

News

Cabinet approves welcome strategy for newly arrived residents

— Page 4

News

Members of the community protest eviction order placed on High Road venue

— Page 5

Education

Local schools and colleges shine a spotlight on their latest news

— Page 10–12

Comment

Kamaria Brown Whittingham shares what she learned from her jury service experience

— Page 13

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Local news that matters to you

Disabled resident ‘failed’ by the system Housing allocations process called into question



Elisa Perez-Sphar Credit Neil Littman

By Luchia Robinson

A man whose partner died whilst waiting to be re-housed says disabled residents are being let down.

Neil Littman, a designer from

Winchmore Hill, was both co-carer and next of kin to Tottenham resident, Elisa Perez-Sphar before she passed away from a cardiac arrest, aged 41, in December 2019.

Elisa, who suffered multiple health needs, including Chronic

Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and heart damage was housed in a bedsit in Nicholson Court, High Road Tottenham. Neil says the temporary accommodation, was in disrepair; it had damp, vermin, and limited space.

“There just wasn’t room for Elisa to have a normal life. She didn’t have a separate bedroom or privacy, she had to eat her meals sitting on the bed, she had a kitchen that she couldn’t use because it had no ventilation and no windows, so basically, she was trapped,” said Neil.

“Despite these points, we couldn’t get acknowledgement that the living situation was unsuitable, and in the end, her housing was deemed adequate, which I think is a bit of a misleading term.”

Elisa was unable to walk and used a wheelchair. She was taking multiple medications and was dependent on oxygen to help her breathe.

In November 2018, Neil and Elisa approached the council to change Elisa’s priority status on the housing register from Band C position to Band A, which in part, applies to applicants who: need to move urgently because of a critical medical or welfare need, including emergencies; tenants who are occupying a specially adapted home and are willing to transfer to a home that is more appropriate to their needs; and tenants who require extensive disabled facilities that can be provided more appropriately in alternative accommodation.

Letters sent to Neil last year from property management organisation, Homes for Haringey, reject applications made for reviews of Elisa’s housing status; each concluding that no medical priority applied.

Neil says the last assessment, was conducted at the start of November 2019 by an occupational therapist who visited the flat. Up until then, previous assessments of Elisa’s circumstance had been conducted without anyone seeing the

“We couldn’t get acknowledgement that the living situation was unsuitable”

bedsit. He says he and Elisa received phone calls two weeks later (a fortnight before Elisa’s passing), from the occupational therapy team, again expressing that a medical priority did not apply.

Following this assessment, Neil said: “I phoned a week later and sent a document with a lot of new photographs that I took of the property, including new equipment that had been put in there by North Middlesex Hospital. It was so obvious that you couldn’t live in the place properly – it was an obstacle course.

“There was actually a machine in the hall that you’d trip over every time you came into the property, and two oxygen cylinders as well as the other equipment. It was a joke really.”

“This is why I feel so angry. I feel the council are operating a system that cannot be penetrated.”

Neil added: “I think the priority of the council has changed; they have become less helpful to people who are disabled.”

Band A status is awarded by the council when there is a critical medical need, including when the applicant’s condition is life threatening and the existing accommodation is a major contributory factor,

Continued on Page-3

Have your say! Take part in our readers’ survey: Visit tottenhamcommunitypress.co.uk/survey

WELCOME

Steadfast In Difficulties

February 2020
N°. 31

At Tottenham Community Press we believe that Tottenham deserves a newspaper that is written by and for local people, and which celebrates community in all its diversity. We believe that local news brings people together around the issues that matter most to them and ensures everyone can have a voice in local decision-making. Now more than ever we believe that the media should be responsive and accountable to the community it serves.

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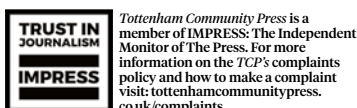
Aerial view with Spurs Stadium by Mustafa Suleman

To see more, turn to pages 8-9



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Hello and welcome to issue 31. This month's front page story looks at the case of Tottenham resident Elisa Perez-Sphar, a local woman whose health and housing circumstances heavily impacted upon her life, prior to her recent passing (p.1 and 3).

We highlight what has been happening at our local schools and colleges in the Educational Spotlight (p.10-12). Pupils from St Pauls and All Hallows Gospel Choir tell us about how singing has helped increase

their confidence, and Haringey Sixth Form College share how the improvements made to the facilities benefit their students.

We would like to hear your perspectives of Tottenham, particularly if you are aged 10-18. Let us know what matters to you by pitching a story idea about what's happening in your area, school, sixth form or college. Send your pitch to: tcp@socialspider.com.

Police have recently launched a new appeal for the 2018 murder

of Tottenham teenager, Tanesha Melbourne-Blake. They want to hear from anyone who may have any knowledge of who was involved, and any leads can be made anonymously (p.3).

Kamaria Brown Whittington describes her experience of being summoned to jury service. She lets us know what this meant for her, and the wider relevance of the civic responsibility.

