



Hands-on: Helena Kyriakides

## The yummy life in Italy

Helena Kyriakides moved to Bologna in Italy 14 years ago but still counts East Finchley as home. Here she recalls how her childhood experiences led her to a high-powered career combination of food, wine and supercars.

When I was young, I often used to sit in the kitchen with my Greek Cypriot grandmother in Leicester Road where she used to make wonderful, typical Greek foods like Moussaka, roast lamb and stuffed vine leaves. When she lacked an ingredient, which was the case quite frequently, she used to send me to 'the Greek shop' in the High Road.

And often we had a family walk on Hampstead Heath followed by tea on Hampstead High Street. Every Sunday over there at about four o'clock, a bright yellow Lamborghini Countach would rev up its engine and speed off. I couldn't wait to hear the engine and see the car every week.

**A taste for good things**  
This true story actually

landed me a job organising events for Lamborghini some 20 years later! I now have my own specialised agency that organises food, wine and supercar experiences in Emilia Romagna. Find out more at [www.yummy-italy.com](http://www.yummy-italy.com).

In Italy I have become an official balsamic vinegar and Parmesan cheese taster and am currently working towards a professional sommelier qualification.

So, as you can see, it all fits into place – with a glass of wine in hand, of course. My mother's from Germany, my father from Cyprus, so I'm of mixed blood and a typical Londoner. And although I've been in Bologna for the last 14 years, when I say "I'm going home" I actually do mean going back to East Finchley.

## Sadness and laughter at theatre fundraiser

By Diana Cormack

A fundraising event on behalf of the Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre was held at 142 High Road on 24 January. Described as "an evening of entertainment, offering an insight into the role of women during wartime", the first half consisted of readings from poems, letters and monologues written by women between 1914 and 1918. They were chosen and performed by local actresses Carolyn Pickles, Julia Swift and Hilary Townley. Whilst many of them were incredibly moving, some were instructive and surprisingly, despite the sadness of the theme, there were those which evoked laughter. All reflected the maturity and skill of these experienced performers

### After Penelope a triumph

In the second half the younger generation took over, with the Spectra Theatre Company's production of *After Penelope*, a piece devised by six students for their degree performance at the East 15 Acting School. Katerina Allen, Erin Clarke, Megan Lloyd-Jones, Ilaria Rocchi, Deli Segal and East Finchley's own Lucy Butler (daughter of Carolyn Pickles and artist Tark Butler) wove together women's stories from wars across the ages, ranging from the American Civil

War, through Nazi Germany to modern times. Following a successful run at the White Bear Theatre, Kennington, this directing debut for co-writer Colleen Prendergast was a triumph.

The audience couldn't praise it enough. "Outstanding"; "Fantastic"; "Stunning"; "Who'd have thought it would be so good?" were among the comments heard in the packed theatre. At a question and answer session following the performance the audience was relieved to hear that the group hopes to tour with the production, particularly taking it into schools and colleges.

The Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre is a charity which supports and aids young people at the centre where activities such as dance, drama, film, music and circus skills are offered to young people, including those with learning or physical difficulties. For more information visit [www.fofyt.co.uk](http://www.fofyt.co.uk)

## Risk IT for a biscuit

By Stepan Stepanenko  
Local volunteer group EFAB is organising weekly IT courses in locations around East Finchley and is looking for new participants and volunteers. The IT and Biscuits sessions have proved to be particularly popular, their aim being to let volunteers share their knowledge of computers and the internet with others.

The sessions try to dispel myths of fragility and danger that often deter users, especially the elderly, from giving computers a go. Among many highlights so far was the creation of a Facebook account for a resident in his 90s, which allowed him to contact his university friends from India.

Rewarding for the volunteers and the participants, sessions include complete beginners, as well as proficient users who want to improve their computer skills. From turning on a computer, browsing the internet, shopping online, writing documents, emailing, to calling family, these sessions aim to address any query.

They are held at three locations: Homefield Gardens on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wilmot Close on Wednesdays from 2-4pm and East Finchley Library on Thursdays from 10am to noon.

More information can be found on [www.efab.org.uk](http://www.efab.org.uk) or by calling Lisa on 07909 998453.

## Get your antiques valued

On Sunday 8 March Bonningtons Auctioneers will be at Stephens House, 17 East End Road, N3 3QE, for a valuation event organised by Finchley WI.

From 10.30am to 2.30pm your items can be valued at a cost of £10 per person (you can bring more than one item but no furniture).

Homemade cakes, crafts and a tombola will be available. Proceeds will support local charities, including Cherry Lodge Cancer Care, Finchley Food Bank and Stephens House. For further information email: [alcocks@btinternet.com](mailto:alcocks@btinternet.com) or telephone: 020 8343 4563.

## RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

### A real kitchen sink drama

Exam season is almost upon us. And soon there will be an even wider range of GCSEs to choose from. Plump for the combined food and drama course, for instance, and not only can you dress up and throw a tantrum, you can really become a knife-wielding drama queen.

According to rumour, the new course will teach your average bored teenager how to joint a sheep, gut a chicken and make gravy and custard, probably at the same time. The aspiring actor will then be able to dress up as something from Shakespeare and recite the soliloquy from Hamlet as they fillet a halibut.

Qualified with an A grade at GCSE they'll know how to make omelettes, toss pancakes and make pastry to such a high level that they'll be able to produce a feast fit for Falstaff. In the real world none of this will matter, because the cooking course you really need before you leave home has got nothing to do with gutting or filleting or garlic or jus.

What you really need before you depart for university or throw yourself at the mercy of your slum landlord is simple. To survive on your own you need a microwave, a supermarket and the phone number of the local pizza shop.

Who needs Henry V's speech about this blessed land or the ability to wear tights and stand beneath a balcony sighing up at Juliet when you can just shove a deep frozen horsemeat lasagne in a microwave, open a bottle of wine and pretend you know Jamie Oliver? Trust me, I'm a professional.

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