ON THE HILL

FREE

DECEMBER 2023



Ben Aitken on

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AND

Shop Around the Block

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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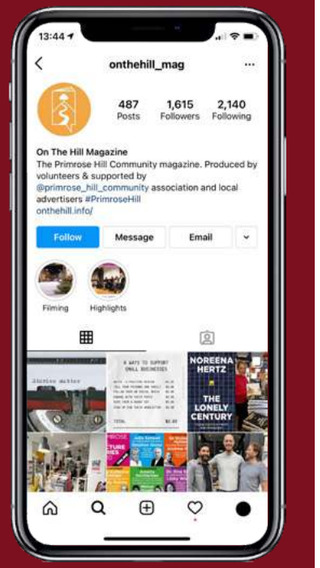
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On The Hill On The Go

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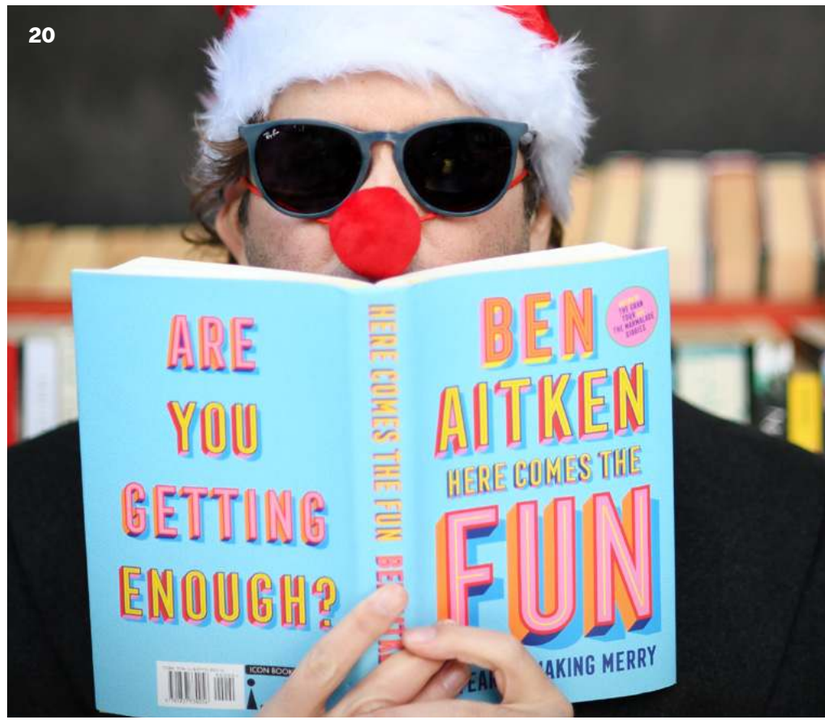
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ON THE HILL
PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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DECEMBER 2023

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with Bayleaf the Donkey

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10.30 am Congregational Eucharist
5.00 pm Children's Crib Service
8 pm Midnight Mass

Monday 25 December
Christmas Day
10.30 am Festal Sung Eucharist

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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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Sarah Louise Ramsay

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Editor's Letter



Welcome to December

In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas* Carol, the ghost of Marley is wound in chains as he tells Scrooge he must change his ways. Here in Primrose Hill, we wind our contributors with fairy lights and baubles. If you write a book about having fun, then basically you're fair game in our eyes. Thank you, Ben Aitken, for being a sport and letting us tangle you in festivity for our front cover. Local author and erstwhile volunteer at the library and Shelter, Ben has a new book out, *Here Comes the Fun: A Year of Making Merry*, and he's given *OTH* some suggestions of fun things to do in London. Ben suggests places close to home such as Kentish Town City Farm, Hampstead Heath and a bench in Primrose Hill! He also recommends places further afield to give yourself a lift.

The converse applies to Christmas shopping – keep it local and try not to venture further than our own streets. Our shops need your support more than ever. We've supplied a selection of gift ideas to get you started.

If you're having a traditional roast this Christmas, then also shop local; and if it's to be vegan, we've some tasty suggestions for you inside. Plus our local chef and food writer, Yotam Ottolenghi, is always inspiring if you need to pull off something impressive for guests. He recently gave a talk at Cecil Sharp House about food, family and life. I hope he'll forgive me for filching these links from his Instagram account, but I'd like to recommend at this fraught time a couple of charities which are doing great work in both Israel and Gaza: **www.theparentscircle.org** and **www.savethechildren.org.uk**.

Closer to home, our foodbanks are really struggling to keep up with demand, so spare a thought for them.
Have a happy Christmas...

Maggie Chambers

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'The doctor said that it's tinselitis...
this always happens to me at Christmas.'

ON THE STREET

The Roundhouse (p8)
Primrose Hill Quiz (p9)
Yotam Ottolenghi (p12)
The Danish Church (p13)
AND MORE



THE ROUNDHOUSE

Continued on p 8 ▶

Photo by Patrick Dempsey

ROUNDHOUSE WORKS

By Sanam Lou

Young creatives in London now have access to facilities at the brand-new Roundhouse Works

For almost 20 years, the Roundhouse has provided young creatives aged 11–25 with access to studios below its iconic main space. In June of this year, having recognised a growing need among young people for a safe, nurturing space, it opened its newest facility, Roundhouse Works. This innovatively designed building, accessible from Regents Park Road, is a dedicated workspace and development programme empowering self-made freelancers and entrepreneurs to harness their skills in the creative industries.



Photo by Patrick Dempsey

The space is open seven days a week, and available to those aged 18–30 via a number of membership options. The new building houses state-of-the-art facilities, including a bespoke music room, a triple-height studio for circuses and performances, a large multi-use studio for workshops, and a dedicated podcast studio. In addition, there is also a green workspace for creative entrepreneurs and freelancers.

Roundhouse Works is also unique in seeking to be truly accessible, providing affordable membership, financial assistance with other costs such as travel or childcare, and holistic support for its in-house youth workers. The many volunteers and employees at the centre provide members with the support they need, and opportunities to obtain a deeper understanding of the business aspects of the creative industries.

The Roundhouse is able to provide all-important links between members and the creative industries, and is building partnerships within the arts and entertainment business. It offers one-to-one mentorship with industry experts as well as networking events and workshops with industry partners.

Marcus Davey, Chief Executive and Artistic Director of the Roundhouse, said, "The UK is in danger of losing a generation of creative talent, but the Roundhouse sits in a unique position to combat this. We have a track record of equipping young people with the skills to succeed in the arts and creative industries, and we also have the connection to industry to open up some of those pathways, removing so many barriers young people face. Only by investing in young people can we ensure that the UK reaches its creative potential, and Roundhouse Works is a huge step-change for us to achieve this."

