



Come dine and make a difference

By Ann Bronkhorst

In 2015 we wrote about Viola's Food, a small catering business run by Viola Slodzinska, pictured, from her home in East Finchley. Her business is thriving but last year Viola took on a new challenge.

Moved by the plight of Syrian refugee children, she joined Unicef's campaign #CookForSYRIA. While visiting her family in Poland, she hosted a fund-raising dinner in a restaurant, cooking the main Middle Eastern dishes herself. It was a success, raising awareness as well as donations and was featured on a local TV station.

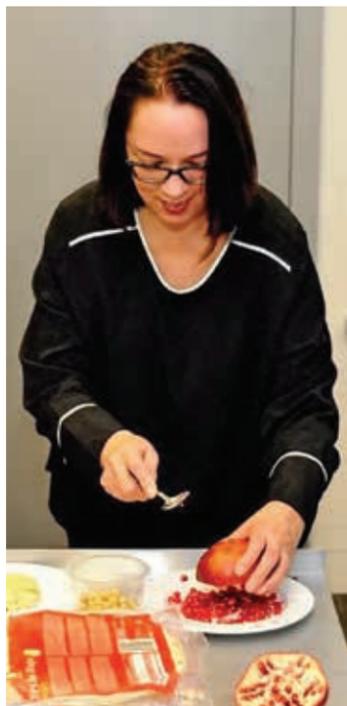
Back in East Finchley, Viola decided to host another fund-raising meal, this time from home and on a smaller scale. She invited neighbours and customers, persuaded local businesses to donate raffle prizes and somehow made enough space for guests in her tiny flat.

The food was varied and tasty: shish tawook, lamb with green beans, chicken with len-

tils and pomegranate and, for non-meat-eaters, tabbouleh, fattoush, lentils kofta, tahini, hummus and labneh. Wine and soft drinks helped the party atmosphere.

Viola wants to thank Tony's Continental, East Finchley Supermarket, Boucherie Moderne, Table du Marche and Finchley Wines for their support.

Find out more about her two dinners at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/violasfood where donations can still be made to Unicef's relief fund for Syrian children. With a target of £500 she's reached nearly £600. As Unicef's warm letter of thanks says, much can be achieved "with a sprinkling of spice and a splash of kindness."



Gill Doherty (née Bourne), 1938 to 2017

Carmen Stevens pays tribute to the co-founder of the Animal Aid and Advice charity shop in the High Road, who died last year aged 79.

Gill, pictured below, was the eldest of three sisters, and attended Westcliff High School for Girls. Their father had a photographic business in Chalkwell, Essex.



At 18 she began vocational nurse training at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and worked for many decades in London; at one stage for a general surgeon, and finally for an eye specialist in Harley Street. On the latter's retirement, Gill also retired from paid employment.

She met her husband John in London and enjoyed a long and happy marriage. Gill was a devoted carer during his long-term health problems. They shared many pursuits, including ballet, opera, antiques and literature. Early on, health permitting, they travelled extensively, as well as entertaining at home.

The Dohertys had two prized Burman cats, and then took in a stray, who they jokingly called Banquo.

Approximately 30 years ago, at a Kensington cat show, she met Gill Harris, who gave her a lift home. The two became firm friends, and launched with others their cat homing project. Another friend suggested opening a charity shop to raise funds, and the Animal Aid and Advice Shop was opened in the 1990s.

Most of the refurbishment of 48 High Road in East Finchley was undertaken by the feline fraternity. At a later date, a further bookshop was opened in Highbury to increase the charity's income.

As a trained nurse with a massive social conscience, Gill volunteered at the Royal Free Hospital. Her skills and experience were especially appreciated in the eye outpatient department.

Aside from her warmth, intelligence and wit, Gill's determination was remarkable. She will be greatly missed, primarily by her family, the Animal Aid and Advice Shop, and also the many customers like myself, with whom she formed a great rapport and long-term friendships.

Headscratcher

Solution to puzzle on page 8

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Letters

Prospect Ring not ignored

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed to read the attack on myself and my colleagues by DP Donnelly in *The Archer* with regards to the proposed tower block on Prospect Ring (Letters, December 2017). I thought it would be helpful to place on the record that ward councillors have attended all three of the public meetings, had three meetings - with officers onsite and two off site. We have also attended meetings of the Residents Association, providing them with support and advice. We have also dealt with correspondence from residents and sought answers to their queries. I note that none of the residents who have contacted me is named DP Donnelly. Officers are very aware of the concerns that we and local residents have about their scheme, and have made some amendments to reflect this. Sadly not enough, but we are not the party in administration at the Council. At least not yet.

**Yours faithfully,
Cllr Arjun K Mittra,
East Finchley ward.**

Surgery closure

Dear Editor,

I was a member of the Patients Participation Group for the Cherry Tree Surgery. I now write in a personal capacity. The way the closure of Cherry Tree Surgery (*The Archer*, January 2018) was handled by NHS England and others has been far from satisfactory. It is true Dr de Cesare resigned, he had no alternative. The authorities did not help him in any way to resolve difficulties at the surgery, many of which were erroneously reported (I can attest to this as some personally affected me). So many patients have always found the doctor to be caring, compassionate and very thorough. We have nothing but respect for him in every aspect of his practice of medicine in this community. NHS England did not send letters out to everyone. I did not receive one, for example; I know of many others who only learned about the closure through Twitter or Facebook. At the final PPG meeting with the NHS England representative this person did not acknowledge NHS England's part in all this debacle, did not own it and refused to apologise for the events that had taken place. She did not answer the questions put to her and with regard to the letters to patients there was a gloss over the facts as to what happened: she first said that the letters were being printed, then that they had been sent out. Those two statements do not reconcile, do they? Thus many people were in difficulties in finding alternative GP care; the information that

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was provided to some patients was out of date or plain wrong. All this left some vulnerable patients in a very difficult position especially at this time of year. Some only had days to find another doctor. And registering and having records sent to the new practice is not smooth either. There have been difficulties which have caused delays and anxiety to many. This closure has come down to one thing only: a wish to close single-handed practices no matter what the consequences may be.

**Yours faithfully,
Ros Goldfarb,
Southern Road, N2.**

History lesson

Dear Editor,

I would like to supplement the history of Tollington Boys Grammar School in the January number of *The Archer*. I attended Tollington Boys from 1943-6, cycling to school along East End Road which was usually empty of traffic throughout its length.

My most dramatic memory was sitting an exam in the gymnasium, which was a corrugated iron building, and a V2 bomb dropping nearby, lifting the end of the gymnasium and then letting it drop down again with a thump. Everyone carried on writing.

The school itself began life in Tollington Park near Finsbury Park but rapidly grew in size and in 1901 was transferred to a new building in Tetherdown. Tollington Girls School was founded in Grand Avenue after the move of the boys' school.

Adjacent to the boys' school was Tollington Preparatory School which was fee paying but was later transformed into a state primary school but preserved the initials TPS by calling itself Tetherdown Primary School and thus avoiding the expense of rebranding the many articles of the school marked with TPS.

Some time later the girls' school was transferred to a new building and their empty building was then occupied by Tetherdown Primary School and again for the same reasons, economically preserved the Tetherdown name despite the anomaly of now being in Grand Avenue. I suppose that it was no different from the preservation of the Tollington name after it moved from Tollington Park.

The most distinguished alumnus of Tollington was Sir Henry Dale, Nobel Laureate 1936. He attended the school when it was in Tollington Park but his potential was recognised and he was encouraged to enter for a scholarship to the Leys School Cambridge to which he then transferred.

**Yours faithfully,
Oscar Hill,
Address supplied.**

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