

# Suburb News

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association



Archer's Lucy Harrison wins Pearson Headteacher of the Year Gold Award, see the full story on page 3



Amara donates her hair so she "can make someone happy." Read her inspiring story on page 5

HGS Trust Chief Executive Will Hawkins responds to your views on Central Square, page 11



## Hope springs eternal?

EDITOR: SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

There's a dissonance between the beauty and calm we are surrounded by here in the Suburb and the troubles of the wider world. Walking across the Heath Extension on a particularly cold but sunny morning, I felt unexpectedly sad. How can there be so many things wrong with our planet when such beauty abounds?

That question lingered as I read Jonathan Waxman's account of the Holocaust Memorial Day event at HGSS. The survival of a group of boys, spared the gas chamber by a stroke of chance, is both extraordinary and deeply unsettling. Do we ever learn from the past? It seems not. As Olga Stoyanova's update from Kyiv (p3) demonstrates, life in Ukraine is perilous. Ukrainians have lost their normal existence. It's a sobering reminder of how fragile normality can be.

Clr Rohit Grover pays tribute to John Marshall who did much for the Suburb community, both in office and beyond. We also say goodbye to three much-loved residents whose quiet generosity helped shape our community for the better.

Of course, life here continues with vigour and purpose. Culture and horticulture flourish (pp16-19). The Free Church opened its doors to those without shelter (p4). Rabbi Marc Levine and Revd Emily Koltveit sustain us with more inspiring Letters of Faith (p5).

The New Year began in spectacular style with fireworks over Central Square (p10), a shared moment of light against the dark.

As Marie-Christine O'Callaghan reminds us on p22, even in Greek mythology, winter never has the final word. Spring always follows (climate change permitting...).

Let's hope for some lighter times ahead.



Photo: Project ImpACT

## Intergenerational volunteering

PROJECT IMPACT

The seeds of connection were planted as Year 8 volunteers from Project ImpACT joined residents of Nightingale Hammerson House in The Bishops Avenue N2

for a joyful intergenerational celebration of Tu B'Shvat, the Jewish New Year for Trees. Rooted in Jewish thought, trees represent growth, resilience and, of course, human development.

This meaningful project has enabled the teens to develop empathy and communication skills while building relationships between two generations which rarely get the chance to interact.

Before meeting the residents, the young volunteers spent time learning how to engage in meaningful conversations with older people and gained insight into the vital work of Nightingale Hammerson, which supports more than 250 residents, including those living with dementia and those receiving palliative care.

Intergenerational volunteering has been shown to not only

reduce loneliness among older adults but also to support young people's mental health and emotional development. Sessions like this show how powerful it can be when generations come together and grow side by side: [www.intergenerationalengland.org](http://www.intergenerationalengland.org).

Project ImpACT engages, educates and empowers young people through meaningful volunteering and community service. The charity's programme enables teens to volunteer for charities, develop life skills and become future leaders. Over 6,500 teenage volunteers contribute more than 54,000 hours across to date. A remarkable 92% of teens report that volunteering with ImpACT has positively affected their emotional wellbeing.

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## Annual General Meeting 2026

(RA members only)



The meeting will take place at 8pm on Monday 30th March at Henrietta Barnett School Main Hall, Central Square, NW11 7BN

- Doors open at 7.30pm – light refreshments will be available before the meeting •
- Nomination procedure for RA Council: [www.hgsra.uk/docs/noms.pdf](http://www.hgsra.uk/docs/noms.pdf) •
- Meeting agenda on the RA website from 23 March •



# MAGISTRATES COURT

## Your Courts Need You!

SARAH SACKMAN MP

Until December last year Barnet Court on Hendon Lane was boarded up. In disrepair, it had to close its doors due to leaks and faulty heating. Our local court building had become a symbol of a crumbling, seriously underfunded justice system.

I have fond memories of our local court. One of my first cases as a young barrister was at Barnet in 2012. I acted for a coalition of community campaigners – for retired accountants, rabbis and Occupy activists – all campaigning to save Friern Barnet Library from

closure, and we won. Seeing the building closed, meaning local people would have to travel further to have their cases heard, saddened me.

But thanks to Government investment, as of this year our court is back open and thriving. On a recent visit I met with dedicated local staff, magistrates and judges and saw the court was busy and buzzing.

When we think about the legal system, we might think of the Old Bailey or the Royal Courts of Justice or even the TV show Suits, but justice starts locally. An active local justice system is vital for

Suburb residents. It reminds people that if they do find themselves with a dispute or legal difficulty, the court is there for them – on their doorsteps.

Barnet Court focuses on family and civil law. Many of the decisions made here are made by magistrates. Magistrates are volunteers drawn from our local community. They come from all backgrounds and with different life experiences to perform a vital civic service – local justice delivered by the people for the people.

At the St Jude's Christmas Fair, I was fortunate to meet two Suburb residents who serve as magistrates.



Photo: Office of Sarah Sackman

One of them, Shelley- Anne, who edits this newspaper, explains what it means to her in the article below. I spoke to them about what had motivated them to become magistrates, and it made me reflect on the importance of community involvement which is so alive and well in our area.

You don't have to be a lawyer or an expert in law to become a magistrate. You just need to be an expert in fairness and decency. I've met magistrates from all walks of life: university students, small business owners, stay at home parents and retired professionals. All of them with the skills and sense of public service that power our local justice system, all over the country.

Magistrates are the beating heart of our system, helping families stay together, protecting children and victims and punishing

crime. And we need them now more than ever.

We are now recruiting more magistrates to serve the community and deliver swifter justice for victims. The Government is investing in getting the local justice system back on its feet and we want residents to participate.

It's rewarding and fulfilling work, making the sorts of decisions that can change lives for the better and have a real impact on the day-to-day life of Finchley and Golders Green residents.

Your community needs you! So please do consider applying, you can either go to: [www.gov.uk/become-magistrate/can-you-be-a-magistrate](http://www.gov.uk/become-magistrate/can-you-be-a-magistrate), or you can simply scan this QR code.

It is such a brilliant way to serve our community.



## My magistrate journey

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

I'd thought about applying to become a magistrate for many years. But the timing was just never right. I'd start to fill out the application form but never managed to complete it. Something always got in the way. Initially, it was my legal career, which afforded no extra time. All-nighters were commonplace and being made up as a partner further increased my workload.

When our first daughter was born, I decided to look at other possible career options and became a business law lecturer at the University of Law, then an in-house legal consultant. Later, after a chance conversation, I went on to co-invent a hair clip which led to setting up a hair accessory manufacturing, sales, design and distribution business. My role as commercial director was exciting, involved quite a bit of long-distance travel and was extremely full-on. By then I had two children under the age of three. There was absolutely no spare time. Once again, applying to the magistracy was put on the back burner.

In 2018, I took a step back from the business to spend more time with my father whose health was declining. My father had been a magistrate and it was something he really enjoyed and was extremely proud of. He was devastated when poor health meant he was forced to retire from sitting. During this time I was able to re-evaluate my work-life balance and trained to be an arbitrator and

mediator, setting up The Mediation Pod in 2019.

In 2022, I finally completed my application to the magistracy, was successful in the interview and finally appointed in June 2023, sadly only two weeks after my father passed away. The swearing in ceremony at the Old Bailey was extremely emotional. I wore my father's signet ring and I take it with me to all my court sittings. In a lovely twist of fate, I was assigned to the same magistrates' court as my father.

I really love being a magistrate. It's both challenging and rewarding in equal measures. And, I know my father, Daniel Wander JP, would have been absolutely delighted.



Swearing in at the Old Bailey (Photo: David Salisbury)



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# Update from Kyiv

OLGA STOYANOVA

On 19 January, a Russian missile and Iranian drone attack plunged my home in Kyiv into darkness for 50 hours. At first, we survived on power banks and spare batteries. Eventually, everything ran out. The refrigerator stopped. The internet disappeared. Mobile phones went silent. There was no way to reach anyone.

For a modern person, it is difficult to imagine what it means when nothing in your flat works and you are completely cut off from the world. You cannot follow the news or understand what is happening around you. Everyday life simply stops: you cannot cook, wash clothes, or perform the most basic routines. Some homes were left without water and heating. Essentials we once took for granted have become a luxury for Ukrainians this brutal winter.

My 13-year-old daughter and I tried to stay strong. We lit candles, played dominoes, and told ourselves this would pass. But at times, we could not hold it together and we cried.

In October last year, an Iranian-made drone struck our

apartment building. It hit a non-residential section, and no one was killed. Still, I will never forget that sound. A week later, another drone hit the building opposite ours. People leap from burning flats, desperate to save their lives. Not everyone survived.

This winter, Russia has intensified its campaign against civilians. Major cities are attacked every five to seven days with hundreds of Iranian-made drones and dozens of missiles. These strikes systematically destroy critical infrastructure, tear apart homes and kill civilians. The danger is compounded by the fact that Ukraine has very limited air defence missiles left this winter. Thus, we face many of these attacks almost defenceless. At the same time, January temperatures have dropped to minus 25 degrees Celsius.

There is a particular terror in hearing a missile or drone and never knowing where it will land. Perhaps this time it will be your own flat. That is how a young couple was killed in the Kyiv region on the night of 28 January. Their four-year-old daughter survived only because a neighbour pulled



The heated tents in Troieshchyna (Photo: Valentyn Ohyrenko, Reuters)

her from the rubble. Sadly, she and her 20-year-old brother were left orphaned.

During attacks, many people hide in their bathrooms – one of the few relatively safer spaces in Ukrainian homes, especially in winter, when underground shelters are freezing. You do not know whether you will wake up in the morning. And even if you do, what kind of life awaits you?

The days following an attack are often the hardest. Most households have no electricity. Many have no water. But the most

frightening reality this winter is cold radiators. Kyiv relies almost entirely on centralised heating and Russia is deliberately destroying thermal power plants. At minus 20 degrees, it is extremely difficult to remain in an unheated flat. Some apartments cool down to just three degrees above zero. People sleep in coats and hats inside their own homes. The elderly suffer the most, particularly those who have no one to care for them.

Troieshchyna, a district of Kyiv with a population of 300,000, has been pushed to the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. Since mid-January, the residents have been left without electricity and heating. Local authorities have set up heated tents where residents can warm up, charge their phones and receive a hot meal. These tents are their only chance to eat warm food and feel human again.

Children across Ukraine are not attending school. In mid-January, state schools went on unscheduled holidays for an indefinite period. Even online learning is nearly impossible with all the power cuts.

There is no doubt: this winter, Russia is committing a real genocide against millions of Ukrainians, hoping we will surrender, give up our land, and accept the destruction of our country. Ukrainians live under constant stress, freezing in their own homes without basic means of survival this winter. With every new attack, the situation deteriorates further. Ukrainians have lost their normal lives but refuse to lose dignity and hope. Ukrainians say there are only a few weeks until spring is here, then it will be easier but, without air defence systems from our international partners, it will be too hard.

# Award winning headteacher

ANNA HINDMARSH

Archer Academy headteacher, Lucy Harrison, has received the Pearson Headteacher of the Year Gold Award, celebrating her dedication to East Finchley's community and innovative leadership.

Referred to as the 'Oscars' of teaching, the Pearson award recognises teachers who have a passion for supporting their student and staff communities.

Lucy has pioneered several transformative decisions as headteacher. Ten years ago, she introduced a policy to ban smartphones in school. At a time when social media and WhatsApp were relatively new, the move sparked debate.

Teaching is Lucy's greatest privilege and her leadership philosophy revolves around a belief in joy. With this prestigious award, she hopes to continue to innovate in the education sector.



Lucy Harrison receives her award (Photo: Alistair Veryard)



The young couple killed during a missile attack in Kyiv (Photo: Sviltana Blatova)

# Barnet Council Update

As your local councillor, this is actually the first time in four years that I'm writing an update for Suburb News. Normally, I leave this to Councillor Rohit Grover, mainly because he's much better with words than I am! However, with Rohit stepping down in May 2026 after 11 years of service to our community, it feels like the right moment for me to step up and share more regular updates directly. And on that note, I'm very pleased to report some positive progress on local improvements.

## THE MEADWAY ROUNDABOUT PERGOLA

We have been successful in securing funding from Barnet Council to repair the broken pergola on the Meadway roundabout, which has unfortunately been boarded up for around five months. The existing wooden structure is no longer safe so the plan is to replace it with a coated stainless steel structure that will be built on site. This approach is important, as it allows Barnet to preserve the beautiful wisteria that has grown over the existing pergola rather than removing it. We are currently working closely with the HGS Trust on the design, appearance and colour of the new structure to ensure it fits well with the character of the area.

## LYTTELTON PLAYING FIELDS CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

We have also secured Barnet Council funding for some new playground equipment in Lyttelton Playing Fields. We are proposing an 8x4 metre climbing dome, or similar, which should be a fantastic addition for children and, judging by similar installations elsewhere, adventurous adults too!

As always, thank you for your continued engagement and support. Please do get in touch if you have ideas, concerns, or suggestions; they really do help shape the priorities we pursue on your behalf. Contact: [cllr.m.mire@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.m.mire@barnet.gov.uk).