The Roundhouse also supports its members in developing a wider range of life skills, such as time-management, decision-making, problem-solving, leadership and communications skills – as well as improving their self-esteem.



Photo by Lou Ellis

Completely privately funded, these facilities will double the number of members at the Roundhouse to 15,000 young people, providing them with an unmissable opportunity to turn their dreams into reality.

www.roundhouse.org.uk

PRIMROSE HILL QUIZ

Can you tell truth from fiction?

By Bernard George

1. When duels were fought on Primrose Hill, the usual weapons were rapiers.
or
They used pistols.

2. The reservoir on Barrow Hill was covered to prevent drownings.
or
It was to prevent cholera.

3. *The Dictionary of London* (published in 1879 by Charles Dickens Junior) said of Primrose Hill, "It is very popular with holiday makers who are unable to get out of town, although, with the exception of a rather small open-air gymnasium, there is nothing to contribute to the public amusement."
or
"A modest mountain, offering a charming view of the metropolis, but from which the visitor may be distracted by the low entertainment and rowdiness common in the area."

4. The latitude and longitude of Primrose Hill are 51.541° and 0.1533°.
or
–28.089° and 136.378°.

5. Chalk Farm Underground station is the only tube station on the Northern Line to be Grade I listed.
or
It has the shallowest lift shafts of any tube station.

6. Dr José Rizal is described on his blue plaque at 37 Chalcot Crescent as 'Writer and National Hero of the Philippines'.
or
He is described as 'Novelist and Political Essayist'.

7. Jenny Marx, wife of Karl and resident of Kentish Town, described Primrose Hill as bourgeois.
or
She said it was lovely.

8. The American singer-songwriter Loudon Wainwright III (father of Rufus Wainwright) wrote a song about 'living on the side of Primrose Hill'. One verse went: "Yeah I see you / Riding by on your flash bicycle / Yeah they can do you for that on Primrose Hill / A pretty young mother goes by / She's pushing her pram / Her little baby leans out / Just to see what I am."
or
"I was riding my skateboard / Down the slope / Up came a policeman / On his motorbike / They say the British police / Are as nice as pie / Well all I can say is / Nobody told this guy."

9. On Midsummer's Day 1792, Iolo Morganwg founded the Gorsedd, a community of Welsh bards, at a ceremony on Primrose Hill, organised according to ancient Druidic rites. But after his death the shocking fact came to light that he had forged much of his Druidic lore.
or
The shocking fact was that he was born in England.

10. Primrose Hill has a reputation as 'an incredibly over-privileged ghetto north of Regent's Park entirely inhabited by socialist billionaires and few French hedge fund managers' according to Ed Miliband.
or
These were the words of Andrew Marr.

Answers on p 30

Postcards from Primrose Hill

The section of Elsworthy Road we see on this postcard, the western end, was laid down across the old Eton and Middlesex Cricket Ground from 1890, but was not completed until 1915. The houses had a great variety of rooflines and red brick exteriors. The architect was William Willett, and for his sensitive and generous layout of 'Elsworthy Village', with its wide pavements, plane trees and privet hedges, he was hailed as 'the pioneer of garden suburb development'.

Apart from the houses, trees and hedges, we also see two carts parked on either side of the road. One has the name of a business painted on it: 'Pullars Perth'.

J Pullar and Sons was an agent for cleaners and dyers. In Kelly's Post Office Directory of 1910,



the company is listed with the byline 'by appointment to His Majesty the King' (Edward VII). They would have dyed and cleaned all sorts of fabrics, clothes, carpets, curtains, etc. The business was originally from Perth, Scotland, and also had branches in London. This cart would have come from Tottenham Court Road, as for many years Pullars were based nearby, at 18 Chenies Street. The building still exists, now housing the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA).

@old_primrosehill_postcards



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NEWS & INFORMATION

PRIMROSE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

from Primrose Hill Community Association

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

OPEN HOUSE

Our Open House event takes place every Wednesday at 2pm. Come along and enjoy, free of charge, a film, a talk, an outing, or other activity put together by our Open House Co-ordinator, Tracey Mitchell. The activity is always followed by tea, cake and chat, and it was the idea of bringing people together through activities that led us to set up the project in the first place. In spring of next year the project will have been going for ten years under the skilled guidance of Tracey, who despite little-to-no budget continues to come up with stimulating programmes. We'll be planning something special to mark the occasion. In December, Open House will take a group of people to the Christmas Carols event at the Royal Albert Hall. We thank U3A in London for their support with the project over the past few years.

WELLBEING CAFE

As the weather gets colder we encourage you to come to our Wellbeing Café and use our 'warm space' on Tuesdays from 3pm to 5pm and Wednesdays between 10am and 2pm. At the same time on a Tuesday we are planning to run a regular 'Singing for the Brain' session, which we'll be promoting across the area.

PHCA MEMBERS GET-TOGETHER

On 8 December we are having a PHCA Christmas get-together for members at the Community Centre. Do join us for some food and a glass of wine. If you're not already a member you can join on the website: **www.phca.cc**.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM took place in November. It is always a nice occasion for neighbours to come together over a glass of wine and nibbles, but the important part of the night is electing the trustees who do such fabulous work in steering the organisation in the right direction, adhering to the aims and objectives laid out in the constitution. This year two of our stalwarts, Doro Marden and Jason Pittock, have stood down. Both have done brilliant work for us, Jason bringing us kicking and screaming into the digital age as well as being our resident DJ, and Doro masterminding Neighbourhood Nosh, among many other things. Both will be sorely missed, but I'm sure we'll still be able to count on their support and expertise in other ways. Change, however, is always a positive thing for a charity and we welcome three new trustees, Elizabeth Middleton, Debbie Marshall and Kate Daly, all of whom will bring differing skills and attributes to the organisation, and we look forward to working with them.

SIGN UP

To find out what's going on in the area you can subscribe to our free weekly bulletin at **www.phca.cc/subscribe**.
To become a member, visit **https://app.joinit.com/o/phca**.



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Yotam Ottolenghi

at Cecil Sharp House

The popular food writer and chef in conversation with Hadley Freeman at Cecil Sharp House

There can't be many people in Primrose Hill who haven't cooked an Ottolenghi recipe or attended a dinner party that featured one. So it was no surprise to find Cecil Sharp House full of foodies on an evening in late September, when chef and author Yotam Ottolenghi was in conversation with local journalist and author Hadley Freeman.

