



Vinyl fans browse and buy at Alan's Records. Photo by Mike Coles

Vinyl revival keeps Alan's Records buzzing

By Neil McNaughton

The recent surge in interest in vinyl versions of popular music has brought a new lease of life to Alan Dobrin's famous record shop at 218 High Road. Alan opened a shop next door 21 years ago and then, when the lease expired after 10 years, he moved to his current premises.

Since then his shop has become a magnet for collectors of second-hand records, not just on vinyl but also in CD and cassette form, for DJs, music buffs or anyone who just prefers the more authentic sound of recordings to the highly polished versions now available as downloads.

Why we're browsing

His customers are surprisingly varied. Fifteen-year-old Isabella, from Whetstone, said she preferred to have a possession that she could look at and handle, rather than just a file in her computer or iPod. DJ James from the *Vibe Circus* collective said he needed vinyl for his gigs, but added that he thought the sound quality was better and

that, besides, vinyl was "just cool these days".

Winston from independent record label and distributor *Studio 16*, one of Alan's biggest customers and sources, agreed that the sound quality was better but also suggested that many people like the artwork on the sleeves, which is of much higher quality than on CD or download versions.

Alan himself thinks much of it is down to sheer nostalgia. For him, like all traders in East Finchley, times are tough with rent and rates constantly rising. Until recently, he said, many record shops were closing down, but recent trends have meant that new stores are also beginning to open, not that he has much

competition locally.

Vynils in the loft?

Alan gets some of his records from DJ collections being liquidated or from record stores that are closing, but the majority still come from members of the public. Some of the rarer or more sought-after recordings can fetch excellent prices, so it may be worth searching your attics and cupboards for your old vinyls. Alan will always be happy to have a look at them and maybe make you an offer. At the same time you'd be supporting one of East Finchley's dwindling number of independent businesses.

New bus

Ultrabus is launching its inaugural non-stop return route from Muswell Hill Broadway to Canary Wharf on Monday 11 January.

For more information and booking details visit www.ultrabus.co.uk

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What would Cousin Edith say?

Once upon a time when men were men, women were ladies and no one took photos of cats playing the piano, mostly because cats, pianos and photography hadn't been invented, communication was simple. Back when Jane Austen's Fanny was at Mansfield Park, if you were beyond shouting distance you did what she did and wrote letters, usually on paper, using ink, preferably via a pen.

Just to add an element of malice to the annual round robin you sent explaining that three of your relatives had died from smallpox, the recipient paid the postage based on the number of pages. So getting a five-page missive from Cousin Edith was about as welcome as, well, smallpox.

By the time Charles Dickens published *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 the semi-modern world had arrived with the postage stamp. Now everyone could receive news, views, bad jokes and cards in the knowledge that someone else had paid the postage. Not even the typewriter, photocopier, postcard or ballpoint could change the amazing impact of ink on paper. Everyone could get out their address book and inflict their news on the world whether the world wanted it or not.

Then came the telephone. At first you had to call the operator and ask them politely to connect you to Aunt Gladys in Bournemouth, but soon enough, the accelerating technology let you do it yourself. And that's where the problems start.

Why write when you can insta-face-snap-bookchat instead? Why keep anything written down like addresses and numbers when it's all in the super smart phone in the My Whole Life app? I mean, why bother? Except that when my shabby phone decided to eat itself I discovered that I didn't know anyone or anything or any numbers or addresses or anything. So, if you are reading this on your watch, beware, because if it breaks you might have to go back to pen and paper and that would be dreadful. Or would it?

This article was written on paper using ink via a pen.

Beryl Wayne, 1924 - 2015

Neighbours of Beryl Wayne in Lauradale Road, N2, and those who knew her well would say she was a champion of the people. Reading Beryl's own biography notes reveals four main threads running through her life: health, education, duty and politics.

Her own health as a young child was not good and her schooling was interrupted by hospitalisation. However, Beryl won a place at Latymer School and later, in 1941, she was fit enough to join the WRNS. She gained a place on a technical training course to work on radar, served on several bases and, in 1944, helped in the planning of invasion forces Europe.

Whilst she initially voted Conservative, in May 1945 Beryl's political allegiance changed following her observation of pre-1940s deprivation, her wartime experiences and, immediately after the war, working as personal technical secretary at the Ministry of Works. These experiences, allied to the many serious discussions with her cohort during her post-war teacher training course, convinced Beryl that the status quo was unacceptable and she decided to join the Communist Party. As a teacher she worked her way up to become a deputy head, all the time attempting to correct the many social injustices she saw around her.

Part of the attempt to change things meant joining the National Union of Teachers, eventually becoming secretary of Friern Barnet branch and then



People's champion: Beryl Wayne

President of the North London NUT.

Beryl married the late Wolf Wayne in 1961. They were a devoted couple with great community spirit and became very active in campaigning on many social issues. This continued into their retirement.

They were founder members of Lauradale Road's Neighbourhood Watch, supporters of the North London Hospice Movement and were often invited to Tetherdown School to tell the pupils about their wartime experiences. Wolf had great stories of his volunteering under age and his PoW tunnelling exploits whilst Beryl took in various foods in wartime ration quantities.

"Lauradale Road will not be the same without Beryl and Wolf," said a neighbour. "She will be much missed."