# On The Hill

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR PRIMROSE HILL PEOPLE

APRIL 2018 | ONTHEHILL.INFO



## SAVE ST MARY'S YOUTHWORK!

A plea for help from an important local project

## KATHERINE WHITEHORN

Her life as a journalist on *Picture Post* and *Paris Match*

## OSKAR PINK

The rock-and-roll hair salon

Produced by Primrose Hill Community Association

# Sales

## 020 7043 4433

### £749,950 Leasehold



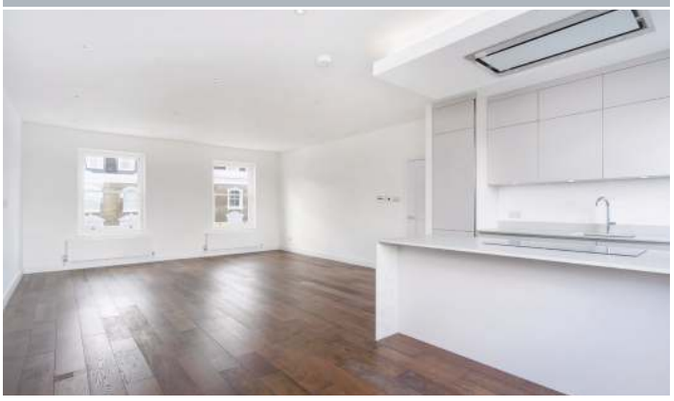
Primrose Hill, NW1

A bright and spacious 1 bedroom apartment situated within a grand period residence with superb South facing communal gardens. This excellent property comprises a large and spacious reception room leading into a dining area and modern kitchen, the bedroom is to the rear facing the tranquil gardens. The apartment is perfectly positioned for all the amenities located in the village and open green spaces of Primrose Hill and Regents Park, alongside an array of quality independent shops, cafes, restaurants and bars in Camden Town.

Energy Efficiency Rating - D66

1 1

### £1,600,000 Leasehold



Primrose Hill, NW1

This stunning property has been meticulously renovated to the highest specification and offers bright and spacious accommodation throughout. The second floor hosts a 28 ft dual aspect, open plan reception/dining room with a beautifully designed modern kitchen and a guest cloakroom. The top floor comprises of a principal bedroom with a stylish en-suite shower room and a walk-in wardrobe, a further 2 double bedrooms and a family bathroom.

Energy Efficiency Rating - D60

3 2

# Lettings

## 020 7043 3333

### £1,000* pw Unfurnished (£4,333 p/m)



Primrose Hill, NW1

A charming 2 bedroom mews house offering open plan living and set within a secluded gated mews just off Regents Park Road. The property has been finished in a contemporary style and comprises a spacious reception/dining room incorporating an integrated kitchen, principal bedroom with an en-suite shower room and private balcony, second double bedroom with an en-suite bathroom and a guest cloakroom.

Energy Efficiency Rating - C72

2 2

### £3,500* pw Unfurnished (£15,167 p/m)



Primrose Hill, NW1

A stunning and recently refurbished family house comprising 4 reception rooms, spacious fully fitted eat-in kitchen, principal bedroom with a dressing room and en-suite bathroom, 4 further double bedrooms, 2 further bathrooms and a well-manicured private garden. This family home has been decorated in neutral tones boasting wooden and parquet flooring and further benefits from modern and contemporary fixtures and fittings.

Energy Efficiency Rating - D55

5 4

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# April 2018

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Special thanks to all our contributors.

This publication is created by the community and for the benefit of Primrose Hill on behalf of your local charity, the Primrose Hill Community Association (PHCA). All proceeds from this publication go directly to fund the charity. We hope you enjoy.

www.phca.cc



Disclaimer: the views in the magazine are not necessarily the views of the PHCA.

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**Cover**
Sarah Louise Ramsay

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# Welcome to April

In *The Spectator* last month, Andrew Marr gave a stark reminder of how Primrose Hill was rubbing shoulders with some of the worst deprivation in north London. And he made clear that it's not the state dealing with the fallout, but volunteers. The youthwork at St Mary's Church, run by Jason Allen – who Andrew Marr calls a local hero – is working with gangs, taking calls day and night, organising football groups, coordinating the handing in of firearms and working with schools to diffuse violence. With cuts in local authority funding, the work that Jason and his team do is under threat and they need our help in the fight against the stabbings, gang culture and drug dealing which is taking over our streets. Please spare a little money to help them continue to do their job. Details of how you can help are on page 8.

Also in this issue you can learn about WB Yeats's time in Primrose Hill, take a look at the lives of a family in Edis Street, and see how 'The Beast from the East' made us all into better people, for a short while at least.

Rock and rollers among you will need a new hairdo for the coming festival season, so head round to Oskar Pink where free therapy and a singalong is included in the price of a haircut.

Primrose Hill Eats this month comes from Emma Du Croz of The Life of Pie, who trades at Primrose Hill Market. We invite you to try her rose apple tart.

If you require more of a vintage feel to your cookery, then try Katharine Whitehorn's 1961 book, *Cooking in a Bedsitter*. Tracey Mitchell talks to Katharine about her time as a journalist on *Picture Post*, *Paris Match* and *Life*.

There's plenty more to read inside, so crack open your Easter eggs and enjoy.

*Maggie Chambers*




I created Mary's Living and Giving Shops for Save the Children as places to collaborate at the heart of communities while raising lifesaving funds for children all over the world.

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♡ Mary x

mary's living & giving shop

for Save the Children

# On The Street

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'Under African Skies' *p 9*

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AND MORE

## Keep St Mary's Youth Club open

A plea for help from this important local project.
*Continued on p 8* ▶



# Keep St Mary's Youth Club open

By Xandra Bingley

Shocking fact: pretty and glamorous Primrose Hill is an Area of Acute Deprivation.

The Youth Club is the one place that replaces local shut-down government Youth Centres. Please help keep St Mary's Youth Club open.

Our Youth Club workers mentor 6–12 and 13–18-year-olds where schools are failing and homes are often dangerous. Children become traumatised and start to act up violently on our local streets. Gang behaviour is growing. Last year we held 489 gang intervention sessions. Teachers at Haverstock School and UCL Academy ask Youth Club workers to come to the school gates and defuse violence. Probation Officers request our Youth Club workers to mentor Youth Offenders in prison and leaving prison so that they do not re-offend. Firearms are handed in to our Youth Club.

We, the lucky privileged local residents, live very different lives. These children and young people are hidden from us in poverty. Residents exist in adjacent streets in tragically different worlds. We have 28% of local children living in poverty. The results are that this year by February three of our young people have been murdered and eight stabbed in knife crimes. There have been 1,113 Youth Club sessions with young people over the last year to prevent crime. Intense mentoring case studies spin young peoples' lives around. Assisted CV, job and education applications are helping disadvantaged young people with histories of deprivation and violence to start on new paths.

The Youth Club desperately needs a second paid worker salary and more funds for sport, food, equipment and training volunteers. Jason, our one paid Youth Club leader, and his volunteer team answer calls day and night, out on the streets and in the housing estates to stop violent behaviour.



Jason's own vulnerable childhood has led him to devote himself to giving hope to deprived children and young people, to raising self-esteem and to creating good future lives.

This January, knife crime in London officially rose 23%. We so very much need St Mary's Youth Club to stay open.

We need readers of *On The Hill* to help with this urgent local Youth Club project. If you would like further details please email Xandra Bingley at xandra.bingley@gmail.com

If you feel able to make a donation, please contact the parish office or make a donation to their Just Giving page.

**office@smvph.org.uk**

**www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/stmarysprimrosehill/keepstmarysopen**

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# ‘Under African Skies’

By Giles Watkins

I should start this article with a confession: I am a cricket nut, and I also have great memories of Cape Town – in fact my wife and I got engaged there in 2001.

So when our eleven-year-old son Elliott was selected for the Primrose Hill Cricket Club (PHCC) U12 tour in February, I could hardly say no. And it sounded spectacularly better than my own boyhood cricket tour experience – three days of cricket and two nights of youth hostelling on the Isle of Wight. ‘Bat out of Hell’ was the song of that tour, blaring out of the school minibus radio. Forty years on, a lot has changed; and not just the musical choices on the bus (most of which I did not recognise).

PHCC was founded in 2006 by Anthony Bouchier at least in part to provide his own children with quality cricket. The club has around four hundred boys and forty girls aged between 8 and 15, and they have a great record in providing boys and girls for borough and county cricket, with kids involved in Middlesex and Hertfordshire.

A PHCC U12 team has been touring the Western Cape every year for the last decade. This time we had eight fixtures arranged. Conditions were exacerbated by a water shortage, so our first game in Franschhoek was moved to a ground at the back of a brewery! A fine knock from Amaan Mathur was the highlight. Next stop was Paarl Boys Primary boys’ school, where the wicket looked like a thick rubber mat but was actually caked mud. No need to roll the pitch between innings. The groundsman used what looked like an industrial-sized hair-dryer to blow away grass and dust, and Tomas Carroll Orea hit a couple of sixes.

The next day we visited a township. We listened to ‘Gracelands’ on the coach – at last, some songs I recognised! I reflected that our tour would not have been possible thirty years ago.

