



New landmark: Members of East Finchley Town Team fix the teepee structure in place outside Budgens. Photo Mike Coles

Tower of flower

By Diana Cormack

East Finchley's Town Team installed two items on the High Road last month to celebrate the London Festival of Architecture (LFA) which ran throughout June. One was a bamboo structure in the style of a teepee/wigwam erected in the raised garden outside Budgens using the empty Christmas tree space. Flowering plants growing in compost, both generously supplied by the supermarket, surrounded its base.

The other was a Stagesette on the pavement area outside Amy's hardware store. It consisted of two wide-slatted wooden benches which can be positioned at various angles as a seat, or erected as a small stage (see *The Archer*, May 2024). Passers-by of all ages have been taking the opportunity to sit there for a while as well as having a good look at the teepee.

After being used as a stage for story reading and puppetry on the first day, four days later the Stagesette was set up in an L-shaped bench form as a meeting point to launch the local air quality monitoring event. Volunteers were able to collect a monitor from the Town Team to be used throughout the month, with the results fed back into a borough-wide database.

An exhibition of proposals for the town square being on show in Egg and Bake, 122 High Road, for the whole month enabled people to make their comments on the scheme. So did the final scheduled activity on Saturday 22 June, when the Town Team along with East Finchley architects MillsPower held a community consultation event with local performers putting the Stagesette to good use.

Playground team calls for arts and heritage experts

By Samantha Haycock

With the renovation of Market Place Playground well underway, work has begun on plans to bring the history of the site to life. Being located close to the historic centre of East Finchley and what was once the largest hog market in the country from the 1660s to the 20th century, there are plenty of stories to tell.

The Friends of Market Place Playground are looking for help to create permanent information boards, signage and images, and to create a number of 3D public art installations that are interactive and playable.

They need a heritage, museum or communication professional with experience of creating accessible and informative displays for a diverse community, including children, those with disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

This unpaid role would include giving advice on content and construction. Time required is expected to be six to eight hours in total, including one or two meetings. Any contribution would be recognised in the playground's publicity and on the Friends' website.

For the artworks they need people with experience in designing, creating, and installing sculptures from concrete in public spaces. Time required is to be determined but it is likely to be a significant project. This will be a paid project and is subject to fund-



Taking shape: New equipment is being installed in Market Place Playground. Photo Samantha Haycock

ing approval and tendering process.

If you can help, or have an idea of someone who could, email the relevant contact

details to friendsofmarket-place@gmail.com along with a brief summary of experience and interest in the relevant project.

RICKY SAVAGE ... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

They used to play music here

"Friday, all is bright, gonna go and see some band tonight", except you can't. Well you can, but not in the way you used to, because there aren't the venues anymore. Even the big ones have gone. The Rainbow in Finsbury Park, where everyone from The Who to Deep Purple to The Jam played until it shut in 1982. The Astoria on Tottenham Court Road got bulldozed a few years ago to make way for the Elizabeth line and even the Hammersmith Palais, a place immortalised in a Clash song, got demolished in 2009.

The smaller places haven't survived either; The Marquee, The Nashville and The Rock Garden are long gone. OK, some have plaques on the wall of the new office block or student flats, but music? No way.

Maybe that's not important, you can always pay a fortune to go and see Taylor Swift sell out Wembley or the Stones play in Hyde Park, but what about your regular Friday fix? Forget it. That's something from the 70s and 80s when you were only a bus ride way from a gig.

I guess it all started in the early 70s when most people stayed in and watched TV and publicans realised that the way to get people in was to put bands on. A 263 bus ride away from East Finchley got you to the Torrington in North Finchley where The Stranglers and Ian Drury played in the backroom before they were famous.

Go a bit further to New Barnet and the Duke of Lancaster, another pre-fame haunt of the Stranglers and where The Psychedelic Furs started out. Head the other way to Kentish Town and the Bull and Gate to catch some northern band like Pulp or Oasis starting out in the 90s. Or how about heading down the Holloway Road to the Lord Nelson? And there's the Hope and Anchor in Islington, and the Dublin Castle in Camden where Madness began. Except you can't anymore. The Duke got replaced by flats in 2002, The Torrington went in 2004 and is now a Starbucks and the Bull and Gate is now a gastro pub. At least the Hope and the Dublin Castle are still going and Dingwalls never really went away. But if you want to see the next medium-sized thing try out in some grotty pub with bad beer, sorry too late. And if you're in a band and are looking for your first gig, well tough luck, there's nowhere to play. But you can go out and buy Paul Talling's two books on London's Lost Music Venues. I did and have been ticking off all the lost places I spent my wasted youth in. They used to play music there, but they don't anymore.

Review: Tom Lehrer is Teaching Math and Doesn't Want to Talk to You

Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate

By Jessica Holt

From a very young age I remember the songs of Tom Lehrer, pictured, coming on the radio. It was always a Sunday and although I preferred The Beatles, I was aware that what he sang was important, especially the words.

The satirical nature of his songs and the wit of the words were conveyed with skill and affection in this lively production of Francis Beckett's musical play. The opening song *I Got it from Agnes* is a joyful comment on sexual promiscuity and its possible health risks and later in the first half *We Will All Go Together When We Go* is drawing on his experience of working at Los Alamos and the one potential positive of nuclear war.

The power of satire in all his songs is what makes him a timeless artist. The thrust of the play is the questions and conversation between Lehrer, played by Shafar Ifhar, and a young woman called Iris who visits him, played by Nabilah Hamid.

She asks about his life and the choices he made, but most of all she wants to know why he turned his back on



a successful career and settled on teaching maths and a course on American musicals at the University of Santa Cruz. Despite much probing we never get a satisfactory answer. The third actor on set in Lehrer's living room is Harry Style as the pianist accompanying the faultless singing by the other two. Congratulations to the director Isaac Bernier-Doyle for providing the audience with a delightful and entertaining piece of theatre.