



Dramatic plans: Guy Watson

Making a play for the Post Office building

By Diana Cormack

One very interesting response to our request for suggestions as to how the former East Finchley Post Office could be used came from Guy Watson, of Long Lane, who runs a small professional theatre company.

Guy is producer/director of the Dream Team Theatre Company and wanted to use the building as temporary rehearsal rooms for their next project, scheduled to open in March 2015. He told *THE ARCHER* that using disused shops as rehearsal rooms has happened in several places around London but, at the time of writing, Barnet Council had not proved to be helpful with this. His next step was to contact the commercial letting agents and the landlords.

Gruesome

The project in question is a piece of new writing based on the history of the oldest operating theatre in Europe. *The Academy of Melancholy* by Charlotte O'Leary is set in London in 1824. Described as "a theatrical tale of passion, amputation and body snatch-

ing" it tells how Margaret, determined to keep her penniless family out of the workhouse, is forced to become a nurse at the Old St Thomas's Hospital. Horrified by what she sees and hears in those pre-anaesthesia days with no NHS to support the poverty stricken patients, Margaret disguises herself as a male medical student, enters the gruesome operating theatre and starts on the road to becoming one of London's ground-breaking surgeons.

The Old Operating Theatre, St Thomas's Street, London SE1 9RY is to be the appropriate setting for the production. To find out more visit www.dreamteamtheatre.co.uk and email guy@dreamteamtheatre.co.uk if you can suggest somewhere they might be able to rehearse.

The old Post Office: your views

Last month we asked readers who or what should move into the old Post Office building on the High Road, which has been empty since early summer last year. Here's a selection of your ideas:

Tristan Kirk: As the council seems determined to downgrade or close our library, perhaps the old Post Office could be the library's new home.

Stuart Griffin: Waitrose or an M&S food. Anything but another estate agent or low-end supermarket (Aldi or Lidl would be a disaster).

David Burns: Here's my view, and it will surely be shared by at least half of shoppers. We need a mens' clothes retailer. Then I will look better. Seriously, there's hardly anywhere for miles around where a chap can choose a shirt.

John Dearing: As a resident of the flats above the old Post Office (Viceroy Close), I desperately hope it does not become a club or a restaurant with late night opening, noisy customers and smelly kitchen vents! I think it would suit a bank, as presumably the Post Office installed a considerable measure of physical security, but these days banks are closing branches, not opening new ones. Perhaps Barnet



What's next? The Post Office building in the High Road still has a 'To Let' sign up.

Council will consider relocating the East Finchley library there, once they have sold off the existing (lovely) building to some property developer to convert into yet more vastly overpriced flats. However, rumour has it that those Barnet libraries that are not actually closed completely will have their floor areas reduced by three quarters, so the old Post Office may be too large for a library. Of course with the new (as of 6th April 2014) change of use permitted development rights, it is quite likely that the old Post Office will just be redeveloped as, you guessed it, flats: no planning permission needed!

Ulla Mead: I would also would like to see Waitrose have a branch in East Finchley and think that many people felt pressurised to sign the petition against them taking over the site opposite

the station all those years ago (before my time here).

David Griffiths: My suggestion, as a use for the old Post Office building, would be a branch of Planet Organic. It is a very good shop and a successful one. And sells really good produce. Like the branch in Muswell Hill.

Tim McNamara: Waitrose should be invited to open one of their small stores in the vacant site.

D Walsh: Replace the old Post Office with a mini Waitrose or failing that a mini Marks & Spencer or Sainsbury Local. The High Road needs retail that's open later than 6pm and brings people into East Finchley. There is parking behind this building which would be a big advantage for shoppers, or else they will continue to take the bus to Muswell Hill.

A mindful New Year

By Sheila Armstrong
Those who want to let go of the old and welcome the new in 2015 could try the yoga and meditation workshop run by Sallie and Sunnah Rose at Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, on Saturday 31 January from 2pm to 5.30 pm.

The price is £35. Contact sunnahrose@hotmail.com, phone 07941 321772 or visit www.stretchingpeople.co.uk.

A new four-week course in mindfulness meditation with Sallie Rose starts on Thursday 29 January from 7.30pm to 9.30 pm. Contact sallie@meditationow.co.uk, phone 07944 818197 or visit www.meditationow.co.uk.

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(Refreshments are served after mass on Sunday and Thursday)

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The Parish has a flourishing social life.
Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.
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Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

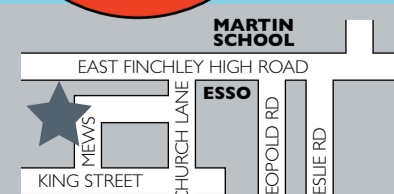
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