



Changes at Chorak

By Ann Bronkhorst
Chorak has been a presence in the High Road for 25 years, providing coffee, cake, light lunches, art displays and discussion groups. After refurbishment this summer it will reopen with more seating capacity and some rather different food ideas: a new stage in its history.

When Chorak owner Javad Oskooee leased the building in the spring of 1990 he hadn't planned to become a baker. An experienced architect, he just wanted an office upstairs and hoped to rent out the ground floor.

The premises had been a wholesale bakery with a small shop at the front and had been empty for five years after closure on health grounds. Radical work was needed, stripping back to the structure and removing clutter and dirt. Finally, Javad says, he was faced with "a three-storey building and nothing to put in it!"

Bravely or rashly the architect decided to run a bakery on the ground floor. He recalls his utter inexperience with self-deprecating humour. For instance, on the first day he didn't have enough change for a customer's tenner and had to run out to buy mustard when someone wanted it in a sandwich.

Space and light

Since then Javad has gained experience in the food business while maintaining his architectural practice. Now, the plan includes a brighter, more modern frontage, space for more customers in rearranged eating areas and provision of some soft seating. Chorak will major on specialist, high-quality breads, baked in the morning rather than at night, and an expanded range of foods including light lunches. Opening hours may be extended, too.

Javad recalls Chorak's very first art exhibition, by local artist Tark Butler, as "a breakthrough" with excellent sales and feedback, so art lovers can look forward to enjoying art with their coffee and croissants in the redesigned Chorak.

Reading group venue change

The popular reading group run by The Reader organisation has changed its home again.

It still meets on Friday from 10.30am to 12 noon, but the venue is now The Old White Lion. This is the drop-in group where you don't know what you'll be reading until you discover it together at the meeting. Everyone is welcome.

Postman Bob, 1946 – 2015

By Eugene Myerson

Retired postman Bob Konig has died from Motor Neurone Disease at the age of 69. Born in Hackney, he and his mother moved to Highgate where he spent his formative years. As an adult, Bob moved to Hornsey, and after trying office jobs, he became a postman in East Finchley in 1969 until he retired in 2011.

From 1987 his round was south of the Fortis Green Police Station, where he endeared himself to us local residents by being reliable, friendly, good-humoured and polite.

We were so impressed with Bob that we gave him a tremendous retirement tea-party (*THE ARCHER*, July 2011). Freed from a full-time job, he indulged his passions for travelling and transport. However, in 2014 he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease, and spent his last months in the Highgate Nursing Home.

By his bedside shelf were some miniature trams and buses as collecting such models had become a hobby. I learned of Bob's illness in March 2015, and visited him regularly since then. The first time I gave no notice of my arrival, but despite not seeing me for nearly four years he took one look and pointed saying: "23 Annington



Road." His prodigious memory was clearly still in perfect working order even though his body had deteriorated. I mentioned neighbours from five nearby streets and each time he gave me their correct address.

For his 69th birthday in June, ex-Post Office van driver Ros Lusardi and I organised a tea-party at the nursing home (*THE ARCHER*, August 2015). Seeing him enjoying it, surrounded by former colleagues and customers who had become friends, is how I shall remember him. Rest in peace, Bobby.

Stars of the silver screen

The Clissold Arms in Fortis Green is opening a new themed room to go alongside the area dedicated to The Kinks who started their performing career there.

The gastro-pub is devoting a room to the stars and masterpieces of British cinema, with walls decorated with photos and posters of classic British movies.

What's more, on certain nights there will be showings of

famous films such as *Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Great Expectations*, *Shakespeare in Love* and *The English Patient*.

Look out for the official opening on Friday 18 September and for film screening dates thereafter.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Is everybody happy?

These are the grey days, autumn is approaching and the sun has emigrated. All that's left is a maxed-out credit card, embarrassing photos and a strangely ambiguous souvenir, so it's nice to know that if you lived anywhere else it would feel so much worse.

Maybe it's the pubs, the shops and the Phoenix, maybe it's *THE ARCHER*, but out here in zone 3 where you can enjoy the benefits of most of what is hip but not too nasty is where people are happiest. Well that's what Time Out claims. It doesn't give too many reasons, but it's nice to feel smug about the place.

Up the road in Highgate they drink more coffee and in Muswell Hill they are the friendliest, but here we are happy. It's why everyone looks so miserable as they get on the tube in the morning. Maybe it's the knowledge that they are leaving the fragrant environment and travelling away from Cherry Tree Wood. Or maybe it's not. All the same it is better than the rest of London.

Let's take Clapton where most people get drunk most of the time, or East Ham where people are too stressed to drink. Would you really want to move there? Or Dagenham, rated as the saddest place in London... and if you've been there you'll know why.

It's not all love and roses. If you want that, head for Wapping where more people have more sex more of the time than anywhere else. But once you've done that, you'd better head for Twickenham to raise the resulting family.

Of course you may not be in Wapping, you may be in Hendon, the place where more people watch more porn than anywhere else in London. Something that tells you everything you need to know about Hendon.

So, when it all goes pear-shaped and your cat loses out to a passing Range Rover or it rains or snows or the trains don't run, don't panic. Remember you live in the happiest part of London and anywhere else will feel so much more miserable.

Mary Barry, 1920 – 2015

Mary Barry, a familiar sight to many as she was driven round East Finchley and Muswell Hill in her Tazzari electric car, died in June at the age of 94 while staying at her family villa in the Tuscan town of Barga.

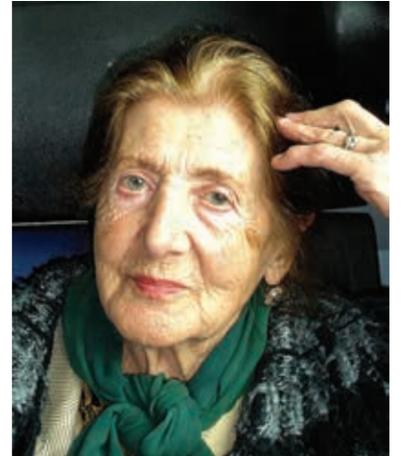
When Mary was in the UK she would spend many happy hours in her garden in East Finchley, sweeping the leaves or pruning her beloved roses.

A typical week for her looked something like this: Monday at the Book Group at Hornsey Library; Tuesday at the Cancer Support Group in Tottenham (at 91 Mary was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy); Wednesday playing Scrabble at Church End Library; Thursday playing Scrabble at South Friern Library; Friday enjoying a matinee at the Phoenix Cinema; Saturday attending mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church; Sunday enjoying visits from one of her eight children, 20 grand-children or six great-grand-children, or going out on a day trip.

During most of these activities she would most likely have been accompanied by her third-oldest daughter, Maria, who acted as her companion and electric car chauffeur, or "naggi-vator" as Mary called it.

Mary was born in Rothesay, on the island of Bute, Scotland, in December, 1920, the second oldest of six girls in a family that had moved there from Italy. Mary played a huge part in the security business Barry Brothers established by her husband Jack Barry in Paddington in 1946 and it is still a going family concern.

She took a lively interest in local events and only a couple of months before her passing would often be seen attending the many rallies and marches organised by local activists to try to prevent the closure of Barnet's libraries: places where Mary spent many a happy hour. Mary will be sorely missed, not only by her immediate family but by all those who knew her.

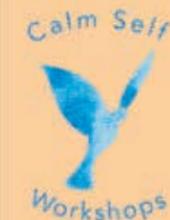


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