

WHAT'S ON

into February

A SERIES of workshops for adults.

Learn how to make your own piece of embroidery based on historical techniques.

For further details please contact the Museum.

● **Burns Night Celebration**
January 25, 7.30pm

AN EVENING to celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns, Scotland's best loved bard.

A relaxed dinner which will include the traditional haggis, neeps and nip o' Whiskey, followed by recitations of some familiar Burns poems and songs before dancing the night away to music provided by a Scottish Ceilidh band.

Previous experience of Scottish country dancing not required!

£80 per person, includes whiskey cocktail on arrival, three course dinner with wines, entertainment until 12.30. Booking essential.

● **Chocoholic!**

February 6, 7pm

AT ONLY 33 years old, master chocolatier William Curley has won many of the world's top culinary awards and worked with the most famous names in European Cuisine.

He is one of a small handful of top 'chocolatiers' in the UK producing world beating chocolate from his shop in Richmond.

A decadent evening of chocolate tasting including a presentation on the 'secrets' of chocolate - through the origins of chocolate making, influences on quality and the current trends in the world of chocolate. Tickets £10 per person, advanced booking required.

INTERVIEW ARA SARAFIAN



BROUGHT TO BOOK: Butcher and historian Ara Sarafian at work in Olympia Butchers

PORTRAIT BY HANDAN EREK

CINEMA

Riverside Studios

Crisp Road W6

Bookings/Information: 020 8237 1111

www.riversidestudios.co.uk

● **The Condor Years**

January 27, 1.30pm

INTERVIEWS, film and photo portraits of some of the racing stars of the last 60 years.

Cineworld

207 King Street,

Hammersmith W6 9JT

Tel: 0871 200 2000

A CONVERTED 1960s

cinema, with four screens,

available for private and

corporate hire. Phone cinema

for films and times.

Vue Shepherds Bush

West 12 Shopping &

Leisure Centre, Shepherds

Bush Green W12 8PP

Tel: 08712 240 240

Vue Cinema in Shepherd's

Bush has 12 screens. Phone

cinema for films and times.

Vue Cinema Fulham

Fulham Broadway Retail

Centre, Fulham Road,

Fulham SW6 1BY Tel:

08712 240 240

Vue Cinema complex in

Fulham has 9 theatres. Phone

for films and times.

A PAINFUL MEMORY CUTS TO THE BONE

► The historian on a mission to rediscover genocide in Armenia is the subject of a powerful new documentary, writes Geoff Cowart

BOOKS have a nasty habit of putting people on dangerous ground.

In 1916, British researchers James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee began to compile a report about the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman empire the previous year.

The subsequent document was published in Parliament's Blue Book series - and is accepted as a superb, factual, first-hand account of the Ottoman (now Turkish) state's attempt to annihilate its native Armenians.

It was accepted everywhere, except Turkey, where even today its entire

parliament deny genocide and the resulting Blue Book.

Enter Armenian, historian, husband, butcher and father-of-one Ara Sarafian.

In between shifts at his father-in-law's shop, Olympia Butchers, Ara sits down to talk. I'd seen him just days before on the big screen at the premiere of new documentary *The Blue Book* at Hammersmith's Riverside Studios. On screen and off, he has a commanding presence and when he speaks, you listen.

"Yes, there is an academic side to the debate with Turkey that interests me. But I also

want to come to terms with the events of 1915 as a person, and especially as an Armenian," Ara says.

From research in British and American archives, the cameras follow Ara to the universities and death valleys in Turkey, where director Gagik Karagheuzian captures frank admissions by Turks and other deniers of the genocide.

The issue has so consumed Ara that he has dedicated most of his life as an historian to researching the origins of the Blue Book, to determine whether the events happened or were part of a more elaborate forgery, as the Turks have always claimed.

And after years of research, often travelling to Turkey by coach or teaching in its universities, Ara talks about the issues of 1915 and 1916 as if they affected him and his family personally.

I realise they did.

"My family is the victim of the Armenian genocide, especially members of my extended family on my grandmother's side.

"As far as I know, I don't have any surviving relatives.

"But my grandmother and her immediate family were saved because their Turkish neighbours hid them while the rest of the village was exterminated.

"We were forced to leave our ancestral lands and now we are scattered across the globe. Where do we fit in?"

"This issue relates to who I am, and who is my family. And the Blue Book is just a part of the story.

'My people are in permanent mourning. It is an open wound'

"The other part is that, essentially, Turks and Armenians are the same people, but we need to acknowledge the past before we create a common future."

The toll of fighting the corner of the Blue Book gets to Ara in the film, and he admits he's taken a break from academia because the stress of watching some of his peers try to obscure history is too high.

"We are in permanent mourning because the issue is an open wound. I think about the events of 1915 every day.

"The pressure is constantly on Armenians to assimilate and die - and why not if the issue was solved?"

"But I don't want to abandon my Armenian identity under pressure.

"This is part of the atrocity. "And we lost."

■ For details, visit: www.anisounds.com/bluebook