri in Aziza. Photo by Diana Cormack

Suburb celebrates 100 years

By Daphne Chamberlain

A good crowd enjoyed a sunny Sunday afternoon in Central Square to celebrate the centenary of Hampstead Garden Suburb.

The Henrietta Barnett School Big Band started off proceedings with a swing and a guest saxophonist for *In the Mood*, none other than Suburb resident Professor Robert Winston.

There were gleaming vintage cars, Henrietta Barnett roses, a Punch and Judy show, prize-winning scarecrows, food stalls and an exhibition in the Free Church detailing the growth of the Suburb.

This stressed Henrietta Barnett's concern that town planning should be for everyone in society, including children, the elderly, the sick and handicapped, the poor and "the naughty".

This wasn't a festival. It was what it set out to be: a relaxing picnic, on the grass and around tables, with neighbours chatting together. Henrietta would have approved of that.

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