Councillor Michael Mire



# G COHEN

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# Holocaust Memorial Day 2026



Photo: Naftali Schiff

JONATHAN WAXMAN

My great grandparents came to England from Eastern Europe circa 1900, when things had become tough for Jews and the economic situation was poor. Actually my Grandpa Max was born on the boat from Poland to England. So my own family had no direct connection with the Holocaust. My son-in-law's grandma came on the Kindertransport in 1939 with her sister. The rest of her family (who could not leave Frankfurt) perished, although it took many decades to find the tragic details of their story. Hearing these stories brings home the reality of what so many went through to those of us who were not so closely touched and so it feels important to continue to honour Holocaust Memorial Day as the sun sets on the last survivors.

Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27 January each year and we marked the occasion at Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue with a book launch and the screening of its remarkable accompanying film, Undeniable. We were fortunate to hear from the authors of the book in a Q&A after the screening.

The book is Miracle by Michael Calvin with Naftali Schiff. Calvin is an award-winning sports journalist. (Rabbi) Schiff is director of JRoots.

The film centres on the rediscovery of 51 boys who survived the Auschwitz death camp and the story of their lives after the war. The boys arrived, after nightmarish train journeys, in 1944 at Auschwitz with their families. They were separated on arrival and most of their family members were murdered. These boys, ranging between 14-17 years old, were deemed able to do some useful slave labour for the Nazis.

They lived in the most dire circumstances – almost no food, terrible cold, shocking cramped living quarters. On Simchat Torah, the most joyous day of the Jewish calendar, Dr Mengele lined up many boys for selection. Eight hundred boys were selected for death and were sent to strip off and herded into the gas chamber. Some boys chose to throw themselves at the camp wire and take their own lives. The boys were shut in the gas chamber but, for some reason, there was a change of plan, the doors were opened and the boys were herded out again. A fresh selection was made involving bizarre physical tests; 50 boys were then selected to live – one other boy managed to hide in the piles of discarded clothes and then mingled in with them to make 51. The rest were herded back to their deaths minutes later.

Those 51 survived the camp and made their way variously to the UK, the US and Israel. Like many survivors, they chose to close the door on that chapter of their lives and did not speak of it. But many did go on to live amazing and productive lives. The story of their survival was unknown until Schiff came upon it quite by chance. After five years of going to see the same survivor, Yaakov Yosef Weiss, in Manchester, Schiff finally managed to persuade Weiss to tell this story. And then Schiff managed to find five more boys from this 'lucky' group. The film and book are their stories.

Schiff embarked on this story at what he describes as a low point in his life. And what he found was that: "These survivors shared an amazing life force" that lifted him as well. Each of their testimonies and stories on the film was remarkable and I look forward to reading the book.

## Free Church Night Shelter



Some of the volunteer team from the Free Church and friends (Photo: Eddie Hayden)

JO MORRIS

At the time of writing we are halfway through a seven-week cycle in this our seventh year of running a shelter. Again, we thank the good-heartedness of the Suburb residents and in particular the elders and congregation of the Free Church, who have led the way in supporting this venture. We thank our Minister, Aled, who has visited and encouraged guests and volunteers alike.

The number of guests varies, but currently 11 men and two women have been accepted by Homeless Action in Barnet as shelter guests. The maximum that can be accepted is 17. They travel to a different venue each night across the Borough.

At the Free Church Hall they receive a friendly welcome, a home-cooked three course supper shared with volunteers willing to chat or not, as guests prefer, a game of table tennis, a place to charge their phones, a warm place to sleep (their sleeping beds and bags are transported by our volunteers to the next venue) and a light breakfast before they leave the next morning.

We are told little about our guests and we do not question them about where they come from or how they came to be in their particular situations. We are not qualified to help resolve their problems. However, we are willing listeners to those who want to talk and many enjoy engaging with us, asking about our lives, helping to wash dishes or clear away in the morning. We invariably receive grateful thanks when they leave at 8.30am.

The volunteers – 15 to run the night/morning – are willing and enthusiastic. They have come from our congregation, the Minyan and the wider community of the Suburb. This year for the first time St Jude's hosted a shelter in the pre-Christmas cycle, supported by the Residents' Association and the HGS Horticultural Society. We were heartened by their participation and introduction of more Suburb volunteers.

I think I speak on behalf of the all volunteers, that we have enjoyed working together to help those who are at a low point in their lives.

If you would like to volunteer or donate please email us at: info@hgsfreechurch.org.uk.

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# Amara's Gift

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

Amara is six years old and in Year One at Brookland Infant school. Amara loved her long hair and would often say her hair was just like Rapunzel's. However after the young daughter



Photos: Dr Farah Jameel



of a family friend lost her hair during cancer treatment (she is thankfully in remission), Amara decided she would give her hair away to someone who might need it. Letting it go felt big and emotional. After many conversations with her family, plus lots of hugs, Amara felt she could turn something she loved into something that might help another child feel brave again. As Amara puts it: "I donated my hair, because I wanted a little girl to feel good, because she lost her hair in a sickness; I wanted her to be happy."

Amara had to grow her hair to reach at least 12 inches in length, which took two years. Finally the day of the Big Cut arrived and, as you can see from the photos, Amara was very happy. In her own words: "I felt really happy because the little girl, she was feeling sick so I just made her feel a little bit better. That's why I feel really proud of myself for making a little girl feel happy."

A brave, kind and generous thing to do to make some other little girl feel better about herself. Well done Amara!

The Little Princess Trust is a charity that provides free real-hair wigs to children and young people who lose their hair due to cancer treatment or other medical conditions, helping them feel confident and supported during an incredibly difficult time. The charity also funds vital childhood cancer research to improve future treatments: [www.littleprincesses.org.uk](http://www.littleprincesses.org.uk).

# Letters of Faith



RABBI MARC LEVENE & REVD EM KOLLTVEIT

Dear Revd Em

Our recent exchanges have stayed with me and I continue to feel grateful for the generosity and openness you bring to this shared conversation. It feels like a quiet but meaningful way of modelling the values we both hope to nurture in our communities.

I've been reflecting lately on the idea of calling. Like many in our line of work, I didn't arrive here with a single dramatic moment, but with a growing sense over time that this work mattered, and that I wanted to be present for people at the moments that count. What continues to sustain me is the privilege of accompanying others through ordinary days and significant milestones alike and the sense that, even in small ways, faith can offer stability, meaning and care.

Edmonton Diocese, where I've been discussing calling with new candidates discerning ministry in the Church of England. I relate to your sense that what we do has significance and, as I've grown to know myself better in my priestly calling, I've come to understand my need for purpose in life. What greater purpose than to live out a calling to serve and encourage others, worship and preach the scriptures?

It's not always easy to return to that place when we first felt that sense of urgency and pull towards a life of devotion, but like you my sense of vocation has widened and grown into a place where I find it hard to imagine doing anything else, even on the roughest days where I find myself looking for my exits. Not only do I serve as Vicar in this place, I am also an Area Director of Ordinands, which means I accompany others as they seek to discern God's call on their hearts.

I believe strongly that everyone has a vocation in God's world, a role that is special and designed for them. It may not be to follow the same paths that we have but has equal equity in God's world. It's a great privilege as an ADO to walk alongside others as they try to work out what that calling might be. It is my dearest wish that everyone who resides in the place has the opportunity and space to discern what God has placed on their hearts and I thank you for your continued calling to serve our community with grace, humour, and fortitude.

In friendship,  
Revd Em, Vicar of St Jude on the Hill

With the passing years, that sense of vocation has deepened rather than narrowed. It feels less about having answers and more about being willing to listen, to remain rooted and to serve with humility in a changing world.

I wondered how this resonates with your own experience. What first drew you into this, and what continues to sustain your sense of calling now, here in the Suburb, at this stage of your journey?

Thank you again for the spirit of friendship that underpins this dialogue. I value it greatly and I look forward to continuing to learn alongside you.

Yours in friendship,  
Rabbi Marc Levene,  
Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue

Dear Rabbi Marc,

As I read your letter, I have just returned from a Vacations Day in the



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Photo: Tony Brand

## John Marshall

1940 - 2025

CLLR ROHIT GROVER

John Marshall, who served as councillor for Garden Suburb ward from 1998 until 2022, died

last November aged 85. John had a highly distinguished political career spanning over five decades. I'd only known him for a fifth of that time but can offer an insight into how John went about his work as the Suburb's representative on Barnet Council, setting the example – in my opinion – of a model local councillor.

John Leslie Marshall was born in London in August 1940. He read Economics at St Andrews University and in 1962 was appointed an assistant lecturer in Economics at Glasgow University.

From 1966 to 1970 he lectured at Aberdeen University before returning to London to work as a financial analyst. He was elected to Aberdeen Council in 1968, moved to London in 1970 and won a seat on Ealing Council the following year. He campaigned for a Yes vote in the 1975 referendum on whether to stay in the EEC and in the first direct elections to the European Parliament was elected as MEP for London North in 1979. He was elected as MP for Hendon South in 1987 and subsequently served as a PPS in Margaret Thatcher's Government before his seat was abolished by the Boundary Commission in 1997.

John was elected to Barnet Council in 1998. Among other roles, he served as Cabinet Member for Investment in Learning, responsible for implementing the Primary Schools Rebuilding Programme and the Libraries Strategy which modernised library provision across the Borough. He was chosen as Mayor for 2008-9 and retired in 2022 after being made a freeman of the Borough.

That's quite a list, but John was deeply immersed in politics. It was the essence of his personality. Every meaningful conversation I had with John – including our final one in the Royal Free a few days before he died – included at least one Margaret Thatcher anecdote. But in those conversations, including our last, he always asked me about my career and what my aspirations

were and made suggestions as to what I might look to do on the Council. I suspect he even had several quiet words behind the scenes to advance my interests. So, he was a politician yes, but also a mentor, true professional and really nice man.

And how did he represent Suburb residents? Simple: they always came first. He had his views and was extremely well-informed on most national and local issues, but he represented his constituents' interests above all else. He knew what he could do as a councillor and used that experience and authority for the benefit of the Suburb. I'm sure most streets in the ward have a house where John helped the residents at some point. Every major Suburb issue during his time as councillor, particularly those which threatened the character and amenities of the ward, would have seen John actively involved.

With respect to the Mayor and Greater London Assembly members, there are only two directly-elected political representatives who can get things done for London residents: Member of Parliament and councillor. John served as both with a great deal of distinction. He was accessible, influential and also thoroughly decent. He was great company too. I shall miss him as will many others.

John is survived by his sons, William and Tom.

## Gabriella Stoplar

1961 - 2025

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

Gabriella (Gabby) Stoplar passed away very suddenly and unexpectedly on 8 October 2025 at her home in Brookland Hill, where she had lived since 1991 with her husband David

and their two daughters Rachel and Deborah. Gabby, aged just 64, died only two days before her cherished grandson Nathan's first birthday and six days before her and David's 35th wedding anniversary.

Gabby adored the Suburb and being part of its community. She made it her mission to get to know all the local shopkeepers by name. A favourite project of hers was to learn to say thank you in as many languages as possible, ensuring she could make everyone she met feel truly welcome. More than 150 people attended her funeral at very short notice, including many Suburb residents, staff from the various Market Place cafés and teachers from Martin Primary School where Gabby volunteered. A true mark of the impact Gabby had on her community.

Born and raised in North London, Gabby read French and Economics at Sheffield University. After moving to France, she emigrated to Israel where she worked as a teacher (gaining a further degree in English Language from the University of Jerusalem) before returning to London to marry David. In later life, Gabby studied Maths with the Open University, achieving a First Class Honours degree.

Gabby had a huge love for dogs and adopted three in succession from a local charity All Dogs Matter. She volunteered with Pets as Therapy and took her rescue dogs Bernie, and then Buster, into Martin Primary School where she supported children with reading difficulties. After hearing of her passing, All Dogs Matter named one of their rescue dogs in

her honour and reported that she was adopted just a few days later. Gabby also volunteered as a Suburb News distributor for Brookland Hill.

Gabby could be seen regularly walking her dogs around the Suburb, most recently with her last rescue dog, Lottie, often stopping off at one of the Suburb cafés where she would order a 'skinny latte with half a shot of

coffee and lots of milk' which the staff would come to refer to as 'a Gabby.'

As well as being survived by her husband, two daughters and her grandson, Gabby is also survived by her brother Danny and 99 year old father, Monty Bixer. Gabby's name will be added to the memorial bench she had erected for her beloved mother, Miriam Bixer, in Northway Gardens.



Photo: Deborah Stoplar



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# Simon Tesh

1957 - 2025

SUSIE GREGSON

Simon of a diplomat, Simon Tesh was born in Beirut, Lebanon and spent his childhood at several different schools, shuttling back and forth with his siblings to his parents' homes in Lebanon, Thailand, Ghana, Egypt and Bahrain. He went to Clifton Prep School and, despite his reputation for being absent-minded, won a mathematics scholarship to Clifton College and then an Open Scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, where he read mathematics. The academics came easily to him; however his passions were music and sport – athletics, hurdles, steeplechase. He even turned down a place on the UK U16 Decathlon Squad.

After Oxford he worked in accountancy in London, New York and Paris. He met and married Caroline Hurley in 1988 and they bought a home on the edge of the Suburb. Caroline became a successful lawyer and Simon was commuting back and forth from his accountancy job in Paris. He missed home life with Caroline and

their new baby, Emily, so, without warning to the family, he abruptly retired to become a house husband and took on, not only baby duties, but all DIY household repairs and improvements. Simon became a regular at the gates of Garden Suburb School (when being a stay at home dad was pretty rare). He was a wonderful loving husband and father to Emily, Patrick and Oliver.

