



High praise for our High Road

By David Melsome

Customers want vintage shops, record stores, artisan coffee, a decent pub and a Chinese restaurant in their dream town centre, according to a study. The perfect high street also has hair salons, a pharmacy, a florist and a delicatessen.



Desirable: East Finchley has a valued mix of shops, cafés and restaurants

Well, on that basis, East Finchley must rank pretty highly. We have a record store, plenty of great coffee, some excellent pubs, a Chinese takeaway, many hair salons, three pharmacies, a florist and a choice of delicatessen outlets on the High Road alone.

People were asked to picture their perfect high street for the survey by Smart Energy GB. Vintage shops ranked highly and we have plenty of vintage clothes available in our charity shops, as did farm produce shops... we now have a farmers' market every Sunday on the Great North Road.

Almost two thirds of people in the survey believed a good high street has a mixture of modern and traditional shops and that seems to match East Finchley's profile too, with long-established traders co-existing alongside newcomers like nail bars and beauty salons.

Over half of the 2,000 people polled said they worried about the increasing pressure that small businesses are under, with nine in ten seeing local shops close around them. Another reason to count our blessings here in N2 and to support all the excellent local shops that we have.

Happy ending after cash machine malfunctions

By Charles Haydn

A customer has praised High Road supermarket Budgens after its manager went the extra mile when the in-store cash machine malfunctioned. Several customers were left short-changed when the ATM, operated by LINK, dispensed incorrect amounts of money. After one customer's bank and LINK themselves initially denied any problem with the machine, one customer reported it to Budgens store manager Ripon Shaha, who took immediate action.

"Through his persistence, he discovered that seven other customers had encountered similar problems that day. Ripon went above and beyond his duties by contacting me multiple times and coordinating with other affected customers. He even offered to sign a written statement to my bank. I believe his actions not only helped resolve the issue but also restored my faith in the community's support system," said the customer.



Fixer: Ripon Shaha

Ripon told The Archer: "We discovered that after a recent ATM cash cassette change, the machine malfunctioned. Initial checks by Nationwide and LINK found that a software glitch was responsible

for the fault and they sent an engineer who fixed it the next day. It took me a while to identify those who had lost out, but we managed to make up everyone's shortfall."



Hare-do: Margaret Andrews and daughter Wendy Gallagher with their Pink Patsy character

A friend to learner readers

By Diana Cormack

Children visiting the storytelling tent at the East Finchley Community Festival in June could not only hear tales about an adventurous hare called Patsy but also take part in related stone painting and arts and crafts. Local author Wendy Gallagher told The Archer how she created this character and the effect it has had on her.

During lockdown, Wendy's mother Margaret K M Andrews, 84, was unable to attend her art classes, so she started painting at home. One particular picture of a pink hare looking at the moon caught Wendy's eye. Margaret named it Pink Patsy after her sister and, when mother and daughter began to compose the first of nine books, the colourful hare became the main character.

Written for three- to six-year-olds, Wendy hopes they will be especially helpful to young readers with dyslexia, which she herself has and which remained undiagnosed for many years. Because of this she is especially proud about having produced on her own these fun and informative books, which act as 'windows into a world where kindness reigns supreme and every creature, great or small, holds a vital role.'

Influenced by nature, stories and memories of childhood walks with her mother and drawing inspiration from their own lives, Wendy hopes the books will encourage a love of the natural world and a desire to cherish and protect it.

She carries this message on visits to nurseries and primary schools and spreads the word further through events like World Bee Day and World Book Day. This must make a change from her work running Gallalock, the key-cutting shop

in Muswell Hill, a long-term family business.

Published by MagMay books (the name being derived from Margaret's childhood nickname of Maggie May), with Wendy's inspired writing and Margaret's beautiful illustrations, the Pink Patsy

books are bringing reading pleasure to Key Stage One children. Matching merchandise is available for them to enjoy and, in the not-too-distant future, an animated cartoon is in the offing. Visit www.magmaybooks.co.uk for more information.

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