



Thriller writer brings a real-world twist

By Nick Young

An East Finchley resident is set to bring out her first novel after setting up her own publishing company. Jane Hankin, of Huntingdon Road, who writes under her maiden name Jane Brittan, founded Blowfish Books with fellow-writer Lisa Taylor after they met on a creative writing course at Birkbeck College.

Jane's debut novel, *The Edge of Me*, will be the new company's first book. It is a young adult thriller about a Finchley schoolgirl who is dragged from

"I wanted to write something that would have resonance for young people," she told *THE ARCHER*. "They know all about the Second World War from school but they have been taught nothing about what happened a generation ago."

A time to remember

Jane researched her novel by contacting the International Committee on Missing Persons, an intergovernmental organisation based in Sarajevo which assists in locating mass graves from the 1990s.

"There are still many missing people out there," she says. The novel's publication is very timely, as 2015 sees the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, in which over 8,000 civilians were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces, and the Dayton Agreement which ended the war.

Jane is able to run Blowfish Books from home as most of the work is done online, with the books being printed in the Czech Republic. She plans to publish her second novel, the first of a trilogy, later this year.

The Edge of Me will be launched at the Cato Gallery on Heath Street, Hampstead at 6.30pm on 10 June. Further details about Blowfish Books and their forthcoming publications can be found on the company's website: www.blowfishbooks.com.



First words: Jane with her debut novel published by her new company.

her seemingly ordinary suburban life to a Serbian orphanage where she confronts the truth about her family's past in the Bosnian War of the 1990s.

Jane has vivid memories of watching the war in Bosnia – the most brutal conflict in Europe since 1945 – on the television news. When she set about writing in earnest she decided to write something for young adults.

She has always enjoyed young adult fiction herself but with a contemporary, real-world twist, and Bosnia has provided the background for that.



Antony Alexandrou's winning photo.

Wedding winner

Antony Alexandrou, who lives on the Great North Road, N2, won the title of **Wedding Photographer of the Year** with this stunning photo of doves being released over a wedding party in Richmond.

Antony, whose company is called 3A photography, said of the Event Photography Awards: "It was a big surprise and also very humbling to be recognised for what I do by the industry."

Open garden

An award-winning garden lovingly tended by Caroline and David Broome will open to visitors on **Sunday 14 June from 2pm to 6pm** as part of the National Gardens Scheme.

The couple's garden at 79 Church Lane, N2, is packed with ornaments, musical water features and interesting borders, as well as a shed roof garden.

Afternoon tea and home-made cakes will be on offer, along with plants for sale and a raffle. Entrance is £3.50, children free, with all proceeds going to the National Gardens Scheme.

He also scooped second prize on the night for an image of a groom being thrown in the air by his best friends to mark the beginning of his married life.

Antony, who attended Wat-

ford Grammar School and then university in Birmingham, photographs all types of special occasions from weddings to corporate events. Find out more at www.3Aphotography.com

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

A bad year for the French

Now that democracy has been put back in the shed with the broken toys, fairy lights and empty paint tins we can get on with the serious business of xenophobia. And few years have been better than this year for annoying the French. Why? Because 2015 is the anniversary of lots of things the French really don't want to be reminded of.

Take a random pick of the dates, starting with June 1940, the 'Miracle' of Dunkirk at the end of May and the abject capitulation of the French three weeks later. OK, so the French got to keep half of France for a couple of years, but in Petain France had its own dictator and 'friend of the Germans'. No wonder they don't like being reminded of it anymore than Channel Islanders like being reminded of their own co-operation with the occupying Germans.

If you go back further there is always 1415 and the destruction of the French nobility at Agincourt, an event that comes with a Shakespeare play, Larry Olivier and something about tennis balls. It wasn't just that, but imagine watching the pride of your nobility, schooled in the ways of genteel warfare, being mown down by a bunch of English peasants with bows and arrows. Not exactly a fun time for the French.

On a different tack there is always 1805, Nelson, Trafalgar, the destruction of the French navy and the end of Napoleon's dreams of invasion. And naturally we Brits decided to make the main square in central London a permanent memorial to the one-eyed, one-armed admiral. Must go down a storm in Paris.

The big one for the French is lumbering over the horizon on 18 June. Yes, folks, it's the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Even today the French talk about a total disaster as 'un Waterloo' whereas we think about an Abba song. If that's not bad enough the Brits decided that it was in fabulously good taste to have the terminus for Eurostar (in the days before St Pancras) at Waterloo. It's probably why when the French think about 18 June they think about 1940 and General De Gaulle's call for Frenchmen to join the Free French and liberate the country. And who can blame them?

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