What was in store for us, I wondered, as I applied the sun cream on the bus. We had a healthy cheque to present to the community and a dozen kit bags of mostly ‘pre-loved’ clothing looking for a good home.

On our arrival we were shepherded into the Community Centre sports hall to the sounds of gospel singing from the nearby church. We learnt that the township layout was a legacy of the fifty-year apartheid policy, so we’d see deterioration in the quality of housing as we went up the hill. What we witnessed was a life lesson to us all: kids playing and having fun in some pretty basic conditions, and a family inviting us into their sparse home, which was remarkably clean and tidy. Everything was recycled, from containers and old caravans, to bedsteads and garden spades. Families queued to collect water from a single tap, yet they smiled and waved, especially one boy in an orange and blue striped top, who followed us around for the full ninety-minute walk. A living example of making the most of what you have.

There are high rates of unemployment, and a drugs epidemic. Tik is the drug of choice – crystal meth to you and me. It’s highly addictive and has almost immediate long-term psychological side effects. Education at least remains



highly valued, with students staying at school well into their 20s if need be to pass their exams.

PHCC took on a local team of U12s, where we narrowly lost. At the presentation we learned that the money raised last year had funded a new sound system and cricket coaches. As we handed a cheque for 80,000 Rand (£5,000), all our kids could understand what their raffle ticket endeavours, doubled by the generosity of Santander, were going towards.

At Somerset College we had an opening stand of 69 between Jai Gupta and Elliott Watkins, a pleasure to watch, especially when one of them is your son! We also came across our first girl opponent on the tour. She was thrilled to see Jasmine Sharp from our side. Jasmine comes from a cricketing family, and was one of the stand-out bowlers of the tour.

The next fixture was in a tough part of town, the Cape Town flats. Barney Norman and Kit Taylor helped us to a respectable tie, and the Belhar boys danced with delight at the rain and the football shirts we had brought them.

At Kenridge, Hamish Cooper scored the only 50 on our tour; and at Bishop’s Prep, Barney Norman was our leading wicket-taker. This game saw Jai Gupta lead the way, and his younger brother Neel was rarely out of the action. Max Leof bowled well at Hermanus, assisted by Danyal Naqvi, Rahul Vashisht-Pigem and Kabir Manaktala, to name but three.

The highlight of the trip was taking the ferry to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela and so many others were imprisoned in the apartheid era. Our guide was imprisoned there for five years following his part in the Soweto riots, and I will never forget his message of the importance of forgiveness.

We all gained so much from this trip, and not just about cricket.

*If you know a boy or girl between the ages of 7 and 15 who’d like to play cricket this summer, please contact:*
**enquiries@primrosehillcc.org**

# POSTCARDS FROM PRIMROSE HILL



PRIMROSE HILL On The Hill LONDON

A picture postcard of number 158, King Henry's Road, a pretty house that sadly no longer exists. It may have been located at the Swiss Cottage end of this very long road.

On 16 September 1910, Ethel wrote to her two friends attending the High School for Girls in Peterborough:

'I hope you have arrived at your destination quite safely, without any trouble. This is a postcard of our house. I thought, perhaps, you would like it. With very kind regards & good luck from Ethel.'

Twenty-three-year-old Ethel Maud Moore lived in this house with her father Joseph, a butcher, and her mother Harriet. They must have been well off: according to the 1911 census, they had a servant named Elizabeth Ann Spoard, and were the only family listed as living at the house, occupying eleven rooms.

And it is because Ethel wrote her address so neatly on this card that we can actually identify the property.

@old_primrosehill_postcards

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PHOTOGRAPH BY Ian Shaw

# Lessons from the Beast

By Caroline Shaw

**A meteorological monster**

Memories of the 'Beast from the East' in early March are still raw for many. Yet whilst the arctic breeze attacked our skin and the daffodils collapsed under piles of snow, something in our collective behaviour seemed to shift.

**Permission to stop**

It wasn't just the schoolchildren who sensed the potential for fun and excitement that a white world brings. The snow seemed to bring with it a degree of permission to relax the usual London pace, to slow down and enjoy. There were people of every age sledging, sliding and making merry in the snow. Conversations, and in some cases snowball fights, started up between strangers and the sound of laughter began to compete with the buffeting winds. There were even reports of a large inflatable dinosaur skiing down Primrose Hill and a giant white rabbit strolling along Broadwalk!

**Deadly dangerous too...**

Meanwhile, with the media speculating that the UK could get colder than the North Pole, the deadly dangerous side of the storm hit home. Out of this emerged evidence of a stronger community spirit, a recognition that we were all in this together.

Students at my Thursday evening yoga class offered each other emergency accommodation as trains home were cancelled. I heard people in a local café organising donations to homeless charities, whilst staff took soup to people camped out on a nearby street. I am sure others went further and volunteered at emergency shelters.

**Foodbank in need**

Now that the mercury is rising and the daffodils have recovered from their snowy bombardment, memories of the icy chill in early March will start to fade. Yet with extreme weather events on the rise and an estimated 180 people sleeping rough every night in Camden, it would be good to think that elements of this community spirit could be continued into the summer.

The foodbank in the Baptist church on Berkley Road tell me that they are still in need of foil blankets, energy bars and soft non-perishable foods, if anyone is able to make a donation.

**Positive for all?**

It is said that striking up a conversation with a stranger (in a safe environment, of course) builds confidence and self-esteem, and that helping others releases feel-good chemicals from the reward centres in the brain. So let's make the lasting impact of the 'Beast from the East' a positive one, and keep going with those spur of the moment conversations and helpful actions (though let's hope no more snowball fights!) as we head into summer.

For more information on Caroline's Thursday night yoga class and regular weekend workshops in Primrose Hill, please see **www.carolineshawyoga.com** or email carolineshawyoga@gmail.com

Homeless charities: for example Streetlink or St Mungo's.

Chalk Farm Foodbank: open Thursdays 10.30–12.00, **www.chalkfarm.foodbank.org.uk**, 0207 483 3763

INTERVIEW

# Katy Taylor

*My Primrose Hill Q&A with style editor and resident Katy Taylor*



**What made you choose Primrose Hill as a place to live?**

I used to live in Tufnell Park, but often found myself at weekends visiting and mooching around the village with a coffee on my own thinking how dreamy it was. When my personal circumstances changed, I had to find a place fairly quickly for myself; it so happened that the place I liked most was in Primrose Hill, pretty much next to the hill itself, so I like to tell myself that it was meant to be.

**What makes Primrose Hill so special for you?**

When I first moved to London, I always thought that Primrose Hill would be such a lovely romantic place to live. And I was right, it is. I am not ashamed to say that I have completely and utterly fallen under its spell in so many ways. As someone who appreciates style and design, I never get bored with looking at all the beautiful, colourful houses; and I like the sense of history and community here, which is important to me. You can be by yourself but not feel lonely, as you get to see the same people every day and can stop and chat to the people who work in the independent shops. That doesn't happen everywhere in London, so I feel very lucky to live here.

**How would you spend your ideal day in Primrose Hill?**

Morning coffee in Ripe Kitchen, as I think they make the best coffee in the village and are perfectly positioned close to my flat. I've got to know the staff well and catch up on local gossip while my coffee is being made. They have a few tables outside, and when the sunshine is out and I don't have to be anywhere I can happily sit there and people watch or read. I'm also pleased that they have recently opened their second branch in Camden Passage, by the Angel.

I'm not a big breakfast person, but late morning I home in on Melrose & Morgan's amazing vegan chocolate and banana bread. Even though I'm not vegan, it's delicious! I think the staff may have clocked my obsession, as I walked past the other day and one of them came running after me excitedly saying, "We've got it in today!" Little things that like that make me relish living here, as I know it wouldn't happen anywhere else.

I'm a big foodie and love to cook. So on Saturdays I like to visit the local farmers' market at the school and pick up some treats to share with friends later. I pick up wine from Bottle Apostle, as it's nice to be recommended wines and discover something new. If I'm eating out in the village, in the winter evenings I love the cosiness and simplicity of French restaurant L'Absinthe. In the summer, good old Lemonia is fun for simple Greek dishes and for absorbing the atmosphere, feeling like you're on holiday.

I think the end of an ideal day might be to stop for a glass of red wine at newly opened La Ferme. If I'm not at the bar, I'm nibbling a few snacks from a picnic basket on my blanket: taking in the views on the hill while watching the sun go down.

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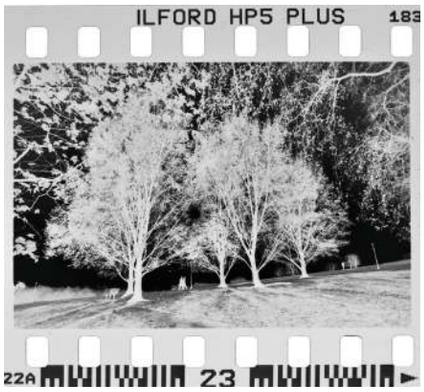
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George Large, *Horticulturalists*, oil on canvas




# Primrose Hill photo story

By Joan Olivella

I once read somewhere a statement from a photographer which said, "If you are able to remember where and when you took a photograph, that means you've taken a good one." I must admit that I have the same feeling every time I see this photograph. I can recall exactly that freezing morning in particular, and how I envisioned the photograph inside my head even before I pressed the shutter.

