



## Bletchley circles and the Cube

By Daphne Chamberlain

*The Bletchley Circle*, the fictional drama about four former codebreakers turned crimebusters, has returned to our screens. On a Bletchley Park website somebody asked whether such a strong bond between these women would have been likely. The answer was no. Many codebreakers who have encountered each other later in life had worked there at the same time, but never met.

People working in one room didn't know what their neighbours in the next room were doing. What historians say does ring true about the drama, though, is the strength of common experience, and how these women can share with each other what they are not allowed to share with anyone else, even their closest families.

Winston Churchill called Bletchley Park the goose that laid many eggs but never cackled, but now the veil of secrecy has been partly lifted. The Bletchley Oral Archive Project is gathering first-hand memories in a race against time.

Could you contribute, or do you know someone else who could? Bletchley Park had outposts at Eastcote and Stanmore, and much of the practical work

operating these machines was done by Wrens.

Contact [www.bletchley-park.org.uk](http://www.bletchley-park.org.uk) if you can add anything, however small, to the extraordinary story which we are hearing at last.

### And what about the Cube?

A spacecraft measuring 10x10x10 cm and weighing less than 1kg is sending messages to the National Radio Centre at Bletchley Park. Launched in Russia last November, it transmits data about its position, temperature, atmospheric conditions and battery performance to monitoring stations around the world. Working with schools and colleges, it's intended to educate and inspire children and teenagers "for many years to come".



The Fire Service attending a fire at Viceroy Close in the centre of East Finchley. Photo by John Dearing

## Flat fire

**A man was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation after an electrical fault started a fire in a first floor flat in Viceroy Close on the High Road.**

The fire service was called to Viceroy Close at 1.30 pm on 13 December. "Two firefighters rushed up the stairs with a fire hose," said John Dearing who lives in the same building. "I saw a young man wander out of the burning flat onto the balcony walkway looking dazed. The fire had already spread to what looked like a pile of brown paper just outside the flat which was burning quite fiercely."

An ambulance was called while the fire fighters controlled the fire. The 30-year-old man was treated at the scene and then taken to Whittington hospital as a precautionary measure.

The fire service reports that 5% of the five roomed flat was damaged by the blaze. "The fire fighters told me that there was no danger to the rest of the building," said John Dearing. "Then about an hour after the incident, a senior fire fighter from our local station called at the flats offering free smoke alarms and fitted two in my flat."

The fire service can provide anyone with a free fire safety

check of their home; you don't have to have been affected by a fire. The visit includes a free smoke alarm(s) which is installed for you. To arrange a visit, call 08000 28 44 28 or go to <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/SmokeAlarms.asp>



Grace Guia and Bohus Trulik display their cakes at Delicia. Photo Mike Coles

## Let them continue to eat cake

By Diana Cormack

**One of the cake stalls which drew a lot of attention at the East Finchley Christmas Festival belonged to Delicia of Fortis Green. This café-restaurant opened in late October at 4-5 Cheapside, where The Emporium Tea Rooms used to be.**

Cake lovers will be pleased to learn that cakes still play a big part there, the eye-catching ones being Portuguese, freshly made daily in another part of London. Those on offer at the festival came in an impressive range of shapes and styles. The

adjoining stall displayed various breads baked by a Japanese lady from Muswell Hill who makes them for Delicia to sell on Saturday mornings.

The café aims to become part of the local community and is already a meeting place for clubs and societies, with a Saturday Club, Neighbourhood Watch, Italian and German language groups and a Scrabble Club in the pipeline.

Weekday mornings start with coffee being available from 7.30am and food from

9am (Saturdays from 8am). Chef Bob told *THE ARCHER* that the emphasis is on fresh food, with everything home made, even the salad dressings and the chips.

Delicia is child-friendly, with a special menu for youngsters along with an inviting play area. Children's parties can be arranged whilst celebrating adults can book dinner in the evening and bring their own bottles. For more information or to make a booking call 07879 816 420.

## Clean as you cycle

By Daphne Chamberlain  
**This is not about cleaning your bike. It's about your bike cleaning the streets.**

This is the idea: a chemical reaction between elements in a lithium-ion battery, water and surrounding carbon dioxide produces oxygen. At the same time, a filter traps dust and air pollution particles, and the rider moves through cleansed, oxygen-rich air.

The APB (Air-Purifier Bike), designed in Thailand by Lightfog Creative and Design Company, has won a Red Dot Design award, but don't rush out to buy one yet. The prototype is still to be completed.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Deep freeze

**As we drown in the latest flood, as your average banker watches his Porsche float down the Thames and the stockbroker belt becomes the stockbroker lifebelt, it's time to think about the cold. Why? Because once upon a time you'd have worried about ice, not floods, so cast a fond look back to a time when you could walk up the Thames from Chelsea to the City without getting your feet wet. Yes, welcome to the big freeze, welcome to the frost fair, welcome to a time when a banker really could walk on water.**

Back when men were men and codpieces weren't something you bought from the chippy, the Thames made a habit of freezing over in London. It did it over 20 times between 1400 and 1820. Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth both skated on it, fairs were held on it and even if the river only froze for a couple of days, it was still long enough for people to take their elephants for walks across it. During the last one in 1814 they set up a full scale fairground and a printing press, roasted oxen and got seriously decadent as only the debauched Londoner can.

Lots of reasons are given for the big freeze, not all of them sensible. It seems that one of Iceland's more incontinent volcanos erupting and belching out ash and magma in 1783 played a supporting role. The main players could have been a bunch of Pacific volcanos led by Mount Rinjani getting over excited in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and ushering in a mini ice age. Either that or it was sunspots or something out of a Terry Pratchett novel. Anyway, things got colder, Greenland stopped being inhabited, oranges stopped growing in northern China and winemaking stopped in England. Which, if you've drunk some of the more dubious products of Chateau North Circular, was no bad thing.

So, why did it stop? Was it because of the Victorian global warming, or because the volcanos got bored? In London it was down to London Bridge. Back in the days when it had 19 arches and the river was wide and sluggish, it didn't take much to freeze it over. But when they pulled the old bridge down and built the embankment the Thames began to flow too fast for it to freeze anywhere outside of a B Movie. Pity really, because I'd love to see Boris try skating across the Thames.

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