ON THE HILL

DECEMBER 2022

FREE



Wellbeing Café

Keep warm in Primrose Hill Community Centre

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Your guide to local gift shopping

Primrose Hill Book Festival

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ON THE HILL
PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

onthehill.info

DECEMBER 2022

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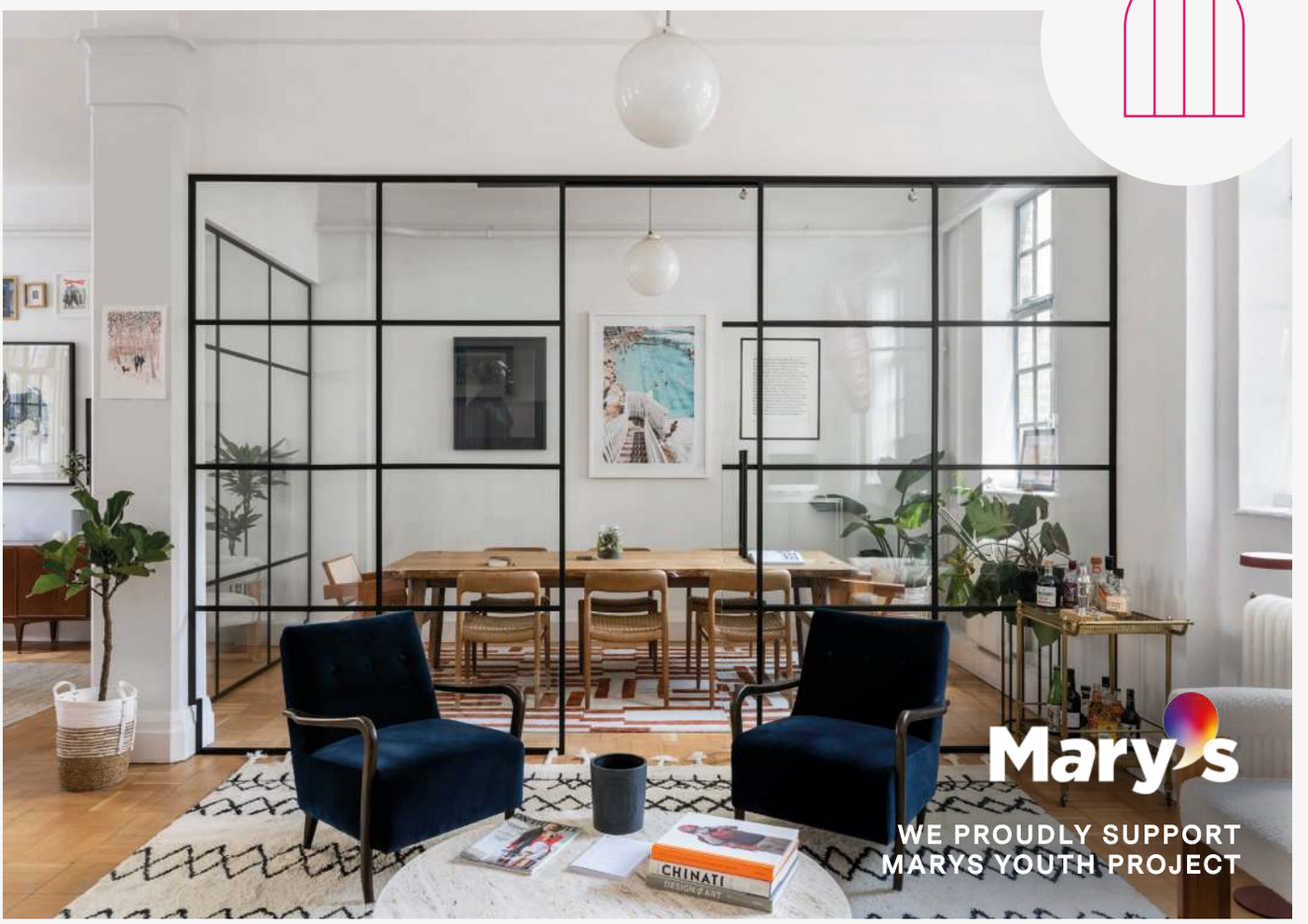
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PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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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Cover
PHOTOGRAPH BY
Sarah Louise Ramsay

ISSN 20-6175



WELCOME TO DECEMBER

Without meaning to sound bah-humbuggish, the last couple of years haven't inspired much festivity in the December issue of *On The Hill*, and I'm not sure this year fares any better. It's difficult to provide a dash of glitz while simultaneously making sure people are aware of the new warm bank, and know how to donate to (or attend) the foodbank.

The new Wellbeing Café in the Primrose Hill Community Centre is to double up as a warm bank and provide a much needed resource for people who face the choice of stratospheric utility bills, or shivering under a blanket. It will provide some nourishing food to those who need it, and the opportunity to keep warm, at least for a short while.

Meanwhile, our shops in Primrose Hill also have their utility bills to pay, so let's support them as best we can, and buy all our Christmas presents, food and drink from them. We've suggested various gifts to buy on pages 18 and 19, but also remember to make good use of the butcher, fishmonger, fruit and vegetable shops, Italian delicatessens and off-licences. Between them, they'll furnish you with the very best of festive dinners.

Throughout the month of November, the foodbank were asking people to donate an item of food each day to put into a hamper for a family at Christmas. If you missed being able to do this, do try to donate food or money to them (details are on page 21).

As I began with Scrooge, so I conclude: "If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

Have a good one!

Maggie Chambers



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ON THE STREET

Primrose Hill Postcards *p 10*
PHCA News *p 11*
Primrose Hill Book Festival *p 12*
Local Celebrity Quiz *p 13*
AND MORE



Wellbeing Café

Continued on p 8 ▶

Wellbeing Café
at Primrose Hill Community Centre



PHOTOGRAPHS (P7 & 8) BY Sarah Louise Ramsay

Neighbourhood Nosh was set up by the Primrose Hill Community Association to provide up to 100 three-course meals a week to people in the area suffering from food poverty or unable to cook healthy food themselves. There are currently over 30 volunteers who give their time to make this possible.

Now that energy prices are soaring, there will be neighbours who also struggle to keep warm. As a result, the Community Association is starting a new scheme to help ease their burden. The benefits of Neighbourhood Nosh are being extended to create a drop-in café or 'warm bank', where people can come to get warm for a couple of hours, have a cup of tea, a bowl of soup or a jacket potato.