This is really emotional for me. It's almost like going back in time to 2010. It was an extremely cold sunny morning in late November. I had my Nikon F2 film camera without any light metering system, backed with a 24mm wide angle, with Ilford black-and-white film. I was climbing Primrose Hill's main path when I noticed some trees from the other side. I thought to myself, "If I shot through the trees, I would be able to capture this strong light."

I waited patiently until the pedestrians had walked by. The exposure was just perfect! Probably if I had taken it in digital, it would have been under-exposed or over-exposed. I do believe that film portrays hard light conditions much better than digital. You can see the circle of the sun perfectly through the branches and scant leaves. I love the shape of the photograph; that's why I decided to include the negative transparency along with the positive. I hope you love it too!

Instagram:
**@littlewhiteflatphotostudio**

# 1st April

A poem by Susan Greenhill

There's a lion in the lettuce
a tiger in the stew,
a tap-dancing caterpillar
snorkelling in the loo.

Quickly run and see
before they disappear,
or the tiger drowns in carrots
and the lion in ginger beer.

You've looked – and they're not there?
What not even the giraffe
standing on his head
reading in the bath?

I can't resist fun and hoax
It's why I love today,
a time for endless silly jokes,
it's April Fools' Day.



**www.soundcloud.com/susan-greenhill-poetry**



# NEWS & VIEWS



## Meat Free Mondays

Meat Free Mondays in March kicked off with a delicious vegetarian brioche stuffed with mushrooms, spinach, raisins and rice at Sylvia's Kitchen, the Oldfield Lunch Club. The dish was created by local chef trainer Michael Wright.

Meat Free Monday's vegan set lunch at Greenberry featured dairy-free ice cream.







# Farewell to Dr Jane Lim

Over sixty people came to the Library on a chilly February evening to say goodbye to Dr Lim, who has retired after fifteen years at Primrose Hill Surgery. John Nutt, chair of Primrose Hill Patient Participation Group, thanked Dr Lim for her care over the years, and Dr Lim spoke of her achievements in expanding the practice. A delicious cake made by Kay Arumugam was enjoyed. A message from someone who couldn't attend summed up the sentiment: "Dr Lim was a super GP, caring, kind, sensible, practical and no-nonsense. She helped us through some difficult times and will be much missed."

# L'Absinthe supports PHCA

During the month of April, L'Absinthe will donate 10% of the total of diner's bills (excluding service charge) to Primrose Hill Community Association. You must mention the offer before sitting down, or when booking.

# Surgery news

The Primrose Hill Patient Participation Group reports that negotiations are ongoing for a new fifteen-year lease on the premises that were recently sold to a local buyer. The District Surveyor is involved to set a fair rent and there seem to be good intentions on both sides.

The surgery reception is now open from 8 am to 12.30 pm, 2 pm to 7.30 pm on Mondays; and until 6 pm every other weekday, including Thursdays. Extra telephone appointments are now available, and the weekly clinics at Oldfield have been resumed. Evening and Saturday appointments can be made at Swiss Cottage Surgery by ringing 020 7391 9979.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

From my Oldfield Eyrie I have a panoramic view of the impromptu local winter games on the Hill's snow-bound slopes, which are more entertaining and picturesque than Pyeongchang could muster. However, after a sleepless night . . .

*A nightmare had made me quite ill,*
*Worried sick with feverish chill,*
*So ghastly a sight,*
*I screamed with much fright,*
*A zip-wire over Primrose Hill.*

Yours faithfully,
Howard Richards


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# What's On April

## NEW THIS APRIL

### TUESDAY 3

**Film show at the Library**
*High Hopes* (1988), slice-of-life comedy about changing London, directed by Mike Leigh. PHCL. 7.15pm, £8, including a glass of wine, in cash, in advance at PHCL or on the door.

### TUESDAY 3 AND WEDNESDAY 4

**Dance and drama Easter workshops for children aged 6–13 years.**
Dance classes will include lyrical jazz, contemporary, street dance, hip-hop and musical theatre styles. Drama workshops will involve working with a professional actor on scenes while developing skills in voice, movement, character, improvisation, performing and script-writing. PHCC. 10am–3.30pm. For more information, contact Juliet 07971 916 174, email juliet@pittapattadance.co.uk

### WEDNESDAY 4

**Open House**
Visit to Regent's Park Mosque, 146 Park Road, NW8 7RG, 2pm. Transport available from PHCC.

### THURSDAY 5

**Meditation yoga with Ellen Emmet**
PHCL. 6.30–7.45. For prices, contact ellenemmet@outlook.co.uk

### THURSDAY 5 AND FRIDAY 6

**Circus Glory workshops**
PHCC. 10am–3pm. Contact circusglory@gmail.com

### WEDNESDAY 11

**Open House**
Talk: 'Supporting Mental Health' with Susan Morris. PHCC. 2pm. Free.

### FRIDAY 13

**On Bouge French Dance Club**
With live music. Newbies welcome. We'll show you how to do these fun dances. PHCC. 7.30–10pm. Contact 07940 269 223, Chris@gigcb.com

### TUESDAY 17

**Open Mic**
PHCL. 7–9pm. Suggested donation £3. Contact events@phcl.org

### WEDNESDAY 18

**Open House**
*Cabaret*, a song and puppetry performance from Tim Sanderson. PHCC. 2pm. Free.

**Martin Graebe Lecture**
Graebe gives a fascinating lecture on Sabine Baring-Gould, the important folk song collector. CSH. 7.30pm. £8.

### SUNDAY 22

**Family Barn Dance**
Bring the entire family and take part in lively dances. CSH. 3–5pm. £7 adults, £5 children.

### TUESDAY 24

**Hampstead Music Club**
PHCL. 8–9.30pm. Contact claire_crescendo@hotmail.com

### WEDNESDAY 25

**Open House**
Film screening of *20th Century Women*, about love and freedom in 1970s California. PHCC. 2pm. Free.

### THURSDAY 26

**Author talk**
Genevieve Fox, former Features Editor of the Telegraph, on *Milkshakes and Morphine*, a memoir on surviving cancer. PHCL. 7pm. £2 at the door.

## PLAN AHEAD COMING SOON

### TUESDAY 1 MAY

**Film show at the Library**
*Cría Cuervos* (1976), directed by Carlos Saura: the end of Franco's Spain watched by a child, with subtitles. PHCL. 7.15pm. £8, including a glass of wine, in cash, in advance at PHCL or on the door.

### FRIDAY 18 MAY

**Top of the Hill Quiz**
Plan ahead for the 15th consecutive Top of the Hill quiz evening. A fun quiz evening with a mixture of taxing questions and silly ones. Recruit a table of up to 8 neighbours, or just come yourself and join in with a team. PHCC. £10 per person (which includes a glass of wine). Book your team in early on 020 7586 8327.

## FOR KIDS

### MONDAY

**Ready Steady Go ABC classes**
Fun and educative groups for toddlers and babies aged 6–18 months with their parents and carers. PHCC. 9.30–11am. £120 per term (pro-rated when joining), trial classes available. Contact 020 7586 5862 to register or for more information

**Rhyme Time**
Library Rhyme Time for under 5s. PHCL. 10.30–11.15am. Suggested £2 donation. Contact 020 7419 6599

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for ages 3–12. All levels welcome. PHCC. 3–6.30pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451 603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

**Homework Club**
Do your homework in the Library with a qualified teacher. PHCL. 4–6pm. Free. Contact 020 7419 6599

### TUESDAY

**Hartbeeps Baby Sensory**
Multi-sensory class of mini music productions for the very young. PHCC. 1.30–5.15pm. Classes £8. Contact Clare 07528 688 734

**Monkey Music**
Award-winning music classes for babies and toddlers: music, movement, percussion, bubbles and fun. Contact 020 8438 0189 for a free trial class

### WEDNESDAY

**Ready Steady Go Yoga**
Baby and Me, age 6 weeks–9 months, with Lily. PHCC. 9–10am. £60 for 5 weeks (first class free). Contact yoga@readysteadygo.org to register or for more information

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for ages 3–12. All levels welcome. PHCC. 2.30–6.30pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451 603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

**Primrose Hill Children's Choir**
Learn to sing, enjoy fun songs and games. Ages 4–11. St Mary's Church, NW3 3DJ. 4–5pm. First time free, then £8 per week. Contact Matthew 07817 234 925, www.primrosehillchoirs.com




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**Mayor's Fundraiser for C4WS homeless project**

The Mayor of Camden, Cllr Richard Cotton is delighted to host an evening with Alan Bennett at Friends House. Alan will talk about his iconic book '**The Lady and the Van**' – the true story of Alan's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman in Camden in the 1970's and read extracts from his diaries.

