

JIM: If space allows, use Arts & Vintage frontage (attached in landscape and portrait formats)

(1052 words)

N6: the Eastern Approaches

by Shirley Shelton

Hearing that Archway Road has been enjoying something of a renaissance, I recently walked each side to see what new shops and services have arrived and which stalwart businesses remain. I encountered many congenial and helpful traders along the way, but nonetheless I passed lots of shuttered premises. These independent businesses need supporting if they are to survive and thrive! Here are just some of them.

Starting up at Topps Tiles on the corner of Bishops Road and walking south, I noted Wild Guitars (no 393) and the long-standing security shop, **Bex Locksmith** (no 369, tel 07788 425881) who will supply and install locks and let you in if you lock yourself out. Further down is the invaluable **Post Office** (no 361, 8340 2544), with an exterior ATM and inside, a photo booth. A few doors along is **Ripping Yarns** (no. 355) the browsable second-hand bookstore with a good line in children's books.

On the corner with Southwood Lane is the large **Hayward Pharmacy** (no 353, 8349 2993, closed Sun), its new blue façade approved by Michael Hammerson in a recent Buzz. On the south corner is the **Petvet** shop and information source for animal owners (no 351, 8341 4888, www.petvet.co.uk).

Past the old bank building, **Papa Del** (no 347) is great for pizzas and pasta after a family outing to Highgate Woods, with big tables for large groups. A comprehensive grocer of frankly unexpected quality follows: **Delicatessen & Delights** (no 343). A couple of charity shops (Donate, don't Dump) precede the Oz Café Patisserie (no 325) with free wi-fi, and Second Layer (no 323), a dealer in avant garde CDs and vinyls.

Celebrated **Tilley's London Castings** (no 305, 8341 5975, www.tillingslondoncastings.co.uk) carries perhaps 90 per cent of the original patterns for railings and gates around these parts, and makes all kinds of bespoke metalwork such as balconies and staircases (also in wood). Here you can meet the great-great-great grandson of the Archway Road tollgate keeper.

From Tilley's living history to the very today **auctionPeople**, (no 301, 0333 1234506 info@auctionpeople.co.uk) who will sell anything over £100 for you on eBay, from designer clothes, furniture and art to computers. They manage everything - photography, description, advice on price, eBay placement, payment processing - for 25% of the final price. Talk to helpful Rebecca.

Local artists still regret Plotons Art Supplies, but another doughty establishment still with us is **Stantons** (no 295-297, 8341 9692). The stock is 'janitorial', which means cleaning materials, with everything for household maintenance including graffiti removal.

The amenities of Jacksons Lane Community Centre need no recommendation from me. Below the junction is cool and pretty Laos Café, linked with next-door **Arts & Vintage** (no 265, 02080 2928453). Here Elsa Rand's choice of decorative art and gifts makes a colourful window display, and notable too is her bespoke jewellery service.

Again, no recommendation needed for **The Red Hedgehog** (no 255-257, 8348 5050, www.theredhedgehog.co.uk), Clare Fischer's inspired local venue for recitals, theatre and other events. **Dean and Hudson** (no 249, 8340 1698, www.deanandhudson.com) is a new café with a glamorous pink and black interior offering their own excellent cutting cakes, cupcakes and made-to-order celebration cakes.

Further down, behind Richardsons, is **The Old Stables** (nos 191 -199), a half-cobbled yard with twelve studio/workshop units and some genuine old enamel advertisements. At Units 10/11 is **Blue Saw** (07903 109022), where Paul Brown makes fitted wardrobes, bookcases, et cetera. At Unit 5 is **Geoffrey Stansall's** upholstery and chair-caning workshop (8347 9558). Unit 3 is **The Vintage Bike**

Cave (8341 6307), where Graham builds and repairs vintage steel-framed bikes, and sells 40%, he says, to ladies. At Unit 1, **Hampstead Decorative Arts** studio, artist Harry Levinson (8348 8811) teaches the techniques of trompe l'œil painting - marbling, graining.

A long-term landmark on the Archway Road is **Richardsons of Highgate** (no 191-199, 8340 2183), the family-owned furniture emporium where each piece is a statement of quality in design and execution. Below Causton Road is **Archway Cycles** (no 183, 8340 9696).

After Cromwell Avenue I crossed the road and turned north. This is the right point - the nearest I got to Archway proper - to mention two informative websites: www.betterarchway.info and www.ecoarchway.org.uk

On the corner of Langdon Park Road is a surprise: **Selvedge** (no 162, 8341 9721, www.selvedge.org), the beautiful textile crafts magazine where they also have a shop selling handmade gifts. Next I noted Halfadozen (no 164), a new gallery which offers affordable works from artists in residence, Pax Guns (no 166, 8340 3039) with serious hobby stuff, and Highgate Chiropractic (no 174, 8341 2212).

Changing Curtains (no 186, 8340 9801), which also supplies blinds and awnings to order, was showing some beautiful fabrics in the window. Another company of note, **The Stained Glass Works** (no 188, 8348 0220, www.thestainedglassworks.co.uk) will design new or restore old pieces.

It's hard to walk past **The Green Room** (no 192, 8340 7759), described as 'a new type of charity shop' but in fact a traditional and literally wonderful type of junk shop. Anything can turn up amongst the bric-a-brac, bygones, ephemera, pillboxes, from a dinosaur's egg to a pristine silk suit originally owned by Cherie Blair.

After the Murugan Hindu Temple is enticing **Bennetts Place** (no 200, 1219 0947). Here far countries and past times meet in original costume jewellery, often of vintage or exotic beads and semi-precious stones reworked. Past the Winchester Hall Hotel, as its handsome wrought ironwork proclaims, and Northwood Road, I arrived at **Wine of Course** (no 216, 8347 9006), selling natural and biodynamic wines, and of course the widely-acclaimed local tipples, Sacred Gin and Sacred Vodka.

Further on are Archway Video and DVD Library (no 220), Highgate Physiotherapy (no 244, 8340 9422), and some substantial empty premises called The Old Paper Mill (no 270). On the corner of Holmesdale Road, where Le Moulin restaurant used to be, is now a tiny Indian, Chilli Spice (no 310, 8348 3444). Finally, beyond the Boogaloo pub, in a sort of brick pavilion on the corner with Shepherds Hill, is another time-defying furniture showroom, Betty Gould Antiques (8348 1160).