



New faces and a new look at historic pub

By John Lawrence

One of East Finchley's oldest pubs has reopened its doors after an extensive refurbishment and a change of landlord. Following the departure of much-loved former manager Patrick O'Shaughnessy, The Windsor Castle, located on The Walks, is now being run by Arina Piskunova and Eamonn England.

The pub was closed for several weeks while it was repainted outside and totally refashioned inside. Drinks are being served and, as soon as they can find the right chef, Arina and Eamonn say they will open the new kitchen to serve classic seasonal British food. A kitchen garden is also under development to grow seasonal vegetables and herbs for the menu.

Arina and Eamonn, who between them have more than 30 years' experience in customer services and hospitality,

say the Windsor is a "hidden gem in the back streets of East Finchley" and they want to make it a destination venue for people from all around N2 and further afield. A quiz night will be returning soon.

There has been a beer house on the site of the Windsor Castle since the late 1700s, close to what was the Old Drovers' Road, one of the toll-free back roads of the district. Cattle, sheep and pigs went past it to the weekly pig market at Market Place, or onwards into London.



Cheers: Eamonn England and Arina Piskunova behind the new bar at the Windsor Castle. Photo John Lawrence

Pumpkin party in the wood

Everyone got into the spirit by dressing up for the Halloween bash at the Cherry Tree Café in Cherry Tree Wood, which ran through the late afternoon on Monday 31 October as a pre-trick or treating party. There was warming food and drink on offer and a smoke machine to add to the spooky atmosphere.



Partygoer in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles.

Tragi-comedy from The Guild Players

The Guild Players, Finchley's amateur dramatic group, have been entertaining us since 1946 and their latest production is a modern tragi-comedy called *Invincible*.

The play, written by Torben Betts, is about a middle-class couple who move from London to the north in the summer of 2012 for a simpler life amongst 'real people'. When their neighbours turn out to be really football-mad, a culture clash ensues and events take a darker turn.

The company gives an age guidance of 12 plus. Performances are at 7.30pm on Thurs-

day 8, Friday 9 and Saturday 10 December at Finchley Methodist Church Hall, Ballards Lane, N3 1NB. Advance booking is recommended. Tickets are £10 and can be purchased online at: www.ticketsource.co.uk/theguildplayers. Subject to capacity, some tickets may be available to purchase on the door. For box office enquiries call 07938 232 027. Details also available at www.guildplayers.org.uk



Sell out: East Finchley-themed prints

Christmas N2-style

If you missed the winter gift market outside Bottles'n'Jars last month, fear not! HR Events and the East Finchley Festival team are bringing another local makers' market to East Finchley, this time at the Bald Faced Stag on 10 December.

Once again there'll be a selection of artisan makers and crafters selling gifts, including glass light catchers, handmade candles and melts, textiles, knitwear, jewellery, prints and homewares. The East Finchley-themed prints and posters which proved so popular at the winter market that they sold out, will be back.

Brass band and festive fun
There'll be a barbecue and mulled wine, brass band and carols in the garden, plus festive facepainting inside the pub.

East Finchley Christmas Fair will take place from 12-6pm on Saturday 10 December in the car park of the Bald Faced Stag and entry is free. For more information see www.ILoveN2.co.uk/christmas-fair.

tall stories

A stellar new show based on the book by JULIA DONALDSON and AXEL SCHEFFLER

The Smeds and The Smoos

LIVE ON STAGE

★★★★★
'Magnificent... a tour-de-force family show'
ONE4REVIEWS

MON 5 DEC 2022 - MON 2 JAN 2023

arts depot BOOK NOW
020 8369 5454 | artsdepot.co.uk

The Smeds and the Smoos © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 2019, published by Scholastic

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"THE VOICE OF SOCIAL IRRESPONSIBILITY"

Who's No 1? Who cares?

Yes, folks, it's that time of year when in the grubby world of pop music everyone turns their attention to the Christmas number one. This always used to be the big one and usually the biggest selling single of the year.

All, well almost all, the greats have been there. The Beatles topped the Christmas chart three years in a row in the 60s, Queen managed it twice in 1975 and 1991 with *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Pink Floyd were proudly unfestive with *Another Brick in the Wall* in 1979.

There's been plenty of dross too from Bob The Builder and Benny Hill. And sometimes the great songs only made it to number two, songs like Petula Clark's *Downtown*, Wham's *Last Christmas* and The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's *Fairy Tale of New York*.

But this was when the charts mattered, when you bought records on pieces of black plastic from your local record store or WH Smiths and played them to death in your bedroom. Back then the stores listed the Top 20 on big posters in the window. Back then you were judged by your record collection. So where did it all go wrong and when did we stop caring about the Christmas number one?

It's a cop out to blame streaming or say that there is too much choice; it's more than that. Since 2002 and the arrival of The X Factor and the manufactured output of Simon Cowell you could guess what was coming next. The last talent show winner would release a cover and it would top the charts at Christmas. And that wasn't the worst of it. The last four years have seen Ladbaby's songs about sausage rolls at number one, for goodness sake.

No one cares about the charts anymore because they don't have to. They can choose to listen to whatever they want, whenever they want, by streaming it in the comfort of their bedroom. Shame really, because today's contenders like Ed Sheeran and Taylor Swift are never going to fill a dancefloor at a Christmas party like Slade's *Merry Christmas Everybody* has done every year since 1973. Like Noddy said: "It's Christmaaaaaaas."