Yotam Ottolenghi's latest books form the *Ottolenghi Test Kitchen* series, a collaborative effort where a group of people, headed by his colleague Noor Murad, gather to create tested and tasted recipes and share them with the world. In spite of having published a number of highly successful titles, Yotam is aware that cookbooks come and go, as do restaurants, but the most rewarding aspect for him is to know that people regularly cook one of his recipes and hand them down to family and friends.

Growing up in Israel, Yotam enjoyed food cooked by his Italian father and German Jewish mother. When his school held diaspora food days, he took in pizza, which was always a great hit with his classmates. He believes that Israeli chefs can play around with food more, as nothing's been set in stone. There are culinary references from Jews originating from various regions, as well as a heavy Palestinian influence. He loves how food functions in a social and historic context, and mentioned how Claudia Roden was a big influence on him as she tells the story of cultures through their dishes.

Hadley's questions were broad in scope and covered food, politics (the event took place two weeks before the recent escalation of tensions in the region) and family.

The questions from the audience ranged from: where he likes to eat out (Scully's in St James's); favourite cookbooks from another author (Diana Henry and Nigella – who is homely but perceptive about the way we live); which recipe he regularly cooks at home (rice and seafood pasta with tomato, coriander and caraway seeds); and the most random question of the evening: what he would order for his last meal if he were on Death Row! The answer: kushari (spellings vary so it could also be koshari/y), a carbohydrate-based comfort food made with lentils or legumes, served with yoghurt, cumin and fried onions.



When asked what he thought of English food, he was surprisingly enthusiastic: he regularly enjoys a traditional roast, with lots of gravy, adding that there were "No bells and whistles, so not very 'Ottolenghi'". He also revealed himself to be a big fan of Yorkshire puddings, which are about as far away from being 'Ottolenghi' as you can imagine!



The Danish Church

By Julie Fitzgerald

The priest at the Danish Church in Regent's Park, Flemming Kloster Poulsen, is leaving his role this year. He reflects that the past seven years have been 'a great adventure'. To live in the peaceful St Katherine's Precinct on the edge of Regent's Park has, he says, been 'a privilege'. But these years have also brought challenges to the Danish congregation: first Brexit, then covid, and simultaneously a significant project to refurbish the church and its neighbouring cultural centre.



Built in 1827, the church and surrounding buildings were formerly the home of the St Katharine's Foundation (a religious charity), which commissioned the church's glorious stained-glass window to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. In the early 1950s it became the base for the Danish community.

The church is a typically Scandinavian space, the interior designed by the celebrated architect and designer Mogens Koch. Simple whitewashed walls and an abundance of light are reminiscent of Danish rural churches. The simple carved altar is of English stone, as is the base of the pulpit. The font and wooden pulpit screening are of Danish origin.

St Katharine's, part of the Danish Folk Church, was reopened by King Fredrik and Queen Ingrid of Denmark in 1952, and the Danish royal family's support continues to this day. The current Queen, Margrethe II, designed and embroidered a chasuble, the outer garment worn by priests while conducting services, and the family supported the campaign to refurbish the church and the cultural centre next door (it raised three million pounds).

Flemming mentions that, post-Brexit, some former Danish residents have returned home.

The church, too, has been grappling with the changes brought about by Brexit. Previously it employed two young church assistants and a student organist. Now the fees for work permits and access to NHS services make these arrangements impossible.

Sunday church services are held in Danish, but all are welcome. Many of the weddings and christenings held here are in English, to secure the involvement of non-Danish partners and wider family. The church is open for services and other events. A timetable is available on its website (see below); look out for dates of tours and Danish language classes for children and adults.

There is a very welcoming café, open for lunch and drinks, as well as a small shop selling Danish food, design and craft. The church hosts a parent group, a book club, talks, exhibitions, concerts, as well as celebrating Danish traditional festivals every year. Two of the most popular of these are the Danish Fair in May, and the Lucia service in December. This Christmas celebration sees girls and boys from the Saturday School parade to the church carrying candles, and carols are sung in Danish and English. This year there will be two services: on 10 December at 3pm and 5pm.

I ask Flemming about his wishes for the church and Danish community, as he buys his ticket back to Denmark: "That would be to maintain a meaningful combination of church and culture at the heart of the Danish community." Will he miss London? "Oh yes, in London the whole world is round the corner. I will miss the hustle and bustle and the vibe."

www.danskekirke.org

Primrose Hill Designer Sale

On 2 December the Christmas Designer Sale returns to St Mary's. This year it will host 60 fantastic artists including Alex Monroe (jewellery) and Christa Davis (cashmere). The Primrose Tearooms will be there to provide refreshments.




Photo by Diana Thompson

Lanah P in *Legendary Children*

A documentary about the pioneers of the original Pride movement will be launched at the ICA on 19 December. The film follows significant pioneers through the UK Pride 50 events during the summer of 2022. Primrose Hill's Lanah P has a strong presence and unleashes a new dance track, 'Get Lesbianated', which features Tom Robinson and Peter Tatchell. Lanah said of the film, "It's a very important documentary in this climate of activists who think that liberation all started with Kylie's gold lamé hot pants from Oxfam and Lady Gaga's poker face."

Artist in Residence at Sam's Café

Camden street artist Xander Coy has downsized his work and brought it to Sam's Café. Xander will be taking the position of Artist in Residence this season, a programme established by Lindsey Mulligan to provide local artists with a platform to exhibit their work. Artists interested in exhibiting should email info@samscafeprimrosehill.com





Primrose Hill Festival

The Primrose Hill Festival on Regent's Park Road is on Sunday 3 December. Savill's are sponsoring the Dog Show and also hosting Christmas craft decorating activities for children in their shop on Regent's Park Road. All funds raised will be donated to St Mary's cold weather shelter where Savill's are volunteers. Donations made on the day will be matched by Savill's. If you register for the craft decorating event you have the chance to win a £300 John Lewis gift voucher. **www.pub.savills.com/PrimroseHillChristmasCrafts**

St Paul's Christmas Fair



Get into the festive spirit at St Paul's Christmas Fair, where there will be a vintage bar with mulled wine and festive cocktails, a food truck, kids activities and toy sale, plus the legendary raffle. They have had a message from the North Pole to say that Santa will be visiting. There will be market stalls for local businesses and anyone in the community who wants to sell products or showcase their brand is invited to take a stall. Friday, 15 December, 5–9pm.

