ON THE HILL

DEC 2020 PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION FREE



THE OPTIMIST

Jon Snow on inequality, lockdown, art and ties

PLUS

FESTIVE FOOD

The perfect roasties, and where to shop and eat out this Christmas

FESTIVE GIFTS

A guide to buying gifts from local businesses

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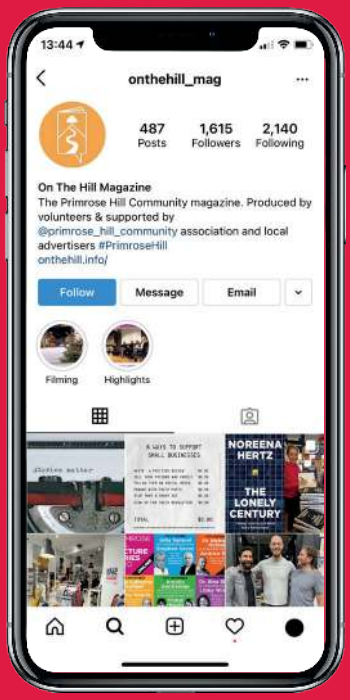
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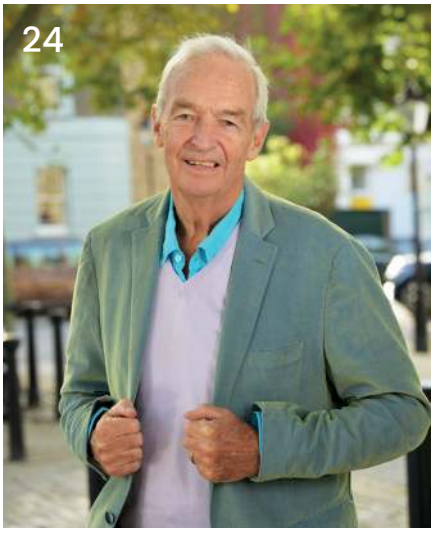
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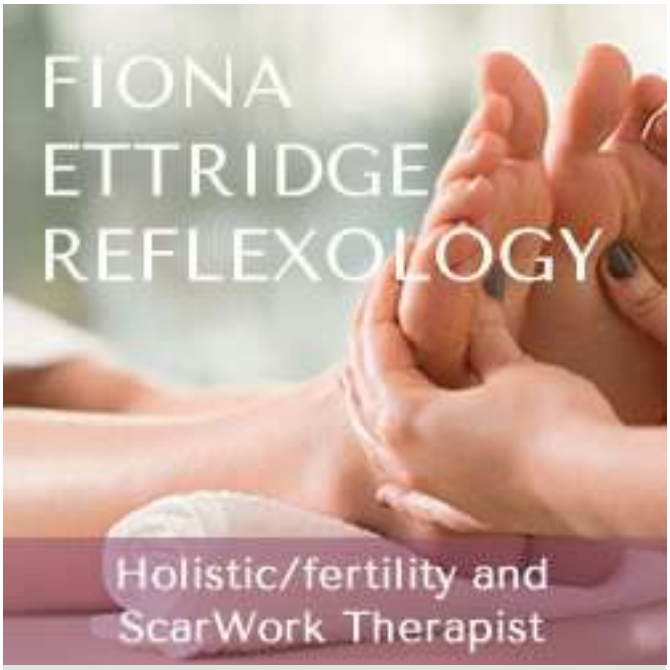
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SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER
3 pm and 5 pm
Choral Carol Service
see website for link
to Eventbrite tickets

THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER
3 pm and 5 pm
Children's Crib Service
see website for link
to Eventbrite tickets

8 PM MIDNIGHT MASS
see website for link
to Eventbrite tickets

CHRISTMAS DAY
10.30 am Choral Eucharist

The Team

Editor
Maggie Chambers
editor@onthehill.info

Editorial Group
Dick Bird, Doro Marden, Phil Cowan, Pam White, David Lennon, Mole on the Hill, Micael Johnstone, Andrew Black

Social Media and Website Editor
Jason Pittock

Subeditors
Brenda Stones, Vicki Hillyard

Photographer
Sarah Louise Ramsay
www.slrphotography.co.uk

Design
Luke Skinner
agency-black.com

Advertising Sales
Melissa Skinner
07779 252 272
melskin@hotmail.co.uk

Special thanks to all our contributors.

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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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PHOTOGRAPH BY
Sarah Louise Ramsay



WELCOME TO DECEMBER

Back in March, when I was editing the April issue of *OTH*, I never imagined I wouldn't see you again until now. This is a one-off issue, to bring a bit of cheer and let you know that we hope to return soon. Meanwhile it's been business as usual on our website, **www.onthehill.info**, where we've reported on events such as the campaign to support residents in Oldfield, the Concert from the Balcony, the Art Trail and Primrose Hill reopening. From donating, cooking and providing meals, to local musicians and artists, our community has helped and inspired all our residents in its uniquely creative Primrose Hill way.

Our local businesses have had a tough year, so it's vital that we give them our support as we approach Christmas. Primrose Hill Butchers were at the forefront of the Oldfield support, so if you're having a turkey this year, you know where to buy it. And as for gifts, what can you possibly wish for that isn't here on your doorstep? We've compiled a list of highlights to inspire you. It's important this year, more than ever, that we support our local shops.

The Primrose Hill Community Centre had a kitchen installed during lockdown and have embarked on a scheme to deliver hot food to Oldfield residents and the Chalk Farm Foodbank. The scheme, Neighbourhood Nosh, has JC, formerly from L'Absinthe, in charge of the cooking, bringing a touch of Gallic charm, as well as great food. The Foodbank (here in Primrose Hill, on Berkley Road) has seen its use triple this year.

Our front cover features Jon Snow, who raised morale throughout lockdown by chatting to passers-by from a chair on the pavement. He cheered us all up and helped to forge a neighbours-in-it-together spirit.

Thank you all for being such a brilliant community. Give yourselves a kiss under the mistletoe.

Maggie Chambers

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ON THE STREET

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AND MORE



PHOTOGRAPH BY Sarah Louise Ramsay

THE ALBERT IS BACK!

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PHOTOGRAPH BY Sarah Louise Ramsay

"Dreams Really Do Come True" The Albert is Back!

By Phil Cowan

30 October 2020: a date to go down in Primrose Hill history. The Albert, closed and standing forlorn on his corner of Princess Road for almost six years, was finally resurrected and allowed to breathe again, his doors opened to a changed world, but one to which he has always adapted since his inception in 1846.

On this auspicious day members of the community gathered together safely to celebrate our beloved pub becoming part of the fabric of life in the village again. Proprietor Sam Moss and his team extended a warm welcome to everybody, including special guest and local resident Andrew Marr, who cut the official launch ribbon and announced in front of a visibly euphoric crowd, "There are many honours in life, like appearing on Desert Island Discs or getting the Order of Merit, but there is no greater honour than declaring The Albert open."

Since its abrupt closure in 2014, the much-loved venue has been the subject of dedicated local campaigning as well as much speculation. Initially it was feared that the ground floor and basement could be turned into flats, but a concerted and unwavering effort by residents, ward councillors, the Primrose Hill Community Association and Conservation Advisory Committee thwarted any such plans from going ahead. Legal protections were put in place to preserve the pub and its beautiful, spacious garden, which had also been under threat of being lost to housing.

All the ducks were in a row, but what The Albert really needed was a great proprietor. Step in Sam Moss.

Sam is a talented and experienced pub operator with years in the business, his own brewery in Leeds and local connections; he successfully launched The Haverstock Tavern in Steeles Village last year.

I interviewed Sam for this magazine in May 2019 about his vision for The Albert, and was struck by his innate understanding of what constitutes a real community pub. He told me, "We are passionate about creating a place where people feel at home and can appreciate the gorgeous interior of this building that is steeped in local history."

