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250 callers, plus dog, in one day

By Andrea Garman

“Where did you get that toilet seat?” One of the many questions asked when my house was part of the Open House London Weekend in September (the toilet seat in question is white and best described as ‘bog-standard’).

I have an end of terrace Victorian house in Bedford Road that has recently been remodelled and extended to let in more light and to link the house with the garden. The extension is contemporary but

17.00hrs.

People came from Chelmsford, Oxford, Nottingham and from the end of the road. They included those with similar projects in mind, someone who had lived in a neighbour-

ing house just after the war, and people who wondered what had been happening behind the large plastic jacket that had covered the house for several weeks while the façade was being restored.

The day proved to be very enjoyable. I am very grateful to the volunteer team who worked ceaselessly and I hope were not too exhausted by the end of the day.



The rear view of Andrea's Bedford Road house.

designed to complement an 1890s house.

The work itself took about seven months of my life, preceded by over a year of planning. The architect, Neville Morgan of architecture 25 ltd, is locally based.

I have visited other people's houses, the Phoenix Cinema and various other gems through Open House London, so it seemed a good opportunity to reciprocate.

The ‘volunteer team’ of the architect, my niece and a local friend were at their posts at 09.30hrs on the day. Plans and photographs of the construction phase to the ready, the Open House notices went up in the front window, and shortly before 10.00hrs, the doorbell started to ring.

With the exception of a short lunch break, the traffic of visitors didn't stop. Operating a ‘shoes off’ policy (the carpets had only just been fitted) there was an ever-present row of a dozen pairs of shoes in the hallway. 250 people and one dog later, we finally closed at



Susanna, left, and Cristina among their treasures at A Room in My House. Photo by John Lawrence.

Sisters do it for themselves in vintage style

A new vintage clothes and homewares business has opened in a largely hidden part of East Finchley. You have to search it out but it's worth it when you get there.

A Room in My House has been started by sisters Cristina Guidone-Charles and Susanna Guidone-Sorkin in a building they inherited from their late father Salvatore, who ran SG Woodwork there for 25 years.

Their studio is tucked away in King Street Mews, a narrow lane off King Street, close to Church Lane. They open their doors on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and, from here, also run the internet side of their business

www.aroominmyhouse.co.uk

Vintage clothes, jewellery, ceramics, homewares and home-made greetings cards are their specialities, harvested from vintage fairs and their own suppliers, and all topped off with a fully working, shiny white Fiat Uno parked in the corner of the shop.

Cristina said she and Susanna always thought they would go into business together. She said: “I'm a graphic designer by back-

ground and Susanna worked in styling and visual merchandising for some of the big high street stores. For years we thought we would combine forces at some point.

“When we inherited our father's workshop, it was the perfect opportunity. Because we have such a mixture of items here, people come in not knowing what to expect, then hopefully find something they really like.”

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