Age UK Camden launches Warm Heart Camden Winter Fundraising Appeal

With many older residents in our borough skipping meals and going without heat to save money, Age UK Camden is encouraging residents and businesses to give to its Warm Heart Camden appeal. For example, those that are eligible for the winter fuel allowance and don't need it themselves may wish to donate it. All donations are used to help Age UK run their vital support services. Donations can be made online at **www.ageukcamden.org.uk**

New Vicar at St Mary's



A little over six months since Rev Marjorie Brown retired from St Mary's church, they now have a new vicar. We extend a warm welcome to Father Philip Ritchie, previously vicar of St John's, Cowley, Oxford.

Remembering Pete Haxton

Residents who remember Sesame, the wholefoods shop in Primrose Hill, will be saddened to learn that Pete Haxton who used to run it has died. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER

Primrose Hill Community Library Craft Fair, Book and Cake Sale
Pop by for hot drinks, homemade cakes and mulled wine whilst browsing discounted books and crafts from local businesses. PHCL. 11am–5pm.

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER

Film Show: *The Shop Around the Corner*
Set in Budapest, this film tells the story of two co-workers, Alfred Kralik (James Stewart) and Klara Novak (Margaret Sullavan), who work together at a charming little gift shop. PHCL. Doors open 7.15pm. £8 including a glass of wine. Tickets at phcl.org/filmshow.

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER

Christmas Concert
Performed by Primrose Hill Choirs. St Mary's Church, NW3 3DJ. 6pm. £10, under 4s free. More info: primrosehillchoirs.com.

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER

Sung Eucharist and Nativity Play with Bayleaf the Donkey
St Mark's church, NW1 7TN. 10.30am

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

Carol Singing at Oldfield
5pm

MONDAY 18–WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

Circus Glory Camp
Learn trapeze, aerial hoop, juggling, plate spinning, hula hoop and more. Suitable for ages 3–11. PHCC. 10am–3pm. More info: www.circusglory.com.

KIDS

MONDAY

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

Ready Steady Go
Pre-school education and activities for ages 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 donation: £2. Contact: 020 7419 6599.

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 donation £2. 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 ages 1–2 years. PHCC. 9.15–11am. Contact 020 7586 5862.

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

Ready Steady Go ABC
Exploratory play, singing, dance and stories for babies and toddlers aged 6–18 months. PHCC. 11.30am–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: maestromatthewww@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.

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

Catherine's Ballet
Nursery and primary ballet classes for ages 3–7 years. PHCC. 4–5.30pm. Contact 020 8348 0262, info@chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk or chalkfarmschoolofdance.co.uk.

We Are Inclusive
After-school club for neurodivergent children to come together and learn life skills, focusing on communication, turn-taking, sharing and developing their strengths. PHCC. 4.30–5.30pm. Free. Contact weareinclusive247@outlook.com.

FRIDAY

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

Interactive Storytime Sessions
Classic stories and songs for 1 to 5 year olds. PHCL. 10.45am–11.30am, doors open at 10.40am. Suggested donation £2.

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. 9.45–10.30am, 1–3 years old; 11–11.45am, 2–4 years old. Contact 020 3969 2642, www.clubpetitpierrot.co.uk.

Perform
Drama, dance and singing for children 4–12 years. St Paul's CE Primary School. 9.30–11am (4–7s) and 11.15am–12.45pm (7–12s). Contact: 020 7255 9120 or enquiries@perform.org.uk.

The Big Book of Everything
Children's event combining puppetry, drama, music and art. PHCL. 10.25am. £3. Two Saturdays a month. Check dates and book in advance at phcl.org/bigbook.

SUNDAY

Perform
Drama, dance and singing for children 4–12 years. PHCC. 10am–11.30am (4–7s) and 11.30am–1pm (7–12s).

ADULTS

MONDAY

Chilled Strings
Beginners' orchestra rehearsals. PHCC. 6.30–8.30pm. Contact sueandhercello@gmail.com.

Board Games
Come along to the library for our board game evening. Bring your own or join in with one that we have. PHCL. 6pm. Free.

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

Voices on the Hill
A community choir singing soul, blues, pop, jazz and classic songs. Everyone welcome. PHCL. 7.30–9pm. £10 per session. Contact: voicesonthehillchoir@gmail.com.

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.

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

WEDNESDAY

Wellbeing Café
Café space and warm bank serving delicious homemade soup and cake, teas, coffees, jacket potatoes and more. PHCC. 10am–2pm. Pay what you can.

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.

Yoga
Renata teaches breath and alignment-based yoga, aiming to foster strength and mobility, while inviting a quality of mental spaciousness and ease. PHCC. 6–7pm. More info: renatabittencourtyoga.com.

London Sound Project
A friendly community-led choir in North London, performing contemporary songs with a pro band, open to all (18+). PHCL. 7.15–9.15pm. More info: ldnsoundproject.co.uk.

THURSDAY

Primrose Hill Walks
Occasional guided walks 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.

Primrose Hill Community Orchestra
A symphony orchestra for all strings and woodwinds. PHCC. 2–4pm. £10. Contact sueandhercello@gmail.com.

Life Drawing
All levels welcome, friendly group. Please bring your own materials. PHCC. 6.30–8.30pm. £10. Follow on Instagram @lifedrawingph. 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 Seniors
Chair yoga. 2.45–3.45pm. Free. Register at phca.cc.

London Classical Choir
Great music, regular concerts for the homeless with London Classical Orchestra. Rehearsals near Chalk Farm, every second Friday, 7.30–9.30pm. £10 (£5 concessions). See londonclassicalchoir.com for location and dates.

SATURDAY

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

Narcotics Anonymous
Support for people with narcotics problems. PHCC. 5.30–7pm. Free. More information via NA helpline: 0300 999 1212.

Feldenkrais with Ana
Awareness Through Movement lessons with a focus on a different theme each lesson, for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Once a month. PHCC. Times vary. £25. More info: www.feldenkraiswithana.com or contact: feldenkraiswithana@gmail.com.

SUNDAY

Sunday Bar
Primrose Hill Community Bar, a chance to meet neighbours over some discounted drinks and play pool. PHCC. 12–3pm.