After a longer-than-anticipated journey through lease negotiations, Sam kept the faith and achieved exactly what we hoped he would: a perfect marriage between The Albert we all knew and the one he should naturally become. The layout, decor and ambience are a perfect tie between past, present and future, carried out with immaculate care and attention to detail. A new 'state of the art' kitchen has been installed in the lower ground floor, along with rearrangements to the toilet facilities that now provide for an accessible WC at ground floor level. The conservatory has been reconfigured into a series of intimate, separate and comfortable spaces, ideal for safe get-togethers. The garden is on track to becoming a wonderful haven for glorious, sun-drenched days next year, but in the meantime heaters are to be provided!

At the official opening ceremony a nearby resident was quick to comment, "It's so great to see the lights on again after all this time, to feel the warmth and energy of the pub and indeed the street being alive!"

Another told me, "I love the pub being back open because it will make this whole area safer from crime, which had rocketed while the place was in darkness for so long."

One particularly impressed guest said, "Fabulous, wonderful, terrific, tremendous news!" while steadfast campaigner for the reinstatement of the pub, Matthew Wright, added, "See you there on Friday evening, in a socially distanced way of course!"

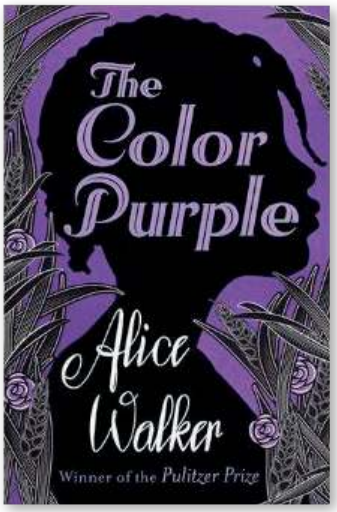
In these unchartered times, it's important to note that a familiar face or a careful hello to somebody can make all the difference to them and to you, but that may be a thing that can only happen in a public space. "There's No Place Like Home" has become a street, a park, a local high street or a public house.

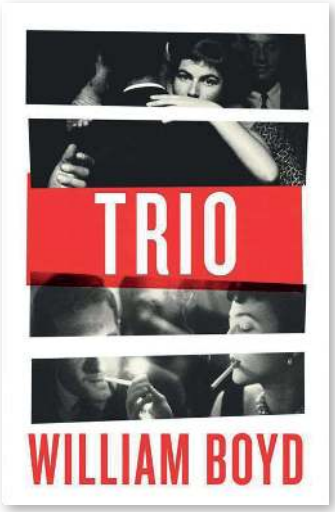
It's been a long haul, but worth every moment of investment in time and effort to see The Albert back open and in good hands. I can finally see a glass half empty change to a glass half full.

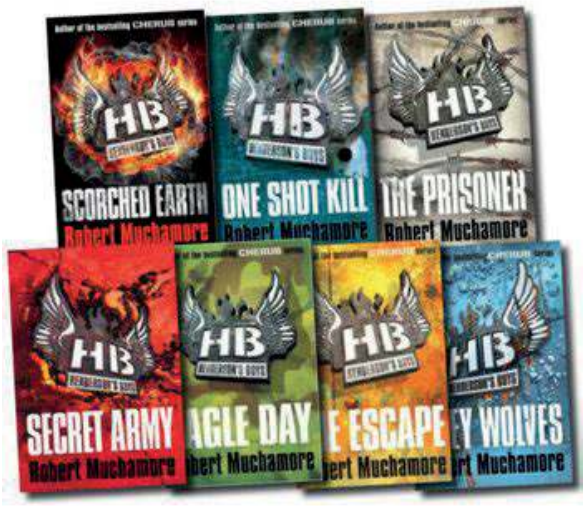
Cheers, everybody!

@Primrose_Phil

Primrose Hill Community Library







The Library hopes to reopen in December after November lockdown. Its latest hours of opening were:

Monday 11am – 1pm
Wednesday 1pm – 3pm
Friday 4pm – 6pm

Meanwhile there have been Library author talks on Zoom; see the Library website for details: **www.phcl.org**

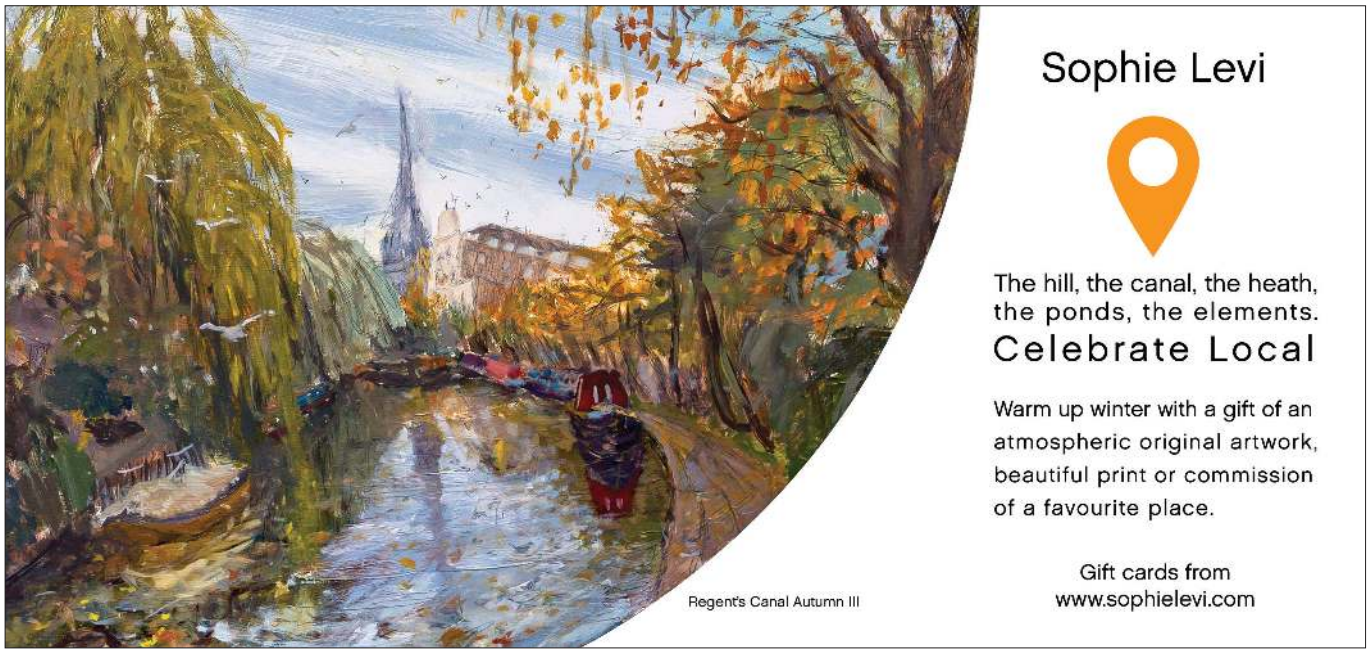
New titles are bought in monthly, including these recent acquisitions:

Paperbacks
Harlan Coben, *The Boy from the Woods*
Lucy Foley, *The Guest List*
Stacey Halls, *The Foundling*
Linda La Plante, *Buried*
Ben MacIntyre, *Operation Mincemeat*
James Meek, *To Calais, In Ordinary Time*
Abir Mukherjee, *Death in the East*
Zadie Smith, *Intimations*
Salley Vickers, *Grandmothers*
Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*
Lou Berney, *November Road*
Tracy Chevalier, *A Single Thread*
Abi Dare, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*
Susan Hill, *The Benefit of Hindsight*
Tayari Jones, *Silver Sparrow*
Joseph O'Connor, *Shadowplay*
Michael Robotham, *Good Girl, Bad Girl*
Francine Toon, *Pine*

Hardbacks
William Boyd, *Trio*
Ben Macintyre, *Agent Sonya*
Hilary Mantel, *Mantel Pieces*
Marilynne Robinson, *Jack*

Children's
Robert Muchamore, *The Henderson Boys* (set)

Primrose Hill Community Library
Sharpleshall Street
NW1 8YN
www.phcl.org
020 7419 6599



POSTCARDS FROM PRIMROSE HILL



Directly opposite the park, at 64 Regent's Park Road, lies Hurst House. Going through the various censuses, I realised that one particular family lived in this house for quite some time. The Harrison family is first listed as living there in 1881. There's the head of the household, 50-year-old James W Harrison, a printer/publisher, and his wife Harriet. They were the parents of six sons: James, Cecil, Ralph, Herbert, Harry and Cholmondeley, and one daughter, Mabel. They seemed well off, because no less than four servants were present when the census was filled in: a ladies' maid, a parlour maid, a housemaid and a cook. The family was still at this address thirty years later, in 1911.