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**VENUE:**
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Bookings via Eventbrite: is www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-alan-bennett-tickets-43611973587


**Homework Club**
Do your homework in the Library with a qualified teacher. PHCL. 4–6pm. Free. Contact 020 7419 6599

### THURSDAY

**Drop-in for under 4s**
Drop in and take part in a variety of activities. PHCC. 11.15am–1pm. Term time only. £2.50 to include snack, tea and coffee for mums. Contact 020 7586 8327

**Catherine's Ballet, Chalk Farm School of Dance for under 5s**
Ballet classes at PHCC. 4–5pm. Contact info@chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk, www.chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk

**Mini Mozart**
Musical story time. PHCL. 9.30am for young children; 10.15am for babies. Contact hello@minimozart.com

**First Class Learning**
English and Maths tuition. PHCL. 3.30–6.30pm. Contact primrosehill@firstclasslearning.co.uk

### FRIDAY

**Mothers' Mornings**
Meet other mothers while your children play. PHCL. 10.30–11.30am. Free. Contact 020 7419 6599

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for ages 3–12. All levels welcome. PHCC. 2.30–6.30pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451 603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

**Pitta Patta**
Funky dance classes. Ages 4–16. PHCC. 4–7.15pm. Contact Juliet 07971 916 174, Juliet@pittapattadance.co.uk, www.pittapattadance.co.uk

### SATURDAY

**Jingle Jam Music**
Music classes with a jazz flavour. Babies of 3 months to walking at 10.10am; walking to 5 years at 11.10am. Contact Emily Dankworth 07905 979 024, www.jinglejamkids.co.uk (no class on 7 and 14 April)

### SUNDAY

**Drama, dance and singing classes**
A unique mix of drama, dance and singing to bring out every child's true potential. Ages 4–7. PHCC. 10–11.30am and 11.30am–1pm. Try a free class. Contact 020 7255 9120, enquiries@perform.org.uk, www.perform.org.uk

## FOR ADULTS

### MONDAY

**ACOL Bridge Club**
PHCC. 1.45–3.45pm. £3. Contact Maureen Betts 07919 444 187

**Bridge Class**
Join us in the Library for a game of bridge. Beginners/intermediate. PHCL. 6.30pm. Contact jojarrold@gmail.com

**Chilled Strings**
Small amateur string chamber orchestra, guided by professional tutor Kwesi Edman. PHCC. 6.30–8.45pm. £10 for each evening. Contact sueandhercello@gmail.com

**Primrose Hill Community Choir**
Love to sing? Try us out! All welcome. PHCC. 7.30–9.30pm. £6. Contact Matthew 0781 723 4925, www.primrosehillchoirs.com

# What's On April

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for adults. All levels welcome. PHCC. 1.30–2.45pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451 603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

**Neighbourhood Information Centre**
Drop-in advice centre. PHCL. 2–4pm. Free. Contact 020 7419 6599

**Trauma Release Exercises (TRE)**
New drop-in class to release chronic tension patterns and return the nervous system to balance. PHCC. 4–6pm. £15 per class, or 5 for £50. Contact Tim Kirkpatrick, www.back2base.co.uk

## TUESDAY

**ESOL Class**
Learn English at the Library. PHCL. 12–1.30pm. Free. Contact jojarrold@gmail.com

**Keep Fit for over 60s**
PHCC. 3–4pm. Free. Contact 0207 586 8327

**Laban Movement Workshop**
To practise and explore Rudolf Laban's Scales and Efforts. PHCC. 12–1pm. £10. Contact 07970 536 643, jennyfrankel.laban@gmail.com

**Morris Dancing**
Learn lively Cotswold Morris dancing with handkerchiefs and sticks, led by tutor Andy Richards. No experience necessary. CSH. 6.30–9pm.

**Pilates**
PHCL. Dynamic sessions, 9am and 10.15am; gentler session 11.30am–12.30pm. £12 per class, £100 for 10 classes. Contact lizacawthorn@gmail.com

**General Yoga**
PHCC. 6.30–8pm. Contact Catriona 07958 959816, cat.b1@blueyonder.co.uk

**Hatha Yoga**
An open-level class combining mindful flow with alignment-based instructions and breathing techniques. PHCC. 1.30–2.30pm. Contact Emma 0780 855 3599, emma.lecoeur@gmail.com

## WEDNESDAY

**Pilates**
Class with Pelin Adlan. PHCL. 10–11am. For price, contact happilates111@gmail.com

**Feldenkrais**
PHCL. 10:30–11:30. For price, contact info@somaticcircles.com

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for adults. All levels welcome. PHCC. 1.15–2.15pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451 603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

**English Folk Dance Club Camden**
Great fun for dancers of all abilities or none. No partner needed. PHCC. 7.30–10pm. Drop-in charge £6. Contact camdenfolkdance@yahoo.com

**Open House**
A regular activity (film, talk, performance) followed by tea, cake and chat. PHCC. 2pm. Free. Contact 020 7586 8327

## THURSDAY

**Pilates**
All abilities welcome. PHCC. 8–9am. £12 drop-in or £60 for 6. Contact Sue Johnson 07815 130 883, suejohnson22@hotmail.com

**Pilates**
Class with Pelin Adlan. PHCL. 10–11am. For price, contact happilates111@gmail.com

**English Country Dancing**
Learn English country and ceilidh dancing with tutor Mike Ruff. Musicians welcome to join the band led by Ian Cutts. No need to bring a partner, no experience necessary. CSH. 7.30–10pm.

**Life-drawing**
Beginners to professionals, just drop in! PHCC. 7–9.20pm. £8 or £6 concession. Contact 020 7586 8327, phlifedrawing@gmail.com, www.meetup.com/Primrose-Hill-Life-Drawing-London, Instagram: @lifedrawingph

**Narcotics Anonymous**
PHCC. 1.30–3.45pm. Free.

**Mother and Baby Postnatal Pilates**
Activate your pelvic floor, tone your tummy, strengthen your back and improve your posture. PHCL. 11am. Book your place on the next course at pilateswithpaulette@gmail.com, Facebook.com/pilateswithpaulette/reviews

**Gentle Pilates**
Gentle but effective Pilates class. PHCL. 12.30–1.30pm. £10 per session. Contact annie@mactherapy.org

**Pregnancy Yoga**
An open level class helping mums-to-be to stay healthy in mind and body during pregnancy. PHCC. 5.15–6.15pm. Contact 07808 553 599, emma.lecoeur@gmail.com

**Primrose Hill Yoga**
Strengthen, stretch, relax and re-energise. PHCC. 5.30–6.30pm. £11 drop-in, £50 series of 5, student and unemployed discount available. Contact carolineshawyoga@gmail.com

**Yoga for Seniors**
PHCC. 7–8pm. Free. Contact 020 7586 8327

## FRIDAY

**Dynamic Pilates**
Strengthen core, prevent back pain and improve posture. All levels and abilities welcome. Own mat needed. PHCC. 8–9am. Contact Natalie 0770 954 3581, natalienicollfitness@gmail.com

**Aerial Pilates**
PHCC. 9.45–11.15am. Contact circusbodies@gmail.com

**Mothers' Mornings**
Meet other mothers while your children play. PHCL. 10.30–11.30am. Free. Contact 020 7419 6599

**Circus Glory**
Trapeze for adults. All levels welcome. PHCC. 1.30–2.45pm. Contact Genevieve 0797 345 1603, gmonastesse@googlemail.com

## SATURDAY

**Primrose Hill Market**
St Paul's School playground, Elsworthy Road, NW3. 10am–3pm. Contact primrosehillmarket.com

## SUNDAY

**Hopkinson's Bar**
Meet for a drink with your neighbours. All welcome. PHCC. 12–2pm. Contact 020 7586 8327

## CONTACT DETAILS

**PHCC**
Primrose Hill Community Centre
29 Hopkinsons Place
(off Fitzroy Road)
NW1 8TN
Contact: info@phca.cc
020 7586 8327