In 2001 Simon became Treasurer of Proms at St Jude's – it was a great role for him, given his love of numbers, as well as music. He enjoyed singing bass in the Free Church and other local choirs. The Suburb should not underestimate his contribution to the success and sustainability of Proms over the last 25 years. His brilliant mind meant he knew numbers, seating plans and bank balances like the back of his hand. He hosted the Proms box office in his home (again without warning to the family!) and loved the contact with the local community. He retired in 2024 due to ill health but continued to help Proms until November 2025.

During his time with Proms over £1.2million was raised for good causes, including Toynee Hall (with which Balliol College has strong connections) and the North London Hospice, where Simon died on Boxing Day 2025. The impact of his death is keenly felt by the Proms family, who will miss his friendship, brilliant recall, tremendous sense of humour and love of the unconventional.



Photo: Proms at St Jude's



A toast with her granddaughter, Evie (Photo: Carolyn Graham)

# Kay Graham

1940 - 2025

COLIN GREGORY

Kay Graham, known to many residents as a teacher and later as a glass maker, died on 2 November 2025, three days before her 85th birthday. She was born in Gerrards Cross in 1940 at the height of World War II. Her parents had fled Nazi Germany in the late 1930s and her father was interned for much of the War. Encouraged by her headmistress to study science, she read chemistry at Bristol University. She stayed on to do teacher training – her first job was at Acton County School, later moving to Holland

Park School in Notting Hill. By the age of 24 she was Head of Chemistry at one of the largest comprehensive schools in London. She married her husband Conrad in 1968 and they moved to Rotherwick Road on the Suburb in 1970 where they raised two children, Rob and Carolyn. After Carolyn started at nursery school Kay returned to teaching, working at The Mount School in Mill Hill where she remained as Head of Science and Assistant Head until she retired.

Kay joined the Hampstead Garden Suburb Dramatic Society, now the Garden Suburb Theatre, in 1972. She helped out with props for the Society's production of Babes in the Wood in 1975, an activity with which she became particularly associated over the next five decades. Although she preferred being backstage, she appeared as the cook in Alice in Wonderland in 1977 as well as in a number of rehearsed play readings, most recently in March 2025.

In retirement Kay became particularly keen on glass fusing, an activity she continued for the rest of her life, teaching the skill to friends and selling her glass in aid of the North London Hospice.

During the pandemic the Garden Suburb Theatre organised online activities. In April 2021, while taking part in a Zoom call with the group, she collapsed. Those on the call alerted neighbours and she was rushed by ambulance to the Royal Free Hospital, a story that made BBC News. She had a ruptured aortic aneurysm, with only a small chance of survival, but remarkably survived the operation, which involved the amputation of a leg. She continued to lead a very full and completely independent life, volunteering at the Royal Free and the Limbless Association and helping others who were coming to terms with amputations, as well as continuing her glass making activities in support of the Hospice. She leaves a remarkable legacy on the Suburb and beyond.

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# RA HIGHLIGHTS

## A steady (but forward-looking) hand on the wheel Peter McCluskie on leading the Residents Association



Peter McCluskie, in the driving seat (Photo: Christopher Matthews)

FRANCINE BARSAM

For Peter McCluskie, Chair of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association, Suburb life is rarely straightforward, and that is something he accepts with good humour.

"Things don't always go perfectly," he says, reflecting on the past year. "But usually, it all comes good and in the direction I'm aiming for."

Peter has been a volunteer with the Residents Association for around 11 years, although his experience with other community organisations goes back much further. Before moving to the Suburb, he spent 22 years as Chair of a different type of residents'

organisation, so becoming involved here felt like a natural step.

Alongside his voluntary work, Peter's professional background also brings valuable perspective to the role. In his working life, he was an Inland Revenue/HMRC civil servant, spending much of his later career developing taxation policy and strategy with Ministers at HM Treasury. That experience has shaped his approach, particularly in relation to governance, accountability and working within complex organisational structures.

After becoming a volunteer with the Association at the suggestion of former RA Chair Richard Wakefield, Peter immediately became active in the Conservation & Amenities Committee, soon

taking over as its Chair. He went on to spend seven and a half years as Honorary Secretary and additionally became Editor of Suburb eNews. In March 2025, following the retirement of the previous Chair, Emma Howard, Peter agreed to let his name go forward for election to the role of Chair.

### A PRACTICAL ROLE AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

The Residents Association is a volunteer-led organisation that represents around 1,600 households (about 4,000 people) in the Suburb. Its work is carried out by a large number of volunteers.

Its activities include producing and distributing Suburb News to every household and Suburb

eNews to members, access to the valuable curated Master Tradespeople List, organising community events throughout the year, funding tree planting in local streets, supporting green space and environmental initiatives and providing grants for local school and community projects. The Association also sponsors local events such as Proms LitFest.

"At its core, it's about supporting the community," Peter says. "People sometimes ask what membership is for, and the honest answer is that it helps us do practical things that make the Suburb a better, more cohesive community."

### STREAMLINING, SYSTEMS AND STEADY PROGRESS

Since becoming Chair, Peter has overseen a period of change. Some issues, including structural changes, updating obsolete systems and reducing conflicts of interest, will take time to resolve fully but much progress has already been made.

"One of the biggest improvements has been simplifying how we operate," he explains. Through natural turnover, the Association's Council has been reduced to a more manageable size, making it more effective and cohesive. A new accounting system has been introduced, work on a new website is underway and close working relationships with the Trust and other Suburb organisations have been strengthened.

"I'm comfortable with technology," he says, "and that does help, but this is always work in progress."

### MEMBERSHIP, INFLUENCE AND LOOKING AHEAD

A key priority for the coming year is rebuilding membership levels, following a period when renewals fell behind.

Peter explains: "Renewals have slipped during the past

couple of years because of lack of resource. That has now been addressed. Recovering those members really matters because the stronger our membership, the more influence we have on behalf of residents."

He sees the Association's role as collaborative rather than confrontational. "There's a balance," he says. "We need to work constructively with others while still representing residents properly. Cooperation delivers better outcomes than conflict."

**A ROLE DRIVEN BY SERVICE**  
As well as chairing the Residents Association's Council, Peter remains closely involved in its day-to-day work, including publications, membership oversight, digital platforms and supporting the new Treasurer. He is also Deputy Chair and Secretary of the Suburb's Police & Community Action Panel and Administrator of the Federation of Residents Associations in Barnet.

"I've never really been one for hobbies," he says. "Voluntary work has always felt like a better use of my time." That said, photography (often featured in Suburb News), automotive history and a growing interest in new technology including AI still feature when time allows.

The Chair role, Peter acknowledges, is very demanding of private time and has its challenges. But he says "I'm very happy to continue to serve so long as the RA membership wishes me to do so."

In a role that calls for patience, balance and consistency, Peter brings a steady and thoughtful but progressive approach shaped by long experience and a genuine commitment to the Suburb. His emphasis on listening, cooperation, and progress offers residents reassurance that the Residents' Association is in good hands.

Can you spare just £15 a year to help keep our Suburb special?

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Liaise with LB Barnet to keep the Suburb clean and beautiful and run a litter picking volunteer team



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Support local charities and community groups including equipment in HGS playgrounds and grants to local primary schools

Just £15 per annum enables you to join over 1,700 other Suburb households that are already members of the Residents Association. You can join online at [hgsra.uk/join](https://hgsra.uk/join) or call 020 3488 9131. Please contact [chair@hgsra.uk](mailto:chair@hgsra.uk) if you would like to volunteer to support our many activities and have fun with others in fostering a strong community.





Oak tree in Bigwood Road (Photo: Colin Gregory)

# Tree renewal in the Suburb is a continuous process

COLIN GREGORY

The Trees and Open Spaces Committee of the Residents Association continues its work on street trees, applications for work on privately-owned trees, and open spaces. We were delighted that three new members joined after our open meeting in September, and we welcome anyone keen to help protect the wonderful trees that make our area so special.

After reaching our £5,000 target for new trees last year, the campaign will run again in 2026 – watch out for publicity on how to donate. Tree renewal is a continuous process, in nature and among tree lovers. Barnet Council has to remove many trees each year because of disease or safety concerns, more than 60 this winter. Barnet and the RA both pay for new trees each year and the extra money raised through crowd-funding enables even more to be planted – 20 extra this year. We will be publishing details on the RA website of sites where new trees are planted, and making a video on the best way to water a tree so neighbours can help young trees thrive.

We continue with our casework and have had several successes. The owner of a healthy oak protected by a tree preservation order (TPO) in Bigwood Road applied to reduce it by three metres and side growth by 30%. We argued that no valid justification for a reduction on this scale was provided, which could cause significant harm to the tree. Barnet Council agreed and the application was refused. An oak tree in the garden of a house in Kingsley Way, also protected by a TPO, had some decay and was leaning, and the Trust had given approval for its removal. We argued successfully that it could be propped up and could live for many more years. In December, we engaged our own arboricultural expert to advise on an application to fell a large old oak in North Square. The expert provided a plan for its safe management, which we are discussing with the owners and hopefully it will be saved and made safe.

If you would like to volunteer to help with our work, or would just like more information, please email the Chair, Colin Gregory, on [trees@hgsra.uk](mailto:trees@hgsra.uk).

## RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION CONTACT DETAILS

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If you would like information on any the RA's committees, or would like to become involved in any of the RA's activities, then please contact us by email, phone or post

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RA HIGHLIGHTS



Photo: Lucy Tobin



All photos: Michael Eleftheriades (unless otherwise credited)

'Twas a braw bricht moonlicht nicht for those celebrating Hogmanay on Central Square this year. For the rest of us, there were near perfect conditions for the Residents Association's annual New Year's Eve Fireworks, with clear skies, a light breeze and frosty ground allowing hundreds of eager spectators to spread out across the full width of Central Square and join in the countdown to yet another spectacular new year display. They were provided for a third year by Frontier Fireworks and supported by our generous sponsors, Litchfields Estate Agents and Repaircare London.

The Residents Association has been providing a free-to-attend new year's display for over 20 years now and our small events team of volunteers works hard to make sure that whilst the display remains spectacular, it causes minimal disruption to the surrounding area, with a short ten minute display and the use of lower noise fireworks.

Frontier were chosen for their provision of low noise fireworks. There are currently no noise restrictions on fireworks for use in professional displays, but there is a 120dBA limit for domestic fireworks and Frontier only use fireworks that comply with this limit. They also incorporate their lower noise fireworks into their displays to reduce the overall noise levels, whilst still allowing the use of the high-level shells expected to start the new year with a BANG!

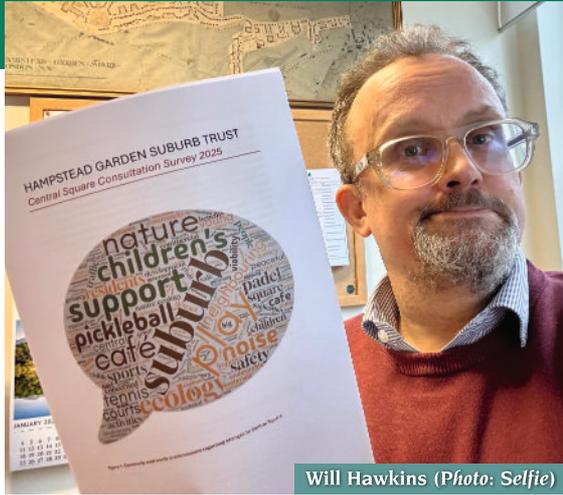
The use of lasers and drones is becoming more commonplace, but they remain prohibitively expensive (up to four times more) for use at relatively small community events. However, the events team will continue to review the options for the traditional HGS new year celebrations, supported by the generous donations of those who attend, our sponsors and the volunteers who give up their valuable time to make it happen.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Adrian Hodgson, [events@hgsra.uk](mailto:events@hgsra.uk)

# OUT & ABOUT

## Central Square: What the consultation told us



Will Hawkins (Photo: Selfie)

Over the autumn, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust invited residents and stakeholders to share their views on the future of the former tennis courts and wooded space to the west of Central Square. The consultation ran from early September to the end of October and received over 200 responses.

I want to start by saying thank you. Many respondents took the time not only to share their views, but also to welcome the Trust's decision to consult early, before any detailed proposals were formed. That approach matters. This land sits alongside the symbolic heart of the Suburb, and it is right that ideas for its future are shaped with residents, not simply presented to them.

Responses grouped around four broad areas: nature and ecology, children's play, racquet sports (tennis, pickleball and padel), and café use. Most respondents commented on more than one of these, often with thoughtful caveats.

Nature and ecology emerged as the most consistently supported theme. Many felt that enhancing biodiversity, planting, and opportunities for quiet enjoyment aligned strongly with the founding principles of the Suburb. There was also a clear expectation that any nature-led approach should be well-designed, well-maintained and feel safe and welcoming.

There was strong support for children's play, particularly for younger children, and often in combination with other uses. Parents and grandparents highlighted the lack of nearby play opportunities and the value of spaces that encourage everyday, informal use. Concerns focused on noise, safety, and visibility.

Views on racquet sports were, perhaps not surprisingly, more divided. Some respondents welcomed the idea of sporting activity on the existing unused tennis courts and valued the inclusivity of newer sports. Others expressed concerns about noise and the proximity of neighbouring homes. What stood out was the care with which people explained their reasoning.

