



Musician conjures up Cuban beats for award-winning play

By Diana Cormack

Pat 'Have Mercy' Leacock is probably best known in East Finchley for his past hosting of our annual community festival. His performances then underlined the musical skills of a man who is not only a MOBO Award-winning multi-instrumentalist but also a prize-winning poet and a composer. It is in this role that Pat has been commissioned to write the score for a re-vamped former Time Out Critics Choice play.

Pat is also a talented teacher and he met the writer of the play, Dean Stalham, when he was delivering a teaching programme he had created to support and empower ex-prisoners. Dean decided to make a change to his life via the creative arts. He started writing poetry, which was published and performed at successful poetry events in which he invited Pat to participate after reading his acclaimed poem 'The Skin I'm In'.



Creative force: Pat Leacock

After hearing a variety of Pat's musical compositions and

seeing him perform with his live band, Dean commissioned Pat to write the music for SPORADICITY, which he has re-written and re-vamped since its 2010 success. Pat composed seven salsa/samba/Cuban-inspired tracks for the play, which is described as gritty, poetic and unflinchingly real.

He said: "It was a true joy creating the pulsating, dark, sultry and warmly hypnotic pieces for SPORADICITY. No genre of music is off limits for me to listen to and to create, so being asked to travel the Salsa/Cuban music route was an aural delight."

Pat will have to travel to Hastings, where Dean is based, to see the first performances of the play at the Stables Theatre on 5 and 6 June. From there it moves to London's Old Red Lion Theatre on 17 and 18 July and then to the Hen and Chicken N1 2LW on 4 September. Contact Pat on Instagram @patsfoodiejourney and @pathavemercy.

Five centuries of service

By Sheela Guttula

The Finchley Charities marked 538 years of service with a special Heritage Day event, bringing together residents, trustees, colleagues, supporters and distinguished guests to celebrate its legacy and reflect on its future.

Founded in 1488, when Robert Waren bequeathed 11 acres of land to support the church, improve highways and provide relief to the poor, the charity has served the Finchley community for more than five centuries. Today, it continues that mission as a sheltered housing charity, offering homes and supporting independent living for people aged 55 and over.

Guests including Barnet Mayor Councillor Danny Rich and local councillor Alison Moore enjoyed presentations and resident's stories. Talks by Simon Smith on the history of alms houses and Dr John Price on the history of The Finchley Charities brought the charity's legacy vividly to life. The event also introduced the Finchley Charities' Heritage Project, an initiative to preserve and protect



Finchley Charities: Residents Stephen and Valerie Gold speaking at the Heritage Day event

its extensive archive of historical documents.

The charity's CEO Carmel Miedziolka said: "There is real space for kindness, for small acts of care, for looking out for one another, and through our Residents' Voices, we experienced so much of that at this event. Community doesn't just happen. Community grows best when the conditions are right."



Backbone of support: Just some of the volunteer team at Finchley Foodbank

Volunteers are the backbone of the food bank

By Louis Victor

It's the UK's National Volunteers Week in the first week of June, and Finchley Foodbank would like to recognise the huge effort and dedication of its own brilliant team.

Chair Paul Woodward says: "Volunteers Week is the perfect time to recognise the invaluable contributions volunteers make to Finchley Foodbank. We simply couldn't exist without them. Thank you to all our volunteers for your dedication, passion, and time; you are the backbone of our efforts, and your work ensures the Foodbank is able to open its doors to people in need in Barnet."

Foodbank volunteers fill roles ranging from receiving deliveries to sorting donations to restocking shelves and staffing the two weekly client sessions. The Foodbank is always on the lookout for more volunteers to help with these tasks and also for the 'digital champions' role.

These are people who can show others how to use smartphones, computers and tablets safely and signpost clients to potential funds, council services, and other online resources.

Volunteering at Finchley Foodbank, based in East Finchley, is a great way to give to your local community and to gain a lot personally, and is perhaps best expressed in the words of some current volunteers.

Harry Harcus says: "My advice is to find something that you care about and that fits your lifestyle and routine because it is a commitment. For me it's been a way to give back to my community and use my skills and time to help others."

Begum Noormamode says: "I would wholeheartedly encourage people to volunteer. It has a way of opening your eyes in the best possible way. The people you meet are genuine, supportive, and quietly like-minded, and you end up learning so much simply by being part of it. If someone is thinking about volunteering, I would encourage them to take that first step. It might change their life for the better, just as it has mine."

If you want to find out more about helping out at Finchley Foodbank, visit finchleyfoodbank.org.uk where you will also find how to get in touch. And check out the Be Part of It column on page 2 of this newspaper to find opportunities with other local organisations.

Thirty years of garden glory in Muswell Hill

Susan Bennett and Earl Hyde are opening their fabulous Muswell Hill garden again in support of the National Garden Scheme (NGS). Last year, the couple raised £10,000 with a series of open days.

Now in their 30th year of welcoming public visitors, their garden is famous for its beauty and variety, and for Earl's mouth-watering homemade cakes.

Susan says: "In a world fraught with traumas beyond our control, the health benefits of gardens are universally recognised. King Charles, Patron of the NGS, knew that instinctively, practising organic principles and "talking to his plants" long before we learnt plants are sentient in their own way.

"A warm welcome awaits whatever the weather. Our plant sale is abundant, our pottery studio is open to browse, our homemade cakes are delicious. A huge thanks to our dream team of helpers who make it possible."

You can visit Susan and Earl on Sunday 14 June and Sunday 2 August, both days from 2pm to 6.30pm, at 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, N10. Admission is £5, children free, dogs on leads welcome, disabled access. Cash preferred, cards accepted.



Garden guru: Susan Bennett during a visit to the Chelsea Flower Show

Looking for volunteers?

Are you looking for volunteers to help in your community group or organisation? Our Be Part of It column is published on page 2 every month and gets results.

Submissions are free and are included subject to available space. Please submit your listing up to a maximum of 80 words to news@the-archer.co.uk, marking your email 'Be Part of It'.