**PHCL**
Primrose Hill Community Library
Sharpleshall Street,
NW1 8YN
Contact: events@phcl.org
020 7419 6599

**Please submit entries for our May issue by Friday 6 April**

**onthehillwhatson@phca.cc**

**Cecil Sharp House (CSH)**
2 Regent's Park Road NW1 7AY
Contact: info@efdss.org
020 7485 2206


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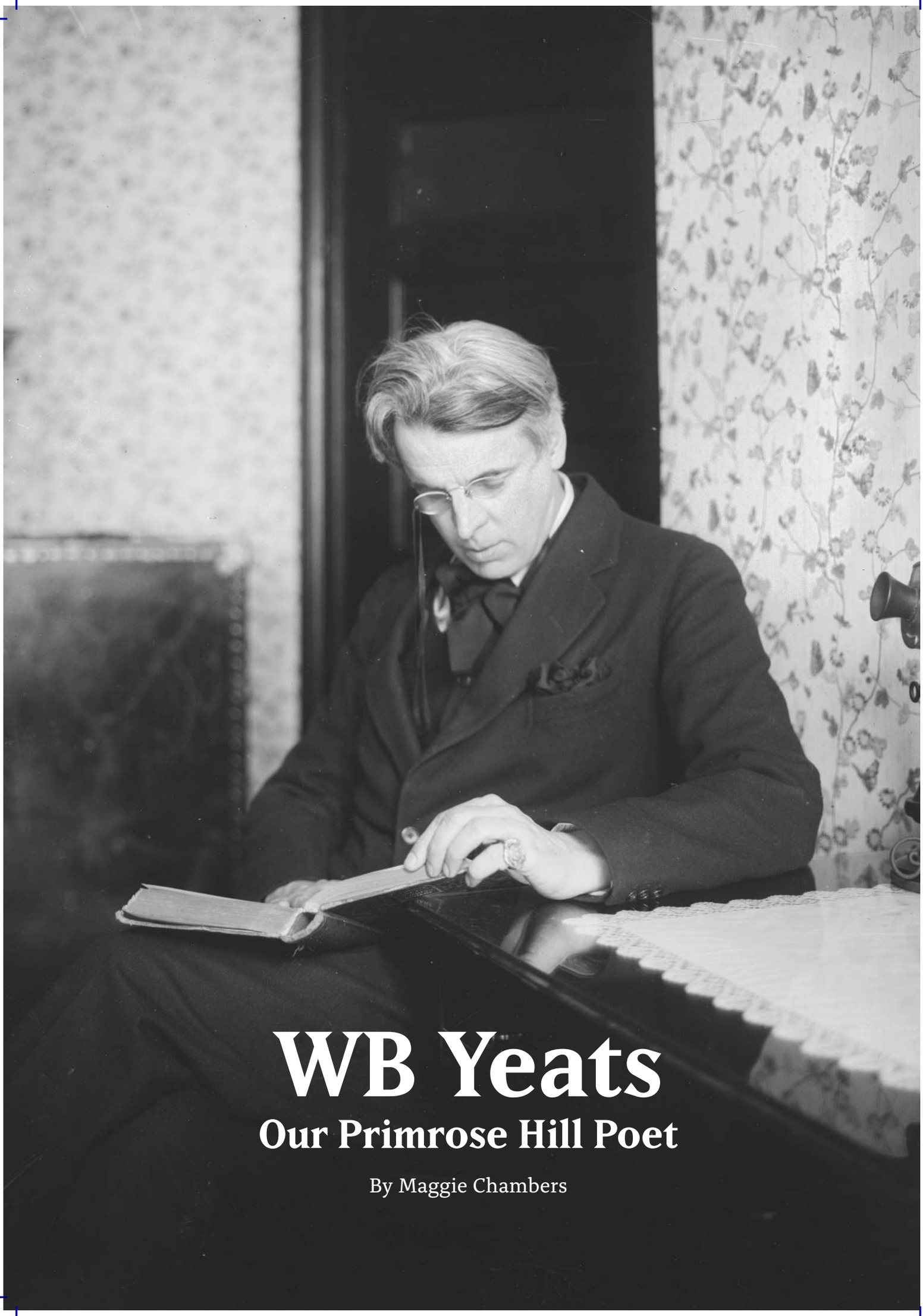
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GOLDSCHMIDT & HOWLAND
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# WB Yeats

## Our Primrose Hill Poet

By Maggie Chambers

**One hundred and two years ago this Easter, Yeats wrote one of the world's most famous poems, *Easter, 1916* after the uprising in Ireland.**

William Butler (WB) Yeats lived at 23 Fitzroy Road in Primrose Hill from the ages of two to eight (1867–73). His father was John Butler Yeats, who started out conventionally enough. He trained to be a lawyer, married, and had the first of his six children, William Butler (Willie) in 1865 and Susan Mary (Lily) in 1866. But after only a year as a barrister, he decided to give it up and move to London to become an artist.

## A marriage of inconvenience

John's wife was Susan Pollexfen, who grew up in a politically conservative family of shipping and milling merchants. She longed for a life of stability and conventionality, so her husband's abrupt career change didn't sit well with her. She didn't want to leave the security of her life in Ireland. John was a restless and gregarious man, and Susan hated his literary and artistic friends. He in turn wasn't keen on the Pollexfen family, as they seemed to thrive on bad news.

John Yeats enrolled himself at the Heatherley School of Fine Art in London, where Rossetti, Millais and Burne-Jones had studied. The rest of the family came over from Ireland to join him, and they moved into Primrose Hill on 1 July 1867. In the six years they lived here, three more children were born: Elizabeth Corbet (Lolly) in 1868, Robert Corbet (Bobbie) in 1870, and John Butler (Jack) in 1871.

In those early years, the Yeats children were taught at home by their parents. Their father was present a lot of the time, and he taught them to observe, use their imaginations and tell a good story. Their mother, for her part, told them Irish folktales.

After his training, John Yeats became a portrait painter. Although he got commissions, he had no business sense. As a result money was scarce, and Susan frequently had to borrow from her father. Eventually the financial worries began to affect his creativity, so he sold the house in Fitzroy Road and moved back to Ireland.

## Back to Ireland

On 23 July 1872, the children and their mother left Primrose Hill for the Pollexfen house in Sligo. The house had fourteen bedrooms, was surrounded by the sea and mountains, and had a garden scattered with figureheads from the family's shipping history.

William Butler Yeats loved Sligo. It became his spiritual home. To him, London was always grey and dismal. He would later write: "This melancholy London. I sometimes imagine that the souls of the lost are compelled to walk through its streets perpetually. One feels them passing like a whiff of air."

But life did not improve in Ireland. Bobbie caught croup and died just before his third birthday. Another baby, Jane Grace, was born, but she died of pneumonia at less than a year old. After this, Susan sank into depression, often nodding off to sleep as she read to the children.

The Yeats family moved back to London in 1887. It was like being in exile for Susan and she suffered a stroke. She spent her remaining years more remote and gloomy than ever. She died at the age of 58 and is buried in Acton cemetery.

**"This melancholy London. I sometimes imagine that the souls of the lost are compelled to walk through its streets perpetually. One feels them passing like a whiff of air."**

## An artistic family

Her four surviving children inherited the Yeats artistic temperament. Jack became a well-known Expressionist painter, described by Samuel Beckett as being " . . . with the great of our time . . . because he brings light, as only the great dare to bring light, to the issueless predicament of existence". He won a silver medal in the Arts and Culture section of the 1924 Paris Olympics for his painting *The Liffey Swim*.

Lily and Lolly were involved in the Arts and Crafts movement. Lily was an embroiderer and trained as a textile artist with William Morris's daughter, May. Lolly worked as an art teacher and wrote and illustrated *Elementary Brush-Work Studies*: a practical guide to teach young children how to draw flowers and plants. Lily and Lolly also helped form the Dun Emer Guild in 1902, which employed only women, and taught printing, bookbinding, weaving, rug-making and embroidery. A few years later they founded the Cuala Press, from where they published the first editions of William's poetry, and often supported him financially.

But even though Lily and Lolly spent their entire domestic and professional lives together, they loathed one another. Death was no escape, and they were to be buried in the same grave. Lily was funny, affectionate and close to William. Lollie was talented and attractive, but seen as the sibling who had inherited the Pollexfen neurotic disposition. She and William also quarrelled throughout their lives.

In 1907, Lily travelled to New York with her father. He fell in love with the country and didn't want to leave, so Lily had to return alone. He spent his final years surrounded by like-minded artists and writers.

His eldest son, William Butler Yeats, one of the world's greatest poets, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. On Easter Monday 1916, a small group of Nationalists fought to gain Irish independence, but were arrested by the British army and sentenced to death by firing squad. The brutal response came as a shock to Yeats: "I had no idea that any public event could so deeply move me." He wrote *Easter, 1916* in the months following the rebellion.

*All changed, changed utterly:*
*A terrible beauty is born.*




## Yeats' influence

Some of you may remember that in the mid-1990s the Princess pub was briefly renamed after WB Yeats's poem, *The Wild Swans at Coole*. It had a tree growing through the bar and swan door handles.

# PRIMROSE HILL
# ENTREPRENEURS

*Local digital start-up entrepreneur Petar Savic talks to some of the start-ups and small businesses running from Primrose Hill. This month he meets Camilla Casey Howling.*



## WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO PRIMROSE HILL?

I'm a born and bred Primrose Hiller. I was brought up in a house overlooking the Regent's Canal and attended Primrose Hill Primary School in the days when Mrs Router was headmistress. I now find myself returning to that same school to collect my four-year-old from the lovely nursery. His trapeze lessons are at the Community Centre, where I myself went to nursery with my twin sister. I have ventured south of the river for short bursts, to the bustle of Clapham and Chiswick, but have returned to my roots pretty quickly.

My experience of living in Primrose Hill is fairly unique, in that all my family are living in and around the hill. My twin sister lives a mere three doors away (very handy when it comes to babysitting), although the tables are about to turn as she is expecting her first baby this month! With a young family, the support of having parents five minutes away and the children's aunts, uncle and cousins so close has been priceless.

## WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT LIVING IN THE AREA?

I love that Primrose Hill has retained such a village feel, and that with no major roads running through the centre we can walk everywhere, while my four-year-old 'scoots'. We really are spoilt for choice having three parks, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park and even Hampstead Heath, in such close proximity.

Chalcot Square also proves the perfect gem of a place to hang out in the summer months: a great place for the children to run free, while their parents socialise over a glass of rosé early evening. Having London Zoo just five minutes away has also been fabulous, when looking for a last-minute form of outdoor entertainment for the children. The petting zoo, the children's water fountain and the playground there are where we spend most of our time during the spring and summer months. There's also something very special about my son being fortunate enough to be able to play cricket at Lord's each week too. And for me of course, a lover of fashion, I can 'hop and skip' through the park to get to Selfridges.

