



King of the beasts: Leo the lion gets a makeover from East Finchley's Rosha Nutt on the Artists' Walk

Palace dressed up with surprises

Art works await you in the strangest of places when you take a walk around Alexandra Palace and its grounds this summer. Paintings, sculptures and other 3D creations have found homes in natural settings and on the buildings as part of Artists Walk. Founded by East Finchley artist Rosha Nutt, the project features work by many local and London artists, including Muswell Hill's 'chewing gum man' Ben Wilson. Everything is free and available for you to follow or find by chance as you walk around the palace and its park.

Quack cures and clockwork scarecrows under one roof

By Daphne Chamberlain

In June, Maurice Collins challenged East Finchley to guess the gadgets from his vast collection of what he calls "weird and bizarre" items. Unsurprisingly, he defeated us all, but reader Adrian Brodtkin's good attempt won him a signed copy of one of Maurice's books. Adrian told The Archer that he knows nothing about historical gadgets, but was so intrigued he had to have a go.

That parallels Maurice's own introduction to collecting. He told us: "It started off on a Victorian rubbish dump, being astonished at the variety of different closure patents holding gas into lemonade and spring water; the pointed bottom bottle, the Codd's bottle which contained a marble; all patented and used nationwide, and I had never heard of any of them."

He then started to look at other unusual patented products, including our old friend the apple peeler and corer, bread slicing machines, quack cure machines usually based on the production of electricity, and items using the power of the coiled spring. Clockwork created perfume distributors, singing birds, burglar alarms, and scare machines that replaced scarecrows by firing loud bangs.

Many hours visiting antique and ephemera fairs have brought Maurice 3,500 artefacts from the century between the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Festival of Britain in 1951. He said: "They are 3D witnesses to the life of that time. Some of my friends and family think I'm a bit crazy, but my late wife's cynicism began to wane when museums across Europe asked to hire the collection."

It is now held by a learn-



Inspect a gadget: Adrian Brodtkin, right, receives his prize from collector Maurice Collins

ing disability charity which receives all the rental monies. Maurice has produced books on his other collections too. These feature posters, advertising ephemera, and unusual mechanical paper.

Feeling intrigued? Maurice has arranged with Faiza at Intelot, 93 High Road, N2 to give away copies of his new book to Archer readers. Just take in our photo of Adrian and his prize.

First come, first aid

A first aid training course is being offered for people living in the Grange Big Local area of East Finchley, in partnership with the British Red Cross. The training will cover basic first aid and will allow participants to act as an appointed person in their workplace. Attendees will learn how to assess a casualty, monitor a casualty and how to deal with seizures. The free training on Saturday 7 August is for anyone over 16 but there are only about 15 places available. To register your interest, email info@grangebiglocal.org.

Elegy to my brother

Former East Finchley librarian Lizzie Barmak, who now works as a counsellor and wellbeing writer, explains the special place that poetry has in her life.

A year after my redundancy from Barnet Libraries, my brother Jon took his own life in alarming circumstances whilst on a quasi-spiritual quest in Nepal.

Although devastated, I wanted to be strong for my husband who has chronic ill-health issues and for my sister who, suffice to say, was struggling with life.

Writing has been my life-long friend. Many moons ago my prize-winning play *Three* was performed at The Bull Theatre in Barnet and so in my grief, words instinctively became my nurturers three-fold: talking therapy, reading and writing – especially poetry. To help me process and express my grief I wrote a collection of elegiac poems and vignettes, which became *The Boat Beyond Tears*.

This collection was long listed by the Cinnamon Press Pamphlet Prize and a traditional publisher showed interest; however, I didn't want to compromise on the content, which includes an introduction, eulogy and a few thoughtfully selected images, so I chose to



New poet: Lizzy Barmak

have just one booklet printed as a keepsake.

This year, in a burst of sentimentality, I decided to get ten copies printed to sell and put the proceeds towards The Joe Strummer Foundation, a charity set up in the name of the late punk icon to provide opportunities for musicians and support to projects around the world.

My brother Jon was a big fan of The Clash and socialist Joe, and he was passionate about art and music, so it seemed a fitting charity. This is one of my poems from the collection:

You Follow Me

You are my insomnia,
when I sleep you haunt my dreams,
when I wake you breathe through me,
sometimes in my longing I gasp for air.

You are my resistance
as I trudge to the bathroom.
In the mirror you gaze back at me
with unblinking, yearning eyes.

I drink you in when I sip my tea,
taste you in every morsel,
with each painful swallow
and stab of heartburn.

In the company of others
you are my timorous handshake,
cold-sweats and fatigue,
my longing for solitude.

When I walk you course through my veins
each footfall spells out your name.

You are the light
reflected in the rainy streets.

They say time heals, but no;
you will follow me, follow me
in haunting echoes
until I follow you.

To buy a copy of *The Boat Beyond Tears* (bank transfer £7, inc P&P) or find out more about her work, email LizzyBarmak@outlook.com or search her directory listing at www.lapidus.org.uk. Lapidus is a literary arts insight development organization promoting bibliotherapy/writing for wellbeing in a variety of settings.