



Highgate Primary helps out the Dads' Club

Back in December *THE ARCHER* published a story about the Dads' Club, run by local dad Adam Porter. In the summer Cherry Tree Wood is a favourite meeting place for the group, although it is less tempting during the winter. An indoor venue was much needed for the rest of the year but the dads were unable to find anywhere suitable.

We are pleased to report a happy ending. By a stroke of luck the article was read by East Finchley resident Katherine Nashnush, administrative officer at the Highgate Children's Centre. Head of Centre and Deputy Head of Highgate Primary School Anthony David phoned Adam the next day and when the Children's Centre opened its doors on 22 February, the Dads' Club was the first group to be welcomed in.

Information Officer Kate Imeson said: "Creating a social drop-in playgroup for local part-time and full-time male carers has always been at the core of our ambitions for the Children's Centre, so we were delighted to find an already existing Dads' Club that needed a home. We're looking forward to seeing it grow into a thriving support group and social network for local dads."

"As a father myself," said Mr David, "I know how daunting it can be to walk into a playgroup where you're the only dad. But our data showed that there are a lot of dads in the area caring for their pre-school children for at least part of the week and we want to support them actively. All the research shows that children benefit hugely from spending quality time with their dads."

The Centre, one of only a few in the London area, has been open for a few weeks and is already a huge success. One week, Riaan Kelly led toddler football skills for the children in the outdoor play area. East Finchley dad Richard Looney said his children Caitlin, two, and William, one, have greatly enjoyed coming to the club.

The centre will be hosting a Dads' Day on Saturday 8 May, when local dads are invited to bring their families for a fun day out. If you'd like to attend the Dads' Club with your baby or toddler, drop in on Wednesday mornings between 9am and 12pm at Highgate Children's

Centre (behind Highgate Primary School), Gaskell Road, Highgate N6 4ED. Find out more about the Dads' Club at <http://thedadsclublondon.blogspot.com> or phone 020 8213 0004.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

If you weren't there

In the weird and wonderful world of rock'n'roll there comes a time when all your yesterdays crawl out from underneath an inconvenient stone to haunt you. And mine is called Nick Kent.

Nick Kent was the reason why I wanted to write about rock'n'roll, take industrial quantities of recreational narcotics, drink death-defying quantities of expensive booze and charge the whole lot to someone else's expenses. I bought the NME, Nick Kent wrote for the NME and I wanted to write for the NME. It wasn't much of an ambition, but it was the 1970s.

They claim that if you remember the 60s you weren't there, but they are wrong. It was the 70s when the weird turned pro and got paid for it. That ten-year period between the end of The Beatles and the death of John Lennon was a golden age. You didn't need a degree or a daddy who worked on The Times or a pointless knowledge of obscure bands. What mattered was being there, and being there didn't mean sitting on the outside looking in.

When Nick Kent went on tour with the Rolling Stones he went with the band. He drank with them, matched Keith drug for drug and then wrote it up for the NME. Objective it wasn't. It wasn't even about the band, it was mostly about Nick Kent and what it was like to snort coke with Keith at seven in the morning. Boy, was I jealous.

In a spectacularly drug fuelled period from about 1972 to 1977 Nick was where the craziness was. He said he had to do the drugs to keep up with the bands. And I guess that was it; he wanted to be in the bands but wasn't talented enough, so he wrote about them like no one else ever did. And I wanted to be him.

When punk arrived and I started to get my chance I found out that there was no point in trying to match Sid and Nancy's drug intake if you wanted to stay alive. Even Nick gave up and eventually retreated to Paris, leaving only a trail of press cuttings and wild stories of a time when if you couldn't be in the band then writing self indulgent accounts of your drug crazed exploits on the road with them was the next best place to be. I should know, I've been there.

Ricky has been reading 'Apathy for the Devil: a 1970s memoir' by Nick Kent, published by Faber and Faber at £12.99.

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A cup of tea and a piece of art

East Finchley artists Gina Bold and Jon Maitland have an exhibition of their work at the Muswell Hill branch of the art café Chorak. The vibrant paintings light up the café walls.

Gina Bold is self-taught, describing herself as an 'outsider' artist who doesn't belong to any movement or school. Her paintings include a blue-grey portrait of Bob Dylan playing a harmonica and a vase of lemon yellow chrysanthemums that burst out of the canvas like sparklers. "My painting is always changing direction," she said. "I'm influenced by who I meet, what I see and what I feel."

Gina was artist-in-residence at Arlington House night shelter in Camden, where she painted 40 portraits of homeless people. She had her first major solo show in 2007 and exhibited some of her work at the Wallace Collection in March. Gina can be contacted through her website: www.ginabold.com

Jon Maitland trained at Bristol Art School and Sussex

University in the 1970s, where he developed an innovative child-like style, using clear bright colours. Deceptively simple, many of the pictures have a social message.

His paintings include 'Inside Looking Out', a view through a window on a sunny day. The rich pastel colours make the scene look edible, as if the window were part of a fairy-tale gingerbread house. In 'Sunblest', a man drives a bread van, bathed in the rays of a giant sun. 'My paintings are an emotional response to everyday things,' said Jon. 'Mostly they're humorous, but sometimes they're very sad.'

Jon usually works from photographs and specialises in large-scale wall murals. He can be contacted on 0759 839 5933. The Chorak exhibition is on until the end of April. All the paintings are for sale.



Gina Bold and Jon Maitland in Chorak

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