



Talent contest and bake-off are GO!

Two competitions to celebrate the performance and baking skills of people in East Finchley are back in the calendar after being unavoidably postponed earlier this year.

East Finchley's Got Talent takes place at the Phoenix Cinema on Sunday 21 April and, in its second year, is again being hosted by East Finchley Festival's MOBO award winner Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock.

Do you have a talent that you can demonstrate on a stage in five minutes? Can you sing, dance, play, perform magic or do something so unique and extraordinary that you just have to share it with the world? If so, East Finchley Town Team wants to hear from you.

cinema foyer, East Finchley Town Team will be hosting a bake-off competition for all ages on the theme of 'The Silver Screen', all about films that might be shown at the Phoenix. If you think you can wow the judges with your kitchen creation, email EFtownteam@gmail.com.

The day starts at 11.15am when the cinema will be screening the hit children's animation *Sing*. Then the talent show starts at 2pm. The bake-off winner will be announced



Sign up now: Entries are welcome for East Finchley's talent contest

The winner of East Finchley's Got Talent gets the opportunity to perform on the Community Stage at this year's East Finchley Festival on Sunday 23 June in Cherry Tree Wood.

To take part in the talent show, email EFgottalent@gmail.com. Applications to participate close on Friday 5 April.

At the same time, in the

during the interval. The talent competition will then conclude with a presentation to the winner at about 4.30pm.

Everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy the day's events. Tickets are available on a pay what you can basis from www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/movie/ef-got-talent-ef-bake-off.



TESS

Classic literature and circus combine in a bold new vision of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

arts depot Wed 20 & Thu 21 Mar
www.artsdepot.co.uk



Final chapter: A reading of Simone Weil's poems was the last literary event at Black Gull Bookshop.

Photo Mike Coles

Books make us more human

By Juliana Sonsin Lima

When I first moved to East Finchley last year, I took a stroll along the High Road to get to know my new neighbourhood. I was enchanted by the local shops and friendly atmosphere, but something caught my eye that made me sure I was moving to the right place: a small bookshop full of stories and a beautiful light blue plaque with a unique bird in it.

As soon as I stepped into Black Gull Books, I knew this charming old shop would be part of my routine. I was right, of course. Over the last year the bookshop has granted me poetic breaths in the routine of this journalist that works immersed into the digital world, but misses touching paper and smelling books. Black Gull was one of those magical places I could escape to whenever I felt overwhelmed.

I was not the only one to feel like that. Manager Brian Schwartz told me during one of my visits that books are doors to other worlds. He said: "You can lose yourself in them. The greatest thing about a bookshop is people don't know what they are going to end up with. They come in looking for Wittgenstein and end up with Jamie



Job joy: Shop manager Brian Schwartz. Photo Juliana Sonsin Lima

Oliver, but hey, that's the thing."

As a booklover, I believe it is right. And I guess my fellow neighbours agree with that, too. Ever since the announcement that Black Gull would close its doors for good, I watched people paying the shop a visit and talking to Brian in a mourning tone, as if they were losing an important part of them.

As sad as it might be for the community, it surely is even harder for Brian, who has been behind the bookshop's care and management for 16 years. "My father always knew I would end up working with books and he was right. Running a bookshop has taught me to be a kinder person. The idea that you open the doors and anyone could come in and anyone does, the whole human parade, it has taught me patience. I used to be less tolerant, but something about books in a book store makes everyone calmer, kinder and more human."

As for myself, I imagined my own world when I was at the bookshop for the last time: in that world would be a new Black Gull on the High Road to keep our hearts and spirits filled with magic and humanity.

Bittersweet final reading event

By Helen Tierney

Black Gull hosted its last literary event on Sunday 18 February before its sad closure. Dr Philip Wilson was making a return visit to the shop to introduce his new translation of Simone Weil's writings and poetry.

Weil's reputation has grown considerably as an activist and inspirational mystic and Phillip, who is Associate Professor of Translation and Philosophy at the University of East Anglia, spoke in detail about her life and the complexities surrounding her beliefs.

Black Gull staff and event organisers were thrilled with the turnout and although the event signified the end of an era, Philip lightened the mood with a specially composed 'Ode to Black Gull', the final stanza of which is printed right. All in all, the evening was a great tribute to what is already a much-missed literary neighbourhood gem.



Tribute: Dr Philip Wilson at the Simone Weil event

"...And so to this last reading when the empty shelves are sad,

And closing is this shop within a world that's going mad.

So let us raise a glass, even though the points are null:

And let us toast the glories of the shrine that was Black Gull."