CONTACT DETAILS

Primrose Hill Community Centre (PHCC)
29 Hopkinson's Place (off Fitzroy Road), NW1 8TN
Contact: 020 7586 8327, info@phca.cc
www.phca.cc

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

Cecil Sharp House (CSH)
2 Regent's Park Road, NW1 7AY
Contact: 020 7485 2206
www.cecilsharphouse.org

SHOP AROUND THE BLOCK

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2023

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!**



Marla & Primrose

Add something one-of-a-kind to your Christmas tree this year. Handmade in small batches in the UK, each bauble is individually painted with festive-coloured wiggles by The Drawing Room for Marla & Primrose. Sold individually - £25

marlaprimrose.co.uk
@marlaprimrose

Pamela Shiffer

This small shoulder bag makes an eye-catching gift, with its contrasting piping and faux-fur top fabric. The thin metal strap can be detached from its clasps, and the zipper closure is perfect for safety around town.

www.pamelashiffer.com



Melanie Press

Designed in Primrose Hill for Primrose Hill, this canvas tote bag is a limited edition, so no waste batches. With hidden inside pockets for your phone, etc, it makes the perfect gift – not just for Christmas.

10% of every bag sold goes to *On The Hill* when you mention *OTH*, the community centre or the library.

pressprimrosehill.com



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

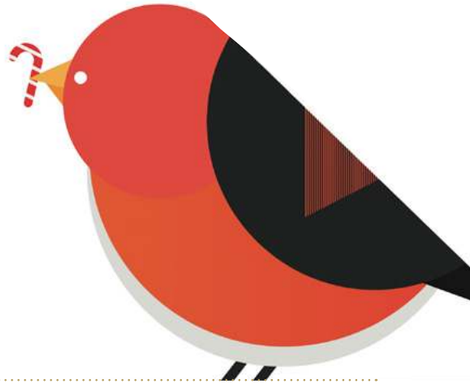




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theprimrosehillcollection.co.uk





Harriet Kelsall

Add a little sparkle to your Christmas list with a fabulous bespoke ring. They're one of a kind and crafted in the UK from 9ct Fairtrade or recycled yellow gold. You're certain to find 'The One' with the many unique designs on offer.

www.hkjewellery.co.uk
@harrietkelsall

Boujo Hake

Christmas and PJs are a natural pairing. Boujo Hake's slouch pants are luxurious and beautifully simple. Made from GOTS certified organic cotton, details include a delicate cotton lace drawstring. A gift that will be truly cherished.

boujo-hake.com | @boujo__hake

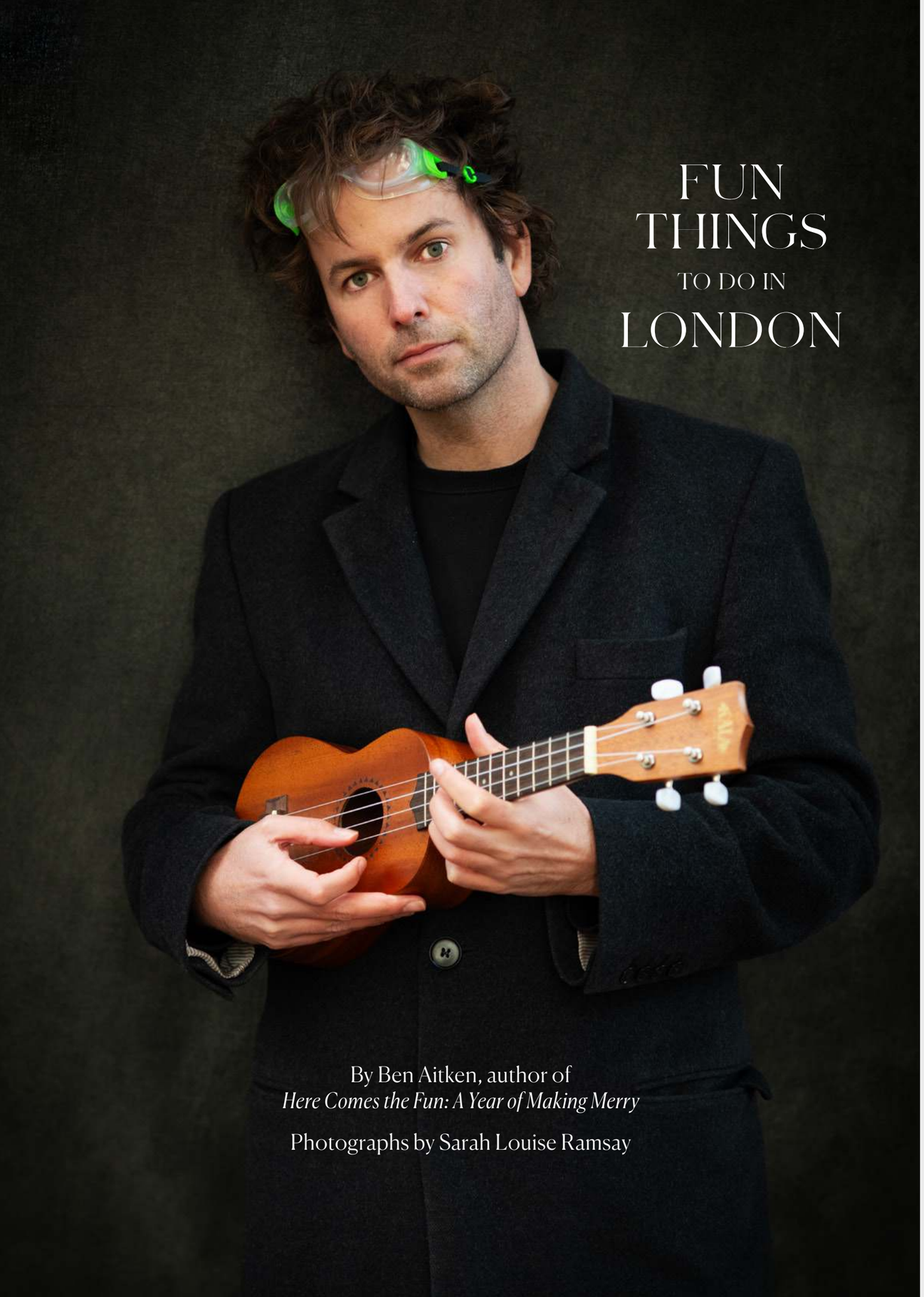




Gallery 196

These mirror masks are made in Rajasthan by an elderly couple especially for Gallery 196. They have won many awards including a prize by the then Prince Charles in Delhi decades ago! They are mirrored mosaic on a resin base and catch the light prettily. Each one is unique.

gallery196.com



FUN THINGS TO DO IN LONDON

By Ben Aitken, author of
Here Comes the Fun: A Year of Making Merry

Photographs by Sarah Louise Ramsay

Ben Aitken is a local writer and volunteer at the Library. He is the author of five books: *Dear Bill Bryson*, about following Bill Bryson around the country for no good reason; *A Chip Shop in Poznań*, wherein he moves to Poland to peel potatoes; *The Gran Tour*, which is travels with his elders on a series of budget coach holidays; *The Marmalade Diaries*, on moving in with an 85-year-old widow ten days before a national lockdown; and most recently *Here Comes the Fun: A Year of Making Merry*, an investigation into the serious business of having a laugh. Now he proposes a selection of things you can do for kicks in London that won't break the bank.

