



The spirit of Christmas past... and future!

Those were the days! Carol singers mingle with mulled wine drinkers as the East Finchley Christmas tree is lit up outside Budgens in the High Road 12 months ago and the London Metropolitan Brass Band belts out some festive favourites to the happy crowd at the East Finchley Winter Festival in 2014. Happy memories indeed of our community coming together in these photos by Mike Coles. They look like another world, another time, with not a protective mask in sight. We all know this year won't be quite the same but these joyful gatherings WILL return. Until they do, stay safe and well.

Jac turns on the chat

By David Melsome

Choreographer Jac Coxall is still honing his skills despite not being able to appear on stage much this year. The young dancer has turned presenter by hosting a weekly chat show with his celebrity mates. Jac, who we featured early in the year when he switched his career to serving behind the tills in Budgens in East Finchley, is on Instagram every Friday at 8pm talking to someone famous.



Nighttime natter: Jac Coxall chats online to TV presenter Angellica Bell.

His guests have included *EastEnders* favourite Charlie Brooks, Atomic Kitten's Natasha Hamilton, children's TV presenter Angellica Bell, *Gangs of London* actor Aled Ap Stefan, and Kimberly Wyatt, from the Pussycat Dolls.

Jac said: "My aim is to show people a side that the media doesn't always show, the ups and downs of the industry, how people got into the industry and advice that they'd give to people wanting to venture into it.

"No week is the same. I let the chat flow and go off how the guest is answering the questions. It's amazing how they really open up and bare all. Each guest has been completely authentic showing their true self."

As well as being a way of connecting during the pandemic, Jac hopes his one-man chat show will help him develop his presenting skills. Watch episodes of *Lockdown After Dark* on Instagram @jacjaccox

Spicing up the local shelves

By Ellie Franklin

"I take a bottle of tabasco to the pizza restaurant in my handbag, embarrassingly for my husband," says Dominique Woolf. It's a sign of the passion for sauces that's led her to set up her own food business.

Dominique has Thai roots and it was her aunts who ignited her love for food, which she went on to explore at Leith's School of Food and Wine in west London.

After experimenting with other products, she decided to create her own sauces as they're crucial to how she eats. The Woolf's Kitchen launched in June with three unique sauces: Tamarind Ketchup, Hot + Sour, and Jalapeño + Lime, all to be found on shelves in East Finchley and Muswell Hill.

Competition finalist

Just four months after launching, Dominique made it to the final three of Enterprise Nation's 'Female Start-Up of the Year' competition. She says positive things are happening as a result and she now has a range of nut products launching this month. Asked about the future of her business she said: "It's tough owning a restaurant at the best of times but nothing's off the cards."

Lockdown setbacks

Dominique, who is based in Crouch End, experienced a series of setbacks throughout lockdown including a lack of childcare for her three young children, an inability to sample products due to social distancing restrictions, and an initial launch date which would have seen the wrong branding put out on shelves.

The market has also changed due to Covid-19 as shoppers are spending less time browsing, meaning new products may be missed.



Tasty creations: Dominique Woolf with her new range of sauces.

Advice for new brands

Dominique has had to learn quickly and is happy to share her advice with other start-ups. "Firstly, research your market and become an absolute expert in it. Network like crazy. LinkedIn is my networking tool, alongside Facebook with local community groups," she says.

"Test the market if you can. There's also an element of just going for it. Procrastination

kills many more businesses before they've even started. And finally, start local. People support local businesses, which can give you the courage and motivation to expand upon that support."

The Woolf's Kitchen sauces can be found in Budgens in East Finchley as well as shops in Muswell Hill and Crouch End. Details at: thewoolfskitchen.com/saucy-shop

Cracking Christmas jokes

Save money on Christmas crackers by shouting 'Bang!' and telling one of these terrible jokes.

What's the difference between the ordinary alphabet and the Christmas alphabet?

The Christmas alphabet has no L.

Which Christmas carol do parents prefer?

Silent Night.

Why does Father Christmas have three

gardens?

So he can hoe, hoe, hoe.

What do you call people who are afraid of Father Christmas?

Claus-trophobic.

What song do monkeys sing at Christmas?

Jungle Bells.

Which of Santa's reindeer has bad manners?

Rude-olph.