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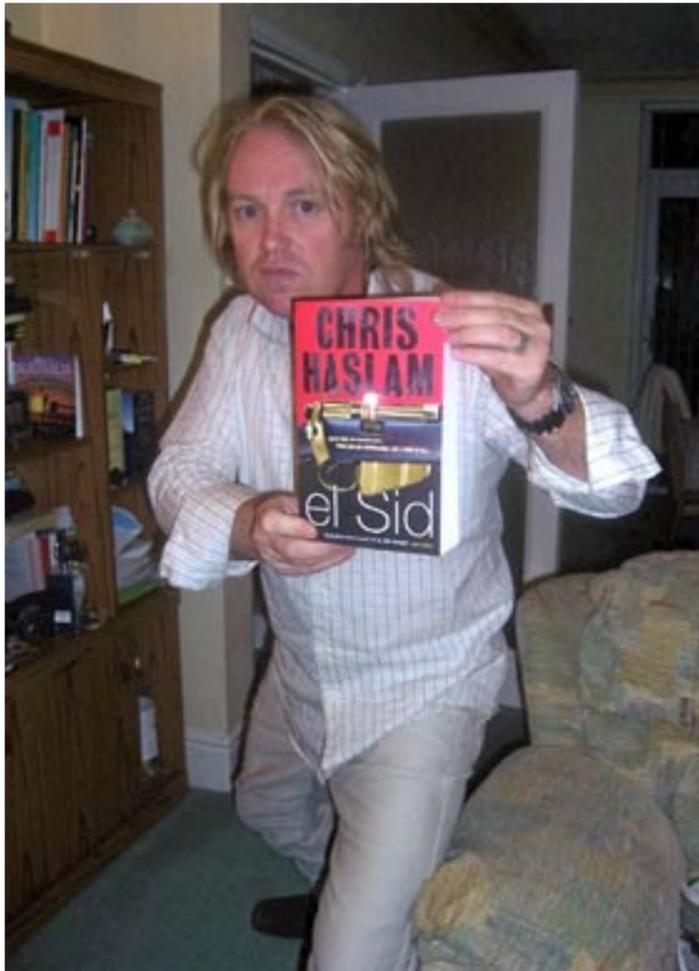
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Win an essential read

By Diana Cormack

On the strength of his two previous novels, East Finchley author Chris Haslam has built up a growing reputation for comic thriller writing. Chris, who is a travel writer for the *Sunday Times*, lives in Creighton Avenue with his wife and three children.



Is this a hold up? Chris Haslam with his latest novel. Photo by Diana Cormack

His first novel, *Twelve Step Fandango* (2003) was the only British nomination in the Best Paperback Original category of the USA's prestigious Edgar Allan Poe award.

His second, *Alligator Strip* (2005) had the same anti-hero Martin Brock. Critic Matthew Lewin wrote that Chris has "that rare talent of being able to combine seriously funny stuff with a truly engrossing thriller".

His latest book *el Sid*, published this August, deals with the search for a stash of gold secreted away during the Spanish Civil War. Seventy years on, International Brigade veteran Sidney Starman recruits a pair of hapless hands, Lenny Knowles and Nick Crick, to help him find the hundred missing boxes of bullion. One newspaper reviewer has described it as "essential summer reading."

Readers can find out if they agree with this, because Chris has given *THE ARCHER* two signed copies of *el Sid*. To win them, two correct answers to the following question will be drawn out of a hat:

Which ex-British government minister's father was himself a refugee from the Spanish Civil War?

To enter, send your answers with contact details to The Archer, PO Box 3699,

London N2 8JA or email the-archer@lineone.net by Saturday 30 September. Good luck!

The man who created Archie

By John Lawrence

This fascinating photograph, printed here by kind permission of London Transport Museum, dates back to 1940 and shows the sculptor Eric Aumonier putting the finishing touches to his famous statue at East Finchley station.

Aumonier perches atop a ladder on top of the station entrance to brush up the sheet lead that covers Archie's beech wood interior and his steel skeleton, twice the size of a living man.

Unveiled on 22 July 1940, Archie cost £245 and is thought to have been originally one of a series of designs to enhance the newly built underground stations of the 1930s.

The sculpture was intended as a powerful symbol of the area around this part of the Northern line. Finchley was once on the edge of the royal forest of Enfield, where hunting with bow and arrows was commonplace. London Underground also saw his dynamic pose as reflecting the speed and directness of underground travel.

Eric Aumonier was commissioned to do other work for London Underground, most notably some of the statues in and around St James's Park station and the London Underground headquarters that



Eric Aumonier puts the finishing touches to the Archer statue at East Finchley station in 1940. Picture courtesy London's Transport Museum © TfL

rise above it.

Among his other works are the Empire relief panels on the former Daily Express building in Fleet Street.

When Aumonier began suffering ill health, he and his wife

moved to New Zealand. He died there in 1974.

You can order a copy of this photograph, or any from the London Transport Museum archives, by visiting their website at www.ltmuseum.co.uk

Grab the chance to learn

Did you know that Barnet College holds free classes in East Finchley? The courses are ideal for adults who want to return to learning after a break and can help you to gain confidence and boost your skills.

Classes are designed to provide chances for further study and to increase your job opportunities. They are informal and welcoming with friendly and experienced teachers. Subjects include Improving Your Maths and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

All the community courses are free and are for a few hours each week, normally during school hours. They are held at local and convenient venues.

This September they will be at The Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, and the Grange Community Flat on the Grange Estate.

If you are interested or would like to have a chat about what's on offer contact the course organisers Jan Brennan on 020 8266 4284, Janine Casey on 020 8266 4339 or Sally Holder on 020 8266 4021. They advise that there may be a high demand for places.

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