Our Frocking cancer diarist, Kaz Foncette celebrates her

'cancerversary' alongside fellow locals who have been affected by cancer (p.7), and on page 14, Karin Lock reviews, Golden Child by Claire Adam.

If you would like to submit a story idea, review, illustration, photography, comment, a letter or opinion. Send all details to tcp@socialspider.com, for consideration. We welcome your contributions.

Luchia Robinson
Editor

NEWS

Community

Dance academy and local charity receive funds for their respective projects

Page 6

and when the medical condition is expected to become terminal within a period of 12 months and re-housing is needed to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care.

Neil said: "Elisa's COPD was life threatening. The fact that she had a London Ambulance emergency procedure guide on the back of her front door was evidence of this. North Middlesex respiratory department had already given her a life expectancy of 4-5 years in 2015.

"There were at least two or three appeal processes, and we failed on each occasion. In every case we weren't told what the problem was, just that the evidence wasn't good enough, it's not compelling enough."

"We had letters of support from everybody who counted. Elisa also had a respiratory nurse from Whittington Hospital who visited at home, and saw the circumstances that she was living in. There was a hell of a lot of people on Elisa's side."

Neil added: "The council ensure that people are put in the position

where they have to find out what to do by default. It's like going into a room, switching the lights off, and trying to find your way with a torch, although not having a torch at all, and not being given any assistance to work out: what the system is; why you would qualify; or what reasonable expectations are."

He added: "I feel the council failed in the duty of care for a vulnerable adult. Despite the amount of evidence that they were presented with, they chose to ignore it, or judge it on a system which was not really fit for purpose."

In response to our queries, the council explained its medical assessment process and the role – since 2011/12 – of independent medical advisors, while also outlining the systems they have in place for vulnerable people. They did not respond specifically to any points raised in this case.

A spokesperson said: "Haringey Council extends its deepest condolences to Ms Perez-Sphar's loved ones."



Oxygen cylinders Credit Neil Littman



Credit Neil Littman

Continued From Page 1

Police launch new investigation into murder of Tanesha Melbourne-Blake

Detectives investigating the murder of 17-year-old Tanesha Melbourne-Blake in Tottenham in 2018 have linked the gun used to kill her to another murder.

Forensic tests on the bullet recovered from her body have shown the same handgun was also used to kill another local victim, Joseph Williams-Torres. Detectives believe it was a "gun to hire" circulating in the local area for at least a year.

Joseph, 20, died on 14th March 2018 on Essex Close in Walthamstow, in a case of mistaken identity. His three killers were jailed for life last month and the handgun, a Czech-made Browning with its serial number removed, was found



The burnt out suspect vehicle Credit Metropolitan Police

wrapped in a towel inside a bag by a member of the public on Tudor Close N6 on 19th May 2018.

Tanesha was with friends when she was shot from a vehicle on Chalgrove Road, N17 shortly before 21:35pm on 2nd April 2018. Tragically she did not survive the attack and died at the scene.

Detective Chief Inspector Neil John, Specialist Crime, said: "Fortunately this very dangerous weapon is now off the streets but we believe it was a 'gun to hire' in the local area from at least May 2017. It killed two people and we know it was also used in three other crimes.

"We believe those who shot Tanesha are involved in separate gang activity and she died as the result of ongoing territory disputes in the area. Tanesha had no links to gangs whatsoever.

"I understand that people may feel concerned about coming forward in these circumstances but we will treat all information in confidence. I strongly believe there are people in the local community who know who killed Tanesha and I would urge them to come forward.

"It is almost two years since Tanesha was murdered but regardless of the passage of time we remain relentless in our search to

bring her killers before the courts."

Tanesha died just 13 weeks before her 18th birthday. She regularly attended Bruce Grove Youth Space, volunteering to become a mentor to other young people and was hoping to become a qualified youth worker. Friends and colleagues described her as having a "bubbly personality" and someone who "lit up a room"

"I strongly believe there are people in who know who killed Tanesha and I would urge them to come forward"

with her presence.

The vehicle used in the shooting was a grey/silver Vauxhall Meriva people carrier with blacked out rear windows and the registration number KS56 NKG. Detectives know it was parked under Martlesham House on the Broadwater Farm Estate between Thursday, 22nd and Sunday, 25th March 2018. Officers don't know where it

was kept or used between 25th March and Tanesha's murder on 2nd April.

The suspect who fired the shots is described as a black male with a "slit or two in his left eyebrow", probably a pattern shaven in. He wore black clothing, including black gloves.

The Vauxhall Meriva was found burnt out at Ludgrove Court on Fordham Road in Barnet on 7th April 2018 – detectives think it was left parked somewhere after Tanesha was shot.

Tanesha's mum said: "I just want people to come forward to say what they know, it's heart-breaking. Tanesha was innocent and had lots going for her, a lot of goals and dreams. Everyone at the youth club loved her and it broke a lot of the children's hearts, up till now they can't believe what's happened. Tanesha was not somebody who got herself into problems. She had friends all over, she was always a peacemaker."

There have been five arrests made so far as part of the investigation.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the police incident room in the strictest confidence on **020 8358 0100**, tweet **@MetCC** or stay anonymous by contacting the charity Crimestoppers: **0800 555 111** – they will not ask your name or trace your call.

