



Family memories behind the scenes at the RAF Museum

By Diana Cormack

Having spent my childhood growing up on various Royal Air Force camps both here and abroad, I was immediately interested in a series of talks organised by Age UK Barnet. These consisted of four fortnightly visits to the RAF Museum in Colindale, built on the former site of RAF Hendon.

The first was an introduction to the museum's archive and library collection, with a chance to see some items not usually on public view. The second was a tour of their Cold War aircraft with stories about that sensitive time.

The third was based around a huge Lancaster at the new Bomber Command exhibition, concentrating on the amazing equipment and clothing needed by the crew to survive the low temperatures at great height. Finally we learned about the extensive art collection housed there, with particular emphasis on a recent intriguing acquisition by Fiona Bannon.

All the talks were well presented with interesting facts

and fascinating details. For me they were often nostalgic as my father, mother and brother all served in the RAF, so seeing the uniforms and hearing names and expressions buried in my memory was somehow comforting. So was the mid-afternoon cuppa and biscuits we were treated to!

Entry to the museum is free. It provides for all ages, so families can find trails designed for specific age groups, and there is also a new themed outdoor play area for the under-11s. With so many aircraft housed in five modern hangers, it is easy to spend the day there. For more details search online for the RAF Museum London or call 020 8205 2266.

Falafel has a different recipe for success

By Claire Biek

Shoppers on the High Road will have noticed the new falafel counter that has opened by carving out some space in the Budgens store. The street-facing kiosk is run by owner and chef Hossan, whose Egyptian recipe uses chickpeas, fava beans and fennel to make it just a bit different.

Hossan has owned his fast-growing small business for nearly four years and Falafel N2 is his third branch. The others can be found at the Whittington Hospital and on Upper Street, Islington.

Business has been going well for him so far in East Finchley,



Counter offer: Owner and chef Hossan at the new falafel kiosk

which he describes as "beautiful" with a real sense of community. His peak period is lunchtime and he is starting to win custom from local workers and those working from home.

Cheeky monkey



All kinds of items find their way into our charity shops but even staff at the RSPCA shop in the High Road, N2, were surprised when a full-size monkey costume was donated. Manager Julie Brill had just put it in the window when three teenagers came in to ask if they could try it on. One of them liked it so much he bought it there and then. Julie said: "They were lovely kids. I think they were going to a fancy dress party."



No smoke: A young cadet gets to grip with ladder work at Finchley Fire Brigade

Learn new skills with Fire Brigade

By Diana Cormack

Not a lot of people may be aware of a youth project run by the London Fire Brigade where teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17 can become Fire Cadets. Under a scheme that started in 2013, they can learn about fire safety for themselves and others; what to do in an emergency; basic first aid; firefighting skills and life skills, encouraging them to be a positive citizen and active member of the community.

After completing the 12-month programme, young participants can apply to become an officer fire cadet and can then build upon the skills they have gained, helping instructors to teach others.

As well as using various types of firefighting equipment and experiencing different activities, cadets benefit from visiting other fire stations and meeting new people. They are encouraged to get active and learn the importance of keeping fit and healthy.

The Fire Brigade says being a fire cadet offers the opportunity to develop confidence and leadership skills whilst learning teamwork and making new friends. It can also make an impressive addition to a youngster's CV when the time comes. To learn more, visit www.london-fire.gov.uk/FireCadets.asp

RICKY SAVAGE ...

Hey, hi, goodbye

It's weird when your past runs away from you and that's what happened to me when the BBC announced that Annie Nightingale had gone to the great DJ booth in the sky. Part of me is not too sure why, the rest of me is dragged back to being a kid listening to Radio 1 on a tinny transistor and discovering that it was not just populated by old men.

By the time Annie turned up on the radio in 1970, with her regular greeting "Hey, hi, hello", she'd already got a track record as a journalist, had been on TV, was part of the 'scene' and had become a friend of The Beatles.

But she was the first female DJ on Radio 1. She had been trying to get on for years, but back then the blokes who ran Radio 1 aimed it at housewives and they turned her down for being a woman. In the end The Beatles press put in a word for her and they gave her the chance.

It had taken three years from the launch of a sanctioned pop station for the BBC to wake up and smell the coffee, but now she was there doing her stint on the evening Sounds of the Seventies alongside John Peel, whispering Bob Harris and others long since forgotten. And she had more in common with Peel than the rest of them, because like Peel she was interested in what came next, not what had gone before. Once she was there, she never left.

In 1978 she stunned the world of the ageing hippy by replacing whispering Bob Harris on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* on BBC2. Out went the soft rock, California country and flares, in came bands like The Damned, Elvis Costello, Duran Duran and just about everyone else who mattered.

She could have stuck with what she knew, but that wasn't her style; she always wanted to be one step ahead. When acid house and dance music happened at the very end of the 1980s she was there and started playing the latest sounds. It didn't matter if her new audience were young enough to be her grandchildren, she was there at the cutting edge, listening to the same stuff as 16-year-old clubbers.

That was her job; to be there and be ahead, looking for the next thing. She was still playing live sets and being loved by a new generation right up until her last shows a few weeks before she died. She not only outlasted all the blokes who'd been on the radio when she started, she'd outlasted the next generation. She wasn't just 'the bird on the wireless' She was far more than that, she was Annie Nightingale.

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