



Be part of Tarling Road community, says new manager

By Janet Maitland

A new programme of events has been announced by the Tarling Road Community Centre including games nights, tea and chat sessions, a gardening club and a Valentine's Day family disco. The centre is also open to suggestions of other new events.

"We'd like the community to be more involved in their own community centre," said new manager Sonile Zimba. "So this year we're putting on events which are affordable or free. Come along and make friends or come with your old friends."

Dance, play games or chat

The Valentine's Day family disco takes place on Saturday 18 February from 1.20pm to 6.30pm and costs £6 for a whole family of one or two adults with two, three or four children. Otherwise it's £4 per adult and £2 for a child. Tea and coffee is free. To book tickets, email tarlingroad@ymcalcan.org or call 020 7018 6560.



Activities: Tarling Road hub

The games nights are free on Sundays from 5pm to 8pm. Board and card games will be on every table. The event will

expand to whatever people want, maybe bingo or quiz nights. Free tea and coffee is provided and you can bring your own snacks.

The tea and chat sessions take place on Wednesdays from 10am to 12pm. "Anyone can just pop in and have a chat," said Sonile. Again, tea and coffee is free. A free gardening club will also be starting up in the spring. The centre in Tarling Road, N2, can be contacted on 020 7018 6560 or by email at tarlingroad@ymcalcan.org.

New building, new energy

The site used to be home to the Old Barn, a thriving community centre for over 25 years until it was taken over in 2010 by a group of trustees who closed down all the services. The Old Barn Action Group campaigned for years to get the centre restored to the community and it was finally wrestled back in 2014, with the lease reverting to the council, who demolished the old building in 2016. The centre's new building was finished in 2018.



Food store: The egg found in Gill Steiner's garden is likely to have been buried by an urban fox

The strange case of the buried eggs

By Mike Coles

A year or so ago, keen local gardener Gill Steiner was tidying up some flower beds at her tennis club when she came across a buried hen's egg. Someone suggested it must have been buried by an animal for future consumption. Gill thought no more about it until just before last Christmas when she was cleaning out some flowerpots on her patio at home in Woodside Avenue, N6, and came across another buried egg.

Asking around, someone thought it might have been put there by a fox. Most of us are familiar with squirrels digging holes in lawns and 'squirrelling' away food to be recovered in the winter, but surely not foxes? It turns out, however, that foxes routinely 'cache' food in multiple locations, sometimes your garden, for recovery later, marking each location with its own scent.

Reynard the survivor

There is no shortage of foxes locally. Urban foxes have adapted to live with humans and unlike their rural cousins who kill real chickens, ours prefer theirs cooked by KFC. Half eaten hamburgers are also a favourite treat. They have learned that humans are harmless and nowhere near fast enough to catch them so they have no natural predators in East Finchley. Cars, however, are their greatest danger, causing the most deaths.

Their amazing sense of smell and cognitive abilities allows them to locate where they've buried their food in order to dig it up again in the

future. Unfortunately, they often treat buried pets in the same way, smelling the strong scent and digging them up as if they'd buried it themselves.

Reynard the explorer

But back to Gill's egg in her flowerpot. We know that a fox is the likely culprit and apparently it can carry a chicken's egg safely in its cheek, but where did it get the egg? There are undoubtedly some chickens kept locally but a more likely explanation is that someone discarded it as it had passed its use-by date. We'll never know

but we must admire the fox's enterprise, although it lost this particular meal.

Foxes are natural explorers. One was once spotted riding an escalator on the underground, and in 2011, one was discovered roaming the top of The Shard, London's tallest skyscraper, while it was under construction. A local pest control manager who helped rescue the animal was quoted in the Sun newspaper as saying: "The fox would have had to climb 71 sets of stairs and an old-fashioned ladder."

RICKY SAVAGE ...

Down the tube

It's cold, the rain is horizontal and the train you want is 10 minutes away from East Finchley. Do you wait and look at the crumbling paintwork of Charles Holden's tube station masterpiece or get the first train and do the platform rush at Camden Town? Whatever you choose, you're part of history.

It's 160 years since someone had the bright idea of digging a trench, putting down railway tracks, sticking a roof over it and running steam trains through it. It may have been less than four miles from Paddington to Farringdon, but it's where it all began. It took a long time to turn that four miles into 11 lines, 272 stations and 250 miles of track. It took nearly 30 years to discover electricity and another 20 to stop trying to run steam trains through London. But by the 1930s it had sprawled out as far as Watford. Welcome to Metroland, welcome to the suburbs and welcome to signal failure at Baker Street.

If we'd known that it was going to end at Battersea Power Station, we might have stuck with buses and horses and walking. But we didn't, we stuck with the underground lines until they became the arteries of London, clogged, crowded and partially decaying. And guess what, I love it.

This jumble of lines has given us great architecture, the best bits by Charles Holden, and a wiring diagram for a map. It has also given us a weird etiquette that only Londoners understand. You know, stand on the right, don't ever make eye contact, never talk to strangers and flip through the Metro before leaving it for the next passenger to enjoy.

There are other things as well, things like knowing that a 'baby on board badge' is invisible to commuters, that your shopping needs its own seat and that no journey is complete without a coffee, if only so you can leave the cup behind to add to everybody's colourful travelling experience.

It doesn't matter that it's mostly dirty, the seats look as though they've hosted a near-death experience and you always get an ear-piercing screech from the tracks as you come into Camden. I don't even mind waiting on the platform for the night train, because there's still no quicker way to get round this beautiful sprawling city.

Active artists

The East Finchley Open Artists 2023 Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 14 January at the United Reform Church in Muswell Hill.

Pat Hewett-Marvell and Jo Pethybridge were re-elected as joint Chairs, Ian Hunt continues as Secretary and Jeremy Clynes as Treasurer. Jo reported an active and productive 2022 coming out of lockdown and looked forward to a busy 2023. The group's next major exhibition, titled Interplay, will be at the Original Gallery, Crouch End, either side of Easter from 4-6 and 11-23rd April.

COMING SOON AT ARTSDEPOT



Sun 12 - Tue 14 Feb
The Singing Mermaid
Julia Donaldson & Lydia Monks' book comes to the stage.

Monthly from Wed 22 Feb
Poetivty
An inspirational evening of good vibes, poetry and open mic.

Monthly from Fri 24 Feb
artsdepot Comedy Club
Top notch comedians in an intimate setting.

Thu 2 Mar
Eshaan Akbar - The Pretender
New stand up from Eshaan Akbar, as seen on QI and Mock the Week.

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Mar
Zog
A roarsome, fun-filled family show.

Sat 11 Mar
Kate Mosse
The bestselling author celebrates history's 'Warrior Queens & Quiet Revolutionaries'.

Thu 16 Mar
Dotdotdot Dance: Blue Ghost
Dynamic flamenco dance meets live electronic music.

...and lots more! See the full line up at artsdepot.co.uk

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Book Now:
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artsdepot.co.uk

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