You can also visit **www.fearless.org** to pass on information anonymously about Tanesha's murder and any other crime.

Credit Stephan Furner

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NEWS

Photography

Tottenham Photography Club
display different parts of TottenhamPage
7-8

Credit Stephen Furner

Possession order issued for T Chances

Property owners and community members clash over High Road venue

By Luchia Robinson

A possession order of 399-401 High Road, Tottenham (also known as T Chances), saw members of the community evicted from the property last month.

People gathered to protest outside the community venue, just days after the possession order, which was carried out on the behalf of The Tottenham War Services Institute (TWSI) – the freehold owners of the property.

TWSI say the possession order was the result of seeking months of legal advice for ‘illegal occupation of the building by person or persons falsely claiming to be the rightful management, and/or acting on behalf of the legal freeholders.’

A statement from the TWSI read: ‘A campaign of harassment was started by the group who broke into and occupied the building, claiming to be a ‘steering committee.’ Local groups have since been encouraged to pay to use parts of the property. Building infrastructure, health and safety, and other essential responsi-

bilities were ignored.’

The TWSI says documents and valuable property was deliberately removed, destroyed and publicly distributed without authority, and that full reports of these losses and events have been submitted to the police.

The TSWI assert that the group – using the names Tottenham War Services Institute Steering Committee and New Chances Group – broke into the property in January 2018, taking control of the ground floor, ultimately compromising the venue’s programme of support for local vulnerable people and those with mental health difficulties.

The Tottenham War Services Steering Committee refutes these claims. The committee refers to itself as being a community group committed to ensuring that the property benefits the inhabitants of Tottenham.

The group say that community control is being prevented and that there needs to be a transparent community process for administering the space. They are calling for: the TWSI trustees to resign and be replaced with highly skilled local residents; for the building to be regularly

as the original court order had been dismissed, and that another claim had been filed by the TWSI in a different court.

He added: “They illegally enforced this occupation, at 5.00am, with everybody thrown out on the streets.

“There’s nobody in the building that’s unknown, the building has been open for weddings, funerals, receptions, and seminars for the last two years. The building hasn’t seen any of the trustees for the last two years – there’s no paperwork, no letters, all we’ve got is this eviction.

“The only letter that they’ve [sent] states that they want to go inside the building to have it checked out for safety, so it won’t open till further notice.”

According to TWSI, the building remains legally closed pending a health and safety, surveyor’s review, by all authorities, the head-leaseholder and Footsteps Academy – a school for young people excluded from mainstream education, who were using the building at a non-commercial rate.

Captain Rizz refutes these claims saying: “There is no problem with safety, we’ve had fire checks in there, we’ve had safety officers in there. The school upstairs has had OFSTED in there, so it is all totally legitimate – it is not being squatted.”

“The main trustee gave us the right to be in the building. There are two licensee holders and there’s also community workers. All-in-all there are about 10 people that are allowed to be in the building legally. The trustees are saying we’re squatters, their aim is to get everybody out of the building, to close it for ‘x’ amount period of time, and then board it up and sell it to property developers.

He added: “I was asked to help out in 399 by the trustees, but this basically started with me realising that things were not quite right.

“All around the country this is happening. My aim is to get an injunction put on councils or property developers buying or getting hold of community land or community assets.

“I think this is the next stage to stop this from happening to all of our community centres because the fight is endless.”

“The fight is endless”

accessible to Tottenham; and for there to be no deals with property developers.

Captain Rizz, a local community worker and committee representative, says the enforced injunction was in breach of a court order issued in 2018 by Edmonton County Court, which allows lawful tenants and licensees into the building. He says the eviction was in contempt of court,



Credit Stephen Furner

COMMUNITY

Taking giant dance steps

Local dance project funded by The Mayor's Young Londoners Fund

Dance Academy, Streetz Ahead are amongst the second-round recipients for funding from The Mayor's Young Londoners Fund for their project Dance Giants.

Children from Tottenham primary schools: Earlsmead, Seven Sisters, Willow, St Francis and Risley will be involved in Dance Giants; a street and breakdance mentoring programme for children aged between 9 and 14.

The dance project, which aims to build emotional resilience and wellbeing in young people's lives, sees mentors acting as role models to the young people – sharing their own experiences of how the arts helped

them overcome difficulties to make a success of their own lives.

The fund will work with 100 children each year and run for 3 years. Weekly activity sessions will include high intensity breakdance and street dance training. Group mentoring sessions will build a toolbox of coping strategies and creative work will develop confidence and self-esteem.

The young people will work towards an end of year production at The Bernie Grant Arts Centre to celebrate their achievements and progression.

Linda Sarr, Headteacher at Risley Primary School, said: "It is wonderful to be able to offer our pupils the opportunity to take part in the Dance

Giants programme.

"The children were very excited when they were asked if they would like to take part and for many, the fact it was free, meant that they would be able to attend. The concept of combining street dance with mentoring to boost confidence and self-esteem will no doubt have a positive impact for our students. They can't wait to get their t-shirts and to see themselves performing on stage!