## I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE RECENTLY UNDERGONE A CAREER CHANGE: WHAT'S THIS IN, AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU?

With two small children and a husband who has just launched a new business venture – QuoinStone Management – I figured that working in the hospitality events and marketing industry was no longer conducive to my lifestyle.

When I had my eldest I set up 'Love Letters London', creating personalised illustrated names for children, which has proved very popular. The personalised named frames work as an ideal first gift for a new-born or young child.

Then I recently qualified as a personal trainer and am already really enjoying the challenge and prospects of where my career may take me. I love that I can positively inspire others and make a difference to the lives of fellow locals in their mood, shape and health. Primrose Hill and Regent's Park act as the perfect 'playground' for this.

For more information or to train with me, please find me on Instagram: @camillacaseyhowling. I will be starting a running club at the beginning of April, so anyone looking to get beach-ready before summer, please do join me. Please email me for the days and times we run:
**camillacasey@yahoo.co.uk**
**www.loveletterslondon.com**



# Katherine Whitehorn

**WORDS BY Tracey Mitchell**

"I've been incredibly lucky with a marriage to the right man, two super sons and really agreeable work," says Katharine Whitehorn over coffee in her Primrose Hill home.

We're talking about her time on *Picture Post*, *Paris Match* and *Life* in the 1950s. She claims she learned it all at *Picture Post*, where she first met Gavin Lyall, who became both her husband and a thriller writer.

"*Picture Post* was marvellous. I'd be asked by the editor to interview somebody. It might be anyone or anything," she says. "The theory was you could do anything if you asked the right questions. It was good for a beginner, because the photographer went with you. You always had someone who knew about things to tell you what you could get away with."

*Picture Post* offered her a start in fashion, although it was a long time before they let her into the Paris fashion shows. Much later, she had great fun doing clothes for the *Observer*. By then, she believes, she had sufficient experience to make a go of it because of the earlier work at *Picture Post*.

"For years, I did everything on offer. I had a long stretch where I pretty well did anything," Katharine explains of a prominent career in journalism. A memoir, *Selective Memory*, described her time on *Picture Post*, *Paris Match*, *Life* and *Woman's Own*, after which she began a humour column in the *Spectator*. Throughout the 1960s, she bridged serious and women's writing at both the *Spectator* and the *Observer*.

After becoming Women's Editor at the *Observer*, she did the clothes once again before swapping to the serious side. "I remember liking it very much indeed," she says. "It was still great fun to do the serious stuff. The things I wrote about were usually the things I was interested in. People you were with knew what you were talking about."

Although she took part in TV and radio programmes, like *Any Questions*, the *Eamonn Andrews Show* and *Call My Bluff*, Katharine doesn't consider broadcasting ranks high among her achievements. "At that point, a lot of journalists did the odd extra thing. I did it, I liked it, but it wasn't important to me. Basically, I've always been a writer. Of course, by then I was with Gavin," she continues. "I was well-known among some people, those who read magazines and papers. Plenty of people knew Gavin. He wanted me to do what I wanted to do. He read everything I wrote."

By the 1960s, many Londoners lived in bedsitters and a publisher had an idea for that market. First published in 1961, *Cooking in a Bedsitter* became a classic handbook of quick, simple meals for those in rented rooms. Lines like 'cooking at ground level, in a hurry, with nowhere to put the salad but the washing-up bowl, which is in any case full of socks' retained the humour of her *Spectator* column. *Cooking in a Bedsitter* was in print for the next forty years as a survival manual for busy people in need of a guide to eating. A series of survival mini-books followed, including *How to Survive in Hospital*, *How to Survive Children* and *How to Survive Your Money Problems*.

Today, Katharine views the survival books as an extension of her journalism. She wrote most of them on a boat lent to Katharine and Gavin by their friends, the best-selling crime writer Dick Francis and his wife Mary.

"If you ask me when I was happiest, it was on a boat on the Thames with Gavin," Katharine says. "At first Dick and Mary lent us theirs, and then we got our own. We'd sleep on board and stop occasionally. I could do anything I wanted on the boat, including writing." Ultimately, they got too old for it, but briefly before Gavin died they lived on dry land nearby in a cottage.

"I've had a fairly full life," she adds. "I had a hell of a lot of chances to do one thing and another."

# Primrose Hill Lectures



**6 June**
Nick Crane on
*The Making of the British Landscape*



**13 June**
Rowan Williams on
*A Christian Response to the Refugee Crisis*



**20 June**
Miranda Seymour
*In Byron's Wake: Women of Science*



**27 June**
Mike Brearley in conversation with Ed Smith
*On Form, Or Off?*



**4 July**
Clemency Burton-Hill on *Music Every Day*



**11 July**
Helen Pankhurst on
*The Story of Women's Rights – How Far Have We Come?*

All lectures at St Mary's church start at 7 pm. Tickets will be on sale later this month at £12 per lecture (£10 concessions); £60 for the series (£50 concessions).

Proceeds go to St Mary's outreach work to provide for our disadvantaged youth, the elderly and a cold weather shelter for the homeless.

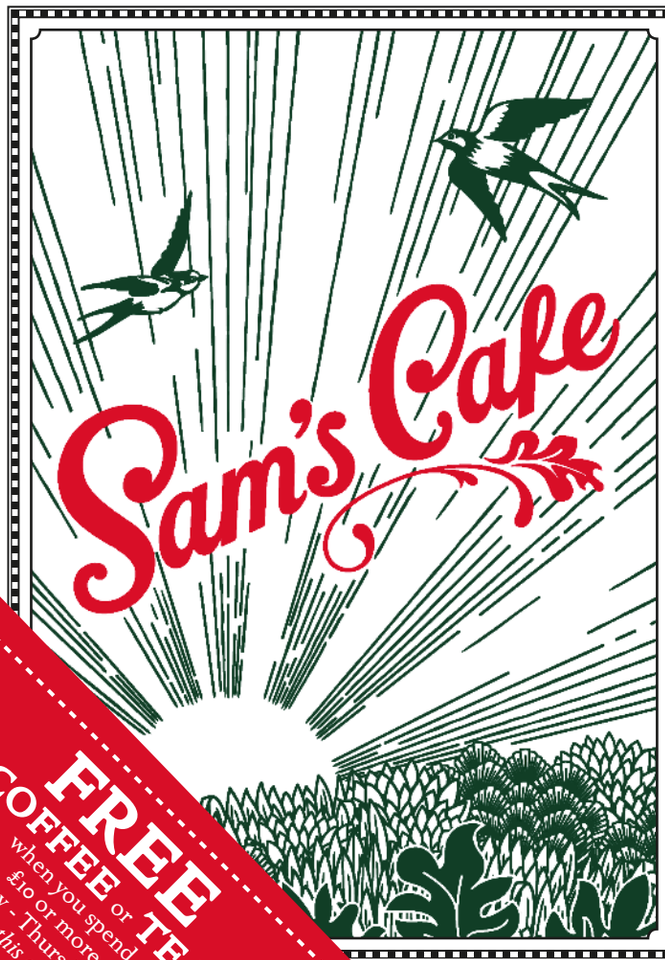
**www.stmarysprimrosehill.com/concerts-events/summer-lectures**



Sid Motion Gallery is pleased to present a new group exhibition *Imagined Characters,* which includes recent paintings by Charis Entwisle, Pat O'Connor, Jennifer Louise Martin (see *OTH,* March 2018) and Daniel Wheeler.

**Exhibition dates**
22 March–14 April 2018
Open Thursday–Saturday
12–6pm, or by appointment

Sid Motion Gallery
142 York Way
London N1 OAX
**www.sidmotiongallery.co.uk**


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Adrian & Bahri

# Caring for foster children

Adrian and Bahri have been fostering for Camden for nearly two years. Here Adrian talks about the rewards and challenges of being foster carers and their experience so far.

**How did you get into fostering?**

We first considered fostering with Camden some seven years ago, but for various reasons we withdrew during the assessment process. Five years later our lifestyle had changed and we both felt the time was right to look at having a child in our lives. We weighed up the pros and cons and what we wanted out of the process and felt that fostering was more suited to us than adoption. We made the initial call, joined the Skills to Foster course and were then assessed by our social worker.

**What are the rewards and challenges of being a foster carer?**

Our biggest challenge was that we had not had our own children; we have had some experience with children, but we had never raised our own. We were not sure if what we were doing was the 'right' thing. But our supervising social worker was very helpful in building our confidence and providing that much-needed other opinion. She said it was not as big an issue as we expected.

Even though we are relatively young foster carers (compared to the national average), one of the most interesting things we have had to learn is what it is like being a teenager in today's society. The pressure on them is massive and our job is to help them cope so that they are able to move towards independence in a few years. The challenge of being a 'streetwise' carer and learning about teenagers today has proved to be entertaining.

Although it sounds strange, one of the biggest rewards has been when our child starts to open up and show emotions and cry. It's a real breakthrough when they have enough trust in you to be able to show emotion. When that big wall that they have built to protect them starts to be taken down, it can be so rewarding.

The opening up, seeing a child relax and smile, seeing the child improve in confidence, understand the need to be healthy and be totally relaxed in your home makes the challenges faced all worth it.

