



The Archer Showcase:-

A new series featuring work from members of local writing groups by Daphne Chamberlain

Judith Sullivan from East Finchley Writers

This is really new ground for *THE ARCHER*. For the first time we are publishing parts of a novel. This month you can read the first chapter, and we will bring you further excerpts at intervals.

Bird to the Hilltop is Judith's second novel, but her first has not yet appeared in print. She says, "I just sat down and did the first book, throwing it all together in about six months. With this one, I'm getting really good feedback from the group. I can't thank those guys enough".

American-born Judith, a journalist with experience in information technology, has been living in England for four-and-a-half years. Belonging to the group, she says, gives her a bonus benefit of participating in the Finchley community.

Bird to the Hilltop, set in a background of pre-11 September New York, is planned as one of a series, inspired by Sue Grafton's Alphabet novels.

It's showtime

By Daphne Chamberlain

In December, Femke van Iperen introduced the East Finchley Writers. There are several creative writing groups in East Finchley, and we would like to showcase all of them by publishing some of their work.

Make no mistake, you non-authors, work is the right word. Writing is a craft, and like all crafts, its practitioners can learn from each other. It is also about communication. How does a solitary writer know if they are getting that vital point across, if there is no feedback from their readers? This is why support, encouragement and constructive criticism from fellow group-members are so important. (Remember that even published authors in the big league work with an editor - who very rarely receives any credit.)

Creative Writers' Group Showcase

The writing we would publish in a Showcase series would already have been read and discussed with a group. It could be a short story, an extract from a novel, a poem, dialogue from a play, part of an autobiography, - but it must be less than 400 words long.

So contact us, all you groups out there. This is your chance to be published. And, all you solitaires hammering the keyboard, if you don't belong to a group remember that you are not excluded from appearing in *THE ARCHER*. Just send us your work. After all, the whole of the paper is a showcase for East Finchley.



Judith Sullivan photo by Femke van Iperen

"Fly away like a bird to the hilltop

and fit their arrows to the string, to shoot from the ambush the true of heart"

Chapter 1

Who'd a thunk it. For two blissful years during which no-one keeled over dead at my feet, everyone in my circle of friends remained steadfastly among the living.

That all ended with the death of top model Melanie.

You know about Melanie's death. Everyone on planet earth with access to a computer or a newspaper knows about her fatal collapse in Paris in January.

You know that Mela's demise at the age of 20 blew what tinny little bit of a lid still covered the notion of glamour and cheer within the fashion industry. Essays were written, chins scratched, committees convened and much, much hot air blown on the subject of beauty, fame and innocence lost. Much of the verbiage was about as vacuous as the milieu it professed to attack and analyze.

There were good articles and tv interviews, of course. But even some of the better pieces on what happened, especially one in the New York Times Sunday magazine, missed some of the key points. This account of what really happened will, I hope, turn any of you still lured by the appeal of haute couture straight in the direction of the nearest Bloomingdale's.

Let me introduce myself to get that out of the way before we turn to the more interesting story of what happened to Mela. The events last winter and brought to a shocking halt a good period in my life.

First things first. I am MJ Quinn, known in some very witty circles as the mighty Quinn or Quinn of the night. Clever stuff if you find wit in a soundbite. I am a simple girl, really. 42 years old. Tall, relatively slim, white. I live in Paris, with my loyal feline named after the late great Flannery O'Connor. And if you don't know who she is, go back to the bookstore where you bought this. Now. Straight to the O section.

Archer Bridge



The Stayman Convention

By Mike Graham

Named, somewhat quixotically, after the American player George Rapee, the Stayman convention is a bid of Two Clubs after partner bids 1NT (some players also have the understanding that it applies after a 1NT overcall as well). It asks partner if he has a four card major; responses of Two Hearts and Two Spades show four cards in the bid suit, and a response of Two Diamonds denies a four card major.

It is important to remember that the convention can be used on both weak and strong hands. For example, holding ♠ 5432 ♥ 5432 ♦ 5432 ♣ 2 (to take an extreme case) you may well bid Two Clubs if partner opens 1NT and the next hand passes. Whatever partner bids, you intend to pass it. This may make it difficult for the opponents to enter the auction, as they may be uneasy about doubling without trump length. You may still go for 1100, of course, but such instances will be rare.

There is no harm on using Stayman on relatively balanced hands where your side has the balance of power. North-South got egg on their faces on this deal, from a local teams match:

South opened One Notrump, showing, at this vulnerability, 14-16 points, and West passed. North added his 14 points to his partners 14-16, and simply jumped to 3NT. West led the king of spades, and there was no happy ending. South showed good technique by ducking the first two rounds of spades, but could not make nine tricks without playing on diamonds. West took his ace and cashed his spades for down one; 100 to East-West.

If North had used Stayman South would have responded Two Hearts. North would have an easy raise to Four Hearts, and South would have made an easy eleven tricks - 650 to North-South. A swing of 750 points!

Dealer South		♠	A82		
Game All		♥	QJ97		
		♦	QJ5		
		♣	A43		
♠	KQJ96		N	♠	743
♥	83			♥	652
♦	A32		W	♦	974
♣	982		S	♣	J1075
		♠	105		
		♥	AK104		
		♦	K1086		
		♣	KQ6		

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