



Record audiences at Arts Festival

By Geoffrey Hanson, Festival Director

'Variety,' they say, 'is the spice of life,' and it was the variety in this year's East Finchley Arts Festival that drew so much favourable comment from the many who attended. Audience numbers were up on previous years and the whole event had a real feeling of festivity.

Writing this the day after the Festival ended, it is difficult to single out any one item or event but clearly Dame Emma Kirkby's concert with the English Consort of Viols drew a full house and an enthusiastic reception whilst the London Mozart Players and Rimantas Vingras gave me great personal pleasure with their performance of my new Piano Concerto.

Bruce Purchase as Dr. Johnson in a one-man drama especially written for him by John Wain held us spellbound for an hour and a half. Poet

Children's storyteller June Peters made a very successful first appearance at the Festival, delighting younger members of the community and their parents with her lively and original programme.

The Art Exhibition in aid of the North London Hospice concentrated on local artists and, together with the bucket collections, raised around £2,500. Thanks, East Finchley. I hear that there have been requests from Muswell Hill residents to know more about the Festival. See you next year!



Festival Director Geoffrey Hanson, Rimantas Vingras and the London Mozart Players. Photograph by Saulius Mendelis

Fleur Adcock succumbed to a bout of flu but Elaine Feinstein held the fort with an intriguing description of her work.

The performers in the Rivers of Babylon concert presented their material with freshness and obvious enjoyment, clearly shared by the audience. The Lunch Hour Recitals were a new idea, justified by the support they received.

Jennifer Bate put the organ at All Saints Church through its paces, whilst Patrick Naylor and Tim Robinson gave a beguiling recital of guitar music.

The Fidelio Piano Quartet made a welcome return visit to the Festival and played with their usual élan and flair. Dave Burman's London Vintage Jazz Orchestra drew the Festival to a close with a rousing programme played to an appreciative full house.



Anniversary fun in Fordington Road. Photograph by Linda Mitchell

Fun in Fordington Road

By Fordington Road resident, Linda Mitchell

On 15 September, the residents of Fordington Road held a street party to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first houses being built there.

Julia Richardson, a resident whose grandfather built the houses, came up with the idea. Some of the neighbours hosted meetings to discuss ideas and plans. Eventually, a date was fixed, and permission obtained to close the road to traffic for the day.

Amazingly, the sun shone! Everyone brought food and drink for the refreshment tables, and one neighbour made a beautiful "Happy Birthday" banner, which stretched across the road. The lamp-posts were all decorated with garlands and balloons.

Another neighbour set up a jewellery stall, where children could make their own necklaces and bracelets with the lovely beads provided. Everyone wore a sticker with their name and house number, and a game of "House Bingo" proved as popular with the adults as it was with the children.

It was great fun to sing along

to the karaoke machine: GPs, solicitors, surgeons, builders, all enjoying a sing-song together. Later in the day, a treasure hunt was organised and was a great success. The children had a lovely time running races down a car-free road.

A particular group worked very hard to make sure that the day went well, and it certainly did. We had good food, drink, music, bubble machines, laughter and, most of all, such friendly neighbours.

Of course it was over all too soon. It would be good to make it an annual event by celebrating the celebrations of the previous year.

War injuries you cannot see

By Diana Cormack

A fund to help those seriously wounded during World War I was set up by Earl Haig not long after hostilities ceased, with poppies made by the disabled soldiers themselves being sold to raise money. The red poppy is now recognised as the symbol of remembrance for victims of any conflict since then in which this country has been involved.

But in 1919 another charity, Combat Stress, was established to help the thousands of soldiers suffering from shell shock.

Combat Stress says that the number of psychiatric casualties of war is far greater than those killed or physically disabled. It is the only UK charity that supports British ex-servicemen and women who have been profoundly traumatised by their harrowing experiences on active service. Since World War II, some 85,000 veterans with a variety of psychological injuries have been helped. With current

conflicts, the present number of 8,000 clients is sadly steadily rising. The youngest is 19.

To help veterans rebuild their lives the charity has three specialist centres in Ayrshire, Shropshire and Surrey, which offer short-stay remedial treatment, providing respite care, psychiatric support and occupational therapy. Help at home is available, too, with support from professional regional welfare officers all of whom have been in the services. Combat Stress works in cooperation with other service charities, the NHS, the military and the government.

Combat-related psychological injuries can also have a huge impact on families, friends and carers. Combat Stress would like to do more to support these often unrecognised victims, as well as to continue its lifelong commitment to clients. For all this it needs funding. To help or to have more details contact Combat Stress at Tyrwhitt House, Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BX, telephone 01372 841619 or visit www.combatstress.org.uk.



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