

When I started working on the Berwickshire News and Advertiser as their feature writer and columnist the Editor didn't like my name! Saying that Tregidga was too difficult and he wanted me to create a pen name! I had to think quick and blurted out "my middle name is Nicola and my mother's maiden name is Armstrong." "OK" he said, "Nikky Armstrong it is." And so Nikky Armstrong was born. At first I found it very strange but after a while I realised the plus side was being able to get honest feedback on the column because they didn't realise they were talking to Nikky.

However, for an April Fools column the editor came up with the idea of Nikky interviewing Vivienne!!! As there also had to be a photograph of the victim I donned a crazy pink wig in a vain attempt to disguise my identity. Anyway here is the result.

NEWS FEATURES

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## Personality Profile...

by Nikky Armstrong

THIS is one of the hardest interviews I've ever had to do because Vivienne, like myself, is a freelance feature writer. She's more acquainted with asking the questions and steering the interview than being the actual subject. Writers, like photographers, prefer to be behind the scene — well behind it! I knew I had my work cut out.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons greeted me as I obeyed a shouted command to enter the small cottage at Bankend near Duns. She sat at her computer by the window surrounded by piles of paper while her dog occupied the sofa. There was no room for me, in fact my presence created a positive crowd in this tiny room.

It's always a thrill to meet another writer and find out how they cope with the depressing aspect of rejections. "Oh, I could wallpaper this cottage three times over with my rejection letters," she said with a nonchalant shrug. "Did you know that there are more suicides in this business than any other?" Yes I did actually. "You've got to have

broad shoulders, but most importantly, you need a good sense of humour." Comedy tapes of the Goons, the Navy Lark and Victoria Wood are stacked beside the CD player obviously stand-bys to restore a flagging spirit.

Vivienne spent the first 17 years of her life in the bustling metropolis of Portsmouth. "I hated it. This is more me," she said pointing out to the green fields and woodlands. However this urban beginning could explain her flamboyant appearance. With a hair style trying to imitate Tina Turner's, heavy make-up and stripey trousers she looked as out of place in this rural setting as a sheep sitting on a number nine London bus would be!

With articles published not only in British magazines, but also foreign publications she recalls the time she interviewed Adam Faith in

bed. BED?! "Yes, I was supposed to meet him at his tennis club in the middle of London. However, when I arrived I was handed a note which read: 'Please meet me at my hotel.' There was no other explanation. I realised I had just 10 minutes to get across London. I shot out of the club and hailed a taxi on the street. I'd never done that before and it felt quite exciting!

"Anyway, with instructions to avoid the scenic route the taxi deposited me at the hotel with two minutes to spare. The receptionist directed me to room 432 on the third floor. A gruff voice answered my knock and I tentatively went in."

Her eyes grew wide as she continued.

"Can you imagine my surprise when this star, whom I'd fallen madly in love with long ago when he played Budgie on telly, was



propped up in bed! My expression must have said it all because he suddenly jumped out of bed and nearly ran towards me with his hand extended! He was wearing a long night shirt

by the way!" Our girlish giggling startled the dog who looked at us with disgust. "Another surprise was that he's actually one inch taller than me!"

"He had flu and despite a sore throat chatted for three hours. He looked like death warmed up and I thought that evenings performance of Alfie would be cancelled. But like a true professional he went on."

So which stars would Vivienne most like to interview? "Oh, Dudley Moore without a doubt would be the greatest adventure. While the shy Timothy Dalton would be an exciting challenge!"

For the immediate future however, Vivienne is in the middle of writing a book and hopes to get it published at the end of this year. "It's a compilation of all the funny things that happened to me when I lived abroad." That was all she would divulge.

On reflection this interview wasn't as difficult as I'd anticipated! Maybe that was due to our recognition of a shared kindred spirit!