



Stand and deliver: Lisa and Stephen with Ernie the milk float at the East Finchley Late Summer Social in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles.

How a 1972 milk float could be the future of shopping

By John Lawrence

A restored milk float from 1972 called Ernie could be leading the charge on a new way of shopping that brings goods to our doorsteps and reduces the amount of plastic packaging we all use.

Wife and husband Lisa Jones and Stephen Thomas found Ernie on eBay during lockdown and knew right away that he would be the ideal vehicle for their zero-waste venture

called The People's Pantry. They have loaded him up with around 130 staples, including oat milk, pastas, oils and cleaning products, many in refill dispensers and all sourced from suppliers with good sustainability credentials. Customers can book Ernie to make a visit to their road for themselves and their neighbours. At the same time, Ernie's little brother Eric, a former Royal Mail bicycle, can be pressed into action for individual deliveries. At the moment Lisa and Stephen's two-month-old business is most active in Muswell Hill but is already exploring new delivery rounds in East Finchley and other surrounding areas.

Live sustainably

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive," says Lisa. "So many people have been looking for doable solutions to living more sustainably; and the fact that we bring a bit of fun and nostalgia and an old-school sociable element back to shopping seems to really chime." Lisa, whose career until now has been in public relations, and Stephen, whose background is in IT, point out that UK supermarkets alone create 900,000 tonnes of plastic waste per year, of which less than 10% is recycled, so reducing the use single-use plastic is a crucial step for our planet. "Such is the climate crisis, that it is about 'reduce and reuse' now," said Lisa. "Recycle" is a last resort. But it's not really a new concept; we are essentially replicating the historic model of the milkman." Find out more at thepeoplespantry.biz

Are you getting the menopause care you need?

By Karen Finn

Menopause wellness coach Karen Finn says it's critical that women get proper support as they experience this natural decline in reproductive hormones. Here she reports on how it can be a bumpy ride.

A woman reaches the menopause when she hasn't had a period for 12 consecutive months. Her ovaries stop producing eggs, causing a drop in oestrogen and progesterone. This usually happens at around age 51, but the hormonal decline and related symptoms can start a decade before periods end, during the perimenopause.

Most people think it's all about hot flushes, but there are dozens of other symptoms, ranging from memory loss, insomnia, joint pain and low libido to anxiety and depression. A knock-on effect is that romantic relationships, work, family life and friendships can suffer.

Getting the support you need

Women in our community are feeling let down by some GPs. "The first thing my GP did was offer me antidepressants," says Jo, a local resident. "When I said I wanted to try hormone replacement therapy, he gave me a list of medicine options and told me to go away and research them myself." Meanwhile, Cath's

local GP surgery told her that they don't prescribe hormone replacement therapy (HRT) during the perimenopause.

I spoke with Dr Claire Phipps, a local GP with a special interest in the menopause, who confirmed that perimenopausal women can start taking HRT before their periods end. She recommends that women ask whether their surgery has a GP specialising in the menopause. If they don't, they can request a referral to a menopause clinic.

"I'm passionate about arming women with knowledge about their bodies so they can request the treatment they need, whether it's HRT or an alternative," says Dr Phipps. She suggests that women book a double appointment and write a detailed letter to their GP in advance. Her Instagram feed @themenopausesisters has a sample letter and other resources.

Women can also find plenty of helpful information at menopausedoctor.co.uk and menopausesupport.co.uk. For more info on Karen, visit karenfinn.net

A day to celebrate the power of poetry

By Daphne Chamberlain

This year's National Poetry Day is on Thursday 7 October. Always on the first Thursday in October, Poetry Day is a UK-wide celebration of poetry, and the theme this time is Choice. There is also always a basic aim, which is to enjoy and celebrate poetry, and that is becoming more widespread every year.

National Poetry Day is organised by registered charity The Forward Arts Foundation. They say: "Over the years we've had poetry in schools, poetry in burger vans, poetry on the news, poetry on the side of buildings, poetry strapped to the legs of carrier pigeons, and much, much more. We champion excellence in poetry and grow audiences through National Poetry Day, the Forward Prizes for Poetry and annual Forward books".

In case you still need per-

suading that poetry is for everyone and every situation, why not take a look at The Poetry Pharmacy, ISBN:978-1-846-149542, a book by William Sieghart of Forward Arts, who set up National Poetry Day. Here you'll find a selection of poems he calls "tried and true prescriptions for the heart, mind and soul".

Visit nationalpoetryday.co.uk for more inspiration, and keep enjoying and celebrating throughout the year.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Whistle for it

They say a week is a long time in music, as last week's star becomes this week's has-been. So where does that leave 50 years? Whistling, probably. And it's 50 years since the BBC decided to keep up with the times and launch a proper rock show called *The Old Grey Whistle Test*.

Back then there were only three TV channels and the only other music programme not aimed at the over-50s was *Top of the Pops* and that didn't count if you didn't like pop. So then-controller David Attenborough let the lunatics take over the studio for a late night show and *Whistle Test* was born.

It was different, it was cool and it had all those bands your parents hated. Even the presenter, bearded whisperer Bob Harris, was guaranteed to annoy the oldies, and that made him cool. It was go-to TV for dissolute teens with a healthy interest in mind-expanding substances.

For most of its 17-year lifespan, *Whistle Test* was the only place to go for bands who did albums, not singles. A quick romp through the archives gives you everyone from The Who to The Ramones via The Eagles and John Lennon.

Not that Whispering Bob liked all of them. He thought Roxy Music were too weird, the New York Dolls were mock rock and he looked like he was frightened of Patti Smith. What Bob liked was Californian hippies and soft rockers like The Eagles. The show once had an interview with some stoned West Coast guitarist discussing flared trousers on a beach, which Bob lapped up.

But to give him his due, he did give Bob Marley his first outing on TV, let David play Queen Bitch, introduced us Brits to Bruce Springsteen and let Meatloaf loose on an unsuspecting public.

By 1978 Bob was starting to look dated and Annie Nightingale took over, followed in the 1980s by the likes of David Hepworth, Mark Ellen and Andy Kershaw. The music changed and The Damned, Jesus and Mary Chain and The Stranglers got their chance to play songs that never would have got on *Top of the Pops*.

Had it lasted much longer it would have been where you'd have discovered Nirvana, but life's not like that. In 1987, the BBC appointed a head of youth programming who axed it for not being youthful enough. Now it's just a set of archive clips and highlights dragged out for a special history slot on BBC4. And real music fans of a certain age can tune in, turn on and remember when rock was still a teenager.

FUN and MUSIC for BABIES and TODDLERS in N2 on TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS at 10am



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