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Sharma shows off the station's floral display. Photo by Diana Cormack

A brighter journey

East Finchley is one of the tube stations selected by London Underground to welcome travellers with a beautiful display of flowering plants. Station employee Sharma told the Archer that, as well as having a suitable entrance in which to display them, there had to be staff members who were willing to take care of the plants. Sharma felt it was a way of cheering up passengers "in these days of recession" and said that many people had commented on them.

Alex's teenage tale

By Jake McConnell

Four years ago, Alex Pearl was a copywriter whose workflow had slowed to a trickle. With nothing else to do, he decided to start writing a book. Now his work is earning rave reviews and will soon start raising money for a homelessness charity.

The book is called *Sleeping with the Blackbirds*, and is written for children aged 14 upwards. It follows perpetually bullied 11-year-old schoolboy Roy Nuttersley, who befriends the birds in his suburban garden and hatches an ambitious scheme.

Alex, an East Finchley resident for 12 years, said: "I originally wrote it for my kids. I guess I wanted to show them that not all kids had it as easy as they did."



After being made redundant, Alex set out to publish his work. It will launch in the autumn and, with each purchase of the book, a sum of £1 or more will be given to the national charity Centrepont.

Alex added: "I realised that the book could do some real good by raising money for Centrepont, which does fantastic work for homeless youngsters."

The charity supports over 1,300 homeless young people a year in London and the

North East. It provides the personal, social and educational support they need to build their self-esteem and turn their lives around.

So far, Alex's story has received positive reviews.

Towering achievement for guides

Girls from the 4th East Finchley guide group joined more than 4,000 other guides from London and the South East as they walked across some of the world-famous bridges spanning the River Thames.

Each group decided how many of the eight bridges to walk across and which route to take.

The 4th East Finchley guides decided that they would walk over all eight, zigzagging from the Golden Jubilee Bridge, down to Tower Bridge and then walking all the way back along the South Bank to do the final one, Westminster Bridge.

After a full day's walking they were all exhausted. The group of six girls, aged between 10 and 13, took part in the event on Saturday 9 July. It was designed to encourage walking as a way of exploring



The 4th East Finchley Guides make it to Tower Bridge on their Thames walk.

Quiz winner

Thanks to everyone who entered The Archer's quiz on our stall at the East Finchley Festival in June. Congratulations to our winner Genevieve Martin.

the outdoors and each girl collected a medal once they had completed their walk.

For more information on girl guiding, visit www.girlguiding.org.uk.

THE ARCHER on twitter

THE ARCHER is now on twitter. For local news and tips, follow us at <http://twitter.com/#!/TheArcherN2>.

You can also keep up with us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TheArcherN2>.

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