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Branching out

Four years after opening its doors, the Cherry Tree gift shop in the High Road is celebrating with a relaunch and a number of new ideas.



The gift shop has bags of new ideas.

Owners Sue Tollerfield and Haylee Millar were inviting existing customers, friends, local residents and employees to join them on the evening of 4 November for a special relaunch event.

At the same time, they were launching an exclusive loyalty card. Every time customers spend over £20 in store they will receive a stamp and after collecting five stamps, each full card can be redeemed for a choice of gifts.

Sue and Haylee opened the shop at 172 High Road in April

2006 and have grown the business in the last four years to cater for the needs of local consumers. Both owners are based locally, with their children attending local schools, and they pride themselves on utilising local businesses whenever possible, whether suppliers, printers or designers.

Haylee said: "Our aim is to source different products, from up and coming designers such as 'About Mary' for jewellery as well as established brands such as 'LSA' glassware and 'True Grace' candles."

Review: The Drowsy Chaperone

By Angela Anderson

This autumn's musical production at Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate began with a character known as Man in Chair who is sitting at home and telling us, the audience, about his love for musicals. He puts on the record of *The Drowsy Chaperone* (book by Martin and Mckellar, music and lyrics by Lambert and Morrison) and the all-singing, all-dancing cast appear in his living room, initially emerging through the fridge and then via the bookcase.

The set, designed by Martin Thomas and lit by Howard Hudson, was inventive, imaginative and intricate enough to double as a home and a set for the musical itself. The cast was superb. It was very much a company show with each group of characters having their own spot. The clichés are all there, as befits a pastiche, with gangsters, showgirls, producer, butler and mistress, best man, Latin lover and, of course, the drowsy (i.e. drunk) chaperone herself.

The singing, accompanied by a live band, was rich and tuneful and the dancing beautifully choreographed with split second timing, all in a very small space. The musical was stopped periodically as Man in Chair's phone rang or he wished to talk to the audience and then for a prolonged spell while the electricity supposedly failed. The cast held their poses with admirable concentration and flexibility until the action resumed.

Ted Merwood, who plays Underling (the butler) with skill and aplomb, said of the



Gangsters confront Feldzieg and Kitty in a scene from *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Photo courtesy Upstairs at the Gatehouse

cast, "We love taking part in it." Their evident enjoyment was mirrored by the audience

as the full house laughed and applauded at every opportunity.



It's the time of year when the boiler needs its annual service (just before it packs up), baths seem much more attractive than showers and you can almost see the quarterly energy bills doubling. It's supposed to be cold: I just don't like my feet freezing to the kitchen tiles in the morning, so I do what comes naturally ... turn up the heating! Maybe not.

I remember putting my last 50p piece into the meter as I contemplated 2ft of snow outside my student flat last century. Things aren't quite so bad now but, after monitoring our fuel bills online, I'm dismayed by how much fuel (with consequent CO2 creation) we "normally" use and fear the likely rise in fuel costs in future.

Reducing home fuel use is a matter of managing what goes in and out of our living space: 60% is for space heating, 23% for water heating. Big CO2 and cost savings (average £70 per year) come from turning the home thermostat down just by a degree or two.

Keeping the heat we've paid for
Poorly insulated walls and roofs lose 60% of this heat, the remainder going through draughty doors, single-glazed windows and floors. Inexpensive draughtproofing on exterior doors and windows stops a lot of heat leakage. We can't easily insulate our solid exterior walls but we can put heat-reflective sheeting behind radiators, so more heat stays in the room.

We insulated our roof when it was replaced and DIY loft insulation

can make a noticeable difference. Floorboards can be insulated underneath and any gaps sealed or covered. I'm investigating secondary glazing, almost as good as double-glazing and much cheaper.

The biggest cost saving (average of £150 per year) comes from limiting shower-running times to four minutes (see the letter on this in last month's *ARCHER*). There are more ideas on my blog mememoryman.wordpress.com. Meanwhile, looks like the bath is out, at least until I can explore solar thermal water heating.

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