The idea of a café or refreshment offer also prompted mixed views. Some saw this as a way to bring life and sociability to Central Square, particularly in quieter months, while others worried about viability, noise and the impact on the character of the area.

Trustees have reviewed the consultation findings carefully, and no decisions have yet been taken. The purpose of the consultation was not to arrive at a single answer, but to understand what matters most to residents and where sensitivities lie. Other aspects – particularly those focused on opening up the space and on nature and ecology – may offer opportunities to begin making positive improvements sooner. Further engagement will follow as thinking develops.

A full summary of the consultation findings is available on the Trust's website. The detail and nuance of the responses deserve more space than a short article can offer.

*Will Hawkins, Chief Executive, Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust*

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In this series Suburb News spotlights the Suburb's local independent shopkeepers

SIMONE HALFIN

Walking into Temptations, the gift shop owned by Lorretta Paterson in Temple Fortune, is a magical experience. Lorretta has worked in Temple Fortune for 50 years and the current shop is the third iteration of Temptations. She says her most successful version was the large one near Landys, the chemist. She owned this one for ten years. Suffering, like most people did, with rents after Covid, she had to downsize and moved to her present shop four and a half years ago. Lorretta started her retail career working at Cohens, the jewellers, nearby. She did a diploma course in retail jewellery while she worked there, advising customers and learning the trade first-hand. Growing up, marrying and having her children in this area, Lorretta feels she knows most of her customers pretty well. She loves working in the community and hopes that trade will pick up in the new year, as everyone has been hit by rising prices.

Temptations is filled with so many beautiful things, all chosen by Lorretta who likes to get an eclectic mix, sourcing from different suppliers all over the world. Her jewellery comes from Italy and India and includes different coloured gem stones which bring good energies, bracelets, necklaces, leather handbags from Italy in a range of colours, multi-coloured scarves from India, greetings cards, and earrings, some of which actually have clips, a bonus for me! I love her unusual selection of greetings cards, jewellery and gifts for the house which are both practical and unusual. All of the gifts here are reasonably priced and make brilliant presents for every occasion.

Temptations is open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm.

## Think you can't bowl? Think again!

Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club in Finchley has launched a new weekly Sunday afternoon session, open to the public. This relaxed and friendly indoor bowls group is designed for adults with disabilities, visual impairment or long-term health conditions, offering a supportive and social way to enjoy sport. Friends, family and carers are welcome to bowl too and the first session is free. The club is fully accessible with free parking, step-free access via a ramp and specially adapted walkers and wheelchairs available for use on the green.

Indoor bowls provides gentle exercise, helping to improve balance, flexibility, concentration and overall wellbeing, while the strong social side supports mental health, resilience and community spirit. Glebelands believes in sport for all and accessibility for all. The dedicated Sunday session creates a shared space where everyone can exchange experiences, learn from each other and enjoy a cup of tea together. Many coaches and players have lived experience of disability, including sight impairment stroke and Parkinson's – so you'll be bowling with people who truly understand.

So come along at 2.30pm on any Sunday. You will find us at Summers Lane, N12 0PD.

Or for further information go to [www.glebelandsibc.co.uk](http://www.glebelandsibc.co.uk) or give us a ring on 07870 826333.

Tessa Wire

Photo: Lisa Barry



In this issue we tasked our Suburb News Youth team from Christ's College school to consider ways of making our community more wildlife friendly. Here's what they thought.

## Light Pollution: Lower the Lights!

The introduction of artificial light at night (ALAN) for road and pedestrian safety has been beneficial for urbanised lifestyles, yet has disrupted the natural cycles, impacting many species of animals. In particular, many nocturnal ecosystems have been confused by this unnatural, new addition to once predictable shifts in daylight.

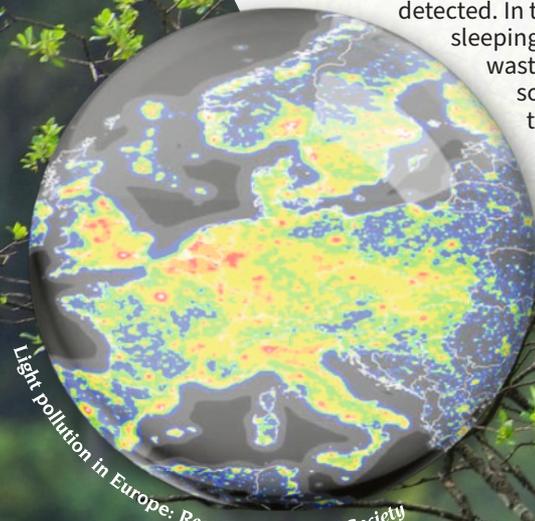
Now, due to the overuse of light, species may not be able to adapt. Trying to navigate a new lifestyle has caused a dual disruption in owls' hunting patterns, as well as potential eye damage and increased mortality from collisions. When hunting, light adversely affects their ability to remain stealthy and inconspicuous in the artificially-lit habitat that they are being forced to call home.

Artificial light at night disrupts not only nocturnal animals but also amphibians like toads and frogs, whose nighttime croaking plays a crucial role in their breeding rituals. This interferes with reproduction and reduces populations of these animals. Although we may use light because it is beneficial for us, we must take into consideration the effects on the animals and species it impacts.

You may have seen many introductions of light that serve little purpose and ultimately waste energy, such as car headlights and street lights.

Street lights shine at full capacity throughout the whole night without changing their intensity, even when there is no one walking on the streets. One way we could approach this problem is by installing sensors that dim the lights when no movement is detected. In the early hours when activity is low as most people are sleeping, bright street lights serve little purpose and ultimately waste energy. Although this may not act as a permanent solution for flying and gliding animals, by positioning the sensors to activate at certain heights, we could reduce detection of animals roaming the streets and prevent further, unnecessary addition to light pollution.

MIZUKI & NELLA  
Christ's College



Light pollution in Europe: Royal Astronomical Society

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## Noise Pollution: Lower the Volume!

Have you ever encountered a night when fireworks are all you can hear, or nothing but music and transport being noisy? Many of those living in the suburbs have experienced this, yet there are many ways to avoid disturbed nights.

Despite firework night being one of the most popular holidays (especially amongst families), it is one of the most unexpected causes of detrimental noise. Anyone with a pet knows that loud noises can be distressing for sensitive ears and research suggests that our furry friends have the capability to hear four times louder than humans, causing alarm and spiking anxiety. Infants may also be disturbed by the noise which disrupts sleep schedules.

Daily transportation causes much of the noise pollution we experience. Traffic, motorcycle revving and blasting music while travelling around the Suburb can have a large impact on the overall noise that people are exposed to – the average volume being over 100 decibels – way over the recommended adult limit. The maximum for children is even lower than this, meaning the daily limit is easily exceeded.

These examples are just a few of the many causes of noise pollution. However, there are a couple of things you can do to help reduce the noise. Going to community-hosted firework shows can not only reduce the volume overall, but encourage valuable time together, along with opportunities to meet up with friends and is a great alternative to holding your own firework displays. Putting a silencer on your motorcycle can decrease the volume by up to 40 decibels, and simply closing your windows when playing music is an easy and effortless way of reducing noise.

Hopefully this can serve as a reminder to lower the volume!

PHOEBE & KRITIKA  
Christ's College

## Embracing Overgrowth: Go Wild!

Today, our parks and gardens seem to be too neat. Flowers are restrained by the pots we wrestle them into, astro turfs and patios engulf what little natural lawn we have left and outdoor furniture is prioritised over nature's original inhabitants: plants. Of course, the idea of tidiness is ideal for us, but for most insects who find their habitats destroyed, it is disastrous. Bees, arguably nature's hardest workers, declined in population by 60-70% in 2025 alone. Part of this can be attributed to a lack of flowers, which are cut down to make way for new concrete playgrounds, buildings or sports facilities. To prevent this busy insect population from dying out, we must act by not killing every plant we think is 'too wild'. Weeds such as dandelions and ground ivy are essential to pollination in ecosystems. After all, we wouldn't want these bees going extinct, 'busy as a lawnmower' doesn't quite have the same ring to it.

Another vulnerable insect is the butterfly. Even though all of us would be delighted to see them more frequently, it seems that very few people are actually trying to support them. For example, small actions such as planting lavender, catnip (nepeta) and coneflowers (e.g. echinacea and rudbeckia) can be miracle workers when it comes to boosting butterfly populations.

Even if you don't have time or a wide range of gardening resources available to you, you can still easily make a difference. One simple solution that could support ecosystems would be leaving a small corner of your garden unmown, allowing nature to fulfil one of its most important obligations: proving to us that chaos, sometimes, might just be a good thing.

LILY & REIKO  
Christ's College

Hi my name is Teah and I'm currently in year 12. When I'm not studying for my A-levels, one of my biggest passions is watching movies. I'm therefore very excited to be starting a movie review column in Suburb News. Each issue will feature some of my favourite watches of all time. Please let me know if there are any movies you would like me to review. Send an email to [suburbnews@hgsra.uk](mailto:suburbnews@hgsra.uk) with your movie of choice and why you think it should be reviewed.

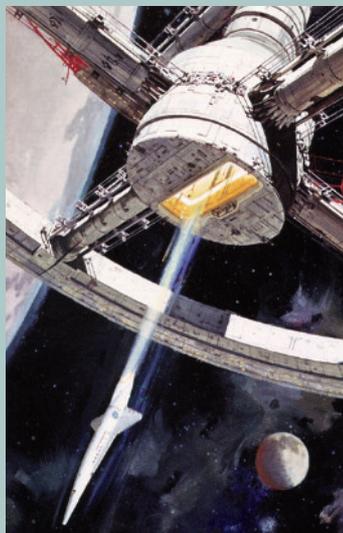
I thought I would begin this column with a review of my all-time favourite film: 2001 A Space Odyssey.

Hope you enjoy!



## 2001: A Space Odyssey

Age rating: U (Suitable for all ages, although its slow pace and style may be more suited to older viewers).



Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey is an iconic movie in cinema history. Released in 1968, it laid the foundations for modern sci-fi films, influencing film-makers such as Christopher Nolan (one of my favourite film directors). Despite its age, it's definitely timeless, bold and original. This film is best suited to viewers who enjoy slow-burning stories, striking visuals and films that encourage interpretation rather than give clear answers. It's not fast-paced or action-heavy but, for those willing to sit through it, the experience is definitely rewarding.

One of the aspects I admire most is the ambiguous ending. Kubrick leaves the audience to form their own conclusions, which makes the film feel personal and engaging. The cinematography is also one of my favourite components of the film – the symmetry, composed shots and vivid use of colour create some of the most visually incredible moments ever seen.

The performances are excellent, the twist unexpected and, of course, there's that unforgettable soundtrack. The famous opening sequence with the monkeys is especially striking, highly symbolic and essential to understanding the film's deeper themes, without relying on dialogue.

I won't reveal too much, but 2001: A Space Odyssey is a film that challenges and stays with you long after it ends. A cinematic masterpiece.

# World-class music, books and family fun

## Proms at St Jude's 2026

RON FINLAY

It is Spring, so now is the time to block out your diary for Proms at St Jude's, which this year runs from 27 June to 5 July. Be first in line for tickets when they go on sale to the public on 6 April. However, as many events sell out, become a Friend now for priority booking which starts on 30 March.

In its 34th year, Proms at St Jude's has earned a reputation as a world-class arts festival in North London, combining international performers with a warm, community atmosphere.

### A GRAND MUSICAL OPENING

The music programme opens in style on Saturday 27 June with pianist Junyan Chen joining the popular Fantasia Orchestra for Mozart's Marriage of Figaro overture, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 1 and his exhilarating Symphony No 7.

Sunday brings something truly special. Wolf Hall in Concert is based on Hilary Mantel's master-work. Debbie Wiseman will perform her haunting orchestral score and actor Anton Lesser – Thomas More in the BBC series – will narrate. Together with soprano Grace Davidson and the Locrian Ensemble, it is a powerful blend of music and storytelling.

### MUSIC FOR EVERY TASTE

Throughout the week, audiences can explore an impressive range of styles. Chamber music lovers will enjoy the acclaimed Fidelio Trio, while choral fans can hear the renowned Choir of The Queen's College, Oxford. Viola 'superstar' Timothy Ridout appears with the Academy of

Fantasia Orchestra  
(Photo: Kaupo Kikkas)



Anton Lesser as Thomas More (Photo: BBC)

St Mary-le-Bow in an Italian-themed orchestral evening, and dramatic classical favourites will be played on the organ and piano by the hugely popular Scott Brothers Duo.

For a change of pace, The Van Morrison Alumni Band will perform soul-stirring hits and a Saturday night Jazz Celebration features music by Gershwin, Bernstein and Ellington.

The traditional Last Night Concert on Sunday 5 July promises a rousing finale, with the Purcell School Symphony Orchestra and mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston – a joyful mix of classics and favourites.

### FREE CONCERTS AND FAMILY HIGHLIGHTS

One of the Festival's hallmarks is accessibility. Free lunchtime concerts will run throughout the week, showcasing outstanding young musicians.

Families will again be well catered for. Two 'Teeny Proms' will introduce toddlers and pre-schoolers to live music, while the Family Festival on Sunday 5 July will fill Central Square with free activities, performances and hands-on fun. Budding music lovers can enjoy interactive concerts and a lively performance of Peter and the Wolf.

