



Get the performing bug

Fixation Theatre Company's Festive Showcase was a huge hit at the Finchley Youth Centre in the High Road last month. Young performers aged four upwards staged a dynamic selection of songs, dances and acting pieces they had created, and played to packed audiences at two shows.



The Fixation Theatre's Festive Showcase at the Youth Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Artistic director Laura Davitt said: "We would like to thank all of the amazing talent for taking part in the show, and the parents, audience members and all of our

staff and volunteers for continually supporting our shows."

Fixation is starting to rehearse for its production of *High School Musical* this month

and is always looking for fresh talent to join in. Find out more by emailing Laura at info@fixationtheatre.com or phone her on 07708 608570.

'Super charger' creates parking headache in the Suburb

By Ruth Anders

Increasing petrol prices and concerns about the environment have led to a rise in sales for electric vehicles. This in turn has led to a proliferation of charging stations on our high streets. But who could have anticipated the rise of the 'super charger' or the questionable opportunity their installation affords Transport for London (TfL) to generate income from parking penalties?

Large and unsightly

A case in point is Market Place, in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Problems began there with an application to Barnet Council by TfL to install two chargers in parking bays dedicated for the purpose, one on each side of the road.

Traders and residents claim that the image of the chargers that accompanied the application suggested a much more discreet structure than those that finally appeared.

Members of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association are objecting on the basis that not only are the

'super chargers' unsightly, but also that they are scarcely used and stop bona fide shoppers from parking.

'Months of misery'

Jitendra Dave, who runs the local newsagent, said: "We have endured months of misery over the installation of a completely unwanted electric charging point. All the traders had power accidentally cut off for 12 hours on one occasion and now a perfectly good parking space will be restricted to only a tiny number of users, which is very bad for trade."

Unfair charges

As if that weren't bad

enough, drivers appear to have been unfairly charged for parking in the bays whilst they were under construction. The bays have been up and running since the beginning of July, but work began some months previously on an 'on/off basis' resulting in periods of suspension during which they were off limits for parking. However, the suspension was inadequately advertised at times, and many residents and shoppers have received hefty fines.

During the last suspension period, we are told that TfL's signs were fitted with blank pieces of paper, which should have made the restrictions unenforceable. For now, TfL have refused to cancel the fines.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Our schools are out of tune

By Jane Cutler

I am the co-founder of a 27-year-old music education charity and Saturday Music Centre based in Finchley, and have seen the subject eroded over the past three decades from respected and well-funded to almost non-existent in many schools.

It started with budget cuts and the removal of specialist music teachers from schools; the introduction of the National Curriculum meant there was an expectation that primary teachers would teach music, despite having had as little as nine hours in their B.Ed training in preparation.

The DfE put aside money for the First Access courses so that primary children have a one year (although it's sometimes one term) experience of playing an instrument while in primary school. One year or one term of playing an instrument cannot be counted as a 'good education in music'!

The lack of interest in music shown by OFSTED when inspecting a school and the fact that music nearly disappeared from the curriculum in 2013 all result in many children having no musical skill or knowledge when they enter secondary education. This impacts hugely on what secondary teachers are able to do in their classes and results in the loss of school orchestras, bands, choirs and so much more. And with the introduction of the Baccalaureate many schools no longer offer A-level music.

I would like to see music education rebuilt from the bottom up. Let's start again with quality Early Years' music teaching, moving on to a properly structured and detailed curriculum treating music as an important part of a child's education.

Letters

Plastic puzzle

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any of your readers have had similar experiences when it comes to cutting down plastics.

I have contacted several dairies that supply milk in glass bottles to households in East Finchley, but was told they don't deliver to my address, even though, on one occasion, I spoke to one of the milk men who was just delivering to the road neighbouring ours.

I was told that it wouldn't be possible to deliver to blocks of flats, a reply that baffled me. Why not? On our estate we have off street parking options, and there are plenty of us here who would be interested in ordering milk in glass bottles.

Perhaps local supermarkets or smaller grocery shops such as Tony's Continental could be persuaded to offer milk in glass bottles? Or a vending machine, such as the likes you could easily find in Germany, where farms sell their produce directly from the road, could be installed in East Finchley?

**Yours faithfully,
Christine Hoenigs,
Address supplied.**

What's On...

E-mail your listings to: the-archer@lineone.net

Sunday 13 January

• Ramblers Association walk on Hampstead Heath (7 miles/12km). Meet 10.30am at Hampstead Lane Car Park, NW3 7JP (car park near Kenwood House) with free parking on nearby Bishops Avenue or Winnington Road. This circular walk passes Highgate Cemetery to enter Waterlow Park, finishing at Kenwood House. Leaders: Jane Gibson and Mike Lees (020 8343 1463 or 07727 26 2519).

Saturday 19 January

• Launch of N2 Poetry Issue 7; East Finchley Methodist Church, 197 High Road, N2, at 7pm. Entry £5 includes a copy of N2 Poetry Issue 7.

Monday 21 January

• 1960s Film Club presents an episode of *The Prisoner*, plus *Fahrenheit 451*; 7pm at Friern Barnet Community Library, Friern Barnet Road, N11 3DS. Admission by £3 donation.

Saturday 26 January

• Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale, 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, Cranley Gardens, N10 3AH; info from 020 8368 8180 or 07708 152354; admission 50p; refreshments available.

Until Sunday 27 January

• *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, a screwball musical comedy with music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin; Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate; details and box office at upstairsatthegatehouse.com or 020 8340 3488.

Coming soon to arts depot



Sat 19 Jan // 2pm & 7.30pm

A Sockful of Custard

Celebrating the life and work of the great Goon (and Finchley resident) Spike Milligan



Thu 31 Jan // 2pm

Piccadilly Dance Orchestra

A de-lovely cocktail of songs by Cole Porter, Noel Coward and friends

Book Now: 020 8369 5454 // www.artsdepot.co.uk

artsdepot, North Finchley, N12 0GA

East Finchley Baptist Church

Just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2

Sunday Mornings at 10.30 am

Crèche and Sunday School during service
Wheelchair access

For more information please contact the Church Office

Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: John Lowrie)

www.eastfinchleybc.org.uk

Visitors always welcome

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