



# Bump in the road for Robin's tumour treatment

By Lynn Winton

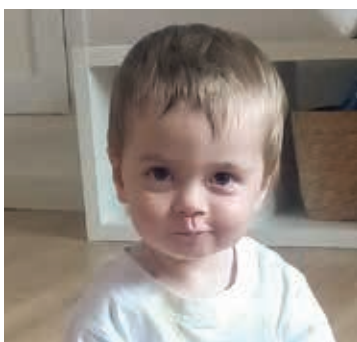
Back in October, readers of *The Archer* were among many who responded to a desperate plea for financial help from local couple Rachel and Nick Samuel, whose baby Robin had been diagnosed with a ferocious tumour, known as a neuroblastoma.

After their son had numerous operations and punishing chemo cycles at Great Ormond Street, the family were raising funds for treatment at Barcelona's Sant Joan de Deu hospital. Its groundbreaking immunotherapy, not available

"On arrival, the medical team discovered some badly-behaving cancer cells were trying to activate and so overnight, rather than start the treatment, it became a rescue mission. Luckily the operation was 100% successful and Robin was, again, 100% awesome."

Robin might have come through this setback with flying colours, and his medical team are still confident he will make a full recovery, but it has added a huge chunk to the hospital bill. Robin is now on his way to receiving his second (of seven) cycles of immunotherapy, but the treatment can only continue if there are funds, and the third cycle requires another £65,000.

Dad Nick, who is a saxophonist and composer, is planning many local fundraising gigs. If you would like to help Robin, the family's crowdfunder QR code is below, or you can go to crowdfunder.co.uk and search using keywords "robin cancer london". You can also follow their planned events on twitter @savebabyrobin. Rachel and Nick can be contacted on 07399 447705 or rachel.samuel@myyahoo.com.



Treatment: Robin Samuel

here, will give him an excellent chance of growing up to be a healthy adult.

Robin, now two, has had his first round of this immunotherapy and I spoke to his mother Rachel to find out about his progress.

"Please thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts. There aren't adequate words to describe what your support means to us. It has been a roller-coaster of a time, and sadly not the fun-of-the-fair kind," she said.



Coming through: The Finchley Girls U-18 side in action. Photo Crocodile Snaps

## Finchley Girls bring it home

Exactly two years on from their first-ever match, Finchley Girls RFC were out in force at the Girls Festival of Rugby 2023 at RAF Halton, Aylesbury, in October, competing among more than 1,400 young female players from clubs across the country.

Teaming up with their friends at Hampstead RFC, Finchley fielded five teams across four age bands from ages 11 to 18, with 70 girls representing the club in their red and white stripes. The Under 12s enjoyed teaming up with girls from Saracens. Having completed all their group phase matches, they went on to beat Kettering, Buckingham and Gosford All Blacks in a physical final to secure victory in the Plate Competition.

Finchley Under 14s faced tough opposition in their pool, but put the effort in to score tries throughout the day. The Under 16s B team, consisting of many players new to the game in recent months, held their own through the pool stages, growing stronger throughout the day. The Under 18s progressed through their pool and knock-out stages to face Gosford All Blacks, a tough, well established team in the final, eventually coming away runners up.

And last but not least, the Finchley U16s A team went undefeated all day, running up dominant wins against prominent teams including Welwyn, Fullarians, Buckingham and going on to beat Old Albanians

10-5 in a tense and exciting final.

Head coach Chris Grilli said: "To see how far we have come in the last two years, starting with just seven girls on a cold, wet Thursday evening, to where we are now, is just incredible. It's testament to the dedication of the players and parents, but also the coaches and admins

who put in so much time and effort to offer this amazing team sport to this awesome bunch of girls. To say I was a little emotional after the final whistle is a bit of an understatement." If you or a girl you know would like to be part of Finchley Girls RFC, contact Emily Grilli on 07890 554505.

## RICKY SAVAGE ...

### Bardolatory

Time to brush up your Shakespeare because this year has been the year of the Bard. Okay, in the world of GCSE English every year is the year of the Bard as another generation of kids try to dissect a 400+-year-old play to find out what it tells us about the human soul before being force-fed a recording from the BBC Shakespeare collection.

So what's been special about this year? Well, it's 400 years since a couple of actor mates of Will's decided to publish his complete works in the first folio. It's thanks to them that his 38 plays got gathered together and passed down like some kind of literary holy grail. And why every castaway on Desert Island Discs gets to take all his plays and the Bible with them.

Shakespeare isn't boring. He gives us suicide pacts, regicide, revenge, young love, murder, death, feuds and a mass of vaguely necessary violence all in a couple of hours and all in one play if we are talking about *Romeo and Juliet*. Look a bit further and you get a man with an ass's head called Bottom, a prince of Denmark staring at a skull as he tries to avenge his father's death, a king desperate for a horse, mistaken identities, love, lust and racism.

Such was his power that by the time Britain got down to conquering most of the world in the name of King or Queen, Shakespeare was one of the cornerstones of British life they took with them into empire. The genius Stratfordian ruled supreme as someone, somewhere was always reciting from *Hamlet*. The sun may have set occasionally on the British Empire, but it sure as hell did not set on Shakespeare.

Not everyone liked this. Starting in the 1850s in America people staring asking whether Shakespeare really wrote the plays. How could a clever grammar schoolboy and actor pen such perfection? Their answer was he couldn't; it had to be a university educated aristocrat like the Earl of Oxford.

In 1920 the appropriately named J Thomas Looney brought out 'Shakespeare Identified' which claimed to prove the real genius was Oxford. People like Charlie Chaplin, Sigmund Freud and Prince Philip were convinced. But they were wrong. The complete works were written by a grammar schoolboy because that's what clever grammar schoolboys do. So, brush up your Shakespeare, because all the world's a stage and Will wrote the words for players to perform on it.

## Treasure trove of craft treats

Craftspeople, artists and eager buyers packed a special fair at The Muswell Hill Club in Fortis Green on Thursday 26 October, helping to raise money for the North London Hospice. Decorations, glass works, jewellery and terrariums were just some of the items available to browse and buy.

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Mulled Wine

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