"Our only regret is that it can't be offered to more children as we have many that would love to take part and would certainly benefit not just in terms of fitness but also their overall well-being."

"Combining street dance with mentoring to boost self-esteem will no doubt have a positive impact for our students"



Credit Carly Michael



Credit Natalie Gee



CARIS staff and volunteers

Tottenham charity gets funding to feed the homeless

Charity CARIS Haringey has been awarded £110,000 to help feed the borough's homeless.

City Bridge Trust, the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, awarded the money to pay for the charity's food parcel project.

Funding will also cover an advice service helping people at risk of homelessness and living in poverty, fleeing domestic abuse, or accessing benefits.

Haringey has 3,000 homeless families and 5,000 children living in temporary accommodation – one of the highest rates in any UK borough.

Last year CARIS Haringey saw a rise in demand for its services, with 100 new referrals.

Dhruv Patel, Chairman of the City of London Corporation's City Bridge Trust Committee, said: "Homelessness is increasing across the capital and it is bigger than the resources of any one authority.

"Our grant to CARIS Haringey will help give the borough's homeless population access to the help they so desperately need.

"Together we are supporting vulnerable people to have a better future, providing advice and access to

life-changing services."

Gloria Saffrey-Powell, Director of CARIS Haringey, said: "We see many families living in the private sector in unsecure accommodation at the mercy of unscrupulous landlords.

"Over the past year, we have helped hundreds of these families in different ways.

"Our legal advice and advocacy is a lifeline and our English classes help parents to gain crucial skills.

"We enable children to learn and play through drop-ins, a mobile toy library, summer play schemes, and Christmas

parties. Our food parcels are vital to ensure no child goes hungry."

CARIS Haringey has been working with homeless families since the 1990s and has been a key voluntary

sector partner to the London Borough of Haringey over this time.

City Bridge Trust is the funding arm of the City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estates. It is London's biggest independent grant giver, making grants of £20 million a year to tackle disadvantage across the capital. The Trust has awarded around 8,000 grants totalling over £400m since it first began in 1995.

"Together we are supporting vulnerable people to have a better future"

COMMUNITY

Youth

Helen Swinyard reviews books
shortlisted for the BiblioBuzz award

Page
15

The Frocking Cancer Diary: Heroes Coffee Club

By Kaz Foncette

Last month was a fresh start for most people. New goals set, bucket lists created, and dry January in full motion. Veganuary was trialled by our north London carnivores, bank balances were a thing to avoid looking at, but for me, it was the month to mark my cancer anniversary – a time to celebrate our first local cancer support get together, and a moment to reflect on the twelve months that had passed by.

You probably know that I was diagnosed with a breast cancer recurrence on the 16th January 2019, and I can't believe that it is all over. Again.

Yes, the last twelve months actually wasn't a dream, truth be told for the most part it was what one may consider 'an absolute nightmare', but closing off the year with an afternoon tea at T on the Green in Bruce Castle Park, surrounded by local people living with cancer, reminded me to never ever give up! To take what life throws at you and throw it right back, and if life keeps throwing things at you then you need to learn to like tennis.

As a 33-year-old, being told you have



Cancer anniversary – a time to celebrate! Credit: Carol Hebbs

"February for me marks a much-needed new beginning – a new season on the horizon"

cancer twice in two years, you would feel as though life was being unfair, that it was being stolen away from you; but actually, with all the people I have been able to support, it has felt like the complete opposite.

February for me marks a much-needed new beginning – a new season on the horizon. Saying 'Happy New Year' has finally stopped and my failing heart, (which I mentioned a few publications ago), has started healing.

February also sees the start of 'Heroes Coffee Club'. Haringey's first, regular drop in coffee morning (hosted by my charity, Wigs for Heroes at T on the Green), that brings members of our cancer community together for a few hours of escape and good cake – something other than needles and scans.

My new year's resolutions? Life is too short, buy the shoes, eat the cake.

Heroes Coffee Club: Friday 28th February, 10am–12 at T on the Green Tea Rooms, Bruce Castle Park Pavilion, Bruce Castle Park, Lordship Lane, N17 8NJ. This is a drop in morning for anyone affected by cancer.

More information about Heroes Coffee Club or Wigs for Heroes

Visit linktr.ee/WigsForHeroes

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PHOTOGRAPHY





Photographs by Tottenham Photography Club



Top left: *Tottenham Lock* by Mustafa Suleman
Top right: *Bruce Grove Station* by Byron Delgado
Bottom left: *Bridge in Lordship Recreation Ground* by Joan Curtis
Bottom right: *Bruce Castle Park* by Dawid Gibek

EDUCATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Choral sound

How singing at a Christmas concert increased the confidence of the St Paul's and All Hallows' C of E School Gospel Choir



Taking centre stage Credit Brenna Duncan

By Vanessa Amoah, Folashade Agarawu, Dahlia Francis & Kyana Kalungi, singers in the Gospel Choir

The Princes Foundation Christmas Carol Concert took place at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge last December.

