



A town square for the future

By Peter Hale

The London Festival of Architecture and Barnet Climate Action takes place during the month of June. The East Finchley Town Team are organising 'Round the Square', an event on Saturday 7 June on the pavement in the High Road, N2, between Budgens and Caffé Nero.



Meeting place: Fixation Academy students entertain the crowd at last year's Festival of Architecture event on the future 'Town Square' in the High Road.

We are continuing to promote the ideas to reconfigure the wide pavement space there, which is awkwardly divided by the large planting beds, so that in future we can free up space as a meeting place and to hold events.

So, please join us on Saturday 7 June from 2pm until 5pm and you can expect activities from local charity Art Against Knives who are working to prevent youth violence through creativity. Between 2pm and 4pm, join the Finchley Pollinator Project planting workshops designed to introduce pots of pollinator-friendly, nectar-rich herbs and flowers into your garden, thus supporting local biodiversity.

At 2pm Fixation Academy

of Performing Arts will be presenting an excerpt from musical theatre by young people.

East Finchley Town Team members will also be on hand to explain the proposals for "town square" improvements to this area of the High Road. Find out more at www.london-festivalofarchitecture.org

Town square update

At present holding the event in this location is awkward but continues to demonstrate the reason for our improvement proposals. The Town Team now has information about all the utilities in the area which will dictate to some extent where trees and other features can be located, and they anticipate submitting a revised scheme for planning.

Walk the history of the High Road

Town centres emerge and evolve. The High Road in East Finchley is no exception and it has grown over centuries to become the beating heart of the local community.

A 90-minute walk led by Roger Chapman next month will pick up past echoes of what was here before the buildings we know today. It will explore the evolution of the High Road to the present day and pose questions about where it may be going in the future. Fascinating documents from Old Bailey trials and newspaper reports will tease out past voices and events along this historic route, which was first used as far back as the year 1300.



Walk and talk: Roger Chapman

The first retail buildings appeared in the late Victorian and Edwardian period and Roger's guided walk will explain how and why the centre came to develop in this location. Moving nearer to the present he will bring together lived experience voices from traders to shoppers to children through the work of the East Finchley Town Team.

The walk will start at East Finchley Underground station at 11am on Saturday 7 June. The event can be booked at www.eventbrite.co.uk from Thursday 8 May.



Spruce up: James Masters, right, along with project designer Phyllida Mills and her son Thomas do some work in the Trinity Road underpass ahead of its full makeover. Photo Mike Coles

Guided walk through ten years of change

By Lynn Winton

Mark your diaries for Sunday 8 June, when Grange Big Local chair James Masters is taking part in the prestigious London Festival of Architecture. Along with volunteers, he will be leading a farewell walk for this groundbreaking East Finchley initiative, which is now coming to the close of its resident-led, lottery-funded ten-year plan.

"We will be focusing on celebrating the hard work of our fantastic residents," said James, "and whether you join the guided walk or follow our trail map independently, you will find out how volunteers made these transformative projects happen."

The free 2km walk will visit the Green Arrows Garden at Archer Academy, a tranquil and inclusive space that supports the wellbeing of students and the parent volunteers who created it.

Also on the route will be Market Place Playground, a formerly derelict, grey space that has been reimagined as an inclusive green park, with a vibrant community of supporters and users.

Paths and gardens

Other stops include the Manor Park Road Underpass, currently being refurbished, Oak Lane Open Space, the pergola outside Vale Farm allotments and the Community Quilt at Tarling Road Community Centre, ending at Barnwood, where free refreshments will be served.

Additionally, the route can be enjoyed by everyone, even from your armchair. An online trail map is accompanied by a film, made by local company Film Yard Ltd, where you can learn more about each project.

James has a final message of gratitude: "I am immensely proud of this community, that called for changes, imagined what could be better and different, and then worked together

to make it happen. GBL may have been the catalyst for all this work, but it is local people who deserve all the credit, so thank you everyone."

The guided walk will start at

11am on Sunday 8 June outside the Archer Academy Garden Space in Eagan's Close, N2. More details and the downloadable map and film can be found at grangebiglocal.org.

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

What is history?

Anyone who says that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce, is wrong. It's not history that repeats itself, it's historians. And, anyway, what is history? The obvious answer is whatever historians say it is. The reality is weirder.

To become history it has to have happened long enough ago for most of the people who were here to have died so that they can't argue about it. It helps to have been turned into the kind of book that gets reviewed in *The Times*. Better still if it has been the subject of a 26-part TV series. All of which is why we will celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

The 8 May 1945 is a hell of a long time ago. To have eaten jam sandwiches at some street party you need to be well over 80, to remember life 'before the war' you'll be pushing 90 and if you served in the thing you'll be close on 100. So it has to be history. And now we can remember it.

All too raw

We never used to. Unlike the Great War which has been memorialised every year since it ended in 1918, this second global conflict was all too raw, too much of a reminder of the horrors. And it hung like a wraith over Europe for decades as those who were there reminded those too young what they fought for. And it was not for teenagers and rock'n'roll

If you grew up in the 60s or 70s 'the war' was everywhere in books, films and on TV. It took until 1968 and *Dad's Army* for anyone to make jokes about it. And there was always someone to tell you 'what it was really like' and that they didn't fight in the war for us to listen to rock'n'roll or grow our hair and not conform. But they did; they fought in the war so we didn't have to join the Hitler Youth and so they could listen to jazz, because Hitler hated jazz.

Now we can remember

Never before or since has Europe been caught up in such a horror as what took place between 1939 and 1945. It took decades for those who were there to get over it. Many never did. Growing up in north London it didn't take much to make me realise what could have happened to many of my friends. But then my politics would probably have got me shot anyway. The thing is, to prevent history repeating itself as tragedy, you must never forget the past. So on 8 May, don't just celebrate, remember.

