



KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Song and dance

Once upon a time when men were men and James Bond didn't need to be invented, musicals meant Broadway and Rogers and Hammerstein and dancing girls and more cheese in the plot than the cheese counter at Sainsburys. Not any more. From the moment that some bunch of lunatics decided to cram a whole load of secondhand Abba songs into an unbelievable plot, the not-so-great and not-very-good have proved some people are mug enough to go to anything. And we're not talking about Lloyd-Webber and singing cats either, we're talking rock musicals.

Once Ben Elton had completed the transformation from annoying left wing comic to just annoying and turned a hatful of Queen songs into a musical the bandwagon was unstoppable. We got Madness, the musical, and now, without a hint of irony, there's a Take That musical called *Never Forget*, something I'll try very hard not to remember.

But why stop there? There are loads of bands whose songs can be beaten, crushed and forced into something with songs and no plot. What about *Hotel Tropicana*, a heart warming story about the son of a kebab shop owner and his talentless friend struggling with their hair gel on a Friday night to the songs of George Michael? Or maybe it's time to go punk with *Westway*, the original Clash musical, or the Sex Pistols story 'retold' as the charming tale of how four loveable Londoners found fame and fortune in the musical *No Future for Mr Vacant*.

If you want to drag yourself further back into the deep and dangerous past then how about the Led Zeppelin musical *Stairway to Heaven* complete with a special guest appearance from Cliff Richard as God? The Stones would be perfect for the musical treatment. It just depends on which period: is it the 60s pop stars or the out-to-lunch 70s? Will they provide the necessary recreational narcotics to get you in the mood for *Jack Flash is Jumping* so you can have a full-on Mick'n'Keef experience?

And don't forget The Beatles. I'm sure that the only thing that stands between some complete dingbat's idea for a musical about four fun loving Scousers laughing and joking their way into the world's hearts is Paul McCartney's sense of good taste. But then again, he's just had to fork out £25 million to his ex-wife so maybe *Get Back Sgt Pepper, Lucy's in the Sky* is only a frog chorus away.

We want the 603

By Daphne Chamberlain

At the time of writing, East Finchley was giving an enthusiastic thumbs-up to a regular, frequent, all-day bus service connecting us with Muswell Hill, Highgate, Hampstead and Swiss Cottage, and calling at the Royal Free Hospital. As the 603 contract comes up for renewal, this is what the Bus Watch West Haringey group is asking for.

At present, the 603 operates only at school opening and closing times. Although it runs along Fortis Green and past East Finchley station on its Muswell Hill to Swiss Cottage route, many people in this area have never even seen it.

East Finchley Bus Watch are helping their Haringey colleagues to collect signatures for a petition to Transport for London, and Secretary Hazel Burnett reports that we are queuing up to sign.

Bus Watch West Haringey Secretary Chris Barker points out that an all-day 603, slightly re-routed to call at

the Royal Free, would benefit the whole community, not simply school students. He mentions hospital patients, staff and visitors, cinema and theatre-goers, shoppers, and visitors to Hampstead Heath and Kenwood. The extended service would also be in line with TFL's current policy of strengthening orbital bus links.

The 603 contract is due for renewal next January. Chris Barker can be contacted on 020 8347 7684 or c.barker@lineone.net. Hazel Burnett's contact number is 020 8444 6824.

In search of an author

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local Normandy veteran and former bandleader Henry Van Emden is a great talker. He has a fund of stories about his colourful life, but is looking for a collaborator to put his experiences into print.

Henry has met politicians, generals and legendary musicians. He found his favourite clarinet in the mud of war-torn France. More recently, he has become a popular entertainer with his keyboard at many local events.

The period of his life he

wants to focus on, though, is his part in the Normandy landings. As he says: "There are not many of us left."

He would like to have a chat with anyone who might be able to help with his autobiography. If you are interested, Henry can be contacted on 020 8883 2715.

Ladies in red

By Betti Blatman

A group of ladies dressed colourfully in purple and red attracted a lot of interest and attention recently when they met for coffee at Kenwood House, Hampstead.

They were a group of London Redhatters who are affiliated to The Red Hat Society, the largest informal ladies' organisation in the world. It is a network of like-minded women who enjoy a sisterhood of friendship, dressing in purple and wearing red hats just for fun each time they meet for the theatre, meals, exhibitions, national and local events. For further information, contact Lorna at londonredhatters81@yahoo.com.



Above: Members of the Red Hat Society have coffee at Kenwood. L-r: Baroness Buyalot, Mistress Muck, then behind, Queen Lorna, Joy-Bells, Queen Mal Shopalotten of Phoenix Croix de Brent, and far right Contessa. Photograph by Polly Hancock

Looking to the future

By Diana Cormack

If you keep your eyes peeled you may notice a sign in the window of Panoptica Opticians at 56 High Road announcing that the plants on display there are growing in compost produced from waste recycled by the business.

In fact, the compost used in the plant pots was provided by their branch at Muswell Hill, which "went green" under a major refit. Now 90% of their waste paper and cardboard is shredded and used in the composting process. The East Finchley branch has begun making its own and, when it is due for a refit, the shop will be tailored to the latest and most efficient "green" requirements.

Manager Rob Lamont told *THE ARCHER* that they are striving to show that even small businesses can make a difference. "If we all do our bit we can make an impact to help protect the planet", he said.

There have been some positive comments from local people and even the florist next door has said it is a great idea. Other businesses are welcome to contact Rob to discuss these green ideas. You can phone him on 020 8444 6693.

Power out

By Betti Blatman

Two thousand homes in East Finchley were affected by an electricity power cut on Wednesday 2 April at 1.30am. PowerGen sent staff to the substation in Hamilton Road and power was restored by 4.30am.

Asian art in the picture

By Diana Cormack

The Noble Sage Art Gallery at 2a Fortis Green was shown in "Desi DNA", a new BBC2 programme about Asian arts and entertainment. On its website the half hour programme is described as "focusing on the new generation of Asians breaking the mould and seeking out the hottest in Asian clubs, fashion, music and lifestyle in the UK and abroad".

Gallery director Jana Manuelpillai was chosen to take part in a feature broadcast at the end of March, exploring "the lucrative world of Asian art". His evident expertise was used to describe and value a painting which had been picked out by presenter Nikki Bedi. This was to be auctioned by Jana at the Noble Sage in February during its second "In the Fore" exhibition (see *THE ARCHER*, March 2008, page 4).

The picture was not sold but, all the time Jana is on screen talking about this, a lone figure can be seen in the background closely examining an exhibit as she sips her wine. If my eyes didn't deceive me it was *THE ARCHER*'s own Sheila Armstrong, there to report on "In the Fore".



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