The Princes Foundation provides a broad range of innovative educational programmes such as traditional arts and engineering for individuals.

It works with many communities around the world and transforms the lives of less fortunate children throughout the UK.

Paul is our gospel choir teacher, and to join you must audition and be in years 3 to 6.

You have to be determined and want to learn to sing. We normally practice on a Friday. We learn different songs and then sing as a choir and sometimes we sing

solos. We aren't quitters so we keep practising until we are good and help support each other.

Dahlia said: "We've been through some good times, and times when we have struggled to learn a song or feel afraid about singing, but this doesn't worry us anymore."

To prepare for the concert we had to rehearse every week and, if you were a soloist, sometimes we had lessons by ourselves.

We were invited to sing because the Trust have enjoyed our past performances and we are always so well behaved. We have met lots of different celebrities who all like our singing. Some of the people we have met and who have spoken to us are: Benedict Cumberbatch, Amanda Holden, Lenny Henry, Adrian Lester and Prince Charles.

Folashade said: "From this experience, I've learnt that if you keep on believing you'll be able to succeed. I'm enjoying being in the

Gospel Choir because every day my voice is getting better.

If you haven't heard our choir sing you should, you would be amazed and impressed with our singing.

Kyana said: "This experience has taught me how to project my voice so that I sing and do not hold back. It has also taught me how

to enjoy singing, to feel free and to enjoy the experience. Singing in the concert and having a solo part really had an impact on my confidence and has helped me to become braver when singing in front of people."

Kyana said: "We are a bunch of talented pupils and I hope we all continue to sing and keep that talent and never throw it away."

Dahlia added: "We have all learned from this experience and we are lucky to have these opportunities. This has had a big impact on me. I have grown in confidence and I now have a big voice."

"This experience has taught me how to project my voice so that I sing and do not hold back"

Broadening our minds

Collaborative film project sparks a wealth of creativity

By Felicia Rock, Child & Family Liaison Officer

Last year, The Brook Special Primary School, created a 30-minute Christmas film in collaboration with schools from Waltham Forest, France, Spain, Greece and Sweden, as part of the Erasmus+ KA229 Music-Drama and Movement project.

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education and training, which runs from 2014 to 2020. Through Erasmus+, UK schools can access funding for life-changing international activities via the School Exchange Partnerships. This includes staff training and teaching assignments in the international partner schools, which provides opportunities for the exchange of best practice.

All 114 pupils at The Brook Spe-

cial School were involved in this film project, which had the main objective of promoting the social inclusion of pupils from different backgrounds, by using music, drama and movement.

The pupils learned how to write a short play, act, perform, film and create a puppet show. They also learnt about improvisation and multicultural celebration, and how films and performance relate to cultural heritage, raising awareness of: empathy; the importance of inclusion; equal opportunities; global learning; protecting the environment, and friendship.

Parents, governors and friends were invited to the premiere of the film, *The Man who Banned Christmas*, last December. The film, which explores how Christmas is a time for sharing and caring for others, was greeted with enthusiasm. Feedback was very



Pupils perform at The Mall, Wood Green Credit Maria Preftitsi

positive – it was as exciting as a BAFTA award ceremony!

Our school will host the project partners from France, Spain, Greece and Sweden from 21–24th April. Parents and governors will be invited to attend workshops, seminars, teach shadowing and meet-

ings, which will take place at school.

This collaborative project is important because it broadens our children's minds, allowing them to understand and celebrate other cultures and customs, as well as forging worldwide friendships. It also develops their creativity, imagina-

tion and community responsibility.

This project helps our children to realise that although they might struggle with expressing themselves effectively, they have many gifts and talents that they can use to benefit other people. It is also a great deal of fun!

EDUCATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Ten LAET students receive Oxbridge offers

Offers from Oxford and Cambridge Universities have been made to ten current Year 13 students at London Academy of Excellence Tottenham (LAET) for the next academic year, starting this September.

The state-funded sixth form, based within the Tottenham Hotspur stadium development scheme, is sponsored by the football club and Highgate School who, together with support from eight leading partner schools (including Alleyn's, Chigwell, Haberdashers' Aske's Boys', Harrow, John Lyon, Mill Hill, North London Collegiate and St Dunstan's), deliver expert teaching.

Using a selective recruitment model, the LAET prioritises local students most likely to benefit from an academically-rigorous curriculum and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Having opened its doors in September 2017, its first cohort received their A-Level results last summer, with more than half winning places at Russell Group Universities – this compares to just 1% of all school students in Tottenham for the last academic year before LAET opened (2016-17).

The latest Oxbridge offers to LAET students have been made across a

wide range of subjects, including Medicine, English, Languages, Maths, Engineering, Geography and History.

Jan Balon, Headteacher said: "We are incredibly proud of our Oxford and Cambridge trailblazers as we are of those students with offers for such a range of elite universities in the UK and abroad. They are proving that with the right support and resources, relative economic disadvantage need not be a barrier to academic success."

LAET is based on the successful model of the first LAE in Stratford, which earned the title 'Eton of the East End' thanks to collaboration with top public schools, including Eton itself.

