



Robert & Natalie outside their Jewellers
(Photo: Redwood London/Natalie Werter)

Robert and Natalie the sibling owners of Cohens, the Jewellers

SIMONE HALFIN INTERVIEWS

Brother and sister Robert and Natalie, currently running D&M Cohen Ltd, Jewellers in Temple Fortune, have been celebrating the shop's 50th year of trading.

Simone: Robert and Natalie, many congratulations on D&M Cohen's 50th Anniversary last year. As you were not able to celebrate properly due to the pandemic, have you been making up for it this year?

Natalie: We have continued the promotion with a loyalty card and a scratch card that we had started to use before lockdown at the end of last year and we are continuing to honour that now as well.

Simone: You are the third generation to own the shop, tell me about the original owners.

Robert: The D was my Uncle, Michael, and the M my Father, Douglas, and the M my Father, Michael. We used to have five shops around London. The last but one was in Tottenham, which closed about 15 years ago, and this is the remaining one which has been going for 51 years now.

Simone: Your wonderful assistant, Tony, behind the counter – who can repair most things – how long has he been with you?

Robert: Tony has been with us for over 40 years. A large part of our business is repairs. We can repair batteries and some watches from here, but we have lots of repairers who we can send things to.

Natalie: We have a fantastic team of staff and they have been very loyal to us over the years.

Simone: Did you always want to continue in the family business?

Robert: Yes, after I left university, I immediately came back to work with my father.

Simone: Natalie, does that go for you too?

Natalie: I used to work here on Saturdays and school holidays since I was really young, then had a break, working for Signet Group Jewellers and became a Junior Buyer, but left to have my family.

After that I came back and have worked here ever since.

Simone: I notice you are a Member of the Company of Master Jewellers – what does that entail?

Robert: It is a large buying group for independent retailers with bi-annual meetings. We get special discounts and things like that.

Natalie: We share ideas and discuss what is going on in the industry.

Simone: You have an incredibly varied stock, do you ever fancy buying any of the second-hand things that have been brought in?

Robert: Watches. I am into second-hand watches and if there is one going, they always take my eye.

Natalie: And I am into jewellery.

Simone: Over the years you have been working here, have you had any problems?

Richard: Yes in 2016 we had an armed robbery; they smashed our wooden door in with a sledgehammer around lunchtime.

Simone: Were you there?

Richard: No, I had just popped out of the shop to pick up some laundry from down the road, my sister was here with Tony, it was just the two of them, they forced both of them into the back of the shop. One was watching over them, and one was taking stuff from the front window. Then, fortunately, Wolfgang from Sweet Vienna, which used to be next

door, came out with one of his big rolling pins, which scared them, so they left.

Simone: Did you lose much stock? Were they ever caught?

Richard: Yes, they took a bit from the front window. I think one of them was caught.

Simone: To finish on a nicer subject; lots of celebrities live round here, have you seen many in your shop?

Richard: Yes. Tom Conti has come in, Richard Madeley has been in a lot, Annie Lennox, Jonathan Ross, Emma Bunton.

Simone: Any funny stories?

Richard: Well, I have become quite good friends with the boxer, Anthony Joshua. He messaged on social media after he won his gold medal that he wanted a watch and I replied saying come down to your local jeweller and I will sort you out. I made a bet with him that if Andy Murray, who was playing in the US Open at that time won, I would give him a watch, up to a certain value. Andy Murray did win, and he came in with Nicola Adams, who also won a gold medal in boxing. He also recommended us for a Google advert, which we made with him last year which was good fun.

Simone: A nice note to end on.

Thank you and a very happy anniversary D&M Cohen!



Early A & J Cohen shop in Hoxton NI, circa 1950s

A SHOUT OUT FOR... Hampstead Dental Studio

The Suburb's very own Hampstead Dental Studio has been nominated for 'Best New Practice' and 'Best Website' in the National Private Dentistry Awards 2021. They are one of only five nominees and the nomination coincides with their one year anniversary. We wish them good luck!



Photo: Ann Clarke, Survive Alive



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