



Tourist walks find their way to East Finchley

By Lynn Winton

Most of our readers are aware that they are living in an enviable London enclave, but how much, if anything at all, does the rest of the world know about East Finchley?



The rest is history: Sam Jacobs leads his inaugural London Walk around N2, here at the Northern line. Photo Mike Coles

Now they have a chance to find out, as we have made our first entry into the list of iconic 'London Walks', the first port of call for visitors looking for an expert guided walking tour. N2 now sits alongside the usual attractions like St Paul's Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament and Dickens' London.

I met our convivial City of London Guide Sam Jacobs on a 'dry run' with a couple of other curious tourists, Irina from Russia and Sabrina from Singapore. Both were keen to know how "real" London looks and works, and what was here before. Sam, our guide, lived here with his parents until he went up to Cambridge University and has researched a fascinating historical walk from the Tube station all the way to the Glebelands green area alongside the North Circular.

Highwaymen

The chances are you are reading this while living on either the Bishop of London's old hunting

park, or on those bywords for danger, Finchley Common, the haunt of highwaymen.

The site of your home might once have looked onto the country's most famous hog market, now Market Place, the toll booth for The King's Highway, or the local gibbet on the High Road, thankfully long gone, where a convict's body was left to hang and rot away for years.

We have pubs that still remember the stagecoaches, and a nursery, once an industrial school, that turned the children of the poor into parlour maids and footmen.

Sam weaves an intriguing narrative and whilst it would be wonderful for the High Road to become a destination for first-time visitors, residents might want to soak up the stories of the last 800 years as well. Sam's next walk is on 14 January and you can reserve a place online by searching for East Finchley or Sam Jacobs at www.walks.com.

Woodland rain dance



Tales to tell: Kate Brown leads the Cherry Tree Wood story time. Photo Diana Cormack

October story time led by Kate Brown for the under-nines in the children's nature area by the playground in Cherry Tree Wood ended with a rain dance. This had first been tried in the

spring when the wood's newly-planted quince trees were in need of water. They survived with a little help from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood group.



In business: Customers enjoy the new Coffee Bank café in the High Road. Photo Mike Coles

Warm welcome for café team

By Maryam Bitege

After Clyde, Joli and Adel searched across London for a home for their new café, they knew they'd made the right choice within days of arriving in East Finchley.

"We were adopted, that is the real word, adopted," said Clyde. "People of all ages were asking who are you, what are you doing, in a very positive way. They told us about the community, about the families here, about the street's history. We'd been to Dulwich Village, to Willesden, but nothing comes close to East Finchley when it comes to the warmth."

After four months transforming the former Triple Two

premises at 85 High Road, the three partners opened Coffee Bank in September. On one of their first days, Clyde saw a grandmother, parent and child all sitting together. "That's what we want," he said. "Not a restaurant, not just a coffee shop. Somewhere in between."

Open roastery

The café features an open roastery where customers watch coffee being roasted, rare in

London. Craft matcha has become their most popular drink. Unlike most cafés, they blend fresh fruit directly with matcha rather than using syrups. The team plans coffee tasting events and hands-on workshops where customers roast their own beans to take home.

Late at night while working in the café, neighbours knock on the window to check if they need help. "We'd never seen anything like it. Thank you for adopting us," said Clyde.

Art for trees

East Finchley artist Denise Ballard-Wyllie is bringing her vibrant prints and paintings to help The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood plant new native trees in the park. Her new exhibition, Buy Art, Grow Trees, runs throughout November and December at Dan & DeCarlo Café, 20 High Road, N2, with proceeds from every sale contributing directly to the tree-planting fund. There's a private view on Wednesday 12 November from 5pm to 7.30pm.

Denise says: "With every artwork sold, we'll be helping to grow new life in the woodland, for people, birds and future generations."



Bird life: One of Denise Ballard-Wyllie's works

Celebration of strange fruits



Roger Chapman. Photo Diana Cormack

On a lovely October afternoon Roger Chapman gave an interesting talk about quince and medlar in the Forest Garden near the Fordington Road entrance in Cherry Tree Wood.

Free quinces were given away along with recipe sheets for dishes involving the ancient fruits.

Santa is coming

A Christmas Fair is being held at St Mary's Catholic Church, 279 High Road, N2, on **Sunday 30 November from 11am to 2pm**. There will be carol singing, hot food and beverages, a tombola, arts and crafts, a hamper stall, toys, henna and glitter tattoos and much more.

You'll also be able to visit Santa in his Grotto, and all are welcome (it's not just for the young ones). As always, entry is free.

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

How to report a crime

• Call **999** in an emergency when there is a danger to life or a crime is in progress

• Call **101** for non-emergencies, if your property has been stolen or damaged, you wish to report drug dealing or a minor traffic accident, and for general police enquiries

• Report crime to your local Safer Neighbourhood Team by email: eastfinchley.snt@met.police.uk, gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk or fortisgreen.snt@met.police.uk

Find full details for the local SNTs at www.iloven2.co.uk/local-government-and-policing

• Stay anonymous and report information to Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**

Landmark for the Proms

This year's Proms at St Jude's season in Hampstead Garden Suburb raised £65,000 for North London Hospice and anti-poverty charity Toynbee Hall, as well as contributing to music education in local schools.

This year's donations will take the volunteers organisation past the landmark of £1.3million donated to charity over 33 years of running the arts and music festival.

Traditionally, £3 in every £4 has gone to help young people at

Toynbee Hall, with the remainder going to the Hospice, but from 2026 onwards, the donations will be split half and half.

At the same time, the dates for next year's festival have been announced as 27 June to 5 July 2026.