

the major newspaper group in Cardiff. The problems he had to deal with could be professional or domestic and ranged from harassment in the workplace to abuse in the home. He says, "I'm glad that people felt able to air these subjects with me. Dealing with problems such as these was certainly a challenge and I learned how difficult it was for people to forgive, or indeed to accept forgiveness. At this time I also worked with local churches so that the ministers would be fully aware of the difficult economic circumstances – the unemployment, the hardships, the rising prices."

In 2006 Ian and Georgia felt that it was time for a change and to move outside Wales. He put his name forward and there was a timely vacancy at the Suburb's Free Church. The Elders (the Free Church's ruling body) looked at his paperwork and invited him for an interview which proved successful. He had to 'preach with a view' – which I suppose is rather like an audition. After his sermon the congregation (members of the church only) cast a vote. When I suggested to Ian that this sounded a bit like a religious X Factor he gave me a wry smile. Anyway, he got the job and started that October.

I asked Ian what attracted him to the Suburb. "I received a really positive welcome but I never researched the Suburb. I prefer to arrive somewhere with a blank sheet and develop as I go along. It's important to get to know your people and for them to get to know you. I believe the worst thing would have been to come here with preconceptions or a programme fixed in advance. For me the Suburb is always in the background and its people in the foreground." I then asked him how he prepares a sermon. "I write it in my head in the early part of the week, then on Thursday or Friday I commit it to paper – 1000 words in two hours if things go well. That's about 100 sentences and I'd be happy if everyone listening would take at least one of those home."

During our conversation about the church Ian had used the word 'community' and I asked him whether he felt the Suburb was a community. "As a whole I don't think so. It doesn't seem to have a common thread running through it any longer, although there are occasions when it seems so, for example when we held the Creative Arts Fair this summer – that undoubtedly drew people together. As does something like your 'Save the Suburb Library' campaign. Fellowship House certainly has a community spirit and I sit on the RA Council which has wide ranging discussions on many of the issues which effect all of us, but something like the HGS Trust is, I believe, an artificial construct to give us a sense of community."

As much of Ian's working week is spent on the Suburb, I asked how he liked to spend his spare time with his family. "Actually , we have tourist outings where we visit the likes of Kew Gardens or Richmond Park. We might walk along the South Bank or admire the view of the City from Greenwich Observatory. Nearer home I find the top of Golders Hill Park a good spot for reflection and in the spring or early summer I enjoy being in Little Wood watching a play at the Open Air Theatre. I have fond memories of watching Lydia in a production there. On evenings like that it's so easy to be reminded of the uniqueness of the Suburb and how essential it is to retain that."

Finally, I asked him about his future and it came as no surprise when he answered, "The future will take care of itself." Then, in an expression that I thought about after he left, he said, "I sit light." It could only be said by a man who is extremely comfortable in his own skin yet is concerned for others. S

A MUCH TRAVELED JEWELLER

featuring Anna Clynes



As I walked down Hampstead Way I was still somewhat unsure how to address the lady I was about to interview. This was not because I was meeting a dignitary and hadn't genned up enough in Debetts – it was due to the fact that she is known by two different names. On the one hand she is Anna Clynes, on the other she is Kochi Okada. Fortunately as I was about to ring the doorbell I remembered the words of her husband, Jeremy: "Kochi is her born name but her family and friends know her as Anna."

Anna was born in Moscow – her father is Japanese and her mother from Kyrgyzstan (for those of an inquisitive nature this country, known as Kirghizia, was part of the USSR, and is in Central Asia next to China). Both her parents were in the film industry, her father being a film director and her mother a scriptwriter. They had met in Moscow, through the Soviet cinema. Much of Anna's childhood was spent travelling in these countries and also visiting many European capital cities – as a consequence of this she speaks five languages!