Food for Neighbourhood Nosh is donated by City Harvest and the Felix Project. This is prepared on Tuesdays and cooked and distributed on Wednesdays at the Community Centre. The remaining raw food is distributed to people in need who come and collect it from the open 'market'; anything remaining is taken to a hostel in England's Lane. The Neighbourhood Nosh cooks will be making more soup each week to supply the Wellbeing Café; the nutritious food and drink is free or low-priced via a donation system.

There will also be newspapers and comfortable places to sit, so people can escape from worrying about heating their homes or feeling cold. The café will also provide further support, linking to other services and initiating learning and mutual care, for example, cooking demonstrations, giving information on local services and identifying if people need a referral to relevant agencies. The scheme will take on a new part-time paid member of staff thanks to generous local donors.

The café is open 10am to 2pm on Wednesdays to coincide with Neighbourhood Nosh, and linking to our regular Wednesday afternoon 'Open House', building up to more days as extra volunteers come forward. The timing will be staggered so as not to clash with the provision supplied at St Mary's, or the opening hours of the Library, where people can also go to keep warm.

The Wellbeing Café can be found at the Primrose Hill Community Centre, 29 Hopkinsons' Place (off Fitzroy Road).

If you can offer any help with this project, please contact the Community Centre:

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Photo: Grade II listed building refurbishment facing Primrose Hill park

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POSTCARDS FROM PRIMROSE HILL

This postcard was never posted, and the only clue as to where the beautiful villa stood are a few words written on the back: 'Dr Ramage, Regent's Park Rd, Primrose Hill, demolished house'.

This Dr John Ramage can be found in the 1901 and 1891 censuses, when his family lived at 196 Regent's Park Road. John was originally from Scotland and was listed as a doctor of medicine.

But the image on the postcard was located on Gloucester Avenue, then called Gloucester Road. The 1911 census informs us that Mary C Ramage lived at number 6, the 46-year-old widow of Dr Ramage. She was born in Moscow, and at this date lived in this grand house with her 21-year-old daughter



Marjorie; Sarah Webb, a domestic servant; and a gardener named William Lardner. When the census was filled in, three visitors from Germany were also staying at the house.

The villa was sadly demolished in the early 1970s, and Darwin Court was built on the site.

@old_primrosehill_postcards

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NEWS & INFORMATION

from Primrose Hill Community Association

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Your regular update from PHCA, publisher of *On The Hill*

As you will see from the article in this issue, we have started our Wellbeing Café in the Community Centre, in conjunction with our Neighbourhood Nosh team, not only to provide hot nutritious meals for people but to act as a warm space too, as our Library does on other days. Initially we will open 10am to 2pm on Wednesdays, but we plan to extend this to three days a week quite soon. From 2pm on Wednesdays our Open House programme takes place, offering a further chance to stick around in the warm to meet with others and enjoy the various Open House offerings.

Over the past few months we have had our AGM, a disco, a bat walk, a climate change talk, an Edith Piaf evening, an open day for PHCAAC about energy-saving in Primrose Hill, a screening of Sonita Gale's powerful *Hostile* documentary, as well as regular themed walks on Thursday mornings, weekly Open House events, Singing with Caroline, Chair Yoga and, on the last Friday of the month themed, bar nights. After this very full events programme, we'd like to thank Tim Kirkpatrick for his involvement over the past four years. He has now stepped down as Chair of the Events Committee, and we are actively looking for a replacement: if you would be interested in stepping into this role, do email us at mick@phca.cc.

Burns Night

Saturday 28 January

Always a popular event, for which members get the first chance to secure tickets to celebrate the life and works of Scotland's national bard. Keep an eye on the website for full details of this event.

Join Us

The Primrose Hill Community Association is a registered charity formed in 1978 to provide services and events to our local community. We run the Primrose Hill Community Centre and Neighbourhood Nosh, publish *On The Hill* magazine and support the Primrose Hill Community Library.

Membership is £8 per year (concessions £1). This money goes towards these services, events and facilities. As well as supporting your community, membership gives you access to the Sunday bar, early notice of events, discounted tickets and sometimes free tickets to events such as the English National Opera. To sign up, visit **www.phca.cc/join** or drop into the Community Centre office.

Plastic-free Christmas!

Saturday 3 December, 2–4.30pm. Come and spend an afternoon sharing ideas about how to 'reduce and reuse' over Christmas.

- **Fare-Well refill van**
- **Melanie Viner-Cuneo** of 'Park the Plastic'
- **Upcycling** with Kate Cullinan
- **Songs and crafting** with Caroline Chan

and more.

Sadie Frost

On Thursday 15 December we will be holding our special Sadie Frost Christmas event. Tickets will be offered to members first, and then remaining tickets will be offered to non-members. Check our website for more details: **www.phca.cc.**

What's On

Open House takes place every Wednesday at 2pm: a talk, a film or a performance, followed by tea, cake and chat. Free of charge, with no need to book – just come along. The monthly programme of activities is available on our website.

Singing Together with Caroline is a weekly activity for everyone, adults and children alike. Every Thursday at 4.15pm – no need to book, just turn up.

Our **Chair Yoga** sessions, suitable for older people or for those with mobility issues, are now being held in person at the Community Centre every Friday at 2.45pm.

Zumba Gold also continues, every Tuesday 2.30–3.15pm.

Both classes are free of charge.

Primrose Hill
Book Festival



PHOTOGRAPH BY Vicki Hillyard

Ten years ago, our local library in Primrose Hill was threatened with closure, as were so many others in the country. Blaming spending cuts, Camden Council announced that it would stop funding Chalk Farm Library (as it was then known). So a massive fundraising campaign was set up by local supporters to save the library; they were so successful that we can now celebrate ten continuous years of independence for our community library, thanks to a host of loyal volunteers.

In recognition of this achievement, Pam White organised a grand book festival one weekend in October. As Pam told the *CNJ*, "The library is about books. Books are our core and we would like to continue to be known as a library that cares about books, and also a library that cares about the community." She added, "When I do a book festival, I do it properly." Which she certainly did. Throughout the course of the weekend, names you would normally associate with the top literary festivals passed through the doors of our library.

Melvyn Bragg, talking about his recent book on his childhood in Cumbria, said that of all the things he's been offered in his life, nothing was as precious to him as the extra ration of sweet coupons he got during the war. Actor Brian Cox debated the merit of method acting, and remembered how Peter Cushing wore white gloves when he smoked, so that his fingers didn't become stained with nicotine.

Actor Stephen Mangan and his illustrator sister Anita engaged a roomful of children with their book, *The Fart that Changed the World.* The founders of the *Lonely Planet* guides, Tony and Maureen Wheeler, described how their publishing company grew to become a household name and how they are now using the revenue from its sale for worthwhile charities worldwide. And that was just the Saturday. On Sunday, Deborah Moggach spoke with Annabel Leventon about her books, *Fool for Love* and *The Black Dress*. Hadley Freeman told of finding a shoebox of treasures belonging to her late grandmother and how that led to the most moving discoveries about Jewish history. Annabel Steadman brought her book *Skandar and the Unicorn Thief* to life by involving her eager audience in unicorn fantasies.

