The title of The Pregnant Widow, according to the ...

“Everyone finds it difficult. The only writer who has ever got anywhere with it in my view is Saul Bellow – the curious thing about life is that it is dead when you write it. It’s a miracle Bellow got anywhere with it.”

The title of The Pregnant Widow, according to the...
author, refers to a quote about revolutions by Russian philosopher Alexander Herzen, who said that when a revolution takes place we should, on the whole, be braced by the fact that one order has given way to another; but what we are left with is not a new born child, but a pregnant widow.

“It is almost the best thing said about revolutions,” Amis adds. “They don’t just end with the death of the old order but with a very painful birth of the new order. I think we are still living through the sexual revolution and will continue to do so for a long time.”

While the new novel is primarily set in the 1970s, Amis reveals there are five sections in the book that bring the characters forward to the modern day and looks at how they and the ideas behind the sexual revolution, have developed.

He has also included “a minor Islamic theme” which he says “has to do with how Muslims and Christians seemed to be getting on reasonably well and we had no idea that this millennium old hatred would burst forward on (September 11).”

Amis is no stranger to media controversy and it was the subject of Islam, or more specifically his condemnation of Islamism, that caused a very public spat with his University of Manchester colleague Terry Eagleton in 2007.

When he hit the news more recently for comments made about Jordan you would be forgiven for expecting these utterances to be concerned with problems in the Middle East.

In fact it was the glamour girl of the same name whom Amis poured scorned on at another literary festival, when discussing how she inspired a character in a novella he has recently completed called State of England.

Amis says that the character, called Threnody, does not play as big a role in the novella as the media storm would suggest, but her portrayal certainly contributes to his satirical and pessimistic take on the state of the nation.

“She is a minor character,” he explains. “It is not Jordan but a rather different type of woman who gets about as much attention. My character is a poet, not a novelist, on the side as well as being a glamour model.

“I think it is slightly depressing that Jordan’s autobiography is a best seller and people queue for five hours to meet her. What does that say about England?

“Snobbery has to start somewhere and if you can’t be snobbish about Katie Price you are dead, you’ve gone.”

Martin Amis, Book Now, Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, November 15, 3pm, £10/£8.50, richmond.gov.uk/book_now_2009
ALSO ONLINE TODAY

Epsom Rotary Club stalwart receives award
ARotary Club stalwart from Epsom has been honoured with a special award.

Councillors appointed cycling champions for Epsom and Ewell
Two councillors have been appointed cycling champions to encourage residents to take up the activity.

BREAKING NEWS: Murder suspect extradited from Spain
Asuspect in the murder case of a Nutfield woman was extradited from Spain yesterday.

Saturday of gigs and activities for young people at Rosebery Park
Young people will be able to chill out with gigs and activities at Rosebery Park tomorrow (Saturday, July 10).

WIN! Ireland goodies
Get your hands on a host of Ireland goodies in our competition in association with Tourism Ireland.

Cash: Dons got what they deserved at Rushden
First defeat of the season at Nene Park.

Game review: Kane and Lynch: Dog Days
The first Kane and Lynch wasn't a big hitter, so it's something of a surprise that the gritty pair somehow got themselves a sequel.

Game review: Alien Breed: Impact - PC
The action is fast-paced and intense and plays a little like Contra, but from an isometric perspective.

Outside the Box has Edinburgh Fringe shows first
Outside the Box is continuing its season of Edinburgh previews next week with shows at Surbiton's cornerHOUSE, Kingston's Fighting Cocks and The Angel Inn in Thames Ditton. Tim Vine, Mark Watson and Reginald D Hunter will all be taking to the various stages as will Pappy's, the Chortle-award winning sketch group formerly known as Pappy's Fun Club. Tom Parry, from the trio, gave us the lowdown ahead of their two shows.

Game news: Worms Reloaded customisation trailer
Britsoft legends Team17 released a new
video today highlighting the levels of customisation that can be found in Worms Reloaded.