



Learning centre flourishes in library building

By David Gritten

For decades now, East Finchley Library has been a local landmark. Set back from the High Road, it is large and handsome in red brick and has survived through various changes to its opening hours and staffing levels.

In the last few months, part of the library building has undergone radical change. This becomes clear if you take the single flight of steps to the first floor where you will find the SET Tuition Centre, created by two members of local family the Tajallifars, Ehsan and Abbas.

The centre is visible from outside with lights and signage in the windows, and inside it is a bright, modern and intriguing space. Its aims are: "To make a difference in lives through education."

Opportunity

Ehsan is an engineer by trade, and also spent 15 years



Teach-in: Staff and students in the SET Tutors classroom at East Finchley Library. Photo Mike Coles.

teaching privately. He says: "I came to realise that my real passion was education. I'd had in mind for a long time that I might be in a tutoring centre like this.

"This opportunity came about when agents told me about part of the library building being available for rent. I gathered that it was struggling because people don't use libraries as much as they used to. So (the owners) were relaxed about renting it out."

Provision for all young people

The centre is open seven days a week, providing tuition for younger people ranging from pre-school through 11-plus to A-levels and university. Subjects on offer include maths, science, chemistry, biology, physics and engineering: "Core subjects, plus a variety of different courses," as Ehsan explains. Students from other countries can study 'English for Everyone.' Find out more

at settutors.co.uk.

For their part, the Tajallifars are delighted by the centre's rapid progress since opening. "This has been as good as we could have expected," says Ehsan. "And for me, there's nothing more exciting than watching a student learning something new through work, and getting excited about it."

From The Archer archives...

10 years ago:
June 2013

Local traders met with Barnet Councillor Dean Cohen to highlight problems caused by parking restrictions in the High Road, N2, and suggest possible solutions. Cllr Cohen said it was the largest such meeting he had attended. Many shopkeepers emphasised their loss of trade, as did the Phoenix Cinema, which had lost custom because parking restrictions in place did not allow time for viewing a complete film. Cllr Cohen was not able to offer any solutions at that time.

15 years ago:
June 2008

Plans were first mooted to turn Finchley Memorial Hospital into a major new healthcare centre offering GP services and pharmacy dispensing. This raised fears that local patients and pharmacists might be adversely affected. The hospital was subsequently rebuilt and fortunately those local worries were not realised.

23 years ago:
June 2000

We reported on a spate of airgun shootings in Cherry Tree Wood. Pigeons and squirrels had been found dead, along with a greater spotted woodpecker. Two local boys had been seen running from the park after the keeper heard shots, but no prosecutions followed.

Johnnie Proud, 1938 - 2023

Johnnie Proud, who died in April aged 84, lived in East Finchley all his life, growing up in Huntingdon Road, and moving to Durham Road and then Richmond Road.

One of five siblings, he was very mischievous and into everything he shouldn't have been as a young boy. Once, when he was looking after his sister Eileen, they had gone to London Zoo and Johnnie thought it would be a good idea to put a board over to the monkey enclosure and let them all out.

Johnnie grew up in the 1950s as a young teddy boy or rocker. He was very proud of his handmade suits and quiff haircut. In the early 1960s, after national service, he joined the Territorial Parachute Regiment. He loved this time and gained his Para wings doing over 40 jumps.

Johnnie married June in 1960 and they had three sons, Andy, Tony and Robert. The boys fondly remember holidays in Malta. They especially remember their dad being involved with a mountain rescue in which a holiday maker had fallen and broken his leg. Johnnie went to his aid but in all the excitement grabbed the man by his broken leg!

Johnnie was lucky enough to be able to turn his hands to many different skills; his jobs included delivery driver, landscape gardener, grave digger and builder. He thrived in the building game and continued to work up until the ripe old age of 84.

Johnnie got remarried to Barbara after adopting Mark. They welcomed their son Brad-



Mischievous and much-loved: Johnnie Proud

ley in 1987.

Admittedly in later years Barbara and the whole family were trying to talk him out of going on the church roof to carry out ongoing repairs. His reply was: "I will be ok, I am working for God".

One of his passions in life was metal detecting and although he encouraged all of the boys to have an interest, his partner in crime was his brother Lenny. Johnnie and Lenny could be found most weekends night hawking and would always return with many tales to tell afterwards.

Johnnie was a very proud dad, grandad and great grandad, and his whole family will miss him dearly. Johnnie was fit and healthy throughout his life but after a short illness he sadly passed away peacefully on the 11 April.

New horizons for retirees

North London U3A has launched a programme of summer events for July and August, aimed at retired or semi-retired people looking for new interests, or new friends. The events, most of them free of charge, include walks, talks, art classes, maths events and museum visits. Find out more by visiting the North London U3A stall at East Finchley Festival on Sunday 18 June in Cherry Tree Wood, or visit www.nlu3a.org.uk/summer-programme.

Summer fair

There will be something for everyone at the summer fair at the Tarling Road Community Centre on Saturday 10 June from 10am to 3pm. Attractions include street dance, karate, yoga sessions and a DJ, as well as old favourites like a bouncy castle and face painting. You can also buy goodies from a range of stalls.

Volunteers are needed to help run the event. If you would like to lend a hand, or want to hire a stall, contact Sonile Zimba on 020 7018 6560 or email her at Sonile.Zimba@ymcalcan.org. Hiring a stall to sell things costs £30. Stalls giving out information are free of charge. Any surplus after the running costs are met will be reinvested back into the centre.

Woodside Ensemble

The next free concert at East Finchley Methodist Church is the Woodside Ensemble, playing a programme of Torelli, Mozart, Clara Schumann and Dvorak.

The ensemble is Kathy Bamber on violin, Maurice Chernick on clarinet, Ruth Cohen on viola, Laura Dodds on cello, Patrick Dodds on trumpet, Sanae Honda on violin and Simon Ferris on piano.

The concert takes place on Sunday 11 June at 7.30pm at the church on the High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue. Admission is free with a collection in aid of street children charity Toybox.

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