Finally, the weekend closed with talks from Alan Bennett and Joan Bakewell, both constant supporters of the library. Bakewell spoke about downsizing from her long-time home in Chalcot Square, the subject of her book, *The Tick of Two Clocks;* she argued that nobody should make so much money from the sale of property and that a tax should be imposed.

Alan Bennett's appearances have become rare, so it was much appreciated that he came along to share extracts from his lockdown diaries. On the subject of Queen Elizabeth, he said he had never met the Queen and was glad as he would have been 'cripplingly shy'. He was always very active in the campaign to save the library, and warned the council at the time, "It is not just a facility. People who use a library, particularly children, go there because it's quiet and somewhere they won't be disturbed. A child shouldn't have to go on a journey to visit a library; it should be around the corner, and the handier the better."

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LOCAL CELEBRITY QUIZ

The following are all past or present residents of Primrose Hill.

1. Academy Award-winning actress who attended North London Collegiate School.
2. An actor, often shaken but not stirred, married to the above.
3. A rock star who described his home in Steele's Road as 'a big, f***ing heavy house'.
4. Actress who lived in Elsworthy Road and was married to the brother of the above, and whose father was an associate of the Kray twins.
5. Tall comedian and writer of children's books, who in 2005 bought the house referred to in number 3.
6. Historian and broadcaster who lived in St Mark's Crescent from 1955 to 1978.
7. Poet Laureate who lived in Chalcot Square.
8. American poet, wife of the above.
9. Broadcaster, now a Labour Peer, who sold her house in Chalcot Square after living there for almost 60 years.
10. Multi-award-winning actress, educated at South Hampstead High School, who has played the Red Queen, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret.

Thank you to Bernard George for setting the quiz (and the cracker jokes later on in this issue!)

Answers on p 29



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NEWS & *VIEWS*

Adrian Hemming



Local artist Adrian Hemming was asked by Stephen Nelson, Curator at Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Cogliandrino in Basilicata, Italy to create an installation. He decided to use a solar etching, *Gran Sasso*. This was blown up to over 2m high and 3m wide. The effect is that the image seamlessly interfaces with the mountain chain of the region to create a magic moment of landscape art. Adrian is also honoured to have just been made a member of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers. Congratulations!



St Paul's School Christmas Market

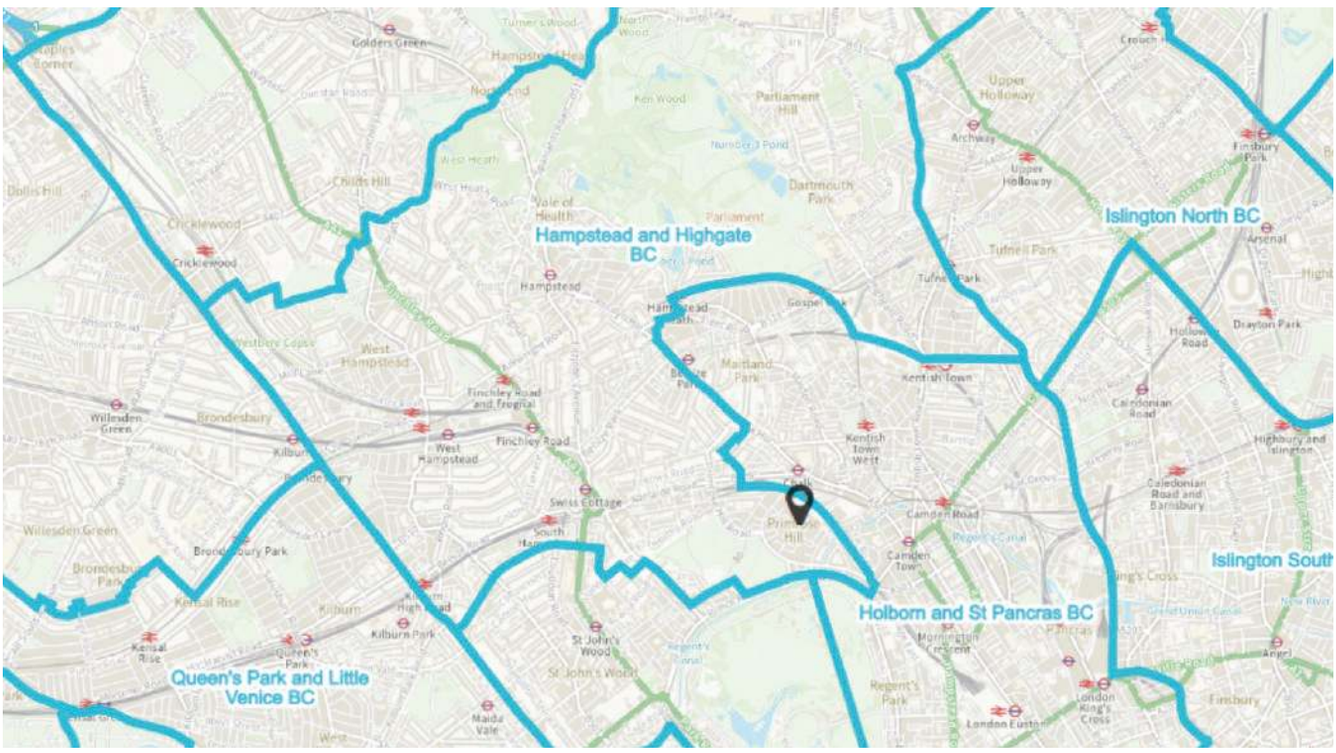
Get into the festive spirit at this annual event. There are gifts, toys, Santa in his grotto and the chance to warm up with mulled wine or hot chocolate.

Friday 9 December 5–8pm

Planting Primroses

On a wet day at the end of October, locals and volunteers planted around 1,400 plants near the reservoir on Primrose Hill, including primroses and other pollinator-friendly wildflowers. Thank you to the volunteers who worked so hard!





Constituency Review

The Boundary Commission for England are currently reviewing Parliamentary constituencies, to rebalance the number of electors in each area. Primrose Hill, currently in Holborn and St Pancras, is due to move to the newly re-established seat of Hampstead and Highgate. Consultations are running until 5 December and the maps will be finalised next summer. Have your say at **www.bcereviews.org.uk**.

