

Heritage: Colourful scenes of a builder's yard and a stained glass maker on what is now the Olympic Park captured by photographers Debra Rapp, right, and Marion Davies.

Industry that made way for the Olympics

By Geoffrey Davies

A display about the impact on London of the 2012 Olympics Games is to open this month at the new Victoria and Albert Museum in Stratford East – more than two decades since the first photograph was taken.

Captured by Muswell Hill resident Debra Rapp and Hampstead Garden Suburb resident Marion Davies, the images show some of the 70 businesses affected by the redevelopment of the area around the Olympic Stadium and Park.

“Marion and I had become friends on a photography course and decided to work together afterwards,” says Debra. “When it was announced in July 2005 that London would

host the Olympics, we wondered what impact it would have on Stratford.”

With her new digital camera at the time, and Marion shooting on black and white film, the pair visited the area once or twice a week for the next 18 months, amassing 10,000 pictures of some of the 284 businesses. Before the Games, the site hosted a wide range of industry from waste management and salmon smoking to a café and

a taxi company.

“It was not obvious how much industry there was there,” says Debra. “For instance, Bowden’s had been making curved glass there since Victorian times. The owners and workers were very open with us, but clearly concerned at having to move. There was great uncertainty about compensation. They were having to run their business while planning on moving. Bigger firms with resources did better.” A selection of images

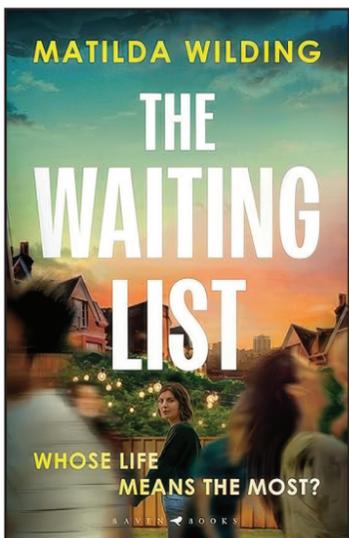
was originally shown at the Museum of London in 2015, who have acquired some for their collection. A big exhibition was held at the premises of salmon smokers H. Foreman and Sons in 2017, next to the Olympic Stadium, along with the launch of the book *Dispersal* published by Historic England, which included academic insight on the impact of redevelopment in the area. The latest showing of over 40 pictures will be on the top floor

of the new V+A East, Carpenters Road, E20 2AR, directly overlooking the area featured in the photographs. It runs for six months from Saturday 18 April. “The museum’s curator of photography sent me the *Dispersal* book,” says Brendan Cormier, the chief curator at V+A East, “and I realised the space has a view across the park and Hackney Wick and the sites they were documenting. And of course, the V+A has a link to industry.”

New mum channels her fears into her first published fiction

By Matilda Wilding

With the name Matilda, and after many happy hours over many years spent ensconced in East Finchley Library, perhaps it was inevitable I was going to write stories.



Reading list: Matilda's debut novel

My journey to being a published author wasn't fast. After studying English Literature at university, I tried writing children's novels, and whilst they will only ever be read by my own, they gave me the confidence to keep experimenting. With more time thanks to lockdown, I launched into a destination thriller. This book got me a literary agent, but unfortunately didn't sell to

publishers due to crossover with other books. It's so often market forces that can dictate an author's path but getting that far made the dream feel reachable.

So, after my son got the hang of sleep (miraculously fast), I used the remainder of my maternity leave to write what has become my debut, a book club suspense novel published by Bloomsbury/Raven called *The Waiting List*.

After doing something as hard and amazing and privileged as bringing a child into the world, writing a book felt like a breeze! I channelled the potent emotions I was experiencing in new motherhood - profound anxieties and fierce new depths of love - into the moral dilemma at the heart of the story.

Set in north London, not far from where I grew up in East Finchley, the book is about a new mother who, faced with an unenviable dilemma, must grapple with whether she could ever take a life in order to save her own and survive for her family. After the very sudden

loss of my father, I've lived with a latent fear of something happening to me which increased after my son was born. Writing this story allowed me to process the weight of that fear and the new responsibilities of parenthood through the prism of fiction. I often joke that I should have had therapy but instead I wrote *The Waiting List*.

The *Daily Mail* has described it as 'extraordinary' and 'unpredictable', and I very much hope it proves thought provoking and compelling to readers of *The Archer* too.



First-time author Matilda Wilding

Academy hosts international guests for British Council

The Archer Academy in East Finchley was selected to be part of the British Council's UK Study Tour earlier this year, welcoming 40 educational leaders from across the Middle East and North Africa for a week-long professional learning programme.



Follow me: British Council visitors are guided round the Archer Academy by a student

The programme began with a keynote address from headteacher Lucy Harrison, examining how schools can lead with vision, empathy, and strategic intent in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Later in the week, the delegation visited the school for a full day of observing leadership in action. Guests heard from senior staff and members of the student leadership team, toured the school, joined discussions, and shared lunch with students.

Staff described the event as a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues from around the world and to showcase the strength of the school community. Students involved in the day were praised for representing the academy with confidence and pride.

The visit formed part of the British Council's ongoing work to connect educators internationally and promote global dialogue in education.