@old_primrosehill_postcards

THE ALBERT
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An Easy Way to Support your Immune Health

By Caroline Shaw

Our immune systems are quite amazing. We each have our own army of cells and organs designed to operate a formidable defence system against invaders like bacteria, pollen and viruses. This internal fighting force is intimately linked to everything else that goes on in our body, for example in our nervous, digestive and hormonal systems. As a result, a lot of our internal processes have a say in our ability to keep viruses at bay.

So as I left the Community Centre in the fading March light, I knew that one of my tasks over the coming weeks (and months, as it turned out!) was to try to support the Primrose Hill yoga groups' immune health.

Reducing stress and anxiety levels had to be a key part of this. Stress tends to result in the release of hormones that help us stay focused under pressure. This is useful in the short term, but if the stress continues it can cause our immune system to become suppressed as the body saves energy for tackling the stress-related task or threat.

Happily, there are many simple and accessible practices we can access to stimulate the parasympathetic side of our nervous system – the part we need for rest, digestion and staying calm under stress.

One of the most important of these practices is nasal breathing. All this means is simply breathing in and out through your nose. This helps to filters out dust, bacteria and other microbes, and calms the nervous system, taking breath into the lower lungs where there are more soothing parasympathetic receptor sites.

The short nasal breathing practice described below is just one example of a simple technique to support your immune and respiratory health. It can be done for as long and as often as you would like.



Caroline Shaw (Photo by Ian Shaw)

Nasal Breathing

1. Find a safe, comfortable space to lie down. Try to relax the skin on your face, especially around the jaw.

2. Gently place your hands on your lower belly just below your navel.

3. Expel a couple of big sighs, yawns or any other noise you fancy, out through your mouth.

4. Lightly close your lips and take 10 easy breaths (count them if you can!), breathing in and out through your nose. You should sense your belly rising and falling under the palms of your hands. Focus on your exhalation and try to make it at least as long, possibly longer, than your inhalation.

6. To finish, give your arms and legs a nice big stretch, roll over onto one side and slowly come up to a seated position before continuing with your day.

It is important that this practice feels easy and natural. If things feel tense at any point, take a few extra breaths through your mouth.

Nasal breathing is of course just one of the many ways we can support our immune health. There are many other breathing and movement practices to try, and with around 70% of our immune cells found in our gut, a healthy and delicious diet is important too!

Anyone interested in learning more accessible, yoga-related practices to look after their immune and respiratory health (as well as a lot of other yoga too) is welcome to join the Primrose Hill yoga group (a friendly bunch!) every Tuesday and Thursday at 5.30 pm. A little yoga experience is required – just 1 or 2 sessions is plenty. At the time of writing we are still live on Zoom; contact carolineshawyoga@gmail.com or see **www.carolineshawyoga.com** for more information.

NEWS & VIEWS



Neighbourhood Nosh

Primrose Hill Community Association installed a new kitchen over lockdown and have started a community food project. Their first two projects will be running a delivery to Oldfield and allocating vouchers to the Chalk Farm Foodbank.

JC, who many of you will remember from L'Absinthe, is in charge of the cooking. The aim is to support people who find it hard to cook from scratch, to reach housebound and isolated people and to promote connection by using volunteers who can gain experience and learn new skills.

They'd like to offer special thanks to many local businesses, including Greenberry for containers, Yeoman's, Bens and Parkway Greens for fresh produce, and Shepherd Foods, whose manager Amit Jan says, "It's amazing that communities can come together for the greater good and for peace and support, which are fundamental attributes to our society whether you are a resident or a retailer."

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact them at nosh@phca.cc. If you could make a donation to help with costs of the project, please go to **www.phca.cc/donate**

'Ghosts of Christmas Past'

Lanah P, born amongst the working-class northern neon lights and fish heads of Grimsby town in the late 1950s, is now part of the fabric of Primrose Hill: a renegade and maverick soul. She is a person of many names and genders, indeed spirits. "I am beyond form, and that's how I see everybody," she says. Lanah made history by being the first non-binary gendered person to appear on the BBC's flagship weekly chart show, *Top of The Pops.* She now has a new Yuletide single, 'Ghosts of Christmas Past'. "It's my disco Christmas glitter ball. I wrote this song back in 2018, when I was all on my own one autumnal October afternoon. I just put pen to paper as I imagined if only life could be like the pictures you see on old traditional Christmas cards: the warm log fires, the golden lights of candle glow and frosted window panes." For more information, contact pillayaway@gmail.com





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THE ROYAL PARKS

Advice for Primrose Hill Visitors during the Festive Period

In the run-up to the festive period, The Royal Parks and Metropolitan Police are reminding people that they must not gather or bring fireworks or paper lanterns to Primrose Hill.

In previous years, an increasing number of people have visited Primrose Hill to celebrate and enjoy the various displays taking place in London on New Year's Eve. This year they are urging people to stay at home. Most of the usual public celebrations will not go ahead as planned, and the London New Year's Eve fireworks are cancelled.



Reenie's Ice Cream Bar

Local resident and actress Sirine Saba is opening Reenie's Ice Cream Bar on Erskine Road in early December. Inspired by the classic American soda shop, Reenie's was created by theatre freelancers when their beloved theatres closed. Reenie's is a family-run 'Covid baby' which was conceived and born out of a desire to connect, uplift and delight at a time when we need it most. Pop in for a milkshake in front of the roaring fire, fill a bag with old-fashioned sweets, or cosy up with hot chocolate, marshmallows and cream to watch a Hollywood musical on the original 1950s TV! Or just walk away, cone in hand, spring in step.

@reeniesicecreambar

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for including Mr David Edwards' letter of life in the slow lane of yesteryear when it was still full of excitement, anticipation and fun without much dosh (*OTH* February 2020).

A pound note back in those caravan days meant a lot for youngsters, who were well aware of the family's financial score, and knew not to demand what would be out of reach of mums and dads.

From playing about on the gun emplacements at the top of the Hill, to exercising on the heavy keep-fit iron rings at the bottom, scrumping and later joining the queue for casual work at the zoo, the memories of that magical caravan stay by Mr Edwards brought it all back. Any location from Clacton to Whitstable was worth the journey and trying to save hard for.

A pound coin seems so little to most kids now.

I congratulate Mr Edwards for reminding me of those times spent on or near the Hill.

