

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Coffee Shop

by Miriam Silver

My love affair with coffee shops began 30 years ago, single, retired, aimless, living in a north London suburb, Sharrards and Choraks both real bakers, provided a welcome place to sit, read -a book/ newspaper - no screens, meet and chat. My career in leisure drinking coffee was launched right there on East Finchly high road.

Nothing can compare with The Beach, open 365 days, decking with chairs and tables right on the beach. Here I can watch swimmers, dogs, some in push chairs, tattoo covered ladies and gents, while sitting looking out to sea.

And the one available for those hardy walkers at the end or beginning of their walk over the Downs and where it is possible for me to sit and enjoy the view.

The florist, not in the best part, has one too, such a pleasure to sit in there, the atmosphere enhanced by all the smells, the plants and flowers providing the perfect accompaniment for my coffee.

They spring up daily, furnished minimally with second hand tables painted or revealing the grain of the wood, giving a cool look, often displaying stuff I have long ago discarded, labelled 'retro'. The local one is excellently for breakfast here, their bread, and welcome, second to none.

Higgs Boson, a sorcerer or apothecary, has a coffee shop, behind yellow lines, next door to a church in an unfrequented road, downtown, which boasts walls covered with framed pictures depicting chemistry-physics diagrams proving the owner's theories. He can grow diamonds and make gold. Crystals are growing in his special liquid, the diamonds are safely framed behind glass.

His coffee is good too. Currently he hasn't been able to market his discovery and is disappointed that none of the scientific institutions contacted have responded to his research.

Essential components for my perfect coffee shop. Chairs that encourage lingering over a second cup not settees. Too low. Quiet, no music, enabling conversation, discouraging screens. Coffee making machine distanced discreetly from customers, using only the healthiest and best ingredients. Positioned against the far wall will be Booths to which one could take that spoon which displays not only your table but your preference for privacy or 'welcome'.

This cafe will bring increased trade to surrounding businesses, will have a view of both the sea and the Downs, be decorated low key with a nautical touch, palm trees and indoor plants will proliferate. As will hygiene. No retro stuff or stripped wood anywhere.

French recipe bread available daily, it will smell wonderful, served by cheery young men and women who will be forbidden to say either,

'Have a nice day' or

'see you soon' or even

'is everything ok?' Urgh!

Of course there will be selection of the best daily papers and all of the Sundays, when Brunch will be available, sharing Tapas or Charcuterie plates.

My coffee shop will be the one that 'anyone who is anyone' in my town will be happy to be seen, it will become a 'must do'. A haven for those who have it all.

You'll know where to find me, that is only and until the above are no more.