**How would you describe your fostering experience so far?**

Our lives have become so much busier than before; the weekends of relaxing on the sofa are over and our schedule of social activities, trips and meeting our child's friends mean that our regime has totally changed.

Fostering is a steep learning curve, and the key thing we have learned from our child and our supervising social worker is that you don't have to do everything perfectly first time, and there is no one-size-suits-all approach to looking after children. There is a lot of trial and error and learning to adapt, especially when it comes to setting new routines and learning to live with a stranger.

Thankfully, we were initially approved by a panel as respite carers for our child for five months (looking after him over the weekend and then extended periods over the school holidays), so that we could build up our experience and at the same time decide whether we as a couple could cope with fostering a child with developmental delay and special needs. This period helped us assess our strengths and weaknesses and the flexibility of our employers, so that when we went back to the panel we were approved as full-time carers for our child.

**Would you encourage other people to consider becoming foster carers?**

Without a doubt – if you have the slightest inclination that you want to do it, then go for it.

At the start it seems daunting and somewhat scary – you are responsible for a 'stranger'. But you are not alone, and there is a large team of people who are willing to help and assist you.

The rewards for changing someone's life prospects, and changing your own life, are second to none.

# Kiki and John

By Julie Stapleton



*I really enjoy my work at our much loved and well supported Community Centre. It's been nearly eighteen months now, and every day is completely different. By far and away the most wonderful element of my job is all the interesting and inspiring people I get the opportunity to meet.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Vanessa Berberian

**Yoga with Kiki**

A case in point was when Kiki rang the centre to talk about her yoga studio and classes. Yoga is very popular both at the centre and in the surrounding area. What stood out for me was the fact that Kiki is also a medical doctor. She started yoga at the age of six and has been teaching for over seventeen years. "I teach small groups and one-to-one classes for adults, children and families. I am currently putting the finishing touches to a beautiful and inspiring book of yoga for children." Wow, who was this multi-talented woman? I really wanted to meet her, and see what she was all about! So when she offered *On The Hill* team members the opportunity of a yoga class in her home, there was no way I was going to turn that down!

Maggie (our editor), Sarah (our photographer) and I accepted the invitation and visited Kiki's beautiful home on Edis Street. We climbed to the top, where a calm, uber cool space awaited us. Three skylights form a window to the sky. It was like having a class in the clouds. Kiki has a very special way about her. Her voice is calm and reassuring. She made all the poses look effortless! We enjoyed the class very much indeed. There is something very comforting about knowing she is medically trained too. We knew we were in very safe hands.

I wanted to know more, so we decided to arrange an interview with both Kiki and her husband, John O'Farrell. He has spent his entire life in Primrose Hill, and I was interested in his story. So we spent two glorious hours talking some days later.

**John's story**

John was the only child of Gael and Patrick O'Farrell. Gael was born in New York in 1941. She was the headmistress of the UN school there when she met John's dad. They met at an art party run by Bobby Goldstein in Manhattan.

Patrick was a designer (now retired) and was working in New York for the iconic Coke bottle designer Raymond Loewy (1893–1986), a French-born American industrial designer who achieved fame for the magnitude of his design work, often called the 'father of modern design'.

It was at another chic New York party that Patrick was asked by Loewy if he would run his London business. So Patrick and Gael moved to the UK together. Loewy eventually sold the London business to Patrick many years later.

The pair got married: John was born in a clinic on Ormonde Terrace in 1974 and has remained here ever since. So he is as rooted to Primrose Hill as the trees in the park!

He went to King Alfred's School in Hampstead (which all three of his children now attend). Initially Gael, Patrick and John lived in Arthur Rackham's house (1867–1939, painter, illustrator) at 16 Chalcot Gardens. The house was designated a blue plaque in 1981 by Greater London Council, which John remembers happening.

Unfortunately the O'Farrells split. The house was sold to Sting as part of the divorce! Gael bought Edis Street on her own after the divorce, and this is where John, Kiki and their three children live today, with the wonderful yoga studio at the top.

To make ends meet, Gael turned the top of the house into a B&B. She went on to establish Primrose Hill Bed and Breakfast Agency, which was a forerunner to Airbnb.

She was a brilliant writer and her vibrant descriptions were picked up by the famous *Fodor's Guide*, which was the 'go to' for visiting Americans to London:

"Expatriate American Gael O'Farrell has fifteen properties on her books, all family homes to which guests get their own latchkeys. A newly accepted one sounded like heaven: 'a pair of 19th century cottages in a profusion of gardens with cats lazing around'. So far this has been one of those word-of-mouth secrets, but now that everyone knows, book well ahead."

The business went from strength to strength and gave single mum Gael the flexibility to bring up her son.

John recalls that his mum helped start recycling in the area in the 1980s by approaching Marks & Spencer to sponsor the installation of recycling bins, firstly on the bridge and then in other areas. This is before they existed anywhere else in London!

He also remembers that Camden Council would not allow the residents of Edis Street to plant trees on the pavement. Gael persuaded everyone to get together and pull up the paving stones and plant trees along the street themselves. The council liked the idea so much that they used Edis Street as an inspiration to plant more trees around the area!

Clearly inspired by his father, John briefly left London to study at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art, then went on to the UCL Bartlett Faculty, which claims to be the first architecture school established in the United Kingdom. It was in Glasgow that Kiki and John met when they were teenagers. He was studying there and she was visiting a friend.

As soon as John graduated, he returned to Primrose Hill where he and seven students rented a house together. It was opposite the Lansdowne pub, which he recalls had strippers at the weekend. He also remembers that Melrose & Morgan used to be a warehouse, and they had raves there regularly.

John is known lovingly by family and friends as the Mayor of Primrose Hill, because he knows everyone! Not at all surprising given that he has spent his entire life here.

"I always think that part of the reason why Primrose Hill has such a strong feeling of community is the geographical shape within London: the railway, canal, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill all contain the area and give a sense of place. Also the close proximity the buildings have to each other encourages an intimacy."

Sadly Gael passed away in 2003. She has a memorial bench on Primrose Hill dedicated to her: comfort, I am sure, to John and his family; a place to go and reflect on a truly inspiring woman, way ahead of her time.

See what I mean? A brief call about yoga led to a class, which led to finding out about the fascinating history of the O'Farrell family. Meeting Kiki and John was an absolute joy. Thank you for sharing your story for us all to enjoy.

Behind every door in our beloved Primrose Hill lies a story. Do you have one? Why not contact us and share yours?

In the meantime, check out Kiki's classes online:
**primrosehillyoga.com, @kikimorriss**



Kai demonstrates the Tree pose

## HOW TO DO – Tree

1. Stand with your feet together.
2. Lift your right foot to the inside of your left thigh (or the inside of your lower leg if easier).
3. Bring your hands into prayer position in front of your chest, and then above your head.
4. Balance for as long as you can. Keep your eyes focused on something straight ahead of you to help you balance.
5. When you are ready to come out of the pose, bring your hands down to prayer position in front of your chest, and then to the sides of your body.
6. Lower your right foot to the ground.
7. Repeat on the other side.

The best place to practise Tree pose is in a forest, garden or park, amongst the beautiful trees. If possible, take off your shoes and socks and feel the earth beneath your feet.

Imagine you are a tree growing tall and strong. Think about what type of tree you are and what season it is.

Once you can balance well in Tree pose, try closing your eyes. When your eyes are closed you need to be very calm and focused in order to balance.

Trees make oxygen, which we breathe in and need to stay alive. We breathe out carbon dioxide, which trees need to stay alive. When you're in the Tree pose, remember to breathe in and out deeply and remember how important it is that we protect the Earth's forests. When we work together with nature, everything is in harmony.



# ROCK UP TO OSKAR PINK

## IN CHALK FARM

Inside Oskar Pink's hair salon hangs a guitar, designed by Deicola Neves, the owner of Camden Guitars. Musically talented customers are encouraged to have a strum post-haircut, while Stavros Konstantinou (aka Oskar Pink) sings a cover version. It's a bit of light-hearted fun to end the session.




PHOTOGRAPH BY Sarah Louise Ramsay

"THE OSKAR PINK SIGNATURE STYLING IS INFLUENCED BY DECADES OF ICONIC POP BANDS AND ARTISTS"

Stavros is a singer in his spare time; he's been voice-trained by Matt Thomson in Camden Square and takes part in open mic sessions held at the Primrose Hill Community Centre hosted by Dan Sandman. He's also a member of the Camden Pop Choir.

## MUSICAL CLIENTS

Not surprisingly, Oskar Pink attracts a lot of musicians, such as Natasha Khan from Bat for Lashes, Jeff Wootton from Beady Eye and Gorillaz and Mark Owen from Take That, amongst others. Managers, publishers, roadies, engineers and A&Rs all head to Oskar Pink's. He's the man to go to for a rock-and-roll-style haircut, and he knows how to make musicians look and feel their best.

## THE VINYL EXPERIENCE

Regular clients can choose from a selection of iconic vinyl albums to be played in high quality while reading the beautifully designed record sleeve and chatting about art and music. It all adds to the hairdressing experience and is rather more interesting than talking about holidays.