Yours sincerely,

David St George

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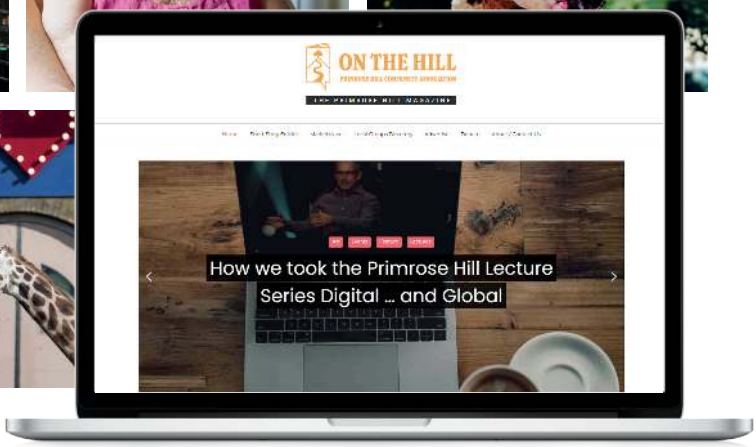












On The Hill Online

You may have seen the notices strapped to railings in Primrose Hill saying that '*On The Hill* is alive and online until Covid 19 is over. Read it at **www.onthehill.info**.'

Since our April issue, *On The Hill* has been posting articles online. As we normally do in the magazine, the website has continued to support and promote crucial community lifelines, such as the foodbank, St Mary's and support for Oldfield.

When all the art galleries were closed, the Primrose Hill Community Association instigated an Art Trail which enabled local artists and photographers to display their work. We covered the event online thanks to our photographer Sarah Louise Ramsey taking photos of our 'gallery' of artists. We also ran a short story competition on the website and we'll be publishing the winning stories in this and future issues.

As we passed through summer, we covered newsworthy items such as VE Day, Black Lives Matter, and London Zoo being under threat. We ran a regular *Corona Diary* by Nicola Mannaseh, and children from Haverstock School found time to write of their experiences during lockdown. We even took advantage of our digital platform to record a local version of *Desert Island Discs* with Daniel Harvey and Zam Kesh.

Throughout it all, we continued with the articles which *On The Hill* would have run in ordinary circumstances. There was news of local businesses, well-being articles, the Primrose Hill Lecture Series, news from the surgery and features of local interest. We kept you posted on the shops which reopened in July and the Library.

The task of managing our website is down to Jason Pittock, who does a great job of uploading articles alongside his full-time job.

This December issue is just a one-off for the time being, but please do continue to follow us at **www.onthehill.info** until we are able to run the print version again.

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Season's Greetings from the Primrose Hill Community Association!

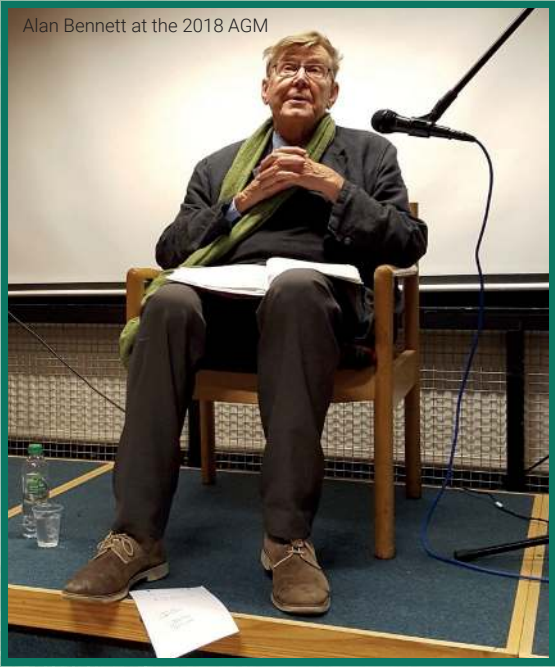
It's been a difficult year for all of us, losing our favourite face-to-face events like the Summer Fair, which bring us together as a true community.

But we've been inventive and found ways to create outdoor socially distanced events, such as the Art Trail in July, and our Wednesday morning walks in the park. Online events have included a coffee morning every Thursday at 11am; Gardeners' Question Time with Catherine Horwood; a party with DJ 'the Baron'; Movie Night; and then a quiz 'So you think you know Primrose Hill?' organised by Dick and Sue Bird. Online talks have included 'Decluttering Help' (Nicola Manessah), 'The Finance Curse' (Nicholas Shaxson and Stephen Robinson) and 'The Lonely Century' (Noreena Hertz).



Primrose Hill Community Centre, just off Fitzroy Road in Hopkinson's Place, is the centre run by the Community Association. We worked hard to ensure that all Open House events, Hopkinson's Bar, the nursery and other activities could, whenever possible, run in a safe, responsibly managed way. Look out for more Open House activities this month, including some festive surprises. We also renovated the kitchen, home to Neighbourhood Nosh – see News & Views for more on this exciting project.

We would love to hear from any of you, including your ideas for events. We are also keen to hear from anyone interested in volunteering – especially if you have digital skills to help us do more online and on social media. You can find out more at **www.phca.cc**, or get in touch via info@phca.cc or else come along to our online AGM on 28 January (**www.phca.cc/AGM**).



Alan Bennett at the 2018 AGM

You are invited to:

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 2021

28 January 2021
7pm
Online

Find out more about your local Community Association, help shape our plans and meet your neighbours.

For more details and to register, please visit **www.phca.cc/AGM**

Community Corner

The Chalk Farm Foodbank

provides weekly food parcels every Thursday morning to those in need. We've seen a threefold increase in people accessing our service due to social problems caused by the pandemic, so donations would be greatly appreciated. Items we need include long-life juice, shampoo/conditioner and deodorant. Approaching Christmas, hamper items and financial donations would be especially welcome. Call us to arrange on 020 7483 3763 / 07445 693 763 or visit **chalkfarm.foodbank.org.uk**.

The Salvation Army

is a church and registered charity providing support to the homeless community, operating a drop-in service with cooked meals and showers. We run a Christmas present appeal with toys and food hampers for families in need. Our band will be out playing carols and fundraising, if permitted. Get in touch by telephone, 020 7485 1605; email chalk.farm.corps@salvationarmy.org.uk; or visit **www.salvationarmy.org.uk/chalk-farm** or **facebook.com/ChalkFarmSalvationArmy**.

Primrose Hill Community Association

would like to say a very big thank you to all the volunteers who have helped us this year. Find out what's happening at **www.phca.cc** or get in touch at info@phca.cc.

Primrose Hill Community Library

is looking forward to seeing you again. For up-to-date information, including how to borrow books during lockdown, do visit our website, **www.phcl.org**. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers! Keep well and keep safe, from all of us at the Library.



SMC Youthwork

works out of St Mary's Centre on Elsworthy Road. This year we mentored 200 at-risk young people in Primrose Hill and Camden. We didn't stop for COVID, but continued our regular phone and IT mentoring so that young people were helped. A heartfelt thank you to Primrose Hill for its support this year. We look forward to 2021: another year of making our streets kinder and safer for us all. See more at **www.smcyouthwork.org**.

Castlehaven Community Association

offers services for young and old and the LGBTIQ+ community, as well as our popular Horticulture Hub project open to all ages. Our events have moved online and we have started an emergency foodbank in response to COVID-19, helping over 2,100 local residents. For more information, please visit **www.castlehaven.org.uk**, call 020 7485 3386 or email info@castlehaven.org.uk.

Camden Council

have created a directory of services for residents. To find out what help is available near you, access **coronavirus-help.camden.gov.uk**.

Cecil Sharp House

can't wait to welcome Primrose Hill residents back to its popular events. Restrictions permitting, there will be a COVID-secure series of gigs in February and March, live and exclusive to Cecil Sharp House. Check out **www.cecilsharphouse.org** for details.

Transition Primrose Hill

is the local grouping of the 'transition towns' movement. We have promoted food growing, worked on recycling and conducted 'citizen's science' air pollution monitoring. Look out for January's CNJ 'wrap', 'The Camden Future Journal', to imagine a different 2030. Join our mailing list by emailing transitionprimrosehill@gmail.com.



The Friends of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill

have great plans to improve the environment and encourage engagement in our wonderful local park. This year we created a new website with a beautiful photo gallery, visitor information about cafes and playgrounds and the history of the park. For more information, including how to join the Friends, visit **www.friendsofregentspark.org**, or look out for us on Instagram and Facebook.