### BOOKS, WALKS AND COMEDY

On the opening weekend, we have LitFest and a great line-up of speakers including: Edward Arthur Guinness on the dramatic story of the Guinness family; Booker Prize winner and best-seller Alan Hollinghurst; and contemporary historian Sir Anthony Seldon to name a few.

Proms is grateful to Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association for its support of LitFest and to West End Lane Books for organising the book signing.

Throughout the week, a dozen guided Heritage Walks will explore the Suburb's architecture, history and green spaces. The festival will again offer late-night stand-up comedy and a licensed bar in the Refreshment marquee.

### PURPOSE

Behind the scenes, the festival's purpose is as important as its programme. Proms raises significant funds for Toynbee Hall, North London Hospice and local music education – more than £1.3 million since the festival began.

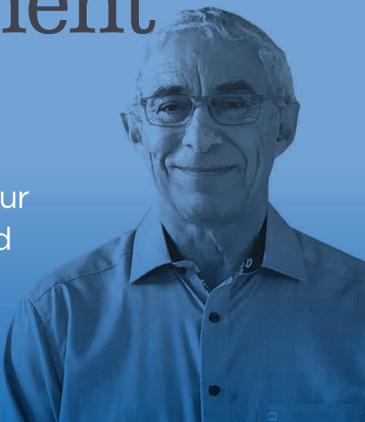
This year, Proms is particularly indebted to Riverstone Living, which has kindly agreed to become principal sponsor of the festival and to Repaircare for their continued support. It makes such a difference to the Festival's success. They see a benefit in their support of Proms and if you know a business or Trust that might like to work with us, please contact us. Find out more at [promsatstjudes.org.uk](http://promsatstjudes.org.uk).

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## ACS spring concert

DIANE LANGLEBEN

On Sunday 29 March 2026, the Alyth Choral Society invites audiences to experience Songs of the Elements: EARTH – an evening of music that celebrates the power, beauty and fragility of our planet. Set against the vastness of the cosmos and the rising sun over our world, this concert promises reflection as well as exhilaration.

Under the direction of conductor Alison Smart Fisher, with accompanist Tim Hooper and soprano Emily Phillips, the programme draws together a rich tapestry of composers including Haydn, Bach, Rutter, Toch and Purcell, alongside music inspired by Ireland and beyond. Each work offers a different lens on "Earth": its landscapes, its seasons, its spiritual resonance and its place in the universe.

Taking place at North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens, NW11 7EN at 7pm, the performance continues Alyth Choral Society's tradition of vibrant, community-centred music-making.

Tickets are £20, with free entry for students and under-18s – an open invitation to the next generation of music lovers.

With refreshments available and a warm welcome assured, this promises to be more than a concert: it will be a gathering in celebration of our planet.

Tickets are now on sale at our website at: [alythchoralsociety.com](http://alythchoralsociety.com) or you can scan the QR code.





Photo: Michael Eleftheriades

## A swinging New Year's Eve Party

EMMA HOWARD

Yet another fantastic party to see in the New Year at St Jude's church, with a break for the amazing RA fireworks display on Central Square at midnight before the party continued.

All tickets for the party sold by 28 December, albeit we were able to release a few more on the door as some of the younger party-goers left. It was very much an HGS Community party, with residents of all ages from two to 92 there enjoying themselves.

The Kids' party set the mood for the evening with a fantastic performance by Olena Nesterenko aka Bubble Show London, who kept children and their grown-ups spellbound as she worked bubble magic with her special potions. Children's party time followed with multiple games of hide and seek and general running around in the spacious church in evidence.

The party for adults then really got going at 9.30 pm when DJ G-Nutz had young and old up dancing the night away. An orderly queue formed at 11.45 to head into the frosty night for the fireworks and the party continued thereafter back in the Church.

A special mention to our many volunteers who manned the door, ran the bar, prepared food, set up the church and then cleared everything up the next afternoon. This event couldn't have happened without you. If you would like to have fun volunteering for church events, please contact me at emmaannehoward@gmail.com.

Hopefully readers were there to enjoy the event first-hand, but if not, the photos will give you an idea of the fun had!

**Thank you to Repaircare London, window restorers and decorators, for their generous sponsorship of the party.**



Photo: Michael Eleftheriades



Photo: Emma Howard



Photo: Michael Eleftheriades

## Art exhibition at Fellowship House



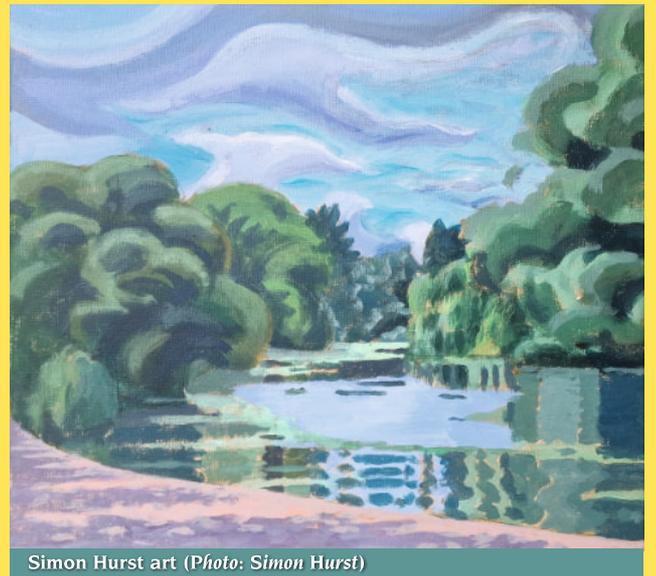
David Davidson etching (Photo: David Davidson)

This March, Fellowship House will host a thoughtfully curated art exhibition celebrating landscape, architecture and place, featuring recent work by local artists David Davidson and Simon Hurst. Running from 3-29 March on Willfield Way, the exhibition brings together original prints and landscape paintings that will resonate strongly with the Suburb's artistic and architectural heritage.

David Davidson, Head of Architecture at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, presents a series of etchings exploring architecture, still life and the quiet poetry of everyday objects. Alongside him, Simon Hurst – architect, artist and former Trustee of the Trust – exhibits landscapes in acrylic and oil, as well as prints inspired by landscape themes.

The exhibition will be open to visitors on Tuesdays from 2-4pm and Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30pm, with additional viewing opportunities when Fellowship House is open. Residents are warmly encouraged to drop in and enjoy this local showcase of artistic talent.

Shelley-Anne Salisbury



Simon Hurst art (Photo: Simon Hurst)

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Photo: Andrew Botterill

# Solidarity

ANDREW BOTTERILL

Sunlit wheat fields beneath an azure sky – the colours of the Ukrainian flag. This picture has been hanging above the door to the hall at Fellowship House since the Russian invasion four years ago. It will stay there until there is a just peace.

Concertgoers to Fellowship’s Autumn Series have been generously contributing to the Red Cross in Ukraine for the past four years. Fellowship matches these donations. A combined total of £18,000 has been donated.

We invited two representatives of the Red Cross to mark the poignant 24 February anniversary by giving the Tuesday Weekly Talk. Their description of the work of the Red Cross in Ukraine was inspiring, thought-provoking and put our day to day Suburb preoccupations into some perspective. The interest shown and our donations, tiny though they are, will hopefully be taken as a token of our solidarity with those blameless Europeans fighting a war for us as well.



## An Icon at the Gate

ANDREW BOTTERILL

When Fellowship decided to diversify into real estate last year, we thought of Battersea Power Station, then Liverpool Cathedral, then Waterloo Bridge. In the end we settled on a rather more modest work by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott – the K6 phone box at the gate to Fellowship House. Closer to his Hampstead birthplace and rather easier to maintain.

There are still 12,000 of these boxes left (3,000 with active pay-phones) out of a total of 60,000 installed around the UK from the 1930s to the 1960s. We paid BT £1 for ours.

The ten page purchase contract expressly disallows ownership of what lies beneath the box so we had to kiss goodbye to the potential oil, gas and rare earth reserves.

There is maintenance work to be done, the aim being to make it the smartest box of the six on the Suburb. They are an iconic part of the Suburb street scene. We want our box to continue its role as the lighthouse showing the way to Fellowship House. To this end, the interior light will be restored and hopefully we can change the roofline panels from ‘Telephone’ to ‘Fellowship’ (see photo with a little help from ChatGPT). This is not a straightforward procedure.

The Trust and Barnet have both been very supportive of this initiative but, as a listed building, formal permission by Barnet for a change to the exterior still needs to be granted.

What will go inside? Sparing you the jokey suggestions, we’re thinking of a panel on the back showing part of the 1913 photo of the old Clubhouse, emphasising a sense of place. Any other ideas?

Hopefully others will now be inspired to take over the remaining five boxes.



Photo: Andrew Botterill

## Plea and thank you

Here is the annual request to help Fellowship find Suburb residents who may need temporary funding to help tide them over financial hardship. We give to many charities but our top priority is always to ensure we do as much as we can for any Suburb residents in financial need. If you know of anyone in this position, please phone Lorna Jones in confidence on 0203 723 9299.

As this understated secular organisation embarks on its 116th year of enhancing residents’ wellbeing, the hard-working Committee of nine unpaid volunteers would like to record their thanks to all Suburb residents who use and support Fellowship and its modest home on Willifield Green.

Do consult our website at <https://fellowshiphouse.co.uk/> particularly the ‘About’ section which details the Trustees’ Report and Accounts and charities supported.

Discuss booking requests with Elisabeth Kocen on 0208 455 9000. Jill Purdie on 0208 458 5042 can answer questions about the activities put on.

Andrew Botterill

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# HGO – the Suburb’s opera company nominated for six Off West End awards

RICHARD HALL

**H**GO (originally Hampstead Garden Opera) began more than 30 years ago as a course of opera classes at the HGS Institute. But now, twice a year in Highgate, the company stages first-class award-winning opera, with vibrant young singers and a live professional orchestra, at affordable prices. The intimacy of the Jacksons Lane Theatre and

the quality of the young singers bring opera to life.

2025 saw sold-out productions of Rossini’s ‘Cenerentola’ in April and Monteverdi’s ‘Poppea’ in November. Both shows received high critical acclaim and both have been officially nominated for the 2026 Off West End awards (the ‘Offies’).

HGO – a registered charity with no paid staff, no premises, no overheads – provides unique

opportunities for young singers, the professionals of the future, to perform roles which, early in their careers, they would not be given in the big opera companies.

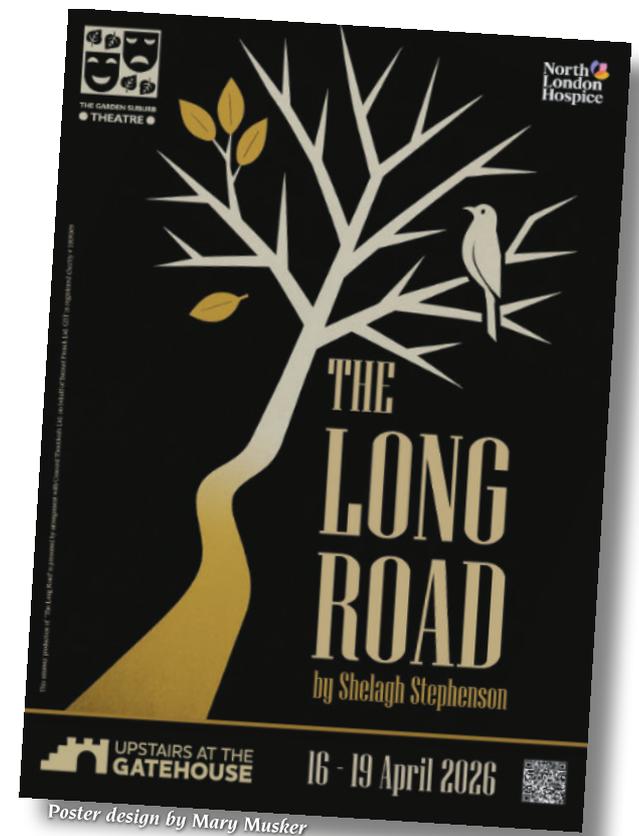
So do book early for HGO’s next production at Jacksons Lane Theatre: Benjamin Britten’s emotional and controversial opera ‘The Rape of Lucretia’ from 18 to 26 April 2026. Tickets are available via the HGO website: [hgo.org.uk](http://hgo.org.uk) or from the theatre.



Cenerentola (Photo: Laurent Compagnon)



Poppea (Photo: Julian Guidera)



Poster design by Mary Musker

## The Long Road at the Garden Suburb Theatre

COLIN GREGORY

**T**he Garden Suburb Theatre’s next production is ‘The Long Road’ by Shelagh Stephenson. The play centres on the aftermath of the murder of 18-year-old Danny and the devastating impact of this apparently random act of violence on his mother, father and brother. As each family member wrestles with grief, guilt and forgiveness, they must decide whether to have contact with Danny’s killer. Will this offer understanding and release – or deepen their despair? This powerful and moving play evolved from research with prisoners and victims’ families about their experiences of restorative justice and played to sell-out houses when it was first staged at the Soho Theatre in 2008. Performances will take place from 16-19 April 2026 at Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate, N6 4BD. Tickets: [www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com](http://www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com).

