



Modern history: The tributes to George Michael and Amy Winehouse on the frontage of the Finchley Youth Theatre. Photos Mike Coles

Two singing legends... and other famous faces of N2

By Lynn Winton

Have you spotted the two East Finchley legends who recently arrived on the front of Finchley Youth Theatre, the former church building next to Tony's Continental? The eye-catching plaques naming Amy Winehouse and George Michael are just two of a series of 21 created by artist Edward Crooks, to commemorate some of the borough's most notable people and it is very fitting that the Youth Theatre was the chosen site for these two singers who both showed prodigious early talent.

This got me thinking about which other famous faces had the good taste to spend time living here in N2, so I consulted local resident, fount of all London knowledge and Blue Badge Guide Rachel Kolsky, who runs Go London tours (golondontours.com).

Whilst she feels rather disappointed that we don't have any official English Heritage Blue Plaques, she loves the design of these new style Barnet ones, and off the top of her head reeled off an eclectic mix of long departed residents who she believes might one day achieve local immortality with a commemoration of some sort.

Rachel said: "One of my favourites is actor Peter Sellers who lived with his mum at 211b High Road, and someone I really admire is Lord David Ennals, a Labour politician born in 1922 with a huge list of achievements. A human rights campaigner, he chaired MIND, the Anti-Apartheid Movement

and was great pals with the Dalai Lama, whose huge portrait dominated his living room in Ingram Road."

Rachel had more to reel off: "Anthony Salvin, the Victorian architect who is chiefly known for transforming the Tower of London but also built and restored scores of churches, castles and great houses. Then we have the last British hangman, Albert Pierrepoint, who executed at least 435 people and lived in Huntingdon Road in the early 1900s."

Rachel told me of many more, culminating with the US chat show host Jerry Springer, who spent some of his early years in Belvedere Court, Lytton Road, N2, and was the son of German refugees who escaped in 1939 only weeks before the Nazis closed the doors to fleeing Jews. His early ambition was not to be a celebrity, but rather the driver of the 102 bus which went past his window every day.

Famous faces today

Moving on to the present notable residents, *The Archer* respects that many like to live here undisturbed, but others can often be spotted by regulars in Cherry Tree Wood where Cherry Tree Café owner Sharon Harding told me about a few of her favourites. "Actor Michelle Collins is here every day and couldn't be more supportive of us or the community. She will give her time at the drop of a hat to help a young person wanting to get into acting," said Sharon. "And any time comedian Rhod Gilbert loses his dog Rosie he knows to head straight for the café where she'll be waiting for dog treats. Another busy broadcaster is Angela Scanlon who each year comes to support our St Patrick's Day celebrations when we have Irish dancing. A little known fact is that she was a National Irish Dance Champion back home in Ireland."



Top: The new Causeway sign and, above, how it used to look

Station sign back in place

By David Melsome
Reader Tina Janering contacted us a year ago to lament the poor state of The Causeway, the pedestrian path that leads from the back of East Finchley tube station to East End Road.

She was particularly saddened by the loss of the sign that points people in the right direction as they leave the station. It had fallen off its wooden stand and then disappeared, after which the stand itself was covered in graffiti, creating a depressing scene for visitors and locals alike. But a year on, and the sign is back! Its smart new version is in the same position outside the station exit and it looks to be firmly fixed in place. Thank you to Barnet Council and anyone else involved in getting the sign restored.

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