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What's On DECEMBER

NEW THIS DECEMBER

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

A Plastic Free Christmas
Come and spend an afternoon sharing ideas about how to 'reduce & reuse' over Christmas. PHCC. 2–4.30pm.

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

Christmas Concert
Primrose Hill Choirs and Let the Children Sing, carols for choirs and audience. St Mary's, NW3 3DJ. 6pm. £10 cash, under 4s free. Contact: primrosehillchoirs.com

TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER

Film Show
Holiday Inn (1942), starring Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire. Directed by Mark Sandrich. PHCL. Doors open 7.15pm. £8 including a glass of wine. Tickets from PHCL or on the door.

MONDAY 19–WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER

Circus Glory Workshops
Trapeze workshop for adults, teens and children. All levels welcome. PHCA. 10am–3pm Monday and Tuesday, 10am–7pm Wednesday. Contact Genevieve 07973 451603.

FOR KIDS

MONDAY

Ready Steady Go Beginners
A gentle introduction to pre-school activities for 1–2 years. PHCC. 9.15–11am. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for children aged 2–3 years. PHCC. 9.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Rhyme Time
Library Rhyme Time for under 5s. PHCL. 11–11.45am. Suggested £2 donation. Contact 020 7419 6599.

Ready Steady Go ABC
Exploratory play, singing, dance and stories for babies and toddlers 6–18 months. PHCC. 11.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Circus Glory
Trapeze for ages 2½–16. All levels welcome. PHCC. 2–7.15pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451603.

TUESDAY

Monkey Music
Music and play for children under 5. PHCC. 9.25am–12.10pm. Contact 020 8451 7626.

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for children aged 2–3 years. PHCC. 9.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Ballet
Introductory ballet sessions for children, using storytelling and imagery to teach the basics of dance. PHCL. 10–10.45am. Suggested £2 donation. Contact lilykourakou@hotmail.com.

Hartbeeps
Multi-sensory music movement and drama classes for infants and toddlers. 2–5pm. Term bookings £11 per class. Contact clarelouise@hartbeeps.com.

Bilingual Beats
Spanish through music classes for children. PHCL. 4–5pm. Book at www.bilingualbeatsonline.com.

WEDNESDAY

Ready Steady Go Beginners
A gentle introduction to pre-school activities for 1–2 years. PHCC. 9.15–11am. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for children aged 2–3 years. PHCC. 9.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Circus Glory
Trapeze for ages 2½–16. All levels welcome. PHCC. 2–6.45pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451603.

Primrose Hill Children's Choir
Fun songs and games for ages 5–11. St Mary's NW3 3DJ. 4.10–5.10pm. 1st time free, then £10. Contact maestromattheww@yahoo.co.uk.

THURSDAY

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for children aged 2–3 years. PHCC. 9.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Mini Mozart
Musical story time. PHCL. 9.30am–12pm. Book at www.minimozart.com.

Messy Monkeys
Messy play sessions for babies and toddlers. PHCL. 2–4.15pm. Book at www.messy-monkeys.com.

First Class Learning
English and Maths tuition. PHCL. 3.30–6pm. Contact 020 7966 484 568.

Catherine's Ballet
Ballet classes for under 5s. PHCC. 4–5pm. Contact 020 8348 0262, info@chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk or chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk.

Singing Together with Caroline
Singing for 0s to 100s. All welcome. PHCC 4pm. Free.

FRIDAY

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for children aged 2–3 years. PHCC. 9.30am–12.30pm. Contact 020 7586 5862.

Circus Glory
Trapeze for ages 2½–16. All levels welcome. PHCC. 2–7.15pm. Contact Genevieve 07973 451603.

SATURDAY

Club Petit Pierrot
Fun French lessons for babies and children. PHCC. 9.45am–10.30pm, 1–3 years old; 11–11.45am, 2–4 years old. Contact 020 3969 2642, www.clubpetitpierrot.co.uk.

Caterpillar Music
Multi-sensory music and movement sessions for babies and toddlers. PHCL. 3.15–4.15pm. Contact 07968 486471 (Anita).

SUNDAY

Perform
Drama, dance and singing for children 4–12 years. PHCC. 10am– 11.30am (4-7s) and 11.30am–1pm (7-12s). Contact 020 7255 9120 or enquiries@perform.org.uk.

FOR ADULTS

MONDAY

Chilled Strings
Beginners' orchestra rehearsals. PHCC. 6.30–8.45pm. Contact sueandhercello@gmail.com.

Bridge
For beginners and intermediate players. PHCL. 6.30pm. Contact jojarrold@gmail.com or call 07887 568822.

Primrose Hill Choir
Love to sing? All styles of music, all levels welcome. PHCC. 7.30–9.30pm. Contact maestromattheww@yahoo.co.uk.

TUESDAY

Pilates
Dynamic sessions, 10.15–11am; gentle sessions 11.30am–12.15pm. PHCL. £15 per class, £120 for 10 classes. Contact 07525 461361 or lizacawthorn@gmail.com (Liza).

Laban
Workshops based on Rudolf Laban's analysis of movement, for exercise and fun. All levels welcome. 12.30–1.30pm. £10 per session (£5 concessions). Contact jennyfrankel.laban@gmail.com.

Zumba Gold
Zumba class for seniors looking for a fun, modified low-intensity workout, made easy with simple-to-follow steps. PHCC. 2.30–3.15pm. Free. Check PHCA website for details.

General Yoga
Intermediate level yoga. PHCC. 6.30–7.45pm. Contact Catriona first at 020 7267 5675.

Morris Dancing Class
Learn Morris dancing. All welcome, no experience required. CSH. 6.30pm. Book online.

WEDNESDAY

Open House
A regular activity (film, talk, performance) followed by tea, cake and chat. PHCC. 2–4.30pm. Free.

English Folk Dance Club
Fun for dancers of all abilities and none. No partner needed. PHCC. 7.15–10pm. Contact camdenfolkdance@yahoo.com.

THURSDAY

Primrose Hill Walks
Weekly walk through Primrose Hill, Regent's Park and surrounding areas, sometimes with themes. 10.30am–12pm. Free. Check PHCA website for details.

Silver Swans Ballet
Ballet classes for over 55s. PHCC. 11am–12pm. Contact katie@primrosehillballet.co.uk.

Gentle Pilates
Gentle but effective Pilates class. PHCL. 12:45–1.45pm. £15 per session. Contact annie@mactherapy.org

Narcotics Anonymous
Support for people with narcotics problems. PHCC. 1.30–3.45pm. Free. More information via NA helpline 0300 999 1212.

Life Drawing
All levels welcome, friendly group. Please bring your own materials. PHCC. 6.30–8.30pm. £10. Just drop in or sign up online at meetup.com/Primrose-Hill-Life-Drawing-London.