St Mark's Church

Thank you to those who helped us repair the clock at St Mark's in time to strike the eleventh hour on Remembrance Sunday, giving comfort in this complicated time. We wish everyone a very special Christmas and hope you might join us for one of our services, advertised in this issue.



The Primrose Hill Community Library

reopened its doors in September, but had to close them again in November, despite working hard to set up a safe system to protect Library volunteers and members, and continuing to buy many popular new books. But you can still borrow books via remote ordering: see **www.phcl.org** for details.

We have continued with the boxes outside the Library which proved so successful throughout this year. They contain a mix of donated books and old books from the Library. You are invited to help yourself to these, with no need to return them. Or do contribute any of your own, perhaps an old favourite that you have read and read again but now takes up space that could be used for new books. Pass on the pleasure!

HOME VISITS AVAILABLE FOR PRIMROSE HILL RESIDENTS

NAMED BY THE TIMES AS BRITAIN'S TOP BACK DOCTOR





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PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Neighbourhood Nosh

Primrose Hill locals providing some 'Nosh' to the Primrose Hill community in need

Would you like to be part of our new social impact initiative?

We are seeking volunteers for:

- Skills & Time
- Food Donations
- Financial contributions

Email: nosh@phca.cc

Registered charity number 298215

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

FESTIVE FOOD

If you're entertaining friends and family this festive season, local chef Daniel Adams explains how to make the perfect roast potatoes. And if you're planning to eat out, we've found a selection of Christmas menus to choose from.



If you're cooking Christmas dinner at home:

Potatoes and other vegetables:
Yeomans, Bens, Shepherd Food and Parkway Greens.

Turkey or other meat:
Primrose Hill Butchers

If you're eating out in December, here is a selection of places with Christmas menus at the time of going to press:

The Engineer:
www.theengineerprimrosehill.co.uk/christmas
The Lansdowne:
www.thelansdownepub.co.uk/index.php/christmas
The Pembroke Castle:
www.craft-pubs.co.uk/pembrokelondon/food-and-drink
The Queen's:
www.thequeensprimrosehill.co.uk/christmas

Do explore the neighbourhood for other options, and don't forget that many establishments offer gift vouchers.



PERFECT ROAST POTATOES

This recipe is all about trying to lock a lot of flavour into the potatoes by boiling them with herbs, lemon juice and peel. The addition of fresh thyme 5 minutes before the potatoes are cooked adds a fragrant, powerful finish. You can also use beef dripping or goose fat to add further flavour to the potatoes. Enjoy.

Serves 2 to 3 people generously

- **2.5 kg** of Maris Piper potatoes
- **1 small pinch** of dried herbs (rosemary/thyme/lemon thyme/marjoram: it's up to you!)
- **2** lemons, peeled and juiced
- **400 g** vegetable oil (rapeseed is fine)
- **400 g** beef dripping or goose fat (use vegetable oil as an alternative)
- **1** small bunch of lemon thyme or thyme leaves
- Sea salt to season

Preheat your oven to 180°C.

Peel and cut the potatoes in half or into quarters, depending on their size. Wash them in a bowl under cold running water for a few minutes until the water runs completely clear (this washes off any excess starch). Drain off the water, then put into a large pot with cold water. Season the water with some salt and add the herbs, lemon peel and juice.

Boil the potatoes gently on a medium heat until they start to break up and look jagged. It will take about 25 minutes, but you'll want to keep a close eye on them.

When they're ready, drain them in a colander over the sink, and allow them to cool for 5–10 minutes.

In the meantime, place the vegetable oil and beef dripping/goose fat (if using) into a deep roasting tin and put it into the oven to get nice and hot.

Remove the hot tray from the oven. Carefully add the potatoes to the tray using tongs or a suitable utensil. They should sizzle a fair bit on contact with the oil. Flip the potatoes to make sure they're all coated in the oil, then put back into the oven.

Cook for 60–80 minutes. Every 20 minutes you should flip them; this is important to ensure all-over crunch.

When they're ready, throw in the picked thyme leaves, and cook for a couple more minutes.

Strain the potatoes and season with sea salt.

That's it, done! Now tuck in, enjoy, and hear your dinner guests tell you these are the best roast potatoes they've ever had!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

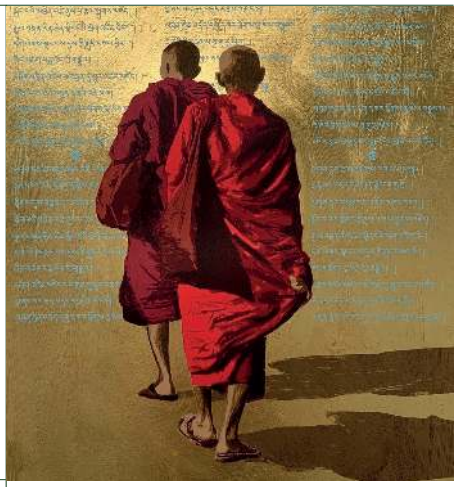
Shopping locally, while always a good thing to do, has taken on new significance this year. Our local businesses have had a tough year and need our support more than ever. So ditch the online giants and shop locally for all your Christmas gifts.

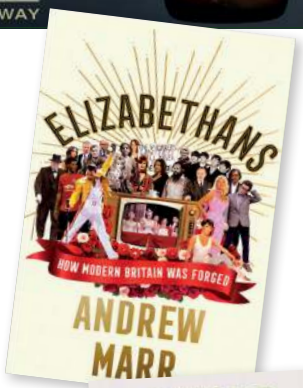
Here are a few tasters to help you on your way...

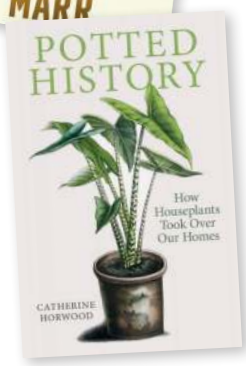


ETHEREAL

Ethereal is the most relaxing hair salon. Why not treat a loved one to a voucher? It's the perfect gift to lift the spirit of the one you love and includes a tailored hair treatment. Alternatively, restore balance to the hair this Christmas with our biodynamic range by Oway. Ethereal will be open on Sundays throughout December.
www.ethereal.uk.com







PRIMROSE HILL BOOKS

How about a book by a local author from our local bookshop? Suggestions include: Patrick Barwise, *The War against the BBC*; Alan Bennett, *Two Besides: A Pair of Talking Heads*; Lauren Child, *The Goody*; Selina Hastings, *Sybille Bedford: An Appetite for Life*; Noreena Hertz, *The Lonely Century: Coming Together in a World That's Falling Apart*; Catherine Horwood, *Potted History: How Houseplants Took over our Homes*; Andrew Marr, *Elizabethans: How Modern Britain Was Forged*; John Mullan, *The Artful Dickens: The Tricks and Ploys of the Great Novelist*; Andrew O'Hagan, *Mayflies*.