The Garden Suburb Theatre is always looking for new members to act, direct, work backstage or just come along. The group performs four plays a year at Upstairs at the Gatehouse and an annual Summer Show in Little Wood. More information at: [www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk](http://www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk).



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## Conservation and accommodation at St Jude’s

DAVID WHITE

**E**xciting developments are underway at St Jude’s Church where conservation of not only the building but also the birds that are roosting in it, are taking place.

### THE LADY CHAPEL

The Courtauld Institute of Art are adopting the Chapel as a fieldwork station for their post-graduate MA course in the conservation of wall paintings. This is a huge win for St Jude’s as it means that the wall paintings in the chapel will be restored and conserved over time at no cost to St Jude’s. The chapel is currently shrouded in scaffolding

to enable detailed investigations to take place during the Courtauld’s Spring Semester which runs between 26 January and 20 March this year. The results of those investigations will determine the methodology to be adopted in conserving and restoring these wall paintings. The scaffolding is being funded by the Archbishop’s Council with support from the National Heritage Lottery fund, as the work being carried out will train future conservators and increase the pool of available talent. St Jude’s envisages that as the work progresses there will be opportunities for residents to observe the work and to hear

from the Courtauld team about the techniques being used.

### WALL PAINTINGS

St Jude’s has been promised a substantial grant to restore and conserve the wall paintings in the side aisles between the chapels and the western end of the church. The funding will also cover the Stations of the Cross and, we hope, the spandrels and decorated beams above the aisles. The spandrels are the decorated arches above the side aisles. St Jude’s will be welcoming Iqra Asim and Maryam Baig into the community as they will both be working as interns on the restoration project which will be run by Cliveden Conservation. The restoration work is expected to run through the rest of 2026 and into the early part of 2027.

### PEREGRINE FALCONS

St Jude’s has installed a nesting platform in the topmost Northeast opening in the tower below the Spire and they hope that the pair of peregrine falcons seen roosting on the tower will adopt the platform and raise a family.



Scaffolding has been erected to facilitate detailed investigation (Photo: Michael Eleftheriades)



Commonwealth Interns Iqra Asim and Mariam Baig join Revd Em along with three post graduate students from The Courtauld Institute of Art (Photo: Michael Eleftheriades)



Peregrine falcons looking down from on high (Photo: David White)



First week of spring at Kenwood (Photo: Caroline Broome)



THE GARDEN GIRL

CAROLINE BROOME

Gardens to inspire you

March, the month of optimism. Winter transforms into Spring. Creatures are waking from hibernation. Shoots are emerging from the soil. Anticipation seems to shimmer in the fresh air. We Brits are well acquainted with the vagaries of our climate, March being no exception. But nothing can stop nature from getting into its spring stride. Swathes of daffodils and crocus transform grass verges and municipal borders into a riot of colour, banishing winter at last. As the days grow longer, there is a change of tempo in the garden, a sense of urgency. Just like the small creatures in our gardens, we emerge, blinking away our torpor. Lifting our faces to the sun, we are full of renewed vigour. It's time to get outside in the fresh air. I think a spot of garden visiting is just the ticket, to whet your appetite for the year ahead.

And what better place to start than Kenwood on Hampstead Heath? Known for its wonderful collection of rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias, its sloping lawns are transformed into a carpet of yellow daffodils. Mature trees are bursting and bud and blossom are just starting to appear. Why not join one of the guided nature walks to spot signs of spring on Hampstead Heath or take part in a family Easter Egg hunt? For more information about current activities visit:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenwood/things-to-do](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenwood/things-to-do).

Borde Hill Gardens in Hayward's Heath is perfect for a day trip. Set in nearly 400 acres of heritage listed parkland, Borde Hill consists of a series of garden rooms, from formal gardens to historic woodland and tranquil lakes. Magnificent displays of magnolias, camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons are underplanted with crocus and daffodils, alongside great swathes of hellebores, primroses and pulmonarias. It really is a feast for the senses. Need some inspiration for your own spring garden? *Skimmia japonica* Kew Green, *viburnum tinus*, *viburnum Bodnantense* Dawn, *lonicera fragrantissima*, *sarcococcos*, *mahonias*, *pieris* and *corylopsis* all do well in our neutral clay soil and will fill the air with fragrance. Family-friendly activities include Kids Trail: Mission Spring,

which goes on until 22 March. Dogs on leads are welcome: <https://bordehill.co.uk/events/mission-spring>.

The Savill Garden in Windsor is another spring favourite. Within easy reach of North London, The Savill Garden is a 35-acre garden with year-round interest, renowned woodlands and seasonal displays. From the middle of March onwards the Spring Wood comes alive with the colours and textures of woodland bulbs and early perennials. The National Collection of Magnolias bursts onto the scene in April, underplanted with a sea of crocus and miniature narcissi, alongside fabulous flowering Japanese cherry trees. Enjoy the spectacular approach to Windsor Castle along the iconic Long Walk by horse drawn carriage, care of Windsor Carriages, until the end of March. Journey to the Valley Gardens on a free minibus shuttle service, operating on selected dates during April and May. For more details visit: [/www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk/seasons/spring/](http://www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk/seasons/spring/).

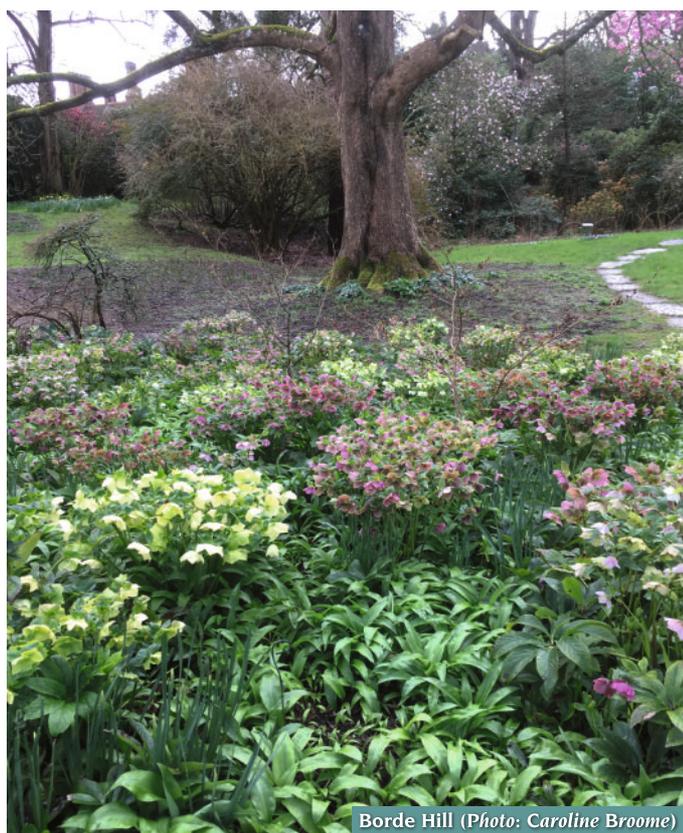
The National Trust's Bateman's House and Gardens, in the High Weald countryside of East Sussex, is the former home of Rudyard Kipling. This 12-acre garden hosts vibrant displays of spring flowers. The riverside walk to the Mill House is edged with hellebores and pulmonaria, followed by snowdrops, crocus, narcissi and tulips, beneath the cherry blossom, rhododendron and fragrant azaleas: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/batemans](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/batemans)

March weather can be unpredictable; it can range from mild and wet to frosty sunshine, often in one day. But don't let that put you off. As the saying goes: failure to prepare, prepare to fail! Take a mac, brolly, sturdy waterproof shoes and wear layers that can be peeled off if the temperature rises. Be sure to check the websites for up-to-date information before you set off. Now, off with you and have some fun. Spring is here.

Read my latest blogs by visiting [www.garden-girl.co.uk/the-blog](http://www.garden-girl.co.uk/the-blog).



A front garden near you (Photo: Caroline Broome)



Borde Hill (Photo: Caroline Broome)

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# A blooming year ahead for the Horticultural Society

CHRISTINE GEISSMAR

After a highly successful 2025, the HGS Horticultural Society is looking forward to another busy and rewarding programme of events in 2026.

Last year saw two very well-attended flower shows, a wide range of talks and activities and notable success for society members in the prestigious London Gardens Society Awards – achievements that reflect the enthusiasm and talent within the local gardening community.

This year promises to be just as full of highlights. Members can look forward to a packed calendar of talks, workshops and trips. The full programme will appear both on the website ([www.hortsoc.co.uk](http://www.hortsoc.co.uk)) and in the Society handbook which will be available shortly to all paid-up members. In the meantime, gardeners are encouraged to note the following events early in the year:

**Luscious lawns talk:** 7pm Tuesday 3 March at Fellowship House.

Horticultural writer and broadcaster Geoff Hodge will share practical advice on lawn care and management. The evening will include welcome drinks, and members are invited to bring seeds collected from their own gardens or young plants they have propagated to swap and share.

**Would you like to know what to do with your garden hedge?:** A practical hedge workshop will be led by Frank Hawkins, Green Estate Manager for the HGS Trust. The session will focus on pruning to revive hedges that are overgrown or lack density, as well as exploring ailments and remedies and giving advice on how to plant new hedging.

One key project is the partial replanting of the much-loved Centenary Bed in front of Fellowship House, so do look out on your local walk for this revived green space.

Adding a touch of fun to the year, HortSoc is launching a potato growing competition, with prizes for the largest potato, the



Put your heart into the potato growing contest (Photo: SN library)

heaviest total crop, the greatest number grown and the most oddly shaped potato. Growing bags and seed potatoes will be provided and an official weigh-in will take place in June.

Not only are there talks and competitions, but HortSoc also organises garden visits such as a summer trip to Norfolk. In July, members can enjoy a three-day coach trip to Norfolk, featuring visits to Anglesey Abbey, Sandringham, the walled gardens of Houghton Hall and West Acre and private garden openings at East Ruston Old Vicarage and Elton Hall.

With so much planned, the HortSoc is set for another flourishing year, bringing gardeners together to learn, share and celebrate all things green.

If you have not yet joined the Society but would like to take part, you can join by emailing [membership@hortsoc.co.uk](mailto:membership@hortsoc.co.uk).

LIZ HALL

British weather is just so unpredictable – as I write this on the last day of January, summer suddenly seems to have arrived!

Time for action. Check out the seed catalogues; look more carefully at those special offers which clutter up the phone every morning. Worry about crop succession and which plants should be cut back now or left until the spring. Check the fruit cage for holes where birds can get in to steal your berries – or, in my case, start constructing a cage now!

My site, Creswick Walk, is beginning to come to life after the winter. It is a pretty site on a

PATRICIA MAJOR

The gardening notes in the last Suburb News reminded me of a rather cheeky, but surprisingly accurate, graphic about soil textures. Let's just say it's not printable here, but the diagram gives you the idea.

Hampstead Garden Suburb is built on clay and, quite literally, built from clay. Anyone who has dug more than a spade's depth will know the yellow, sticky, slimy layer lurking beneath the topsoil. It clings to boots, tools, and occasionally one's patience. But clay isn't the enemy. In fact, with a little care, it can become a gardener's greatest ally.

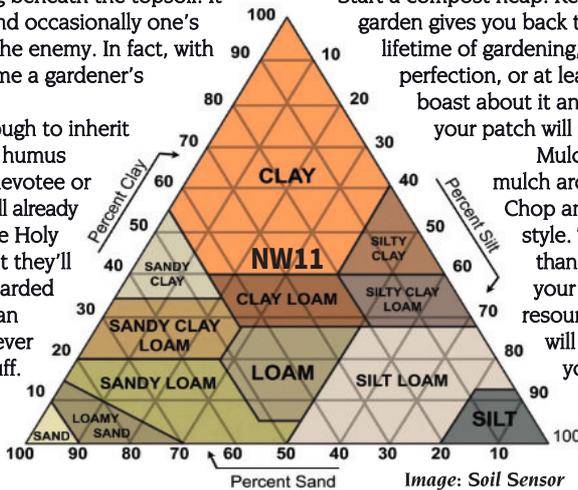
Those fortunate enough to inherit a plot once tended by a humus enthusiast, leaf-mould devotee or committed composter will already be well on the way to the Holy Grail: clay loam. Not that they'll admit it. Clay loam is hoarded like treasure, and who can blame them – you can never have too much of the stuff.

Clay supports an astonishing range of plants. Just look around the Suburb at the sheer

abundance of flora and fauna thriving in it. Clay in the Suburb is naturally acidic, which is why magnolias, camellias and rhododendrons thrive here and are poised to burst into life each spring. It holds water exceptionally well. In winter, you may see it sitting on the surface – not flooding, just a high water table. In summer, the same soil bakes hard and cracks open. Both are gentle reminders to keep adding organic matter. And always water before mulching so the goodness can actually sink in.

Start a compost heap. Return everything your garden gives you back to the soil. Over a lifetime of gardening, you may just reach perfection, or at least get close enough to boast about it and those who inherit your patch will praise you.

Mulch every season or spot mulch around thirsty plants. Chop and drop if that's your style. The method matters less than the mind-set. Treat your soil as the precious resource it is and your garden will undoubtedly reward you many times over. And if all else fails, you can always take up pottery. It has its benefits!