Kriya Yoga
Yoga class. PHCL. 6.45–8.15pm. Contact info@kriyayogauk.com.

English Country Dancing Class
Learn English country, ceilidh, barn dancing, and related social folk dance styles from further afield. All welcome, no experience required. CSH. 7.30pm. Book online.

FRIDAY

Aerial Pilates
Improve strength and flexibility through movement with the support of an aerial sling. PHCC. 10–11am. Contact circusbodies@gmail.com.

Chair Yoga for All
Chair yoga. 2.45–3.45pm. Free. Register at phca.cc.

SATURDAY

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

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CONTACT DETAILS

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(off Fitzroy Road)
NW1 8TN
Contact: info@phca.cc
www.phca.cc
020 7586 8327

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

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

SHOP AROUND THE BLOCK

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2022

Primrose Hill has everything you need when you're planning for Christmas. Here are a few ideas to get the ball rolling. Our neighbourhood businesses need all our support, so remember to **keep it local!**



Be-Kin

An in-person design consultation with Wren Loucks, to explore how your space can be designed to increase your well-being. Following the session, Wren will send you 3–4 key furniture or styling recommendations.
Design & Well-being Intro Pack, £250 + VAT

be-kin.com

Gallery 196

Gallery 196 is a treasure trove all year round, but especially during the festive season! Hand-crafted colourful gifts from artisans in India, Egypt, Japan and Mexico.

gallery196.com





Boujo Hake

Sustainable underwear and luxury basics from local, independent designer. These Slouch Pants are made from beautiful, lightweight organic cotton. The perfect festive gift: luxurious, understated and thoughtful.

boujo-hake.com | @boujo_hake

Primrose Hill Books

There's nothing like a good book at this time of year, and you'll find something for everyone at Primrose Hill Books. They offer a local delivery service and can post books to UK addresses.

primrosehillbooks.com





Soulstice

Soulstice London brings you into a world of healing and wonder; it sparkles with their crystals for every part of your life. Crystals and wellness intertwine beautifully, creating the perfect Christmas gifts. Christmas sets, candles and accessories are a wonderful way to benefit from their healing energies.

soulsticelondon.com
@soulsticelondon



Harriet Kelsall

Make it a colourful Christmas for that special someone with this extraordinary, scatter-style eternity ring. Crafted in the UK from ethically sourced Fairtrade 9ct yellow gold and a cluster of bright and bold gemstones.

www.hkjewellery.co.uk
@harrietkelsall

The Primrose Hill Collection

The Primrose Hill Collection creates bespoke sterling silver jewellery, handmade to order in the heart of Primrose Hill.

theprimrosehillcollection.co.uk



Jesse Brown

Jesse Brown is an artist painting little moments in everyday life. If you'd like to commission a personal piece or buy a print as a festive gift, get in touch!

jessebrown.co.uk
@jessebevanbrown



Melanie Press

The view from Primrose Hill at night inspired the illustration for this scarf, bag and shirt. During lockdown Melanie had time to design a circular interpretation of our iconic London cityscape, and here it is, updated with contemporary colours.
Eliza wears the Night City Jodie shirt with emerald Sailor Pincords, and City Tote Bag with City Night Scarf.
Scarf: 5% discount and 5% donation to On The Hill during December 2022 when you mention *OTH* in store.

pressprimrosehill.com





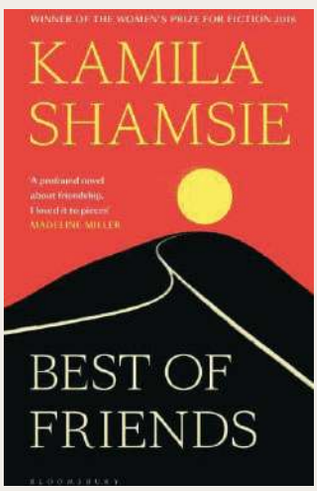
Studio M

Home for the holidays? Commission a special Peace Planter for that special loved one! This one, 'Be The Change' (38 cm) is £950 (prices vary according to size). By appointment only.

41 Chalcot Road | 07956 553493

Primrose Hill Community Library

Here are recent acquisitions at the library which will see you through the winter evenings.



Paperback

Lucy Clarke
The Castaways

Claire Douglas
The Girls Who Disappeared

Lisa Gardner
One Step Too Far

Robert Goddard
This is the Night They Come for You

Donna Leon
Give Unto Others

Hilary Mantel
Eight Months on Ghazzah Street

Deborah Moggach
The Black Dress

Salley Vickers
The Gardener

Catriona Ward
Sundial

Colson Whitehead
Harlem Shuffle

Stacy Willingham
A Flicker in the Dark

Hardback

Kamila Shamsie
Best of Friends

Children's

Alan Garner
Owl Service
The Weird Stone of Brisingamen

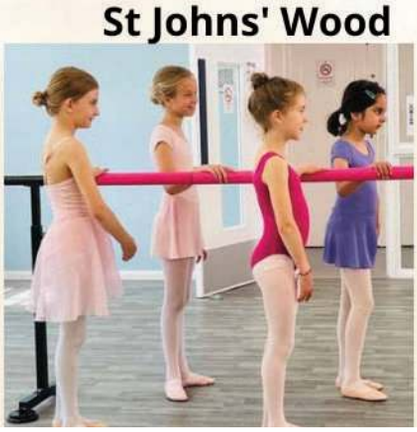
Alice Hemming
The Cursed Unicorn

Jenny McLachlan
The Land of Roar
The Battle of Roar

Chris Smith
Frankie Best Hates Quests

Piers Torday
The Frozen Sea

Alyssia Fleur
School Of Dance
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Adult Ballet Classes
info@alyssiafleurschoolofdance.co. uk
07565 365622
alyssiafleurschoolofdance.co.uk
St Johns' Wood
Marylebone







Chalk Farm Foodbank

Our foodbank is run by local people for local people – they rely on community support to make sure people don't go hungry. In recent years foodbank visits have tripled.

Please take donations to Chalk Farm Foodbank, c/o Chalk Farm Baptist Church, Berkley Road, NW1 8YS.

Drop off times: Thursday 11.30am–1.30pm. Donations must be presented to a volunteer; they can't accept donations that have been left unattended. They don't accept bleach, blades, clothes or toys (except new and in original packing).

They love donations, but encourage members of the community to become regular financial donors, which would help them hire much-needed staff and expand their services to help more people. Please invest in the future of the project and provide support to people in crisis in our community.