Signed copies of the above books are available and Primrose Hill Books can ask the authors to write specific dedications if required.
www.primrosehillbooks.com

NATASHA KUMAR INDIAN ART

"I have seen a celestial paradise on a clear night. I saw it from the roof of the world. And in the morning, among sublime peaks that rose from mist-filled valleys I watched monks play cricket, and pray for enlightenment." Natasha Kumar, 2007 Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh *#Lungta*, prayer flag series. Blessings carried on the wind, A prayer for the swift fulfilment of all wishes. Screenprint with 22 carat gold leaf Edition of 10. Prices from £850
www.natashakumar.co.uk



MELROSE AND MORGAN

This year Melrose and Morgan are offering a wonderful array of festive gifts and hampers. Shop online for a curated collection or pop into one of their shops and create your own bespoke hamper from some of the finest artisan producers, packaged in a luxurious wicker basket. All hampers can be delivered next day, nationwide. Corporate discounts for 10+ hampers. Call 0207 4851600 to discuss your requirements with our team.
www.melroseandmorgan.com



GALLERY 196

Every year we design our popular velvet dressing gowns in Jaipur, India. They are made just for us! We have great fun choosing the cotton velvet prints and putting them together with a cotton block printed lining. They are stylish, original, cosy and warm. A perfect gift! More designs available in the shop.
www.gallery196.com

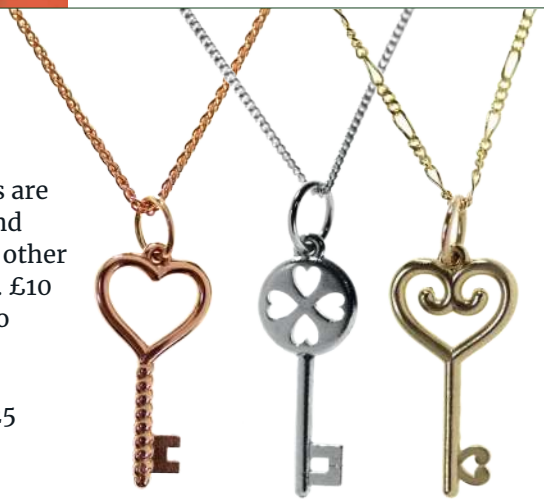


SOPHIE LEVI

One-off originals, commissions and beautiful prints of local and coastal scenes by Primrose Hill resident and award-winning artist Sophie Levi, who paints atmospheric landscapes in oils, and commissions of your home, garden or favourite place.
Prints from £45
www.sophielevi.co.uk

HARRIET KELSALL

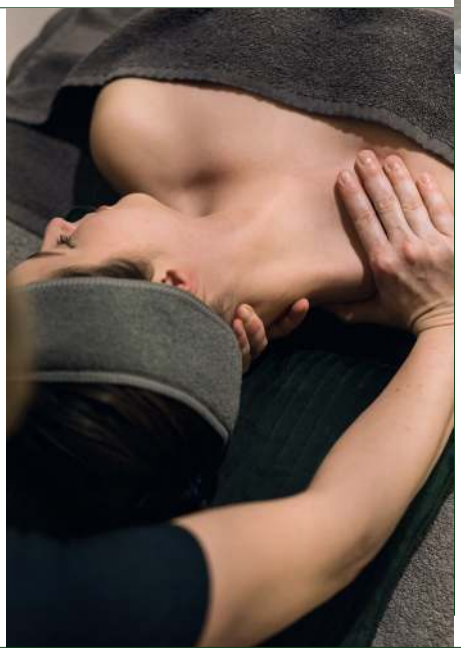
These lovely little pendants are inspired by togetherness and wanting to remember each other even when we are far apart. £10 from each sale is donated to NHS charities.
9ct rose gold £395
Recycled sterling silver £125
9ct yellow gold £395
www.hkjewellery.co.uk





LAVENDER ON THE HILL

Treat yourself and your loved ones this Christmas with Lavender on the Hill gift vouchers. Lavender on the Hill offers a range of treatments from pampering massages to rejuvenating facials. Gift vouchers can be bought in-store or online.
www.lavenderontheprimrosehill.com



ST MARY'S BREWERY

Buy your Christmas beer and help support St Mary's Centre youthwork! From the Winter Warmers gift pack featuring festive brews to the Beer Advent Calendar, this is where to find the perfect gift for beer drinkers. Try a taster at Primrose Hill Farmers' Market every Saturday. You can also buy online with free local delivery.
www.stmarysbrewery.co.uk



PRESS PRIMROSE HILL

This lambswool cardigan is sheared and spun in Yorkshire by a family business founded in 1766, and speckles of undyed yarn are mixed with the dyed fibres to deliver a soft hue. The cardigan is made in Leicestershire.

Melanie Press, previously of labels such as Ralph Lauren and Marc Jacobs, conjured up this cardigan, which was called the "holy grail" by Anna Murphy, Fashion Director of *The Times*. She says, "I love a borrowed-from-the-boyfriend classic. There's nothing more effortless than something we can snuggle into over all our fashionable stuff."
There are two equally covetable versions, blue with green, and grey with grey, and it will soon come in nougat pink.
www.pressprimrosehill.com

NATASHA KUMAR

Charika, a journey, a wandering



natashakumar.co.uk

CHARIKA
(JOURNEY)

A Series of Images by Natasha Kumar



Padma *Kunkuma* *Seng ge*

"I have seen a celestial paradise on a clear night. I saw it from the roof of the world. And in the morning, among sublime peaks that rose from mist-filled valleys, I watched monks play cricket and pray for enlightenment."

Natasha Kumar 2007
Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

Local artist Natasha Kumar's latest collection was born of that moment in the Indian Himalaya. Tawang, or Galden Namgey Lhatse, the world's second largest Buddhist monastery, translates as 'celestial paradise on a clear night'. Close to the contentious, high border of Arunachal Pradesh where China and India collide, it is where the Dalai Lama found refuge, fleeing the Communist occupation of Tibet in 1959.

But it was not the drama of the setting, nor the cricket itself, that provided Natasha with her inspiration. For all their maroon robes and yak-wool shawls, the novice monks risking their ball to the abyss with every boundary could have been village boys. What made them different? What caught Natasha's imagination to become the work's point of departure was their journey; the path to enlightenment. Would they find it? How would they know? What would enlightenment feel like?

Natasha's work explores those questions, each image an imagined snapshot on the journey, inflected through elements integral to Buddhist art, everyday life in the monastery, and its monks. Where to begin? With a prayer for the swift fulfilment of all wishes, a blessing for the young monk pursuing his destiny in the *Pali* (sacred text) series. Accompanying him is his patient tulku, an enlightened being who chooses to continue to reincarnate in order to help others achieve enlightenment. The motif of the *Padma* (lotus flower) series, floating above the murky waters of material attachment and physical desire, reminds our monk of his ultimate goal. A background of yellow to the lotus symbolises the meditation to transform pride into simplicity; of green, the transformation of envy into accomplishment.

But there are other journeys that our travelling monk motif takes us on, real but no less spiritual. In the *Kunkuma* (saffron) series, the monks' shadows fall on a background of the cloth that wrapped the sacred Buddhist texts smuggled out of Tibet, after the Dalai Lama's flight. His own journey to Tawang, over the Himalaya, leading the way for others, is recalled through the *Seng ge* (snow lion) series that adopts his personal insignia, a celestial snow lion with glowing yellow eyes and tiny white claws.

Political struggle continues on the high Tibetan plateau. With *Third Pole*, Natasha's monks head into the fluid confusion of an uncertain geopolitical future. Climate crisis is melting the area's glaciers, and China is damming the reservoir of fresh water shared across Asia, the largest outside the polar regions.

On this journey we share their destiny.

