



This pony's just my size

As the young ones at Monkey Puzzle Nursery in East Finchley couldn't go on their annual trip to Willow's Farm, near St Albans, this year, their leaders arranged for some of the animals to come to them.

Two ponies called Brandy and Sunny came to the nursery to give the pre-schoolers rides around the front garden opposite the tube station. Passers-by stopped to watch and one of the children said: "This is the best day ever!"

Ska and saltfish at surreal supper club

By Janet Maitland

The thing about Covid outdoor events is that you think it's going to be social distancing on a rug on a balmy summer evening. Then the rain comes down in sheets while you're on the bus and you arrive with even your mask sopping wet, wondering if the virus has sent you a little mad.

Fortunately, Inky's Supper Club on Thursday 27 August at Stephens House and Gardens in East End Road, N3, decamped from the sodden gardens to the house's spacious drawing room. Once we'd dried off and used the complimentary hand sanitiser, we sat down at carefully spaced tables loaded with generous supplies of rum to enjoy a splendidly surreal evening.

Tropical treats

"Did you know that Nelson's dead body was stuffed into a barrel of rum to stop it rotting on its way to Gibraltar?" asked Malcolm Godfrey, the general manager, defiantly wearing a Hawaiian shirt as he took us through the provenance of our rum snifters while rain clattered down the windows.

"This reminds me of the Abba tribute band concert on the heath," said my companion happily, knocking back the

last of her rum ration. "You know, when we wore those pink sparkly stetson hats and it rained so hard we had to get under that old tarpaulin."

But we were warm and cosy and the supper was delicious: salted plantain crisps, plump jerk chicken and luscious goat curry, dainty little saltfish tarts, silky aubergine on crispy fried bread and a delicate slice of banana key lime pie.

Best of all was the music, a playlist of rock steady and ska with a sprinkling of reggae. It took just a couple of bars of *Al Capone* by Prince Buster and I was transported straight back to my old school gym for the Friday lunchtime disco.

More to come

Stephens House and Gardens were gifted for the use and enjoyment of the people by Henry Charles 'Inky' Stephens of the Stephens' Ink Company. October happenings include Halloween in the Gardens on Saturday 31st, featuring a visit to the spine chilling cellars, a spooky garden spectre hunt and a fire artist. For information go to www.stephenshouseandgardens.com/events

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Asher aims high for his first mountain ascent

East Finchley teenager Asher made a pandemic-delayed 13th birthday charity hike up Snowdon in Wales last month, raising more than £1,000 for charities thanks to sponsorship from friends and family.

Accompanied by dad Paul, Asher set off on his six-hour return hike under clear skies soon after 6am. The first hour was very steep up the Pen-y-Gwryd or PYG pass and the pair said it felt a bit tough when they started to meet the really keen early hikers already on their way down.

But then it was more or less level for the next hour and they had amazing views of the lakes below and the surrounding mountains, with the peak of Snowdon appearing dramatically high in front of them.

In the last hour it got steeper again but they could see the end in sight. Clouds appeared near the summit and other hikers were converging on the spot so, after seeing very few people, they had to wait their turn at the top. But this was lucky as it gave time for the clouds to clear and Asher was able to claim his place on the highest spot in England and Wales at 1,085m or 3,560ft.



On top of the world: Asher at the summit of Snowdon

Asher, who lives in Fortis Green, said "It was a hard climb, but the view at the top was a great payoff." Dad Paul added: "At the top, when it was clear you could see all around: northern Wales, including Anglesey, the Irish Sea, the coastline and

amazing mountain scenery.

Asher's mountain hike raised money for charities including PEAS (Promoting Equality in African Schools) and ADDISS, the national *Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service*.

A visit to our primary school friends in India

By Julie Taylor

Earlier this year, former Martin School parent and governor Jane Conway made her eighth visit to Tryamboli School in Kolhapur, India, which has been a partner of the East Finchley primary school for six years.

My fellow teacher Shona Glackin and I visited the school in February 2017 and then again in November 2018 taking resources, training teachers and introducing a reading programme called *Jolly Phonics*. Jane was delighted to see that it was being taught systematically to the younger children and that teachers were far more confident after receiving training.

The school is thriving, numbers are increasing and as a result the building is growing with the support of Martin School and other charitable donations. The link with Martin School and the publicity that has resulted has certainly had an impact on the development of Tryamboli.

Martha, Isobel and the special bags

Two years ago, two of our pupils, Martha and Isobel, decided to raise some money for the school. They made cards, cakes and bracelets and held a sale at school which raised an amazing £265. A few months later, as part of an India Week celebration, the children designed symbols for the design of a new bag that represented the partnership between the two schools.



Partnership: Tryamboli students with their Martin School bags

The money raised by Martha and Isobel was then used to purchase the bags, enough for every child and member of staff at Tryamboli School. Children and staff were thrilled to receive the bags which will also be available for pupils at Martin School to buy. Jane, Julie and Shona are planning another visit in 2021, hoping to further develop the teaching of phonics and English.

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