Big or small, every gift you give helps transform lives. Thank you!
Foodbank Admin Team

0207 483 3763 | **07745 693 763 (Mon/Thurs)**

Three Ways You Can Give

JustGiving Page
Via www.justgiving.com/ChalkFarmFoodbank

Bank Transfer
Revelation Church London
(this goes directly to Chalk Farm Foodbank account),
Sort Code: **40-02-03**
Account Number: **81866060**.

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

Standing Order
Download a standing order form from the website and hand this to foodbank staff.



‘Your Story, Our Design’



Everyone who visits a Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery design studio has their own individual story to tell. As bespoke specialists, we then have the upmost privilege of translating that story into a wonderful bespoke piece of jewellery.

So many grateful people have been kind enough to share their stories with us over the last 24 years, but a few recent commissions stand out for the special way that their stories have been translated into one-off designs.

Keen hikers Rob and Natalia designed an incredible Fairtrade mixed gold and trilliant cut diamond engagement and wedding ring set, mimicking a mountain range and the reflection of the mountains in the lake below. The rings are the epitome of bespoke design and were ready in time for a very fitting mountaintop proposal!

Roxanne wanted a pendant that would celebrate life after ‘completing her little family’ with the birth of her son. We created a design that held a beautiful array of gemstones, each representing the birthstone of a family member, all encompassed in the hand-made, golden leaf of a tropical plant as a nod to her favourite pastime.

Lastly, Jonathan surprised his wife, Kate, with the gift of designing her very own bespoke eternity ring as part of her 40th birthday present. Kate had fallen in love with one of our previous commissions, which became the jumping-off point for her new ring. It was crafted using a selection of Kate’s own beloved jewellery pieces which our talented goldsmiths melted down and reformed into the modern heirloom, adding real sentimental weight to the design.

You’ll find the incredible commissions of Roxanne, Rob and Natalia, Jonathan and Kate as well as over 23,000 more on our website. Or if you’re already feeling inspired, you can get in touch with our designers.

hkjewellery.co.uk | 69 Regent’s Park Road, NW1 8UY
enquiries@hkjewellery.co.uk | 020 8154 9500





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info@guygolds.com
020 7018 7180

Performance Centre
240 Kentish Town Rd, London
NW5 2AB



John Castle, Artist & Swan Upper

By Peter Darley

We had a close friendship with the artist John Castle through the late 1980s and 1990s. He lived for much of this time next door at 20 Oppidans Road, and would drop over frequently, white wine bottle in hand. It left a large hole in our lives when he died in 1999.

John was born in New Zealand in 1936 and initially followed his father into business, his family owning a chain of pharmacies. He gave this up to follow a much more precarious destiny as a full-time artist from 1970. This, and his love of jazz, took him to New Orleans and a lengthy sojourn on Mississippi paddle boats to sketch the performing musicians.

In 1990 John Castle was given permission by her Majesty the Queen to go behind the scenes of the most notable royal occasions. Given unprecedented access, he was able to create a lasting artistic record of the monarchy and its role at the centre of Britain's heritage. Working non-stop for two years, patiently recording events in thousands of sketches, he produced a unique and strikingly beautiful record of the royal calendar. This record is captured in his 1992 book *Royal Occasions.* His paintings appear in many collections, including that of King Charles III.

It will be apparent that John had a strong sense of heritage and tradition, and was a member of the Queen's swan uppers for many years. Swan upping is the traditional means by which the swans on the Thames are apportioned among the three proprietors: the Crown, the Vintners' Company and the Dyers' Company. Its main practical purposes today are to conduct a census of swans and check their health. It occurs annually in the third week of July. Over five days, the Queen's, Vintners' and the Dyers' respective swan uppers row up the river in skiffs. Swans caught by the Queen's swan uppers are left unmarked, except for a lightweight ring linked to the database of the British Trust for Ornithology. On 20 July 2009, Queen Elizabeth II, as 'Seigneur of the Swans', attended the swan upping ceremony, the first time that the monarch had personally watched the ceremony in centuries.

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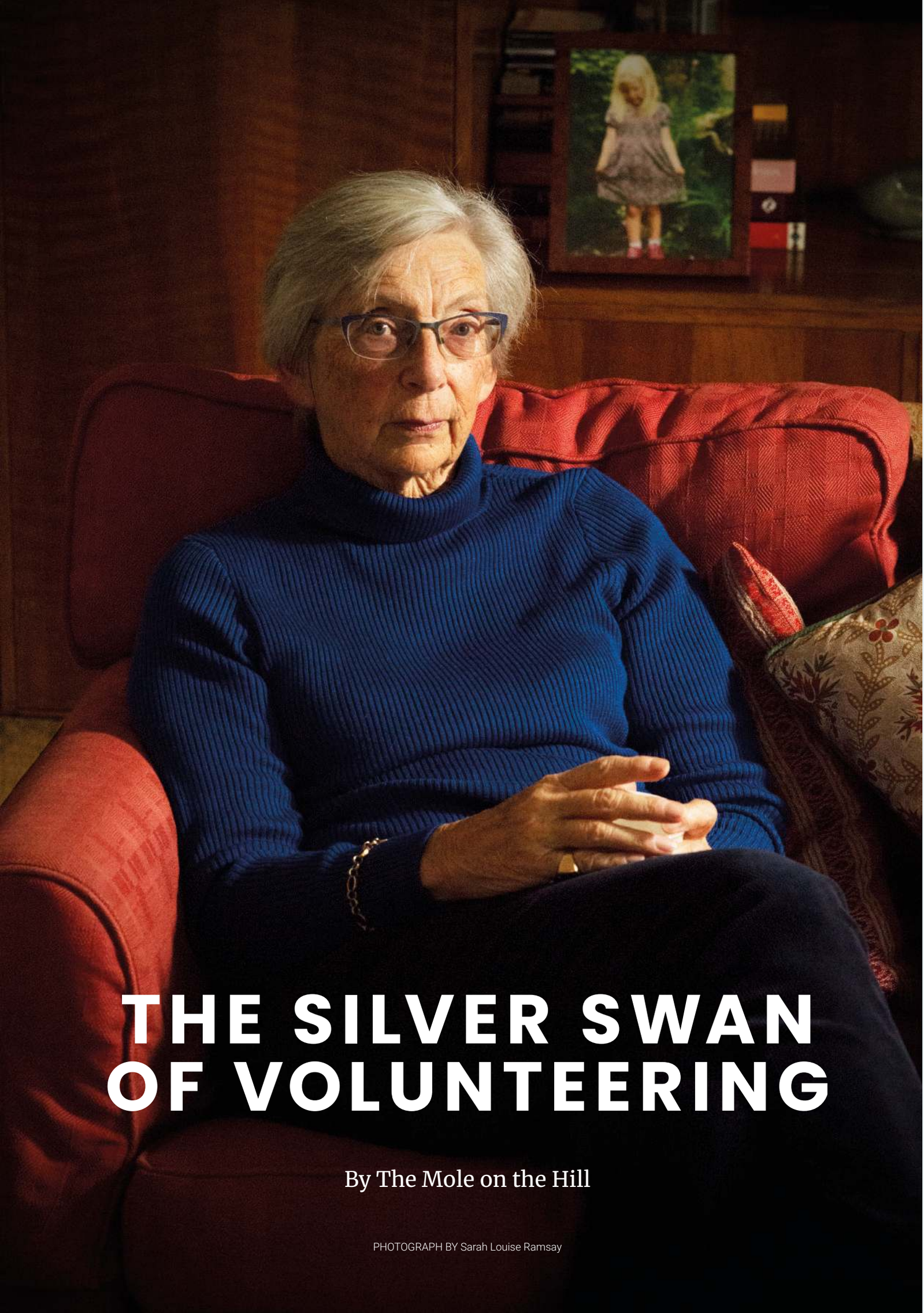
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THE SILVER SWAN OF VOLUNTEERING

