



New sixth form centre at Wren Academy

By Daniella Ekundayo

Wren Academy, a Church of England secondary school based in Finchley, opened its doors to students just five years ago. The Academy has now opened its sixth form centre, following its completion in late 2012.

The Academy has been branded and endorsed by its history of "Outstanding" Ofsted reports. Huge progress in moulding the Wren's sixth form and its curriculum into meeting the high standards of its reputation is already under way.

The new sixth form will offer places to 300 students, a total of 150 students in Year 12 and 13, inclusive of existing Wren pupils and those coming in from other schools.

The sixth form centre is noted as the F-block, which ties in with all the alphabetically named buildings on the school

grounds, and is just a few metres away from the school field.

Year 11 students were given opportunities to play a part in forming the new sixth form, including conducting surveys for other students to take part in, leading assemblies, informing and promoting the sixth form and the design process, in line with Wren's specialism in design and the built environment.

The block was blessed and opened by the Bishop of London last November and the new sixth formers are moving in this month.

Twilight walk

Women are being urged to take part in a new charity walk in aid of North London Hospice. The Twilight Walk on Saturday 21 September will see participants set off from Finchley Rugby Club, in Summers Lane, at 6pm to cover a seven-mile circular route.

Walkers will head towards East Finchley, up East End Road, along Regents Park Road before passing North London Hospice, in Woodside Avenue, where they can light a candle in celebration of someone special before returning to the rugby club. Hospice Director of fundraising Robin Langrishe said: "This is an opportunity for friends and families to get together and have fun while making a huge difference to their local hospice." Registration is £20 per person and each participant is required to raise a minimum of £30 sponsorship. Each walker will be given a free pair of star head boppers. Anyone over the age of 16 can register now for the Twilight Walk by visiting the hospice's website www.north-londonhospice.org or calling 020 8446 2288.

Chorus to back walkers

Rock Chorus North Finchley will be kick-starting the Twilight Walk with fun and uplifting songs to entertain and energise the walkers. Rock Chorus was formed in September 2009 by acclaimed singer/songwriter Lauren Field.

Choir leader Odette Adams said: "The North London Hospice is a charity that is very important to the local members of the North Finchley Rock Chorus choir and we look forward to supporting it on many future events". Rock Chorus North Finchley rehearse every Thursday evening at The Trinity Church Centre, 15 Nether Street, North Finchley, N12 7NN from 8pm to 9.30pm. New members are welcomed at any time. To arrange a free taster session call 01582 668211 or go to www.rockchorus.com and click on 'taster session'.



Esme and friends in Nigeria.

Esme's eye-opening experience in Nigeria

Gap-year student Esme Girling, from East Finchley, spent three months volunteering in rural Nigeria. Here she writes about her first-hand experience of working on a development programme and the benefits of volunteering.

The idea of spending three months working in a village in south east Nigeria was a daunting one. I was working in a rural community called Akwa Ikot Effanga, which is a small agricultural village, just a few houses stretched along a road with very basic school and health facilities. The water and electricity supplies are poor and sporadic.

One of the focuses of my team was the primary school, where we resurfaced the floors of two classrooms, bought sleeping mats and provided new plastic chairs and tables for the creche. We also commissioned a local carpenter to build more work benches for

the overcrowded classrooms.

It was shocking and eye-opening to realise that, although the village was full of little children, so few of them went on to finish primary school. School is not obligatory in Nigeria and many families do not send their children. Often, parents in the countryside want their children to work instead.

I went to Nigeria as part of the International Citizen Service, the government-funded scheme for 18 to 25-year-olds, and joined a programme run by Voluntary Service Overseas.

VSO emphasises the need for volunteers to integrate as much as possible with the local community. I lived with a host

family and the programme employed Nigerian as well as UK volunteers. It means I have formed some really strong friendships with Nigerians my age.

Volunteering in Nigeria was an amazing challenge. Getting to know a country and culture so different from my own has definitely changed my perspective on the world, and I now feel more capable of dealing with anything life throws at me.

If you are interested in getting involved with International Citizen Service, the website is www.volunteercs.org. The VSO website is www.vso.org.uk.

End of term at The Institute

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Institute's annual Art and Design Catwalk was this year billed as the Ultimate Fashion Show, which of course had some significance. With only pottery, sculpture, stained glass, flower arranging, woodwork, and some evening classes remaining at the Arts Centre (now in the Archer Academy), future shows will presumably be held in The Institute's new home at Bishop Douglass School. It was upbeat, though, with theatrical staging, an enthusiastic audience and a certain amount of attitude.

These catwalk shows are always worth attending, with a wide range of designs and models showing something to appeal to most people. My one quibble this time was that the photographers' flashlights were quite dazzling.

The annual Art Foundation show is also worth seeing. The fine art, ceramics, bookbinding and furniture restoration had some very interesting items this year. I particularly liked Fiona Grainger's recreation of her mother's home town in Ireland. Why were there no cars in this town? Because they were removed the day before market day, when the cattle walked the streets. There was no explanation provided for Lynda Cook's painting of "Autumn", which has haunted me ever since. A vivid, autumnal-coloured fox, backed by grey, shadowy figures... Sinister.

Watch out for both shows next year.

From July, The Institute's office and enrolment desk have been at Bishop Douglass School. Term starts on Monday 16 September, with three-day workshops in Pottery and Summer Warm Glass, both at the Academy, 9-11 September.

For details of all upcoming courses, call 020 8829 4229, drop in to Bishop Douglass School, or visit www.hgsi.ac.uk.

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- ⊙ **Parent & Toddler Group,** Green Man Centre, Sajni 8359 3460/Julia 8444 2276
- ⊙ **Phoenix Cinema activities,** Bringing up baby screenings, Weds, 11am; Kids Club, Sat, 12pm; Toddler Time, Tues, 11am. Full details from box office on 020 8444 6789.
- ⊙ **Stepping Stones,** interactive play session for under 3s. Karen 07957 278860.
- ⊙ **Teddy Bears' Music,** singing for 0-3s in Holy Trinity Church, N2; Thursdays 9.45am & 10.45am. Liz 07836 284538.