If it is true – as Samuel Johnson professed – that London has all that life can afford, it is no less true that much of it is unaffordable. Fortunately, as I was to discover in the writing of *Here Comes the Fun: A Year of Making Merry*, London also has its fair share of budget boat-floaters.

One good example is Kentish Town City Farm. Here, for the princely sum of precisely zilch, you can spend an uplifting half-hour weighing up goats, studying sheep and running a curious eye over chickens. I go twice a week and the pigs never disappoint.

Just a modest trot from the farm is the sylvan expanse of Hampstead Heath, where you can regularly join Emily Rhodes, whose Walking Book Club convenes here one Sunday every month to discuss dubious narrators while taking a stroll.

For about forty quid, I learned how to rustle up three dishes of Ukrainian extraction

Your bookish perambulation might be followed by a smidge of lawn bowls. On the southern edge of the Heath, just a jack's toss from the Highgate Road, you'll find the Parliament Hill Bowls Club, a welcoming outfit that caters to both curious chancers and seasoned rollers alike. Over the course of an hour, for the modest sum of just five pounds, I was introduced to the sport by an ambidextrous veteran, who as well as furnishing me with a range of technical pointers, didn't mind sharing a medley of wise words, the best of them being: "The world's your oyster, lad, and for God's sake don't chew it."

Why not head south to Millbank for the free pleasures of Tate Britain?

At which point why not take a seat – and then stay there for an hour. It might sound odd, but by the end of my year of making merry, sitting on a bench had become a bit of a fun favourite. Although of course scarcely one of fun's more adventurous shades, sitting on a bench and just taking in the world is nonetheless a reliable source of the f-stuff. It is drama. It is novelty. It is conversation. It is beauty. It is all-of-the-world, and so little at once. And if nothing else, it is flipping cheap. My go-to bench (if you'd like to avoid it) is on the corner of Berkley Road and Regent's Park Road.

It's time to get your skates on – literally. After hiring a pair from the London Skate Centre on Leinster Terrace, continue to Hyde Park and there cut your teeth (and find your feet) around the park's intricate network of walkways. You might choose to blade in the vicinity of Kensington Palace, or alternatively round the feet of Peter Pan, whose marble likeness is, to my mind at least, a gentle reminder of the life-enhancing importance of embracing one's inner child (even if that child was objectively horrid until the age of fourteen).

Back in standard footwear, why not head south to Millbank for the free pleasures of Tate Britain? Not only is the whole collection free to view, but you can treat yourself to a free guided tour every day at 12 noon, 1pm or 2pm. You just meet at the top of the rotunda staircase and join whatever tour is going that day, according to the guide's particular interests. Tours last 45 minutes, so still time to grab a sandwich in your lunch hour, and return to work with spirits refreshed.

Next stop, still south of the river, is Ruskin Park in Denmark Hill. Here, every Saturday afternoon, the Friends of Ruskin Park get together to do a spot of edible gardening. In my experience, this will typically involve donning a pair of gloves, harvesting a few spuds, chin-wagging with the other volunteers, and then taking home a bag of sugar snap peas.



If I'm feeling more active, I might nip off to give a ninety-minute commanding performance in the centre of midfield. I play for a veterans' football team, for which I was recruited in the toilet of the Pembroke Castle, though I'm assured there are other routes into the game. This was about a year ago, at the beginning of my fun-finding mission, and because I was determined to say yes to everything back then, one week later, I found myself, aged 36, at the centre of a spirited 11-a-side fixture for the first time in twenty-five years. I made an instant *faux pas* on my debut: falling over while attempting a back heel.

The final whistle gone, it's time for some improvisational theatre. I recently did an 8-week course at City Academy, and while £200 for twenty-odd hours of frivolity isn't exactly peanuts, it's arguably a better use of funds than sinking a similar sum into the odd thirty pints of craft lager over the same period, which was what I was originally minded to do.

I'd recommend a penultimate stop at the old public baths in Hackney, where you can practise your freestyle cathartically to instrumental music without the aid or abetment of Bollinger. For little more than a tenner over the course of the three-hour danceathon you will come to learn (if you're anything like me) the unfiltered version of everything you are – which is what Ecstatic Dancing promises to unveil. In my case it was a person standing awkwardly in the corner watching other people flourish, but hey, I was learning something meanwhile.

The best final port of call is a cookery school in Clerkenwell called Migrateful, whose instructors are all migrants or refugees. For about forty quid, I learned how to rustle up three dishes of Ukrainian extraction in a communal kitchen so telegenic I half-expected Greg Wallace to emerge any second from the pantry clutching spotted dick and custard. At the end of the session, you sit down with your classmates and instructor to enjoy the fruits of your labour, while liberally hobnobbing on the issues of the day (namely, just how good a signing Zinchenko has been for Arsenal).

A word of warning to finish: just about the only thing you can say with confidence about fun-following is that it's massively subjective. Meaning there's a strong chance that, were you to stir yourself to carry out all of the above, you wouldn't get the slightest kick out of doing so. In that event, by all means track me down for a refund. You'll find me on that bench I mentioned. Or contemplating chickens. Or rolling woods near Gospel Oak. Or attempting to salsa at Cecil Sharp House...

Primrose Hill Community Library

Snuggle up through the cold winter nights with a good library book.