By The Mole on the Hill

PHOTOGRAPH BY Sarah Louise Ramsay

Grandad, are those people going into church to say their prayers? **No, lass. They haven't got anywhere to live so the church gives them a nice meal and a warm bed for the night.** *Why haven't they got homes? There are loads of houses and flats.* **Yeah, but they cost a lot of money and these people are poor.** *Well, I think it's a shame. The government should do something about it.*

Francoise Findlay was born in London and has lived almost all her life on the far side of Primrose Hill, in the Elsworthy estate.

"My mother was French. Her background was one of great comfort, but she was a rebel. She rejected the life of luxury she'd been brought up in and left it all as a young woman to come to London to Toynbee Hall in the East End. She studied at the LSE to be a social worker. Throughout her life she was a volunteer. Among other things, she learned Braille and brailled for the library at the RNIB. I remember as a child trailing round with her for the Red Cross, trying to locate people who had been lost in the war, putting families back together and reuniting siblings."

"WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO PAY FOR A PROFESSIONAL DIRECTOR, SO I THOUGHT, SOD THIS, I'LL DO IT MYSELF"

Francoise was educated at North Bridge House, which at the time was two houses in St John's Wood Park, backing onto the Finchley Road bombsite. From there she went to Queen's College in Harley Street. The school was founded in 1848 by Frederick Denison Maurice, professor of English Literature and History at King's College London and a Christian socialist thinker. It was the first British educational establishment to give academic qualifications to women. From there Francoise started at the Regent Street Polytechnic to study Sociology.

"I lasted a year. I was very young, only seventeen, and I was among students who were better prepared. So I dropped out and got married. I've never had a paid job. Like my mother, I was always a volunteer. My husband travelled a great deal, and I didn't have help with my children, but I worked as a volunteer for several organisations: the Red Cross, the CAB, Voluntary Action Camden, and Camden Old People's Welfare Association."

At a time when directors of housing associations were commanding very substantial salaries, Francoise became in effect the unpaid chief executive of Hampstead Old People's Housing Trust.

"It was founded by a foresighted lady, Marjorie Rackstraw. When I became involved, all the members of the committee were elderly and they were eager to recruit me. I was young, enthusiastic and particularly interested in the care of the elderly. The Housing Corporation deemed us to be a small housing association, incapable of carrying out new builds or improvements. We couldn't afford to pay for a professional director, so I thought, sod this, I'll do it myself."

And she did. But all the time she was looking for a merger with a bigger organisation. The problem was that very few housing associations were fit to manage an organisation whose sole purpose was to house the elderly. They had five units of sheltered housing and three care homes in Hampstead. However, before any merger was achieved, there was the battle of The Old Court House, or Francoise Findlay vs Peggy Jay.

"We had a lot of problems with one of our properties. The Old Court House, near White Stone Pond, next to Jack Straw's Castle, had been a gift to Hampstead Old People's Housing Trust in 1960. It was a beautiful listed building with a huge garden and some of the best views in London. It was divided into bedsits with shared bathrooms. Each tenant had a little kitchenette with a sink and a Baby Belling inside a louvred cupboard. Despite fire prevention work, in my opinion it remained a fire hazard. However, as it was a listed building, we were not allowed to install an external fire escape. There was one staircase and the only alternative means of escape was along a corridor. You then had to pull a ladder down from a trapdoor, climb it and walk across the roof to Jack Straw's Castle. And remember, the tenants were probably eighty-plus in age. This was the only means of escape. The building was a death-trap and I said we needed to close it.

"The tenants were, understandably, very upset and they enlisted the help of the formidable Peggy Jay and Glenda Jackson. The *Ham and High* took up the cause and for weeks and weeks I was the baddy, because these poor old people were being evicted from their homes. Glenda Jackson calmed down a bit, but Peggy Jay never let go. But I persisted, the tenants were rehoused and the property was sold."

Negotiations for a merger with a larger housing association continued. Mick Sweeney from what is now One Housing was very keen, but Francoise did not think they had enough experience running care homes, so he was rejected. On the other hand, Central and Cecil had care homes in Kew, Teddington and Ealing and sheltered housing that included Oldfield in Primrose Hill, so a merger with them took place and Francoise became a member of their board.

As a child and teenager, Francoise attended the prestigious Nesta Brooking ballet school in Oppidans Mews, and she is now a Silver Swan (a ballet class for those over 55) at Primrose Hill Community Centre. This interest merged nicely with that of her husband, who was a director of the Royal Opera House. She taught him a love of ballet; and he gave her a love of opera.

Since 1970, Francoise has been heavily involved in the Elsworthy conservation

area. And why should she not be? The house she has lived in since she was six years old was the coach-house to 19 Wadham Gardens. And here we need a bit of history. The pioneer of garden suburb development was undoubtedly William Willetts. His development of Elsworthy and Wadham Gardens in the late nineteenth century pre-dated Hampstead Garden Suburb.

"I VOLUNTEER AT ST MARY'S, PRIMROSE HILL: THEY PROVIDE DINNER, BED AND BREAKFAST FOR THE HOMELESS ONCE A WEEK"

All the houses in Elsworthy Village were of the highest standard and 'Willetts-built' was an assurance of excellence. The houses were grouped so as to obtain a uniformity of effect in the road. Buildings were set back from the street and the original boundary treatments of small walls, privet hedging and wooden gates and gateposts were designed to increase the green, leafy environment of the quiet residential streets.