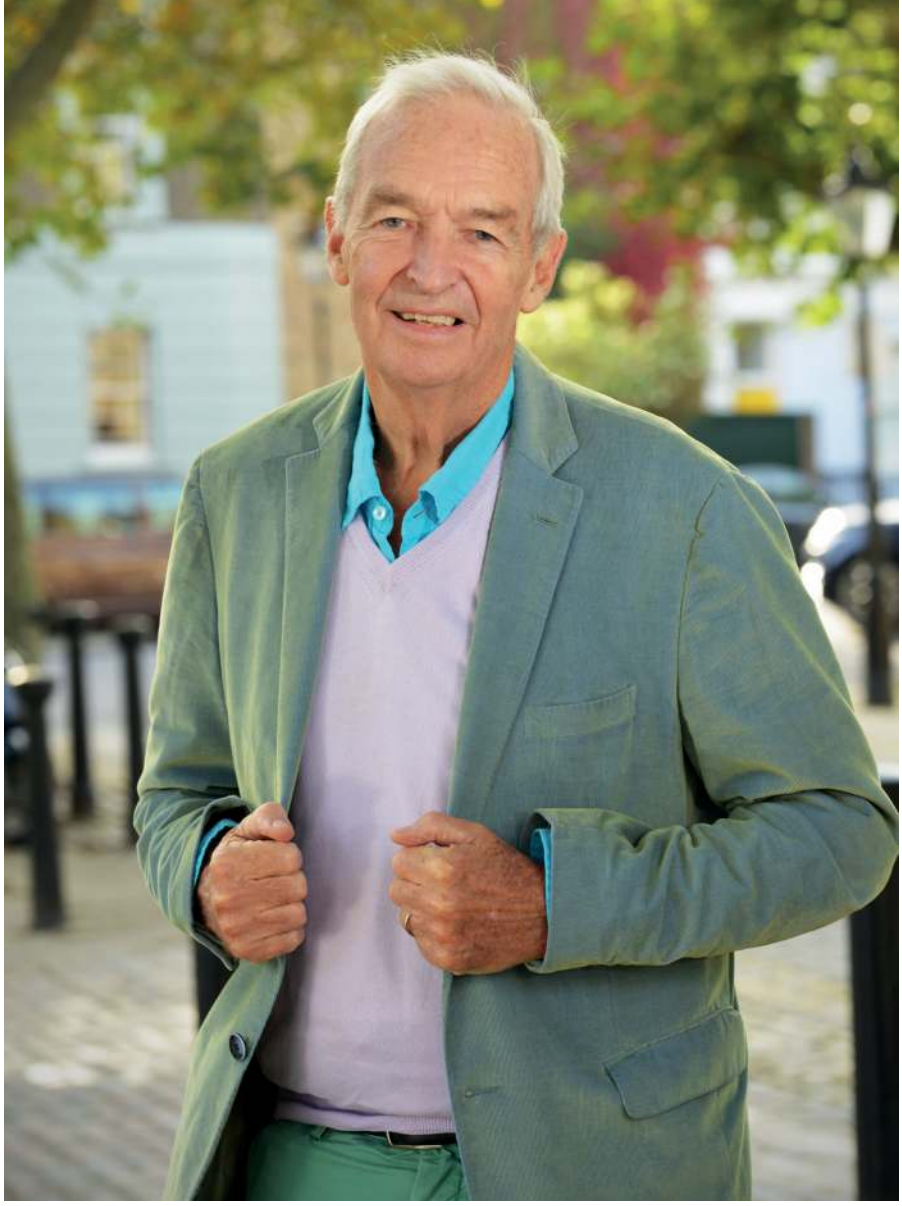


Arunachal Pradesh



THE OPTIMIST

WORDS By Nicola Manasseh PHOTOGRAPHY By Sarah Louise Ramsay



"I would say I'm an eternal optimist."

"I can't believe you recognised me," said Jon Snow, wearing a snazzy silk mask which, as he proceeded to show me, matched his colourful stripy socks. It was mid-July and I was in Primrose Hill on my way to have a haircut after four months of waiting. Well of course I was going to recognise an iconic television news anchor who, as it turned out, is friendly to strangers gushing about good journalism.

At the start of lockdown I decided to write a corona diary; so with the aim of keeping up to date with current events, I spent some time comparing the different broadcast stations. Mostly it was Channel 4 News that won me over, despite it being an hour long every weekday, because I like the in-depth, humane reports delivered by an enthusiastic team from different backgrounds. But especially the main presenter, Jon Snow, makes me feel I can trust him, that there's nothing fake about this well-travelled and unassuming journalist.

After chancing upon him and suggesting an interview, he gave me his card and within days we had fixed a time. On a wet and breezy August morning, Jon Snow arrived by bicycle at Greenberry Café. We sat outside because it was a 'meal deal' Tuesday, which meant that inside was fully booked.

I began with a reliable conversation starter, "How was your lockdown?" Jon replied that it was 'grim'. Going on to explain, he said that he missed the live interactions and spontaneous sharing of ideas with the big team that normally precede Channel 4's nightly news programme. But he was impressed with the self-operating kit that has enabled him to use his home screen to see the person he's remotely interviewing or the autocue in the studio – a technological innovation that apparently didn't exist until three years ago.

Jon Snow has been a newscaster for thirty-two years now, during which time young and old from across the political spectrum have come to respect him. Aged seventy-three, he's actually in the category of 'the most vulnerable', although with his vitality and curiosity he appears much younger. Another reason I prefer Channel 4 News is because Jon Snow's nature includes a sense of humour. As I cry easily when I witness other people's pain, I appreciate how, despite the seriousness of global affairs, Mr Snow can still make us chuckle.

Over coffees we turned to his daring and flamboyant tie collection – he now has around one hundred and fifty in striking colour combinations. During our meeting he got a text from the designer of his ties, asking if he'll do a promotional video for her. "Will you?" I asked. "Sure," he replied.

Outside work, Jon is a patron of several worthwhile organisations – Farms Not Factories and Trees for Cities, for instance. He has a particular interest in the arts, and spends time painting with watercolours in order to record views that he can then send as cards. "It's a welcome relief from standing outside Number 10 shouting at Boris Johnson," he grinned. He is much valued as a trustee for both the National Gallery and Tate. He showed me a painting saved on his phone called *Lake Keitele*, which he encouraged the National Gallery to take a chance on, describing it as 'deep and spiritual'; it is now one of the museum's best-selling postcards.

Back in his younger years, he was actually expelled from Liverpool University for taking part in an anti-apartheid student protest; more recently the university gave him an honorary doctorate, which settled the score. His first job was then to direct the New Horizon Youth Centre, helping homeless people in London. At around thirty years old he began working as a correspondent for ITN, and so



began a career of reporting from dangerous hotspots like Nicaragua and El Salvador.

We talked about how today's journalists "don't have to trudge for miles in underdeveloped countries; more often local people are able to send pictures and videos to newsrooms". Also because the public are taping significant moments on their smart phones, Jon hopes that this encourages some of those who would readily shoot their enemies to be a little more hesitant. He added that presently Channel 4 has someone in the Belarus demonstrations "filming discreetly".

I recalled how earlier in the month MP Dawn Butler was stopped by the police in what she felt was a racial profiling incident and recorded it on her phone. Jon agreed that she had done a good job, though in the online world he felt that verbal violence was escalating. He has become more "circumspect" in his messaging, when he twitters out to nearly one and a half million followers.

"How do you deal with fame?" I asked, to which the highly recognisable presenter replied that when people stop him in the street "there's usually a sensible and interesting reason". But his cycling everywhere keeps things in perspective, because "you only have to get knocked about by the traffic to remember you're a nobody". Some years ago he declined an OBE, and when I asked him about that he laughed. "Become an Officer of the British Empire? End up being a knight or Commander? Why do we still have a British Empire? If I get on that rickety track I'll end up deserting the human race."

Jon has lived for more than fifty years in Primrose Hill and loves that "it really is a village, open and wide, and next to greenery". During lockdown he got to know his neighbours "like never before"; COVID-19 has given us all a wake-up call to think more about others. "As it was such a huge shock, we've had less focus on issues like climate change," Jon contemplated. "But coronavirus has touched us all, in every aspect of life."

Then he added, and not for the first time, "Let's not forget that I'm speaking as someone living in a privileged community." For Jon Snow inequality is "one of the greatest scourges of our time and the cause of so much pain and suffering". He remembers vividly the emotions he felt at the age of eighteen doing voluntary service in Uganda and observing children so hungry for education. He feels that young people would still benefit immensely by playing their part in experiencing the developing world.

Finally I asked him how he manages to keep on presenting the news when constant distressing reports make many of us feel like avoiding it. Apparently, sometimes he does shed tears, but he's learned not to become embroiled or dogged by calamity and injustice. "After all, every day is a climax and then it begins all over again. Besides, I would say I'm an eternal optimist."

