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Crafty paradise at artists' fair

By Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley Open (EFO) artists and craftspeople provided a present buyer's paradise at their Winter Fair at the end of November. The venue at Martin School was packed out, with visitors asked to contribute towards the work of Contact, our local good neighbourhood scheme, as their admission fee. Contact, whose volunteers staffed the entrance foyer, benefited by £720. A spokesperson told *THE ARCHER* they were delighted with the response. *The Royle Family's* Liz Smith, who has recently moved into the area, picked three prizewinners from the public who had contributed, prizes being original pieces of artwork donated by EFO.

Artwork on offer on the 36 stalls offered something for most tastes. Catching my eye (and sometimes my purse) were exquisite examples of woodwork, hand-painted silk scarves, jewellery worked in stones and in feathers, paintings, photographs and tapestries. I always had someone in mind for these presents, but the hardest thing was making sure it wasn't always me!

Topping up stamina on a very cold day were members of the Martin PTA, who organised

food provided by parents, with takings going to their funds. Appropriately, Martin's junior head teacher Maggie Driscoll had a few words to say about linking the school with the community.

The EFO has two regular annual events – the Winter Fair and the Summer Open – when members invite the public into their homes and studios. Their aim is to be a vital part of our community, both by promoting locally produced art and craft, and by using their talent to support community concerns.



Liz Smith at the Winter Fair. Photo courtesy of EFO

Angels of the stars

A multitude of angelic artworks by celebrities including Alexei Sayle, Meera Syal, Jamie Theakston, Carol Smillie and Jonathan Ross went up for auction in aid of north London performing arts charity The Kaos Organisation.

The money raised from the event at Avenue House, East End Road, in December will be put towards the production of a DVD and CD of the award-winning choir for deaf and hearing children.

Incorporating singing and British Sign Language interpretation, Kaos regularly entertains audiences with performances of original Songs of Kaos, all written by or especially for the group.

Comedian and TV presenter Rowland Rivron, whose children attend the group, said: 'Kaos is worth having kids for.' For more

information on the choir, call Ali on 07950 359209 or email kaos_angels@yahoo.com.

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Film director Terry Gilliam talks to the audience at the Phoenix Cinema. Picture by John Lawrence.

Gilliam warns of indie cinema threat

By John Lawrence

Acclaimed film director Terry Gilliam warned during a special visit to the Phoenix Cinema that independent film making was under threat as never before.

Gilliam, who lives in Highgate, was in East Finchley for a question-and-answer session after a showing of his latest film, *Tideland*.

He told the audience that good independent cinemas such as the Phoenix were in short supply and this had a knock-on effect on the number of low-budget films being seen by the public.

Gilliam, the director of *Brazil*, *The Fisher King* and *Twelve Monkeys*, said: "This is a tough time for independent film makers and independent cinemas. There are plenty of independent films being made but there are fewer places to get them shown."

Tideland is Gilliam's own independent film. He was forced to seek funding for it from a number of small-scale Canadian film companies because Hollywood moguls shied away from its subject matter.

Critics have not been kind to it, but a show of hands at the Phoenix revealed that this audience of Gilliam fans loved it, most saying it was 'beautiful' as well as many finding it 'disturbing'.

Based on the cult book of the same name by Mitch Cullin, it looks at the world through the eyes and imagination of

10-year-old Jeliza-Rose as her drug-addicted mother and father die around her and she comes to terms with a new life in the wide open spaces of the Prairies.

"There's no chance that this film would have got through the Hollywood system but it's very dear to me," said Gilliam. "When I first read it, the story was never-endingly surprising. To me, it's about a young child being amazingly resilient about everything that can be thrown at her."

Unusually, the film begins with a short speech by Gilliam

himself urging his audience to leave their adult preconceptions behind and to try to remember what life is like as a child. "Did you like that?" he asked the Phoenix crowd. "Hitchcock used to do it so I thought I'd give it a go."

Before signing autographs in the foyer, the 66-year-old Gilliam announced that his on-off project to make *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* starring Johnny Depp may be on again. He said: "The money may be available. The trouble is, by the time Johnny's free to make it, I may be dead."

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