In 2009, as a result of the efforts of Francoise and her neighbours, Camden published the 'Elsworthy Appraisal and Management Strategy' and, without this document and their efforts, we would now have a hypermarket in King Henry's Road.

Francoise has retired from her onerous housing commitments but she continues to volunteer.

"Until a year ago, I was a trustee of the Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust, which was established in the seventeenth century to provide assistance for the 'the poor and needy of Hampstead'. It was a privilege to play a small role in an ancient charity that continues to distribute funds to organisations and individuals within the area of benefit.

"I volunteer at St Mary's, Primrose Hill: they provide dinner, bed and breakfast for the homeless once a week. I help with the first shift, making up beds, welcoming our guests and serving and eating dinner with them. The shelter at St Mary's is managed by C4WS, and from November to January the project is carried out by seven churches in Camden. It has been going on for several years; and in addition, there is a variety of shelter provision for the homeless if they seek it.

"I look on St Mary's as my community centre. I would like to see more contact between St Mary's and Primrose Hill Community Association. There needs to be more solidarity between the north and south, now that we are in the same ward."

So the poor people get to sleep in the church every night if they want to. I like that, Grandad. It's good. But I still think it's a disgrace that it's left to volunteers to help them.



© The Mole on the Hill

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Surgery News

Dr Kiran Sodha, a GP at the Primrose Hill Surgery, discusses the surgery's approach to Type 2 diabetes.

"The surgery has texted me again. They say I should sign up to the diabetes remission programme as it might help me get off medications. They already texted last month to say I need another blood test, urine sample and a blood pressure check!"

I can almost hear the rumblings of the residents of Primrose Hill as we ping out these text messages.

Type 2 Diabetes affects nearly 5 million people in the UK. Diabetes is a silent disease: most people don't have typical symptoms associated with developing diabetes and don't feel any different despite taking medication.

Diabetes is diagnosed when there are persistent high levels of sugar, more specifically glucose, in the blood stream. Normally glucose is transported efficiently to the body's cells, muscles and liver, but with diabetes this transport is hampered, leading to elevated glucose in the blood stream. This is toxic to the body in the long run, and increases the risk of heart attacks, blindness and severe kidney disease and nerve problems.

The NHS diabetes monitoring programme and medications ensure that over time your blood sugar level stays at a point that significantly reduces the risk of these complications. In the past ten years there has been growing evidence and understanding that glucose levels can stay at a normal range without the need for medication by managing the underlying factors that lead to blood sugar rising.

This is commonly known as the 'diet and lifestyle approach'. I know that our patients hear it all the time, from medical professionals, the wellness industry and friends. 'Behaviour change' is another commonly used phrase. Why do our blood sugar levels remain so high, then? The fact is that it's not that simple. If it was, diabetes wouldn't be so common.

Why each person develops diabetes is complex, and unique to that individual. 'Improving your diet' is different for each person; knowing how to do this and achieving consistency can be daunting, as there are many facets to diet with diabetes. Then there is the impact of exercise, stress and the psychological impact that diabetes can have on individuals. How can all of this be managed in a single ten-minute health consultation?

The surgery is trialling a new approach through group consultations to put diabetes into remission. We'll keep you updated on the results next year.

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PRIMROSE HILL

Christmas Cracker Jokes

Why is the top of Primrose Hill the best?

It's all downhill from there.

Why did Santa want an Elf Centre?

He had tinselitis.

What did Santa say when he slid backwards down Primrose Hill?

Oh-oh-oh.

How do Primrose Hill residents make a sausage roll?

They put it on the hill and give it a push.

What do you call a reindeer behind the bar of the Engineer?

Lost.

Why are Primrose Hill and Parliament Hill both funny?

Because they are hill-areas.

Some athletes were training on Primrose Hill, but which was the warmest?

The long jumper.

What side of Primrose Hill has the most grass?

The outside.

How did the snowman go up Regent's Park Road?

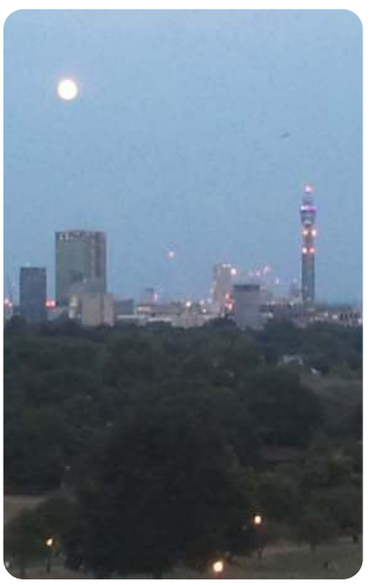
On his icicle.

Pictures from Primrose Hill



Thank you to Pat Snell, Nathan Thomas, Janet Dulin Jones and Francis Serjeant for sending in an assortment of local images. If you have any images of the area which you'd like to share, please send them to **editor@onthehill.info** for possible inclusion in our next issue.













QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Rachel Weisz
2. Daniel Craig
3. Noel Gallagher. The house, known as Supernova Heights, has its own Wikipedia page.
4. Patsy Kensit. Reggie Kray was her brother's godfather.
5. David Walliams, who said that he was renaming the house Superduper Heights.
6. AJP Taylor
7. Ted Hughes
8. Sylvia Plath
9. Joan Bakewell
10. Helena Bonham Carter

SCORE YOUR ANSWERS

9–10:
Perhaps you are a celebrity yourself?
If not, maybe you should cancel your subscription to *Hello!* magazine and read something serious.

6–8:
You are a normal person.
Well done.

0–5:
We salute your indifference to celebrity culture.

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Circus Glory also organises workshops for birthdays and other events

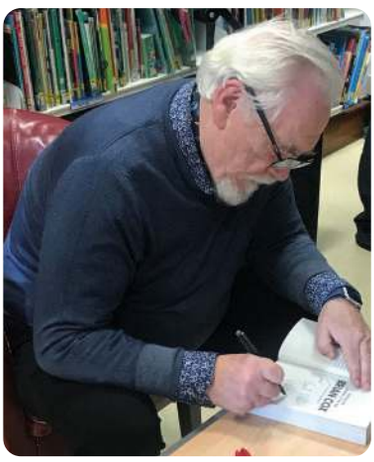
DAYS
Monday, Wednesday
and Friday afternoons

VENUE
Primrose Hill Community Centre
29 Hopkinson's Place · NW1 8TN

07973 451603 · circusglory@gmail.com · www.circusglory.com

Hello, Primrose Hill!

A few memories of the Book Festival, held to celebrate the Primrose Hill Community Library's 10th anniversary.










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Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from John D Wood & Co.



Original cartoon from 1975 - the sentiment remains.

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Kate Martin
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