Adam Pettitt, Head of Highgate School, the principal education sponsor

said: "It's great that, in the place for academic rigour, ten young Tottenham students have come up against the brightest in the land and won places at two of this country's most elite universities."

"Their brilliant success shows just how much partnership between schools can achieve. I'm sure that Oxford, Cambridge and Whitehall will notice just what a difference schools like LAET, working with their local independent schools, are making to social mobility."

"Their brilliant success shows just how much partnership between schools can achieve"



Students with their offer letters and Spurs defender, Ben Davies
Credit: Tottenham Hotspur

Credit: Rap Interiors



Haringey Sixth Form College looks to the future

Innovative improvements made to college facilities

2020 marks a new window of opportunity for Haringey Sixth Form College.

Last year was phenomenal. The college expanded and completely refurbished to accommodate an exponential increase in student numbers over the last four years. Classrooms were extended and renovated to meet the demands of the modern student.

Studies show that a positive environment impacts on productivity, motivation, focus and success. Now the Haringey Sixth Form experience is nothing short of astonishing, and the college's facilities are in high demand from communities in Tottenham and across Haringey.

Now, the question is – What is the ambition for this College of the future, and how will it realise that vision?

The possibilities are endless! Students are at the heart of all we do, and we have decided to further expand our facilities this year by increasing access to technology in the Innovation Centre, along with upgrading and refurbishing front of house and the washroom facilities, to continue to positively impact our learners.

We are constantly striving for excellence in everything we do. The college makes a valuable contribution across the communities it serves, through projects such as Tottenham University, and by supporting local businesses through the Tottenham Charter.

We have already achieved so much: a massive increase in

student numbers; higher student satisfaction and performance; and increased collaboration and partnership work.

Now is not the time to relax! The Haringey Sixth Form College experience is much more than achieving qualifications, it is learning skills for life.

Open Events:

- Wednesday 12th February 2020 – start times at 4pm, 5pm, 6pm
- Saturday 7th March 2020 – start times at 10am, 11am, 12pm

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COMMENT

My jury summons experience

By Kamaria Brown Whittingham

Knife crime is such a commonly raised concern in Tottenham that shirking jury duty would have meant ignoring a burning concern.

I received jury summons last June, in the limbo between finishing my degree and the graduation ceremony. I was doing administartion at a local doctor's surgery and bar-

tending, so jury service posed an intriguing but disruptive change of pace.

The standard period for jury service is two weeks. The first day I arrived at

Wood Green Crown Court, I was called as one of 15 people taken to a case but wasn't randomly selected as one of the twelve jurors.

On the second day I was assigned

a case that stretched over eight working days, starting after 10.00 am and leaving before 4.00pm. The process was well-guided and they paid me promptly after the case concluded. Despite the for-giving schedule, and the mundane moments shuffling in and out of the court room for points of law to be ironed out, there was real gravitas to the event.

Any personal disruption of mine

seemed minor after the clerk read out the charges (assault with intent and carrying a blade), and the prosecution began to outline their facts of the case.

We had to listen to the evidence presented by the prosecution and defence. Afterwards we left the room and deliberated – this was the first time we jurors could discuss the case.

In this group of twelve strangers I nominated myself as forewoman, the leader of the discussion, and was accepted. After two hours without a unanimous decision the judge gave us leave to return a majority verdict. The defendant sobbed when I proclaimed that we had found him not guilty.

Though I have reservations about the justice system, I learned that I owe it to my community to contribute wholeheartedly for the sake of those caught up in it. Representing my community was empowering and I would happily do it again despite any inconvenience.

Speaking with other jurors I was struck by the importance of empathy and life experience in just understanding the evidence, let alone passing judgement.

I'd encourage anyone called to take the opportunity to improve Tottenham by adding to a diversity of experience in the jury box so we can make the legal system work better for us all.



Kamaria Brown Whittingham Credit Ellis Nankervis

“I owe it to my community to contribute wholeheartedly for the sake of those caught up in it”