When Anna reached further education she studied Art History at the University of Moscow and specialised in Persian Medieval art. She remembers those days clearly. "I was there when Brezhnev died, then came the time of Gorbachev. Suddenly we could read all kinds of books, see avant garde films – it was a very interesting period. We could communicate openly and be mentally free where we had previously been restricted. Sadly some of those freedoms seem to be evaporating in today's Russia." Soon after she graduated in 1998, Anna decided that she would like to study further and, as the type of research she wished to continue with was not possible in Moscow, she came to England. She obtained funding from Japan and the UK, for which she is very grateful. Initially she read for a Master's degree in anthropology at Cambridge and then went on to do a PhD at Goldsmiths College, London. "I went back to various countries in what used to be the USSR to look at the function of art and what it now meant to the population, but in many of them art was certainly not a priority. That system had collapsed and what was left were small groups doing their own projects in studios, such as female artists or those that wished to 'find new issues. The State did not condone this path and I had no wish to betray the trust of the artists who had confided in me by writing a research document on them." So, back to London with no clear career path ahead.

It was at this point that she met her future husband, Jeremy at an exhibition of Islamic art. It was soon evident that they shared a love of this subject. They had both travelled to Uzbekistan, where she carried out her research for her doctorate and Anna was envious of Jeremy's forthcoming trip to Iran. On his return they poured over his photos, watched Iranian films, attended lectures and visited galleries together. Within a year they were married and Anna had moved into the house on the Suburb where Jeremy had been born in and still

lived. Anna tried hard to find a suitable job in art or antiques, she had interviews, including one with a leading Russian auction house, but nothing was just right. So she decided to try her hand at something she had always been interested in – making jewellery.

She started by attending St Martin's College, taking a 'how to start your own jewellery business' course and from there she made contact with people who worked in Hatton Garden. "I started to build relationships with suppliers, designers and manufacturers all of whom were able and willing to teach me. I found them reliable and honest – most are family companies and we trust one another. I know that I am getting exactly the right raw materials for what I pay for, and if I pay a premium to get the best then I know it is worth it. I buy mostly freshwater pearls and you can only learn their true quality through an X ray, so honesty is vital. I work in a studio in Hatton Garden, am learning all the time and will continue to do so." I asked Anna what her thoughts were about the future for her business. "My main objective is to please my clients. Like me they are complex – I don't like to pigeonhole or stereotype myself, so why should I do this to my customers. I am open and flexible in trying to achieve any design wishes they have and we talk together about this. So I take commissions from individuals and also have 'ready to wear' pieces which give an indication of the sort of jewellery I can create – I string pearls too. Commissions generally start at £300. I am not a predatory sales person, nor do I want to employ cheap labour in India or China so I have a website through which I hope to slowly build a clientele and word of mouth recommendations from existing clients are invaluable." When Anna showed me some of her work I was very impressed with the quality and creativity. As a 'pearl person' myself I have already dropped hints to my husband about my next birthday!

I went on to ask Anna about life on the Suburb. "I love where we live in Lucas Square – everyone knows one another by name, we socialise and care about the well being of others. There is so much about the Suburb that is unusual so close to a city. We have allotments, wildlife with ducks and ponds, there is the Heath Extension which is not just for us but home to cricket and rugby players from elsewhere. The architecture is aesthetically pleasing and I believe we need the existence of the Trust to protect us in order that we can treasure the Suburb's future. We live in a refined village and have a relatively stress free life – that is something to celebrate."

You can find Anna's website at www.kochiokada.co.uk S



Trust (*trust*) *n.* reliance on and confidence in the truth. Custody, charge or care. (Sp in **Hampstead Garden Suburb** – members elect four Trustees to the **Trust Council** in whom is vested legal powers to preserve the character and amenities of the **Suburb**.)

The Trust requests the pleasure of your company as a member

The Trust Council would like to see more Suburb residents represented as members. The sole requirement for membership is to have lived continuously on the Suburb for three years.

Many residents come to live here because it is a unique environment and support the aims of the Trust in trying to preserve the Suburb's character and amenities. All residents who believe that the job we are trying to do is worthwhile should be members of the Trust. New residents are now welcome to join as associate members.



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