Paperback

Richard Dawkins
The Selfish Gene

Kent Haruf
Plainsong

Monica Helsey
Really Good, Actually

Homer (trans. Emily Wilson)
The Odyssey

Paterson Joseph
The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho

RF Kuang
Babel

Rory Stewart
Occupational Hazards

Charlotte Vassell
The Other Half

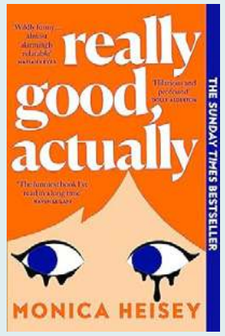
Lynne Truss
Psycho by the Sea

Claire Douglas
The Woman Who Lied

Ottessa Moshfegh
Lapvona

Hardback

David Omand
How to Survive a Crisis



Children's

Jenny Han
The Summer I Turned Pretty

Manon Steffan Ros
The Blue Book of Nebo

Ruta Sepetys
I Must Betray You

Jessie Burton
Medusa: The Girl Behind the Myth

Rosemary Davidson and Sarah Vine
The Great Big Glorious Book for Girls



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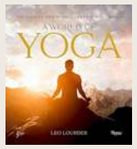
2 Gloucester Studios, 122A Gloucester Avenue
London NW1 8HX

www.coco-de-mer.com

Literary Stocking Fillers
By Primrose Hill Books

If you're looking for the perfect book for Christmas, why not consider the latest publications by authors with a local connection?

For Adults



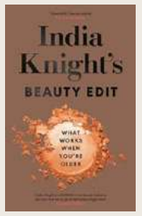
A World of Yoga: 700 Asanas for Mindfulness and Well-Being by Leo Lourdes

A magnificent, large-format survey of yoga, mindfulness and well-being by local author and yoga expert, Leo Lourdes. Accompanied by stunning photographs from Leo's travels around the world, this is a beautiful, inspiring volume.



Went to London, Took the Dog: A Diary by Nina Stibbe

Ten years after the publication of *Love Nina*, the prizewinning account of the author's stint as nanny to a family in Gloucester Crescent, she leaves her home in Cornwall and returns to London for 'a year-long sabbatical'. A poignant, often hilarious chronicle of lodging with the writer Deborah Moggach in Camden Town, revisiting old haunts and exploring the city anew.



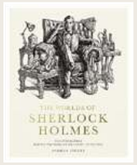
The Beauty Edit: What Works When You're Older by India Knight

By another former resident of Primrose Hill, this is a beauty bible for older women based on the sound advice in her regular *Sunday Times* Style column. Featuring tips and product recommendations, wit and wisdom on the beauty industry, this is an indispensable celebration of how to look good with the minimum of fuss.



The Regent's Canal: An Urban Towpath Route from Little Venice to the Olympic Park by David Fathers

A delightful, pocket-sized guide to walking or cycling the 22 km route along London's best-known canal. Full of diverting anecdotes and history, the book is illustrated throughout with colourful, hand-sketched maps.



The Worlds of Sherlock Holmes: The Inspiration Behind the World's Greatest Detective by Andrew Lycett

This fascinating exploration of Victorian sleuthing and the milieu in which Holmes operated reflects the many passions and interests of his creator, Conan Doyle, who keenly followed new developments in science and psychology, ensuring that Holmes employed the latest detection methods and forensic techniques.

For Children



Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell (ages 8–12)

An exuberant, wildly imaginative story in which Christopher discovers a secret passageway while on holiday with his grandfather. He finds himself on a cluster of magic islands where creatures from mythology still survive. There he meets Mal, a fearless girl with a flying coat and a pet griffin, who enlists his help on an extraordinary mission.



The Great Reindeer Rescue by Stephen Mangan (ages 6–9)

A funny, festive adventure in which Santa's reindeer become scattered far and wide on Christmas Eve after a mishap. Can Holly help Dave to rescue them in time to deliver all the presents? Illustrations by the author's sister, Anita Mangan.



Clarice Bean: Think Like an Elf by Lauren Child (ages 7–10)

Clarice Bean is determined to spread seasonal cheer amongst her friends, family and neighbours, but unfortunately things don't always go to plan. A sparkling story of joy, goodwill and the odd catastrophe enhanced by the author's fabulously stylish colour illustrations.

All books available from Primrose Hill Books, 134 Regent's Park Rd NW1 8XL
www.primrosehillbooks.com

HAVERSTOCK JOURNALISTS



Young journalists from Haverstock School talk to Jim Mackie, Animal Training and Behaviour Officer at ZSL London Zoo

"We want to give animals a voice, because they can't speak to us. We can give them the chance to show us what they need." Jim Mackie

We asked Jim Mackie how he goes about training the animals in ZSL London Zoo.

JM: The good thing about training is that it's a science, like gravity. All living organisms learn the same way; we use that science and we stick to the rules. 94% of the training relies on food. The animal learns to accept the cue for food. We do this to enrich their daily activities and encourage natural behaviours as well.
Times have changed. For instance, general anaesthetics are no longer always needed for simple health checks at London Zoo. Even the lions and tigers now willingly give their paws to have blood taken.

Jim told us about how he started out, by training raptors:
JM: I just knew I had to work with the animals.

The first animal he trained was a meerkat called Mara:

JM: I was teaching Mara how to follow a target and stand up on cue. But she was teaching me too, by showing me what did and didn't work for her.

The Zoo's animal behaviour training hasn't just had an impact in this country. A WWF conservation project in Kenya used tracking data for their African Wild Dogs (AWD) to help protect them, but when the dogs went underground they lost contact. The Zoo trained their AWD dog pack to wear tracking collars through crate training; over a period of time the dogs learned to accept the collars. The Kenyan AWDs learned the same procedure and then the conservators could follow the dogs underground.

Tell us about monkeys. How long did you observe and get to know the monkeys before the design of the new environment and the huge move to the Colobus Monkey enclosure?

JM: We started the project in 2017 and we didn't welcome visitors until 2022. We spent all that time doing what we call behaviour studies of the animals, so we could understand how they responded to humans and be ready to say, 'Yes, these animals are happy in their environment!'

We visited Monkey Valley, where the monkeys live. We were close to the monkeys but felt safe and could see how happy they are in their new home.

Salwa (Year 7) and Malachai (Year 9)
Thank you, Jim, and everyone at ZSL for this interview.

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Have Yourself A Merry Vegan Christmas

By Doro Marden



What about carrying a plant-based diet into the New Year? Veganuary, a charity which encourages and supports people to go vegan for the 31 days of January, had 700,000 sign-ups last year, and they reckon an amazing 9% of the population has taken up the challenge at least once since their foundation in 2014. They are giving out an online celebrity cookbook for 2024 and provide lots of resources and recipes in a daily email to help first-timers.

Would you forgo your feast of turkey and stuffing, ham and sausage rolls over the festive season? A celebration meal in the UK traditionally calls for a big meaty roast, but more and more people are turning to a plant-based diet. For some it is from horror at killing and mistreatment of animals (over 80% of UK farmed animals are in factory farms); for others it is with the aim of protecting the environment (for example, growing crops for animal feed is a major cause of deforestation).