ethical PROPERTY | The Green House

WORKSPACE FOR CHANGEMAKERS

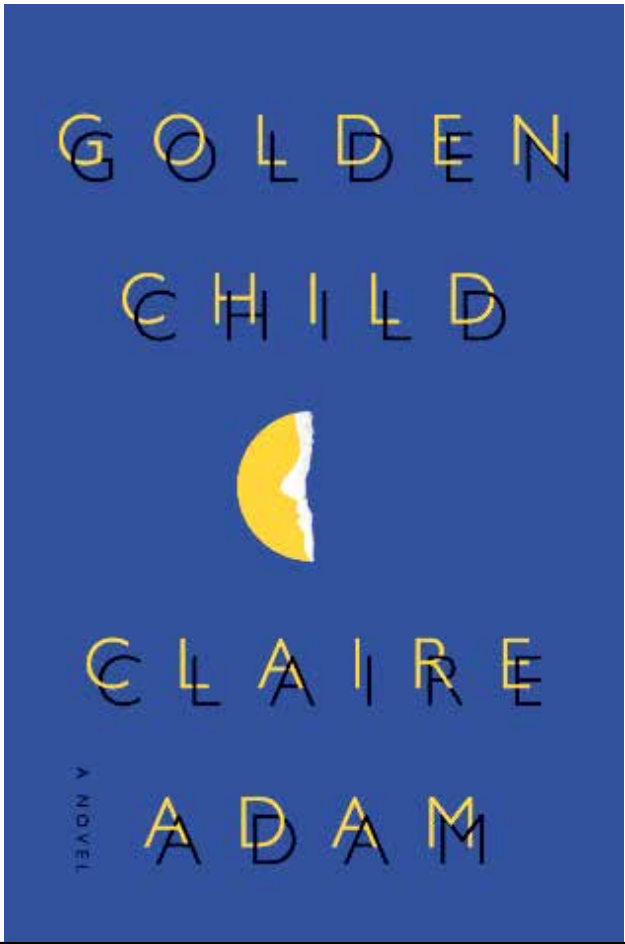
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LITERATURE

All that glitters



By Karin Lock

Listed as one of the world’s most inspiring books by a recent BBC panel, *Golden Child* is a stunning debut by London-based writer Claire Adam. A master class in dramatic tension and understated lyricism, this slim volume offers an absorbing portrayal of a rural Trinidadian family torn apart by jealousy, greed and ambition. The opening night-time scene surrounds us with the sounds and smells of the pitch-black rainforest. Clyde Deyalsingh is looking for his missing twelve-year-old son Paul. He is in a state of high alert yet seems more concerned about his security dogs than his own son. Gradually we are being drawn into an intrigue we do not fully understand. Paul has always struggled in school because of an unspecified learning disability, yet he is intrinsically knowledgeable about the natural world. He is very different to his twin brother Peter – the

‘golden child’ of the title – who is destined for great things if he can only win the island’s most prestigious scholarship. So begins a story that says a lot without stating the obvious. The novelist evokes a sense of place through naturalistic dialogue and geographical references. This is an environment where tradition and modernity exist side-by-side. Neighbours will look out for each other but nepotism is essential for economic and social mobility. The non-linear narrative moves between Clyde, Paul and Father Kavanagh (who teaches at the twins’ school). Clyde’s own lack of schooling partly explains his over-emphasis on educational success. On a societal level, this obsession comes from the expectation that children who do well academically will provide for their families. Conversely, those with a disability are considered a burden. Through her main characters, author Claire Adam is representing different views of masculinity

– one of the novel’s main themes. She is preparing her readers for the complex moral dilemmas we will read about. We are also being warned about the dangers of ‘labelling’ and how this can negatively shape our identities. The wider family dynamics and social hierarchies in *Golden Child* are a prism through which Adam analyses her island’s reality. Trinidad is an oil-rich nation but that wealth has never trickled down to the general populace. Money is a constant preoccupation in the novel yet paradoxically wealth does not provide immunity against the daily threat of violence. *Golden Child* is a bold book that does not shy away from uncomfortable truths. The aftermath of the 1990 coup was a loss of trust in government and authority. The elites closed ranks; political corruption increased; unemployment and crime skyrocketed. As a result, the fear of societal breakdown is never far from people’s minds.

POETRY CORNER

The Less Revered
by Elizabeth Adams

Aristarchus, old friend, I celebrate you!
But how many today realise your worth?
For your brave idea – so simple, yet new –
That our Sun is the centre, not Earth.
Alfred Wallace, so near publication,
How did you feel when, the long years spent,
The awaited tome on Evolution
Emerged from a ‘Thinking Path’ in Kent?
Himalayan smiles from May ’53,
But reaching the summit proved tough.
As the first turned back, did they agree
That being part of the team was enough?
Thus, the first Spring buds give gradual way
To the fullness of blooms on a Summer’s day

Red Balloon
by Christina Egan

In the crowd,
in the too early dark,
the enveloping damp, I rush,
crush onto the red bus, and there,
on the front bench, you are, as if waiting
for me, or at least hoping for me, with a smile,
a wide warm smile, just like the one you gave me
nineteen years ago, with the same smooth oval face;
and our words change the day into a string of pearls,
change the city into a cluster of colourful balloons;
in the damp dark evening, I feel the sun rising,
feel a breeze rising, taking my heart with it,
like a little red balloon, weightless,
into shadeless heights, we are
two bouncing balloons
on a red bus!
And
I love you
So
...
...
...
...
...
...

