



Talented lady of letters

By Diana Cormack

On 9 May, members of the East Finchley Open (EFO) group of artists made a special visit to attend a calligraphy workshop at the Victoria and Albert Museum. But this visit was particularly special because the workshop was being run by one of their own, namely Cherrell Avery.

Since January, Cherrell has been one of three artists in residence at the museum. Some readers may remember her from Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute where Cherrell taught calligraphy for many years. Others may recall her as one of the organisers of the East Finchley toy library, more than 20 years ago.

After being selected last autumn, Cherrell was amazed to see the whole of her home studio transported to a huge room at the V&A. Her remit was to be there for a minimum of three days a week, one of which was to be spent working with the public, giving lessons and providing activities for both adults and children.

Previous primary school teaching experience no doubt helped when Cherrell designed work sheets for youngsters requiring them to visit different galleries for inspiration and interest. Encouraging adults to look at various displays in the museum to stimulate and support their skills is an important part of Cherrell's work. It is also vital to her own artistic development and the notes and sketches she has produced will no doubt lead to some impressive work in the future.

Cherrell has run a successful calligraphy business for the last ten years. She uses her teaching skills to inform the general public and students of calligraphy. At present she is tutor on a foundation degree course at Kensington Palace; she also teaches handwriting and advises on handwriting difficulties. Cherrell travels to advise and lecture both in the UK and abroad, where some of her work is collected and exhibited. Her lettering expertise has been used by film and TV companies, major clothing stores, contemporary artwork projects and in commemorative products, to name but a few. Visit www.cherrellavery.co.uk to find out more.



In harmony: the children of Martin Primary School joined voices with the North London Chorus.

Rained-off choir sings again

By Adam Chandler

North London Chorus and Martin School Choir rehearsed long and hard to perform *Ballads for a Living Planet* at the East Finchley Festival. Unfortunately, the *Living Planet* gave us some rather terrible weather, leading to the reluctant cancellation of the event.

However, all their hard work did not go to waste as the group performed to delighted parents and friends in Martin School on Thursday 21 June. The piece was commissioned to contribute to the repertoire of modern 'green' choral music commenting directly on our fragile human relationship with Planet Earth.

It was designed to be a piece with sufficient musical challenges to be interesting but also readily accessible to most choirs of all ages and abilities, so the perfect vehicle for this collaboration.

Natalie Grant, music teacher at Martin School, said: "It really was a great experience for the children and the parents were absolutely thrilled. I don't think I've seen them so happy after a performance! I hope we can do something similar in the future."

NLC's vice-chair Shantini Cooray, who led and conducted the NLC contingent, added: "We really enjoyed the experi-

ence of singing with them. It's not one we do very often and we look forward to similar chances in the future."

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By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Stoned

It's seriously weird when your wild youth starts drawing its pension and nothing is weirder than when it happens to the Rolling Stones. What was once the most dangerous band in the world is now a bunch of old blokes trying to remember when rock was young and they were younger. Greatest rock'n'roll band in the world? In 1970 maybe; in 2012 they just look old and embarrassing. And it all started so well.

Ignore all the stuff about the first-ever gig in July 1962, the Stones really start in 1963 when the 'classic' line up of Mick, Keith, Brian, Bill and Charlie got together and became the parent-frightening alternative to The Beatles. And what an alternative. The lovable mop tops sang about holding your hand, but with Brian Jones, the Cheltenham Casanova, it wasn't going to stop with holding hands.

The Stones were the band who told you to get off their cloud, couldn't get any satisfaction and were heading for a 19th nervous breakdown and an appointment with the police. They were the wild boys for wild youth.

The madness, debauchery and general mayhem lasted right through the 1960s. It didn't matter that Brian started the trend of dying at 27 when he failed to float in his swimming pool or that they were at Altamont when the hippy dream died. No, they were the Stones, the exiles on main street, or in Keith's case, the exile on mainlining heroin who embarked on a lost decade of drugs and more drugs.

Then it went wrong. Mick started hanging out with the rich and ludicrous, the music got dull and by the time they turned up to play Knebworth in the summer of 1976 they were becoming dinosaurs. Except they didn't stop there. So what if punks could out-sneer them? The Stones had too much money to care and with Keith's mate, the hard-drinking Ronnie Wood, on board the party continued until the rest of us got bored.

Now they look like a bunch of old blokes trying to pretend they are still relevant when they went out of style 30 years ago. Rock writer Nik Cohn was right when he said that the Stones should have stayed forever young by dying in a plane crash before their collective 30th birthdays. And he wrote that in 1970.

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