



Author finds bursts of dark inspiration amidst lockdown

By Benjamin Klauber-Griffiths

A local first-time author has used the recent lockdown to write a new dystopian novel... about a lethal virus ravaging the world. Nicholas Nicolaides has also illustrated and self-published the book, called *Zero One*. He said: "This is the first time I've had the luxury to sit down and write."

The extra time afforded to him because of the restrictions meant he felt it was "now or never" to write up a concept he had long been developing in his mind, synthesising his passion for art with his love of dystopian fiction. He describes how



Author and illustrator:
Nicholas Nicolaides

writing wasn't a linear process, and how he used his art work as a "nice way to build upon ideas". His creative experience entangled the two mediums, as the "process of writing was like painting".

Survival fears

Whilst the novel's conception preceded this year's



Dystopian image: One of Nicholas's illustrations for his novel.

virus, its primary focus is on "who would be the most well equipped to survive", reflecting the fears of many people during lockdown.

As Nicholas says, "everything in there exists", including our over-reliance on technology, and even re-imagined local Finchley landmarks, which help fuel his dystopian nightmare.

Being a first-time author, he relished the opportunity to share early drafts with family and friends, using their feedback as motivation to continue writing. "Talk to anyone who has an opinion" is his advice for other

new authors.

Imaginary world

Whilst for some people, lockdown was a stifling experience, Nicholas has used it as a chance to "introduce my readers to a world I could build upon", creating what he describes as his *Hobbit*, a world to leap off from and develop further.

Whether writing in lockdown or outside of it, he is making it clear that he has more to tell. We look forward to a sequel.

Zero One is available on Amazon.

Artist returns to Russia with love

By John Lawrence

East Finchley artist Denise Wyllie has taken her art work to Russia again, 27 years after first exhibiting there. Her colourful prints inspired by the beauty of Japanese and English gardens are on show in Petrozavodsk in the north west of the country.

Denise, who lives in Long Lane, N2, became friends with Masha Yufa and Sergei Terentjev of the Art Connect project in the early 1990s.



Return visit: Denise Wyllie

They were keen to connect with the world outside Russia and invited her to stage her first exhibition in 1993, making her the first non-Russian female artist to do so in the region.

She has been back many times since and her close connections with Russia meant

she was confident to mount her 2020 Gardens of Paradise show in the same gallery despite Covid-19 restrictions.

The artist says she is delighted with the way her work has been received. "I am elated having another solo exhibition in Russia, connecting with people I met 28 years ago during glasnost [openness] and perestroika [restructuring]."

Denise has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad and established creative links with other artists in the Netherlands, France, Italy, Japan, Puerto Rico and the US. Her work is in international art collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum here in London and the Karelian Republic Museum of Fine Arts in Russia. Find out more at www.facebook.com/ArtistDeniseWyllie



First exhibition: Artist Denise Wyllie, second from the right, being interviewed for Russian television in 1993 alongside friend Masha Yufa.

Farewell to dedicated hospice shop manager

By Diana Cormack

Eugenia Von Piccardio, who was North London Hospice's much-loved East Finchley senior shop manager, has sadly died aged 82. She was a familiar face to many and a dedicated member of the shop's team until she retired less than two years ago.

Born in Austria in 1938 she came to Hampstead as an au pair and settled here, training as a nurse at the Trade Union Hospital. In 1976 she met her future husband Peter and they enjoyed 37 happy years of marriage.

For almost three decades Eugenia volunteered at the North London Hospice shop in East Finchley. NLH Retail Operations Manager Catherine Harrington said: "Eugenia was one of our most dedicated and hardworking managers and was always one of the first people to offer extra time and help whenever we were short staffed. She was a lovely person to work with."

Eugenia was a big fan of The Archer with early evidence of this appearing in an 'East Finchley People' article from February 1995. Here she revealed that with so many friends in the area she had used the paper to publish her Christmas greetings to them. Her husband Peter was one of our deliverers for many years.

In February 2007 she used our pages to draw attention to the unsightly row of newspaper stands outside East Finchley



Eugenia Von Piccardio

station, pointing out that they were not very nice for visitors or locals to look at. Within a very short time they were removed.

After a break-in at the shop Eugenia was overwhelmed by special donations from local people. These included Secure-base supplying and fitting a new intruder alarm free of charge. "People in East Finchley are so kind. It really is a special place," she told The Archer. "Even if I were to win a lottery prize, I would always want to live here."

Needless to say, enormous thanks are due to Eugenia for the atmosphere she brought to the hospice shop and for the long-term effort she put in there. Goodbye to a very special East Finchley person.



Bujar Leka (right) and his assistant at The Cut barbershop. Photo Mike Coles

New opening makes a barbershop trio

By Alessio Pavarani

East Finchley has welcomed a new barbershop to the High Road. The Cut Barbershop, situated opposite Budgens, started up in August and is open seven days a week. This is the team's third shop in the area, with other branches already up and running in Muswell Hill Broadway and Highgate Village.

Owner David Millan said: "We very much wanted to be in East Finchley to complement our Muswell Hill and Highgate shops and as local residents with families, who are active in the district, we feel that we can serve the community well."

His team of friendly, skilled barbers are fully kitted out with

personal protective equipment, including visors and masks, creating a safe environment to get a trim or a shave. They are able to cater for all ages, with a fun car seat available to entertain and amuse the younger clientele. Appointments can be made; however they are not required, as walk-ins are perfectly fine too.