## Oh for a greenhouse!

gentle north-facing slope, with plots of various sizes, surrounded by grass pathways. But, like many of the local allotments, it has some serious problems, the worst two being heavy clay soil and shade cast by overgrown self-seeded trees and, remarkably, even an ancient and largely neglected hedgerow now, a century later, a 50 foot high row of mature beech trees.

Established plot-holders often kindly offer a portion of their sunny plots to newcomers who demonstrate a real interest in growing. And I was delighted to learn only recently that the Trust is in the middle of an investigation of all sites and rents throughout the Suburb, with a view to standardising rents and facilities.

When I attended the HGS Horticultural Society's AGM a few weeks ago, I was amazed by the number of children there, many of them receiving prizes and certificates for the vegetables and flowers they had entered in the Horticultural Show. They showed enormous enthusiasm, maturity and skill. The following day I went up to have a peek at the allotment created for them by Dominic Rose on ground belonging to St Jude's vicarage. It is truly wonderful – well equipped and thoughtfully organised.

And, in one respect I was green with envy. They have a most beautiful greenhouse! Allotment plot-holders on Trust land are not currently allowed one – nor even a

polytunnel. I really hope, however, that this rule will be revisited as part of the current survey, long before those green-fingered children get a plot of their own. It would make for much stronger, healthier seedlings, as well as freeing up the kitchen windowsill.



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# The Virtual Museum and our HBS Interns

JUDY SMITH

In 2019, the Trustees of the Virtual Museum decided to approach the History Department of Henrietta Barnet School to offer a collaboration between the school and the museum. We decided to offer internships to Year 12 students who were studying History at A-Level.

At that time, it was felt that the school and Hampstead Garden Suburb had very little inter-connection. The majority of the girls attending were from outside the immediate area and we believed that this involvement would provide that crucial engagement.

We also believed that the interns should be paid and we were delighted that The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust agreed to provide grants for the first four years of the scheme until such time as we could afford to fund it ourselves.

We contacted the Head of History at the school, Daniel Harbord, and so began an extremely productive relationship which is continuing to this day.

Our interns' work is seen all over the museum – there is a whole section of our WW2 Collection which features Young People & WW2: <https://hgsheritage.org.uk/Detail/collections/WW2-7-0>.

Over the six years since our scheme started, we are delighted to see such a dynamic change in the relationship between HBS and HGS. We see pupils helping Suburb residents with Tea & Tech sessions at The Free Church. And we have pupils working in their lunch hour scanning St Jude's Parish Papers from the 1940s, which will eventually appear both in the museum and on the St Jude's website. Denise Walker, Director of Studies at HBS responsible for Community Engagement, has been instrumental in organising these sessions.

We have just taken on our HBS Intern for this year and part of the selection process was to ask the candidates to view The Mirror in the Bike Shed (<https://hgsheritage.org.uk/Detail/objects/video-themirrorinthebikeshed>), and then write how they thought women's emancipation in the early 20th Century had been affected by what they learned from this wonderful lecture.



(Above) The Bike Shed  
(Above, right) The Mirror in the Bike Shed  
(Right) Willifield Green GSS prize-giving in 1939 – maintaining a degree of normality during WW2  
(All images © Virtual Museum)

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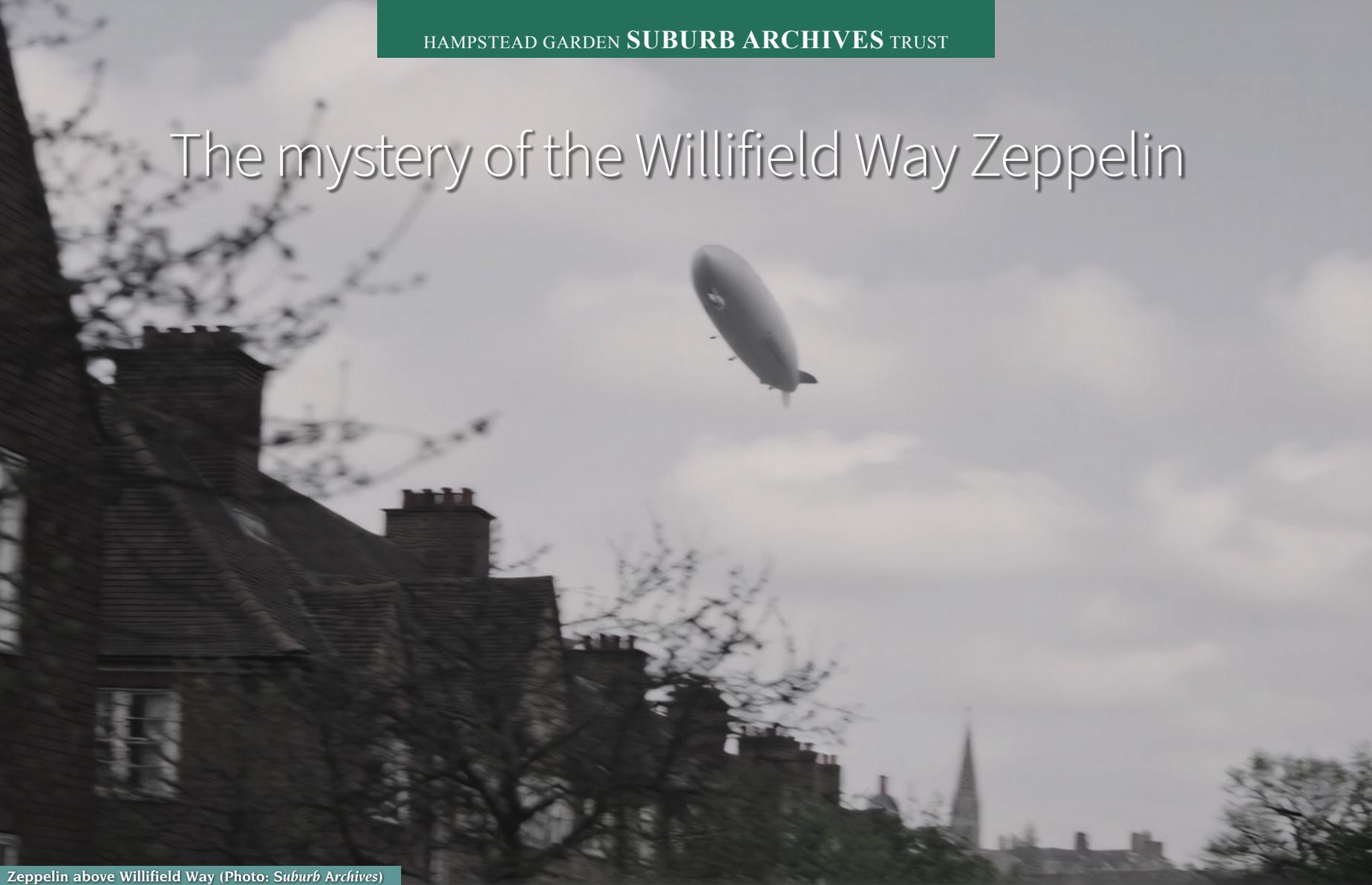
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# The mystery of the Willifield Way Zeppelin



Zeppelin above Willifield Way (Photo: Suburb Archives)

JOHN ATKIN

There is a faded and undated photograph in the Archives of an airship flying ominously over the roof tops of Willifield Way. What brought it to the Suburb? Some commentators have identified the visitor as a German Zeppelin from the First World War. During that conflict, there were nine separate bombing raids undertaken by German airships over London. The raid most likely to have involved a flight over the Suburb is the one undertaken in the third quarter of 1915 by Zeppelin L13.

Zeppelin L13 is seen by some as the mysterious visitor in the photograph because its flight path brought it in the vicinity of the Suburb. Based on German military records and British police and fire brigade reports, it can be determined that on 8 September 1915, Zeppelin L13 crossed the English coast at King's Lynn and then turned south-west to

eventually enter the London suburbs at Golders Green. It dropped two explosive and ten incendiary bombs in the area around Highfield Road and Russell Gardens before it turned right down the Finchley Road to bomb the West End, the City and the East End. No fatalities were reported in Golders Green, but the raid itself claimed 22 lives across London.

The route followed by Zeppelin L13 in September 1915 placed it close to, but not exactly in, the Suburb and so raises doubt about whether the airship in the photograph is in fact Zeppelin L13. It is possible that Zeppelin L13 may have been temporarily blown off its scheduled course, but there are other and more substantial reasons for dismissing it

The first of these is that the Willifield airship is pictured above a road in which the trees are almost entirely devoid of leaves, which would not have been the

case at the time of the air raid in early September. The second reason is that the bow, or nose, of the airship is pointing north-west towards Brent Cross and not south-east toward Zeppelin L13's bombing targets. The final reason is that a daylight photograph of the 8 September raid could not have been taken because the slow-flying Zeppelins only raided London in the dark to reduce their vulnerability to fighter attacks and anti-aircraft fire.

Almost 15 years after the Zeppelin L13 raid, another Zeppelin paid a visit, this time a peaceful one, to NW London. On 26 April 1930 the Graf Zeppelin, one of the largest airships ever built, flew to London on a circular trip from its base in Friedrichshafen, Germany. This was a purely promotional trip. The Graf Zeppelin crossed the coast at Brighton to fly northwards up to London. The highlight of its outing was an

overflight of the 1930 Cup Final between Arsenal and Huddersfield Town at Wembley Stadium, attended by King George V and watched by over 92,000 people.

This is almost certainly the airship captured in the photograph which is flying in the right direction for Wembley. Newspapers reported that the sudden appearance of the Graf Zeppelin above the football match drew a mixed response

from spectators. Some clapped in awe as they marvelled at the enormous airship flying above them, but others booed as they recalled the death and destruction inflicted on London by its wartime predecessors. One thing is certain. Arsenal supporters left the match happy. Their team won 2-0.

You can find out more about Suburb Archives by writing to [suburbarchives@gmail.com](mailto:suburbarchives@gmail.com).



An old used postcard with a view of the Zeppelin and a photo of Count Zeppelin with a description of the location and technical data of the airship: The Graf Zeppelin airship floating at a height of 800 meters above the Rhine. The airship has a length of 135 meters, a diameter of 13 meters, and holds 13,000 cubic meters of gas. The side rudders are attached to the ends of the fuselage. When fully equipped for a 30-hour journey, it still carries 2100 kilograms of ballast. Lounge and sleeping compartments are built into the connecting corridor. *Graf Zeppelin* (Photo: SN library)



## Spring at the Free Church

### EASTER:

**29 March:** Palm Sunday, 10.30am Meet in the Square for procession with St Jude's, followed by Service 11am

**2 April:** Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm Quiet service of reflection with Communion

**3 April:** Good Friday, 11am Service remembering the crucifixion of Jesus

**5 April:** Easter Sunday, 11am Christ is Risen! Service of Celebration

### REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

**Toddlers Group:** Wednesday mornings 9.45 - 11.55

**Friday lunchtime concerts:** 1pm 27 March, 24 April & 29 May

**West End Cafe:** Saturdays 10.30 - 12.30

Minister: Revd Aled Jones • The Free Church, Central Square, NW11 7AG  
[Hgsfreechurch.org.uk](http://Hgsfreechurch.org.uk) • [minister@hgsfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:minister@hgsfreechurch.org.uk) • 020 4531 2055

## Climate change or Demeter's sorrow?



day Persephone was gathering flowers and when she stooped to pick a beautiful narcissus the earth shook and a terrible noise filled the air. The ground split open in front of her and up came a black chariot pulled by four black horses driven by Hades, god of the underworld and king of the dead. He grabbed Persephone and returned to his realm. Demeter waited in vain for her daughter's return and when she did not, driven by worry and grief, she roamed across the earth looking for her and neglecting her duties so the plants withered and died thus starting the very first winter. As the world starved, Zeus was forced to intervene and sent Hermes to Hades asking for Persephone's release. Hades had no wish to lose Persephone and, because he knew that the consumption of food in the underworld bound the eater to that realm, he convinced Persephone to eat a few pomegranate seeds before allowing her to leave. Persephone's reunion with her mother made the spring happen and brought everything to life again. However she had to return to the underworld for six months – each month correlating to the extra pomegranate seeds she had eaten. Demeter's sadness during those months causes the return of winter.

The story of Persephone reassured the Ancient Greeks that spring will follow winter. To invoke science, specifically astronomy, the first day of spring is deemed to start at the Vernal Equinox when the length of the day and night are equal which this year will be on 26 March. Leaving aside for a moment Trump, global warming and science, I like to think flowering daffodils are the first sign of spring and when I shall see them my heart with pleasure will fill, to paraphrase Wordsworth.

MARIE-CHRISTINE O'CALLAGHAN

I think we can all agree when it comes to the weather it has been a miserable year so far. Rain has fallen somewhere in the UK every single day of 2026. Since the start of February, several regions including the south of England have reached or exceeded their entire February rainfall. And the skies have been relentlessly grey adding to the general feeling of morosity.

The UK's geographical positioning is a major contributing factor to its notorious bad weather. Sitting at a latitude of 50°- 60° north, the UK experiences a temperate maritime climate, this means mild temperatures throughout the year but also frequent variations of weather due to seasonal shifts. Britain is also close to the Atlantic Ocean which

sends moist air masses across the country which condense into clouds and rain. The high humidity and the concomitant cloudy skies allied to the weak sunlight make winters feel very gloomy.