What could you do for Christmas celebration meals without meat, dairy or eggs? I spoke to Anna Paolozzi, author of the blog My Primrose Hill Kitchen, for inspiration. "I have lots of delicious festive recipes which are vegan or can be easily adapted," she said. "Whole roast pumpkin with pistachios, apricots, cranberries and rice is an amazing centrepiece to the festive table, or my Heavenly Nutloaf with cashews and mushrooms. That can be made in advance, frozen uncooked and then taken out for the big day." I found yummy-looking sweets and puddings on the blog too: Mince Pie Cake looks wonderful and, like all Anna's recipes, is not too complicated.

And of course there is no shortage of vegan opportunities for eating out around here, even if our beloved Manna seems to be so often closed. Most of the restaurants and cafes in Primrose Hill have vegan options, and if you go a little further afield there are plenty of plant-based outlets. I did a walk with local vegan enthusiasts Sasha and Miroslav down through Camden Lock, Camden Town and Parkway. To start off they recommended the Happy Cow website, which lists vegan eating places all over the world. Following this we found stalls and cafes in Camden Lock spanning many cuisines – Thai, Indian, Turkish and even a vegan burger bar with a long queue.

In Camden Town itself the most surprising plant-based kitchen was in heavy metal music bar The Black Heart, tucked away in Greenland Place and advertising 'vegan food for the soul'.
Jamestown Road has the excellent chain restaurant Mildred's and Parkway lots of opportunities – try Purezza for vegan pizza (they offer gluten-free dough – and vegan wine as well), or Temple of Seitan, a Chinese where the ingredients' taste and feel are just like chicken or beef in the mouth.

Some people don't like the idea of 'meat equivalents', but Sasha explained how that chewiness is what a lot of full-time vegans miss most. You need to be aware that many vegan ready meals use ultra-processed ingredients. "Look at the labels carefully," she said.

If you decide to give it a go, do let us know your favourite recipes and eating out experiences!

www.myprimrosehillkitchen.com
www.happycow.net

PRIMROSE HILL

Christmas Cracker Jokes

Why did Santa visit Primrose Hill Surgery?

He wanted an Elf Centre.

Who brings presents to the lions in the zoo?

Santa Claws.

Who brings presents to the sharks in the zoo?

Santa Jaws.

Who brings presents to the foxes on the hill?

Santa Paws.

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

Lost.

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

On his icicle.

What side of Primrose Hill has the most grass?

The outside.

Why are Primrose Hill and Parliament Hill both funny?

Because they are hill-areas.

Thanks to Bernard George!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HOWARD

A 90th birthday tribute to On The Hillimerick writer Howard Richards



With painful steps advanced Sir Howard.
The dragon, Old Age, hissed and glowered
With serve and swerve and deadly spin
Snicker-snacker, out and in.
Sir Howard never double-faulted
As the dragon was assaulted.
Not there to slay but to keep at bay,
Old age he knows will always win.
Instead, he takes up pen and shapes his verses
And with muttered curses
At the pain, he posts his missives in the letter boxes.
Thus, the dragon he out-foxes.

© The Mole on the Hill

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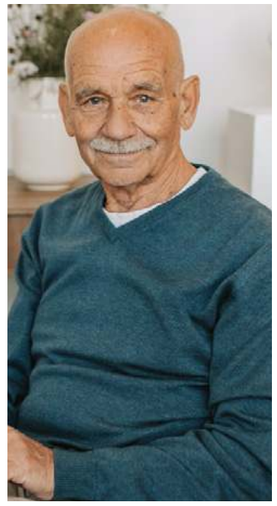
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CareQuality Commission

PICTURES FROM PRIMROSE HILL





Thank you to Minty Sainsbury for the wintery sunsets, Francis Serjeant for 'Narnia' and Janet Dulin Jones for a picture of Pendleton in the snow.

If you have any photos of the area which you'd like to share, please send them to **editor@onthehill.info** for possible inclusion in our next issue.





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Answers to the PRIMROSE HILL QUIZ

1.
By 1790, when the first known Primrose Hill duel took place, duelling with swords was passé. All recorded duels on Primrose Hill were fought with pistols.

2.
Cholera. The reservoir was open from 1825, when it was built, until 1853; but then health legislation required London's inner reservoirs to be covered.

3.
The comment deprecated the lack of amusements, not the excess. It also observed that "Only a few years ago Primrose Hill was in the fields, and from the Regent's Park to Hampstead there was little but open country."

4.
The first set of figures are correct. A negative latitude indicates somewhere in the southern hemisphere, and indeed the second set are for Primrose Hill in the South Australian desert. At this arid spot no primrose has ever bloomed, and it is over a hundred miles from the nearest town, Coober Pedy. It is about the same size as our hill, which, combined with the Australian sense of humour, may explain the name.

5.
The lift shafts are the shallowest of any tube station at just 21 feet. It is only Grade II listed, as are 70 other tube stations. Only St James's Park is Grade I.

6.
He was a national hero of the Philippines, a doctor and polymath of mixed Chinese and Spanish ancestry. In 1888 he lodged at 37 Chalcot Crescent with a family of eight, paying £2 a week. Being the author of two novels sympathetic to political freedom, he was executed for sedition in Manilla at the age of just 35.

7.
Jenny Marx (aka Johanna von Westphalen) wrote in 1856 that Primrose Hill was lovely and that Hampstead Heath was romantic. She was delighted that an inheritance had allowed her family to live near them.

8.
The lines about the bicycle and pram are original Loudon Wainwright. The ones about the skateboard recount an incident from my youth.

9.
Morganwyg forged many ancient poems and rites to convince people that ancient bardic traditions had survived both the Romans and Christianity.

Even into the 21st century some of his tampered versions of medieval Welsh texts are better known than the originals.

10.
It was Andrew Marr in an interview with the *Evening Standard*, but his point was that Primrose Hill did not deserve that reputation, being 'friendliest place I have ever lived by far'. The Miliband family tends not to talk so much about their connection with the area.

SCORE YOUR ANSWERS

0–5.
As deep as a Chalk Farm lift.

6–7.
At least you contribute to the public amusement.

8–9.
Lovely.

10.
National hero.

Good Ancestor Movement

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Hello, Primrose Hill!

The ghouls, ghosts and witches were back in force in at Halloween. Here are a few photos of the night at which Primrose Hill excels.
Photos by Vicki Hillyard









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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