After we elbowed goodbye, I was already thinking of other questions I would have liked to ask him. I went home on the wing of a prayer I learned in the Middle East: that 'from his mouth to God's ear', meaning 'may it come true', that out of this pandemic will come a better society.

Local financial advice

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Quilter Financial Advisers are locally based fully qualified financial advisers who can help you with:

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Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.
The value of pensions and investments can fall as well as rise and you can get back less than you invested.

Winner of the *On The Hill* Short Story Competition

During lockdown, we ran a short story competition. Here is the winning entry in the 6-10 years category. By Zahir Ali

It was early in the morning on a school day, when suddenly my mum turned on the TV and said, "Watch the news, it's very important." My brother and I both sat in the living room in silence watching the news with our mum. The news was showing that many people have lost their lives to coronavirus and that this virus is spreading rapidly. This was quite scary as people were going crazy buying toilet rolls more than buying food. Also the news stated that schools would be closed as they feel it is a high risk if there are too many people together. This virus enjoys attacking people when there are so many people gathered together, and to stop the spread we had to avoid contact with others.

Now how do I react to this? I understand that we weren't going to school, but I surely miss my friends and teachers. Learning began online; it was fun in the beginning but it got boring as it gets tiring, but I still try to do my learning. From 9am to 3pm our house has become a school and my mum started working from home. After 3pm it was time to relax. Time was hard because we were no longer able to see family and friends. Even during Eid, one of our celebrations, I couldn't even see my grandma.

"I surely miss my friends and teachers"

For Eid day, my mum stayed up till late and decorated the living room with balloons and banners to make us feel special. We woke up early and prayed the special prayer for Eid as my mum put out all the prayer mats and made the living room feel like a mosque. She didn't want us to feel sad and that's why she put in a lot of effort to start the day feeling happy and special. Me and my brother helped my mum set the table so that we could eat the delicious food that my mum had prepared. I cut some tomatoes and my brother cut some cucumbers for the salad that we were going to eat. It actually tasted very scrumptious because it was a team effort.

Later that day we called my grandma on Facetime and saw her wearing her new clothes and we showed our new clothes to her. My cousins also joined in the conversation and were talking for a while, everyone so happy to see each other. Whilst on the phone my mum added my aunty to the Facetime call so that we were all connected together. We all smiled and laughed and tried not to think about the virus, as this would have upset everyone. Once the call ended me and my brother played Fortnite for a bit with our friends from school; this was fun as we said Eid Mubarak to each other and asked what they had been doing so far. Everyone was kind of doing similar things to us as well. Some way or another everyone tried to stay connected to their loved ones and made sure to have a positive vibe during this difficult time.

It was coming to 4pm and my mum decided to take us on a long drive to visit our granddad's grave. We were excited because it takes us 1 hour and 20 mins to get to the cemetery and we usually enjoy going to visit whenever we are free. Once we got to the cemetery we saw other people who also came to visit their loved ones. We spent nearly two hours at my grandad's grave and spoke about the memories we had with him. I put some roses on my grandad's grave and wished he was alive. It was sad but my mum gave me a hug and told me that he is watching and he can hear you. She told me not to be sad and said, "Say goodbye and that we will visit again soon."

After we left the cemetery, we drove to Tesco petrol station; me and my brother waited in the car while my mum went to get us a surprise. My mum had to wait in a queue and that's when we remembered about the virus again... Only two people at a time were allowed to go into the shop. Then I spotted my mum coming out of the shop with two boxes of Ferrero Rocher; my mouth was watering as I couldn't wait to take a bite into the chocolate. She came to the car and gave each of us a box and told us to eat just two for now.

As my mum drove off, I started munching on my chocolate and loved every bit of it. I told her thank you so much for getting my favourite chocolate and put one in her mouth as well. This was actually one of my favourite days in such a long time and I was enjoying myself so much. Halfway through the journey I drifted off a little as I'd woken up early to pray. Coming close to our house I woke up and I said, "Are we there yet?" Once we arrived home I had a quick shower and then had our dinner. We then put on a film to watch and relaxed on the sofa and a few times my aunty called to see what we were doing.

Overall I had an amazing day with my mum and my brother; I'd actually really enjoyed myself. It was different, but we managed to defeat coronavirus as we had a lovely day with the family regardless. It was nearly bedtime and my mum showed all the pictures that she took from morning and throughout the day. We all looked happy in the pictures and sent some to my grandma and aunty to see. They also sent us pictures that they took during the day. Eid was different from our usual celebration, but I feel that it turned out to be one of the best ones I have had.

Chalk Farm Foodbank

Our Foodbank is run by local people for local people – it relies on the community's support to stop people going hungry.

This year foodbank visits have tripled, and there will be another wave of desperate need in the coming months.

Please help by taking donations to Chalk Farm Foodbank, c/o Chalk Farm Baptist Church, Berkley Road, NW1 8YS. Drop-off times: Thursdays 10.30am–12pm and 1–2 pm. (Please don't include bleach, blades, clothes or toys, except new and in original packing.)

The foodbank love donations, but also ask for members of the community to become regular financial donors. That would help them hire much-needed staff and expand their services to be able to help more people.

Big or small, every gift you give helps to transform lives.

There are three ways to make a financial donation:
Via **www.justgiving.com/ChalkFarmFoodbank**

By bank transfer to:
Revelation Church London (this goes directly to the Chalk Farm Foodbank account)

Account number: 81866060
Sort code: 40-02-03

Downloading a standing order form from the website and handing this to the Foodbank.

If you are donating by bank transfer and are a UK taxpayer, please download and complete a Gift Aid Form. Gift Aid is a scheme run by HMRC that allows charities to reclaim the tax on donations by UK taxpayers.

Thank you!



Foodbank Admin Team:
Tel. 0207 483 3763/ 07745 693763
(Mondays and Thursdays)

Email:
info@chalkfarm.foodbank.org.uk



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www.clubpetitpierrot.co.uk

Fashion & Jewellery

HARRIET KELSALL
69 Regent's Park Road, NW1 8UY
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Su 11.00–17.00
www.hkjewellery.co.uk

Community

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE
29 Hopkinson's Place, Fitzroy Rd, NW1 8TN
020 7586 8327

PRIMROSE HILL SURGERY
99 Regent's Park Rd, NW1 8UR
020 7722 0038
M–W 09.00–18.00
Th 09.00–12.30
F 09.00–18.00

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY LIBRARY
Sharples Hall St, NW1 8YN
020 7419 6599
M 10.00–18.00
W 13.00–19.00
F 10.00–18.00
Sa 10.00–16.00

POST OFFICE
91 Regent's Park Rd, NW1 8UT
M–Su 06:00–22:00

CHALK FARM FOODBANK
Revelation Church
c/o Chalk Farm Baptist Church, Berkley Road, NW1 8YS
0207 483 3763
Th 10.30–12.00
www.chalkfarm.foodbank.org.uk

Thank you to all our contributors!



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ON THE HILL
PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
onthehill.info

Hello, Primrose Hill!

The Primrose Hill Community Association turned our streets into an art gallery this summer when it presented an outdoor array of local artwork to the public. Our Art Trail featured local professional and amateur artists, and included photography, painting, sculpture and ceramics. The day was a huge success, and the quality of art on display showed off Primrose Hill talent at its finest.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Sarah Louise Ramsay























Unique artist studio

Primrose Hill Studios, Fitzroy Road, NW1 Chalk Farm Underground Station: 0.3 miles

Rare opportunity to acquire a former artist's studio with excellent entertaining space.
Reception room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, utility room, garden. EPC = F

Freehold | 1,319 sq ft | Guide £2.5 million

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Jeremy Bass
Jeremy Bass Estate agent
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In a Piña Colada and cocktail umbrella world, there are still those who prefer an Old Fashioned

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