High over our heads around 5 to 7 miles above the Earth's surface, a powerful ribbon of air known as the Jet Stream races from west to east. An unusually strong and southerly Jet Stream has dominated the UK these past weeks and, combined with a large temperature gradient across the Atlantic and a blocking high pressure over northeastern Europe, has contributed to the wet weather and grey skies.

Just as a ribbon of air influences our weather, there is a ribbon of sea water that also affects us. The Gulf Stream brings warm water from the Caribbean to North-West Europe which explains why Britain

experiences a warmer climate than other countries – such as Canada – at a comparable latitude. Any significant disruption to this current would have far-reaching consequences and its collapse would have a catastrophic impact on our weather and on us. Scientists have noted that the Gulf Stream has been weakening over the past two decades and have linked this to the rise in temperatures and the melting ice sheets – in other words, global warming. The last ten years have been the warmest years on record. The warmer it gets the more potential for catastrophic impacts on the planet.

On 2 February 2026, US President Donald Trump reversed a key ruling that underpins all federal actions on curbing planet-warming gases. Trump said the 2009 ruling was "a disastrous Obama era policy that severely damaged the American auto industry and massively drove up prices for American consumers," and that "This radical rule became the legal foundation for the Green New Scam, one of the greatest scams in history."

It is fairly obvious that Trump is more concerned with his version of MAGA than with climate change. This recent ruling is his latest effort to not only discredit climate evidence, but to erase it entirely. It started with the US withdrawal from the Paris agreement and the termination of the funding of the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii which produced The Keeling Curve, a daily record of global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration. This curve showed the rapid increase of greenhouse gas levels. These gases trap the heat in the atmosphere and are usually a good thing, as without them temperatures would drop as low as -18°C, too low to sustain life on Earth. Unfortunately, human

activities have dramatically increased the release of these greenhouse gases. They are now at the highest level since records began and are causing global warming and climate change. Trump's actions will have unfortunate consequences not only in the US but across the whole world as the US is the second largest carbon emitter (after China).

For now, at least, we know that winter will thankfully and inevitably give way to spring and, despite the vagaries of the British weather, we can begin to hope for brighter skies.

The Ancient Greeks didn't use science to understand their world. To them, winter was caused by Demeter's sorrow at losing her daughter Persephone for six months of the year. Demeter was the goddess of the harvest, agriculture and the very fertility of the earth. The story goes that one





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'El Rapto de Proserpina' by Ulpiano Checa, 1888 (Image: Wikimedia Commons)



## Joanna's Wine column



## Louie's Nutrition column

# Spring wines

JOANNA DABROWSKA

It seems I always wait until the last minute with all my writing, but blimey, I couldn't have chosen a better day than 1 February, under the Full Moon in Leo. Interestingly enough, the same day coincided with Imbolc, which is something native to this land that people probably know far more about than I do. After a little research, however, I discovered it marks the beginning of Spring in the Celtic calendar.

And walking past the Heath Extension, one can already see this shift. Trees are releasing their first buds and small patches of new grass are growing shyly here and there. Why am I suddenly so poetic? Well, in the wine world of the Northern Hemisphere, this is the most important time of the year.

Whilst Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and South America are harvesting their bounty, we begin to observe the buds carefully, hoping for a gentle end to winter, without frost or drastic temperature changes. You see, if frost appears at this stage – which is not unusual – and with current climate changes causing buds to emerge earlier, the plants can lose their entire bounty for the year.

I must say, when I was a casual wino, I didn't realise how much effort goes into growing grapes. I simply assumed they would grow every year. Ever since my wine studies, however, I've become increasingly fascinated by soil types, pesticides, water pollution and their effects on the vines. I'm becoming a 'hypothetical' farmer, despite having no plants aside from a few avocado and herb projects in my humble abode.

Anyway, back to wine – here are a few to try this spring:

**Vergelegen – GVB Estate Red, Stellenbosch 2017** ([www.thewinesociety.com/product/vergelegen-gvb-red-stellenbosch-2017/](http://www.thewinesociety.com/product/vergelegen-gvb-red-stellenbosch-2017/)) V is my favourite and perfectly suited for South Africa's birthday celebrations. However, to spare the wallet a little, their Estate Blend (*Cabernet Sauvignon* and *Merlot*, with a touch of *Cabernet Franc*) does the trick beautifully. Gorgeous fruit, plenty of cacao notes with age, alongside spice and subtle cigar hints. Fine-grained, silky tannins.



I suggest the 2017, which is still available at The Wine Society.

**Vergelegen - £36.**

Alternative: Waitrose - £19  
Rupert & Rothschild Vignerons Classique - [www.waitrosecellar.com/products/rupert-rothschild-vignerons-classique-981342](http://www.waitrosecellar.com/products/rupert-rothschild-vignerons-classique-981342)

**Vouvray – Sébastien Brunet Fosse Rouge** ([www.idealwine.com/en/buy-a-wine/B2110137-103950-1-bottle-Vouvray-Fosse-Rouge-Sébastien-Brunet-2022-White](http://www.idealwine.com/en/buy-a-wine/B2110137-103950-1-bottle-Vouvray-Fosse-Rouge-Sébastien-Brunet-2022-White))

One of my favourite regions in the Loire, with a delightful twist in the name. The grape is *Chenin Blanc*, yet the wine is called *Rouge* – this is where the wine detective hat comes in handy. The grapes come from 60-year-old vines planted on flinty red clay soils, hence the name. Aged in large barrels so the oak adds texture rather than aroma. Creamy, saline, beautifully floral with blossom notes and minerality. High acidity. The 2022 vintage is ready to drink now. Vouvray - £25-35 (the producer I've selected is highly sought after, and it's often difficult to get hold of the bottles, but once you do, you're in heaven).

Alternative: Majestic - £12.50  
Domaine des Aubuisières Cuvée de Perruches Vouvray 2023/24 – [www.majestic.co.uk/wines/vouvray-domaine-des-aubuisieres-05002](http://www.majestic.co.uk/wines/vouvray-domaine-des-aubuisieres-05002)

**Weybourne Estate – "Oriana Golden Spur"** ([www.veyborne.com/product-page/oriana-golden-spur-brut](http://www.veyborne.com/product-page/oriana-golden-spur-brut))

Awaiting its release, but the latest vintage is due out in spring – and from my preview, I can say it's pure fire. A brilliant example of *terroir*-driven English wine and quite collectible too. Brioche, golden apple, apricot and honeysuckle. Elegant mousse, great richness, and beautifully refreshing.

Westbourne – available at their website – £45.  
Alternative: Waitrose - £29  
Gusbourne Exclusive Release - [www.waitrosecellar.com/products/gusbourne-exclusive-release-765032](http://www.waitrosecellar.com/products/gusbourne-exclusive-release-765032)

What to eat with all these? Everything seasonal. Enjoy fresh salads and vegetables, lighter meats and beautiful simple sea-food. After all, this is exactly what we crave after winter hibernation. *Salute!*

# Are food supplements fake news?

LOUIE FISHER

Supplements have become a normal part of modern life. Protein shakes line supermarket shelves, vitamin boosters sit beside prescription medications and wellness powders promise everything from glowing skin to boundless energy.

For many people, the appeal is obvious: supplements seem like an easy way to improve health in a busy world. But understanding how to use them properly is essential if they're going to help rather than hinder.

Dietary supplements are exactly what their name suggests – supplements to the diet, not substitutes for it. They are designed to fill nutritional gaps, support specific health goals, or address deficiencies. They cannot replace the benefits of a balanced diet, regular movement, quality sleep, or stress management. When viewed realistically, supplements can be helpful tools, but they work best as part of a broader lifestyle rather than a quick fix.

Protein supplements are among the most commonly used products, and for good reason. Protein plays a key role in maintaining muscle, supporting immune function and helping the body repair itself. People who exercise regularly, older adults, or those who struggle to eat enough protein through food alone may find protein shakes useful; however, they are not inherently necessary for everyone. Someone already meeting their protein needs through meals may gain little additional benefit from extra supplementation. Used sensibly, protein powders can be a convenient addition to a meal or snack, but they shouldn't replace whole foods altogether.

Vitamins and minerals are another popular category, often taken to boost energy, immunity or overall well-being. Vitamin D, B vitamins magnesium, and iron are among the most common. While these nutrients are essential for health, taking them 'just in case' is not always beneficial. In fact, consuming high doses of certain vitamins or minerals can be harmful. Many people already get adequate amounts from food, especially if their diet includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein sources. Targeted supplementation – based on individual need rather than guesswork – is generally the safest and most effective approach. Vitamin D supplementation is recommended in the darker, winter months, but beyond that and maybe a standard multivitamin, it's best to consult with your doctor before experimenting with anything else.

Alongside traditional vitamins are the ever-growing 'wellness' supplements: greens powders, collagen products, omega-3 capsules, and herbal blends. These products often promise convenience and broad health benefits. While some can be helpful, they are best viewed as optional extras rather than essentials. Greens powders, for example, may offer some nutrients but do not replace the full benefits of eating vegetables. Omega-3 supplements can support heart and brain health, but similar benefits can often be gained from eating fatty fish. As with all supplements, quality matters and bold marketing claims should be treated with healthy scepticism – remember, natural foods are the best source of these and unless you're deficient in certain nutrients, there's often no need to use these well-marketed products.

For the average person, the most important rule is to start with food. A diet built around whole, minimally processed foods will usually provide most of the nutrients the body needs. Supplements tend to be most useful when they address a clear gap – such as low protein intake, limited sun exposure affecting

vitamin D levels, or dietary restrictions that make certain nutrients harder to obtain.

It's also wise to resist chasing trends. What works for a fitness influencer or celebrity may not be appropriate for someone with a different body, lifestyle, or health background. Products that promise rapid transformation, detoxification, or effortless weight loss rarely live up to their claims.

Listening to your body is equally important. Even 'natural' supplements can cause side effects or interact with medications. Digestive discomfort, headaches, sleep issues or changes in mood are all signs that something may not be right. When in doubt, consulting a healthcare professional such as a doctor, pharmacist, or registered dietitian, can help clarify what is necessary and safe.

Ultimately, supplements can play a role in supporting health, but they are not a substitute for the fundamentals. Consistent nourishment, movement, rest, and stress management remain the foundation of well-being. When supplements are used thoughtfully and realistically (and under professional guidance), they can enhance these habits – but they CANNOT replace them.



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# Spring cleaning: A breath of fresh air



HILARY FROHLICH

I recently discovered the concept of burping your home in winter. I beg your pardon, you may think. Before you raise an eyebrow, let me explain the ritual. Burping your home means opening all your doors and windows and letting a proper blast of air whoosh through the house. It clears the cobwebs without dragging out all the heat you've been hoarding since November. Think of it as a quick exhale for your stuffy winter home and the perfect way to kick off your spring clean.

Spring-cleaning is traditionally a thorough deep clean we're supposed to tackle when the daffodils appear. It's about clearing winter dust, de-cluttering and giving your space a refresh. In today's world, where we're all juggling so much, it's ok to do your spring clean over a period of time. It's less overwhelming, more productive and far more likely to actually get done.

You can start by creating a checklist of each specific area you want to tackle. As you go, you'll find ticking things off your list is genuinely satisfying.

Start somewhere manageable that will have a big visual impact. Perhaps it's the pile of newspapers beside the sofa, board games your children outgrew years ago, or the infamous junk drawer where things go in and never come out! You don't need to clean an entire room in one session but do get into corners, de-clutter and re-organise as you go. As you work through each space, ask yourself: could a new storage solution make life easier here? Drawer organisers can transform chaotic drawers. Baskets on shelves contain the bits and pieces. Small changes, big difference.

The bigger jobs during a spring clean include taking down and washing nets and curtains, dusting shutters (every slat, joy of joys), and cleaning pillows and bedding. Make sure to always follow the washing instructions. If you're short on time, an in-between solution is to spray fabric freshener and air your linens outdoors. Not quite as virtuous, but take the wins where you can. Don't forget, in our Suburb homes with fabulous old windows, condensation is not our friend. Clear items in front of windows regularly; a few minutes wiping

moisture can keep mould at bay and help them last longer.

The kitchen deserves special attention. Dispose of food items that have overstayed their welcome. Ensure cereals, flour, and sugar are properly sealed to stop unwanted visitors moving in and remember to do the freezer. How many times have you popped something in there thinking "I'll eat that another time," only to discover it fossilised six months later? Be ruthless.

Under the sink is another forgotten space. Whether you've embraced one all-purpose cleaner or you're housing an array of cleaning potions, keep open bottles at the front and use them first. Clear boxes are brilliant for organising your cleaning products. You can simply lift them out to clean the grime under the sink.

Finally, the garage, shed or loft – the black holes where things go to retire. For each item, ask yourself: has anyone used this in the last year? Are they likely to? Why am I keeping this? Be honest.

One of my favourite rituals at the start of spring-cleaning is planting a pot for my little container garden. As the bulbs show through, I can't wait to see the gorgeous flashes of colour. It's a refresh inside and outside, a promise that winter is coming to an end.

Once you've tackled your first job, everything else starts to feel more manageable. So go on, give your home a good burp. Spring is round the corner.

Hilary Frohlich runs Neat Home, a service that helps people organise and de-clutter. Contact: [hilary@neathome.uk](mailto:hilary@neathome.uk) 07768 327965



Photos: Hilary Frohlich

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