



# Ruben delivers The Archer to the Andes



High spot: Ruben Marden with The Archer at Machu Picchu

By David Melsome

**The Archer newspaper reaches many parts, including Australia and Antarctica in the past, and now for the first time it has gone up the Andes, thanks to school student Ruben Marden, who travelled there on a Camps International volunteering trip to lend a hand in local communities.**

dropping it in a river but said he ended up having a better experience because he could really focus on looking at what

was around him.

Which included whipping out his copy of *The Archer* for

some light reading at altitude. Ruben said: "We were driven from Cuzco all the way up to 3,900m. From there we trekked four hours uphill in the snow and rain to the beautiful Salkantay pass at 4,635m. After that it was four hours down the other side, straight to our first campsite. "On the final day, we had an early breakfast at 4am, and we began our ascent at 5am, consisting of 1,700 stairs. Our reward was a tour around Machu Picchu. Worth every step."

With a team of 25 other Year 10-12 students from schools around the UK, Ruben also worked in three local communities living below the poverty line in the Cusco region, plastering the walls at a community centre, constructing a school greenhouse from scratch and doing agricultural work to support sustainable farming. He said: "As a result of meeting these communities, I have been able to not only help them but also learn from them. I feel much more respect for people worse off than myself and I feel an obligation to help others in similar situations." Ruben said he wants to thank local businesses Amy's Hardware and CW Andrews Pharmacy for sponsoring him on his adventure.

# Playtime on the waves



All aboard: Coldfall Primary children enjoy their new playground.

Photo Mike Coles

**Coldfall Primary School in Muswell Hill has achieved the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Platinum Award which recognises the school's high-quality playtimes. Play has been transformed by the arrival of a full-sized speedboat in a sandpit and the addition of mud kitchens, den building, digging, giant Lego and dressing up.**

The project is designed to let pupils be deeply engaged, creative, joyful and sociable. Audrey from year 5 said: "Before at playtimes we just got hit by balls all the time in the tummy. We used to have arguments and got bored. Now I love it."

Headteacher Ewan Marshall said the school had monitored improved behaviour and children had been taught to explore

challenging play opportunities while learning to consider potential risks, making modifications to keep play safe.

He said: "The OPAL Platinum Award is the highest accreditation and means that the school's playtimes are in the top 1% of over 2,000 OPAL schools internationally. This was a collective effort between staff, children and parents. A true community effort."

## RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

### Austen Land

They say that it is blindingly obvious that a man with a good fortune must be desperate for a wife. From there you only need a BBC adaptation, and we are straight into the Austen industry. And this year is the big one as all lovers of romantic fiction celebrate the fact that she was born 250 years ago on 16 December 1775.

This is the chance to dress up as Darcy or Elizabeth Bennet and pretend that you are at the centre of some romantic Regency myth. And myth is the right word.

In Austen Land, everything is theme-park clean and pretty, with young ladies in flowing robes and men looking handsome in top hats. As always, the heroine gets the man, the money and the happy ending. In Austen Land, the satire and observations on the weird world of real life are hidden behind the gloss of the movies and TV. It is as real as Love Island.

Jane Austen was one of eight children of a country rector of 'moderate income'. She never married, was never rich, made very little from her books and lived a quiet life before dying at the age of 41. She didn't become Jane Austen, great novelist, until long after her death.

To add to the mythmaking, her sister Cassandra destroyed most of her letters to ensure that nothing interesting or unsavoury remained to spoil the image of good, quiet Jane. All we have are her books. And they are novels, not social history. They are Regency England as we like to imagine it.

Jane, like her characters and her readers, was gentry, not a servant or farmhand or impoverished. This was a world where a genteel woman's only hope of a comfortable life was a good marriage. And all the way from *Sense and Sensibility* to *Persuasion* that's the plot. It's why they make such good movies and books to read on the train. They've all been serialised or filmed countless times and, since the BBC had Darcy emerging from swimming in a lake in 1995, Austen has been recrowned the queen of Regency romance.

The real world wasn't like the books. There were servants so that Austen's characters never had to cook or clean. There was no modern sanitation or hot and cold running water, medicine was stuck somewhere in the pre-anaesthetic, pre-antibiotic dark ages. This was a world of maternal and infant mortality, dirt and smells. Daily showers, warm houses and decent lighting were all at least 100 years off.

All the same, as they wheel out another round of reruns of *Emma* or *Pride and Prejudice*, turn the heating up, make a nice cup of tea and relax in Austen Land.

## Fresh air in the Forest School



Classroom in the wood: The Forest School area at Martin Primary School

**Children at Martin Primary School are getting out in the fresh air for outdoor sessions and orienteering activities within the school grounds to help develop new skills.**

The Forest School programme, run by trained staff, gives pupils the chance to explore the natural environment in hands-on ways, building dens, lighting campfires safely and identifying plants and wildlife.

"Forest School gives our children the freedom to explore and take risks in a safe, supported environment," said Tristan Green, one of the leaders. "It's wonderful to see their confidence grow as they learn new outdoor skills and connect with nature."

In addition to Forest School, orienteering has also taken centre stage this term. Using maps, the children navigate their way around the large school field, working together to find solutions to a range of problems. The activities combine physical fitness with geography and critical thinking, helping children build spatial awareness and perseverance.

Teachers have noticed that time spent outdoors has a positive impact not only on pupils' physical health but also on their wellbeing and focus back in the classroom.

"The children return from outdoor sessions refreshed, happy and ready to learn," said headteacher Ziz Chater.



## Catering Manager

Part time 20 hours per week (Mon - Fri)

Salary circa £30,000.00 per annum pro rata

Age UK Barnet is a charity aiming to promote independence and wellbeing amongst older residents in the London Borough of Barnet. We offer a lunch service to clients with early stages of dementia who attend our Day Clubs. Catering for up to 40 clients per day and we aim to offer a varied range of nutritious homecooked meals. We also run a popular Friday Lunch Club and offer a programme of cookery classes for older people.

We are seeking to recruit an experienced catering manager to oversee the catering function within our organisation across two sites. (East Finchley and Hendon) As our catering manager you will be responsible for ensuring our kitchens run smoothly and will be involved with all aspects of catering including menu planning, ordering, ensuring food hygiene compliance, and some cooking.

We offer 5 weeks paid holiday per year, an occupational pension scheme and staff discount schemes after completion of the probation period. For further details and an application form visit our website at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/about-us/work-for-us/> or email [jenny.coomey@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:jenny.coomey@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or telephone 0208 432 1418

Closing Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026