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Above: Richard Burr, centre, celebrates the Age UK men's cookery classes with organiser Karen Williamson, left, and cook Syd McGowen - and (above right) with some of the Age UK cookery club members. Photos by Mike Coles

Loss of Quality

It's with some sadness that we have to report the demise of the Quality Tandoori restaurant, which has been a popular part of the restaurant line-up on the High Road since 1981.

Closure came suddenly and the premises were vacated so quickly that we didn't get a chance to talk to the owner about why he was leaving East Finchley after so many years.

Work is already under way to convert the site into a Thai restaurant, in direct competition with Nahling Thai restaurant just a few doors down the road.

It's always sad to see such a long-standing business depart. In this case, the loss of Quality leaves us with two sit-in Indian restaurants in N2: Majjos and Indian Rasoi, both on Fortis Green.

So with the arrival of another Thai restaurant, what exactly

is the tally when it comes to local dining these days? For the record, here's the menu in N2:

Eat-in:

- Cafés and coffee shops, 16
- Dining pubs, 7
- Italian, 5
- Indian, 2
- Thai, 2
- Fish and chips, 2
- Eastern Mediterranean, 2
- Japanese, 1
- Kebab, 2

Takeaway only:

- Pizza, 4
- Indian, 3
- Chinese, 1
- Chicken, 1
- Sandwiches, 1

Bake Off star tucks in to buffet banquet

Richard Burr was the builder who came so close to winning the Great British Bake Off on television last year. With his cooking pedigree, he was the ideal guest to judge the kitchen skills of beginners from the Age UK men's cookery class at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

The men had prepared a massive buffet lunch for local members of the community and Richard was there to sample their dishes.

On the menu were green curry chicken drumsticks, quiche, salad, savoury muffins and Eton mess, washed down with home-made lemonade. As they say, the proof of the pudding was in the eating.

"It was great to speak to older men who've found out how enjoyable cooking can be," says Richard. "They really pulled it off, cooking

wise: the quiche, savoury tarts, cheese muffin and polenta salad I tasted were magnificent."

Put to the test

"In the last year, our volunteers have taught kitchen skills to over 100 men, some of whom have never even cooked an egg before," says Age UK Barnet's Karen Williamson. "This event really put them to the test!"

For more information on men's cookery courses at Age UK Barnet, phone 020 8150 0967.

Musical heroes

Artist Michael Haynes, who works at East Finchley tube station, has turned the soundtrack of his life into an art show. 'This is Music' features portraits of 16 musicians who have inspired him, among them Paul Weller, Amy Winehouse and The Who, all represented in a variety of art styles traditional and digital. Michael's exhibition runs at artsdepot in North Finchley until 13 August.

A foxy thief

On our stall at the East Finchley Festival in June we had a box into which anyone could drop stories or suggestions. One young visitor wrote very industriously for a few minutes, slipped her paper into the box and went on her way. This is her story:

There was a fox who lived in the allotments near my house. I owned two rabbits so this wasn't ideal.

One night I was in my small garden playing with my sister wearing my favourite boots. My mum called us in and I accidentally left my boots outside!

The next morning one boot was gone. I later found out the fox had stolen it and several other school jumpers for bedding!

Isabella Conyngham-Francis, Brookland Rise, NW11.

Thankyou, Isabella, for telling us about that. We hope one day the fox returns your boot!

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