## FASHION

The Oskar Pink signature styling is influenced by decades of iconic pop bands and artists, from a Liam Gallagher mod cut to a Joan Baez pixie cut; somewhere in between is Morrissey and Ed Sheeran. Pink's expert senior stylist and highly skilled colour technician Lauren will make you look ready to take the stage. Stavros claims to have the best portfolio of Britpop styles this side of London. They get the buzz from the Roundhouse, which is a stone's throw away and steeped in a history of performances.

## AND FINALLY SOME THERAPY...

It is a known fact that people are more likely to confide in their hairdresser than see a professional counsellor. Fortunately Stavros has experienced years of Freudian analysis, so he can also interpret and unpack people's problems. One customer comes every two weeks for a cut while having a talking therapy session. Success can evoke as much disturbance as failure, or fear of envy and guilt at achieving more success than your parents, which may start singers on the road to the 27 Club (popular musicians who die at 27).

If you want to look like a rock star – though if you're living in Primrose Hill you probably are one – then head over to Oskar Pink's for a haircut and a strum.



PHOTOGRAPH BY Petr Brož (via Wikipedia Commons)

# Econo Me

**Can you imagine what Primrose Hill might look like in 2040? Transition Primrose Hill organised a meeting last month showcasing alternative economic ideas. This is the visualisation that was shared with those present.**

Imagine you are at the top of Primrose Hill.

What can you see, hear and smell? You see tall buildings, they are all green, with vertical planting on all surfaces.

There is a glitter of solar panels on every south-facing roof, and community-owned panels on our local public buildings, churches, the Thames Water reservoir at the side of the park.

You hear the whirr of a super-efficient wind turbine at the top of the hill, almost drowned out by birdsong, as a large part of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill is given over to luxuriant, colourful, permaculture fruit and veg growing.

You hear children laughing and working in the allotments and the primary schools, learning practical skills for self-sufficiency and appreciating food.

You walk down the hill to our shopping street: what do you see, hear and smell?

Fresh air and no roar of traffic, no parked cars. Driverless cars , electric bikes and bike taxis have made private car ownership a thing of the past.

HS2 never happened and instead there was huge investment in electrified local links all over the country. Primrose Hill station on the bridge has reopened, connecting us east and west.

Lots of goods come in by the canal and are delivered the last mile by cargo bikes.

You breathe in the fresh air. The street has seating, fruit and nut trees, personalised 'parklets' created by local artists in the old parking spaces. You hear songs from a bandstand for the local community choir and other musicians who perform every lunchtime.

Our cafes sound different … because fully half the people in there with babies in buggies are men! The three-day working week means that we all have more time with those we love, older people as well as our children. Our senior citizens' housing, Oldfield, has a children's nursery on the ground floor and you see elders telling the little ones stories of how it used to be.

You smell newly baked bread from the community-owned bakery, and see a repair shop where the lads who used to steal our mobile phones are teaching each other how to mend them. Sew Much Fun, our sewing centre, has taken over two shops and is full from morning to night. Yeoman's, our greengrocer, sells really local produce from the allotments. You pay for things and services with the 'CAMDEN crown', either paper or digital.

The Community Library runs a tool-lending service, so there only need to be three electric drills in the whole of Primrose Hill.

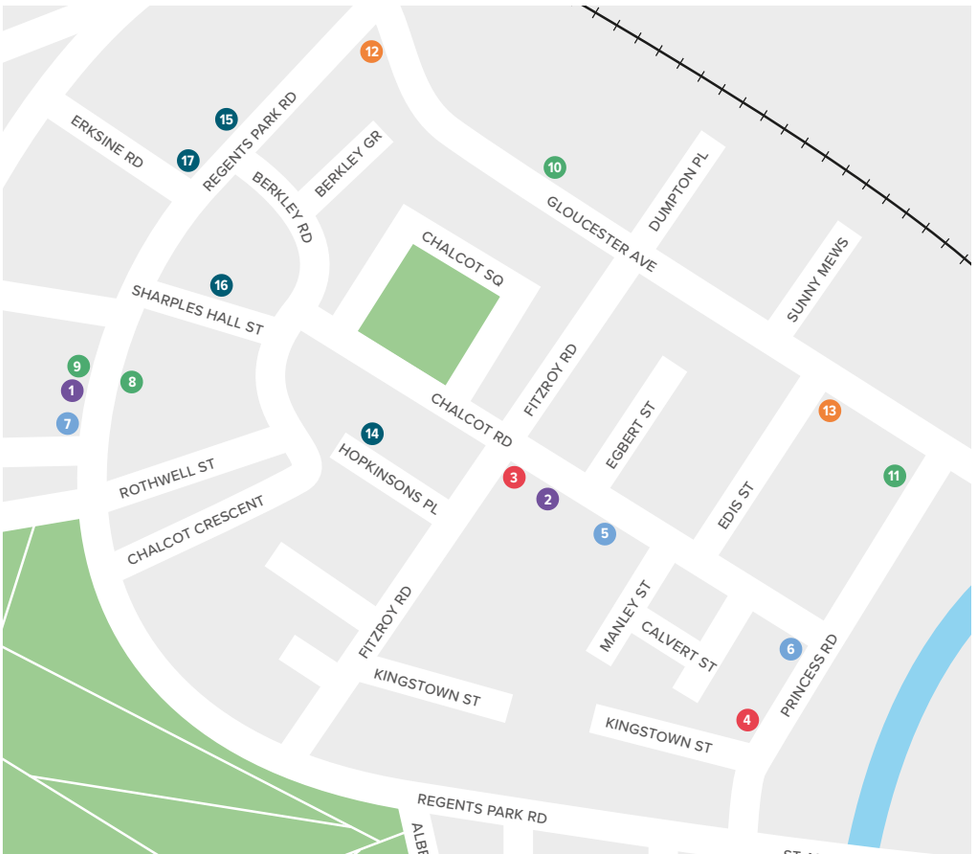
You see lots of multi-generational families on the street and in the parks, because there is plenty of properly affordable housing, so kids don't have to move away. The housing bubble has gently burst and community land trusts own lots of property.

In this future vision, Primrose Hill is linked to a growing network of low-carbon local communities where, instead of the consumer rat race, there is a fairer sharing of work and income, and time to grow vegetables and enjoy family and community. These are felt as life's riches.

Take a moment to imagine your own ideal future … then open your eyes and come back to the present.

One of our speakers was Christian Spencer-Davies, a member of the group working to make the Camley Street district into a 'Community Land Trust' creating genuinely affordable homes for rent and hands-on work spaces. He is leading a tour of the area, ending up in the pub for questions, on Wednesday 11 April starting at 12 noon. For more details, email **transitionprimrosehill@gmail.com**

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FROM The Life of Pie



# Rose Apple Tart

PHOTOGRAPH BY Poppy Ingram

Although there are a couple of stages to this recipe, the pastry and frangipane can be made well in advance and either kept in the fridge or frozen until needed. Having blocks of homemade pastry in the freezer makes it super easy to rustle up a last-minute dessert! Perfect served with a generous spoonful of clotted cream.

1. Cut the apples into quarters and remove the core, then slice into 1 mm slices (a mandolin is ideal for this). In a large bowl combine the melted butter, sugar and orange juice. Add the apples to the orange mixture and toss thoroughly to make sure the apple slices are covered. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and set to one side at room temperature.

2. To make the pastry, combine the butter and sugar using a freestanding mixer and paddle attachment, until just combined. Keeping to a slow speed, gradually add the beaten eggs. When combined, add the flour and mix by hand until fully incorporated. Wrap in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for at least an hour or until completely cold.

3. Remove the pastry from the fridge and roll out to approximately ½ cm thick. Line a loose-bottomed 23 cm fluted tart case with the pastry, ensuring it is pushed carefully into the corners of the tin. Trim the excess using the back of a paring knife and chill in the fridge until needed.

4. To prepare the almond frangipane, beat the butter and sugar in the mixer until pale and fluffy. Continue beating and gradually add the egg. Add the remaining ingredients and beat until combined.

5. Take the pastry case from the fridge and spoon in the frangipane so it fills about half the depth of the tin.

6. Take a few slices of apple and wipe off the excess liquid using your fingers. Roll up the first slice to make the centre of the rose and wrap two or three slices, overlapping, around the central roll, to start taking the shape of the rose. Place this in the centre of the tin and press into the frangipane so that it does not unravel. Gradually build up the shape of the rose by adding overlapping slices in circles around the centre.

7. Finally, brush the whole tart with a little more melted butter and bake in the centre of the oven (preheated to 175°C) for approximately 35 minutes, until the frangipane is fully cooked in the centre of the tart.

**Ingredients**

Pastry
- 175 g sugar
- 190 g butter
- 2 eggs
- 375 g plain flour

Almond frangipane
- 100 g butter
- 75 g sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 100 g ground almonds
- 20 g plain flour
- Zest half a lemon
- Pinch of cinnamon
- ¼ tsp vanilla essence

Apples
- 6–8 crisp eating apples (eg gala or braeburn)
- 100 ml orange juice
- 100 g melted butter
- 100 g sugar

Find The Life of Pie at Primrose Hill Market on Saturdays
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# Hello, Primrose Hill!

We've had lots of fun in the snow, but it's time for spring now!











PHOTOGRAPHY BY Sarah Louise Ramsay





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