“Golden Child is a bold book that does not shy away from uncomfortable truths”

To submit your poetry:
Email tcp@socialspider.com

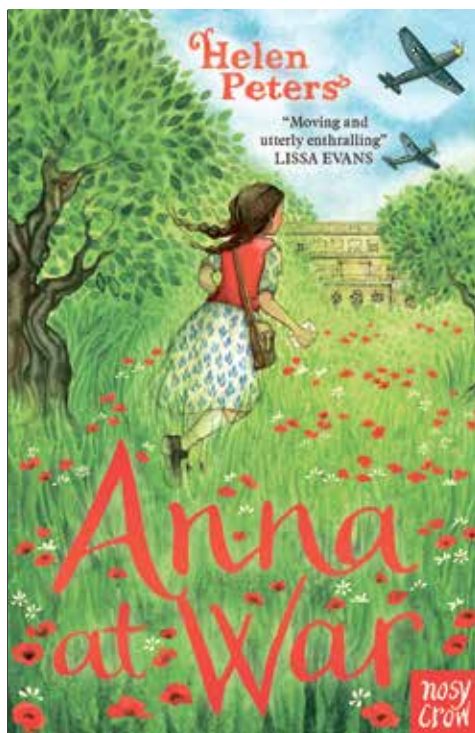
YOUTH

Books shortlisted for the annual BibiloBuzz award reviewed

This year's BiblioBuzz: The Alexandra Palace Children's Book Award has now begun! School pupils across Tottenham and the local area have begun to read this year's six books.

Any school in the borough can join in, and the award is mainly for 8-12 year olds (those in years 5, 6 and 7).

Helen Swinyard, who helped to choose the shortlist with a panel of other local school librarians, introduces the first three of the six shortlisted reads, in the run-up to the ceremony on Monday 30th March!

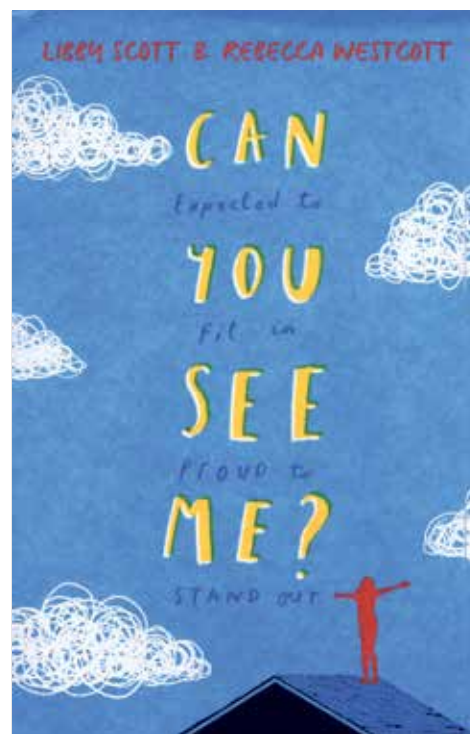


Anna at War by Helen Peters

Anna at War is a great story which is set during the Second World War and framed by the main narrator's grandson, who is trying to find out more about his grandmother's childhood for a school project.

Anna, our main narrator, tells him (and therefore us) all about her journey to the UK via the Kindertransport and her experiences living as a refugee and an evacuee in the UK. It is a great way to learn about this period in time, as well as enjoying a terrific story full of spies, intrigue and friendship.

Quote from the book: "It would be a shame if our stories died with us."

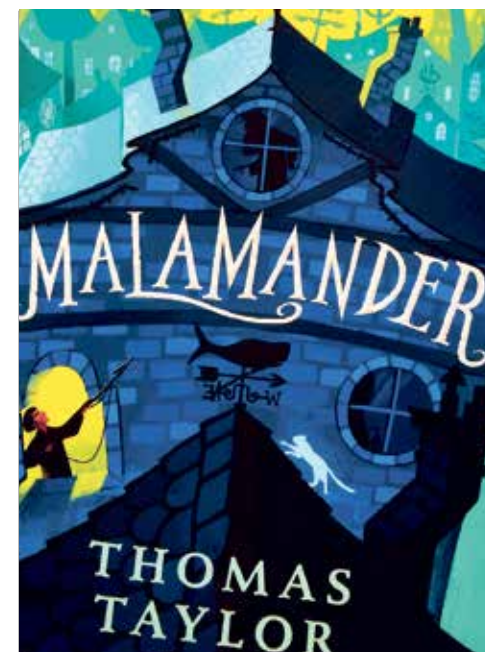


Can You See Me? By Libby Scott & Rebecca Westcott

This is a story written by author Rebecca Westcott, interspersed with real-life diary entries from teenager Libby Scott.

Libby has autism and wrote about her day-to-day life in a blog, which has been used to inspire a story about a character called Tally, who also has autism. The story is about how Tally experiences her new secondary school, navigating friendships, bullying, teachers and school life generally. It is a great way to try to understand autism and other people, and about being true to yourself.

Quote from the book: "I've been hiding parts of myself for a while now. It's hard to expose the bits that I've been made to feel uncomfortable with."



Malamander By Thomas Taylor

Malamander is set in a Victorian-style world which is almost like ours... but not quite... in the seaside town of Eerie-On-Sea.

Follow Herbert and Violet as they try to explain the mysterious disappearance of Violet's parents, without getting caught out by various adults or the terrifying Malamander – the legendary sea creature. This is a quirky adventure story with lots of word play.

Fun fact: the author Thomas Taylor illustrated the original cover of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*!

ACCELERATE revs up in The Engine Room

New youth club launches in Tottenham



Credit Stephen Furner

By Andrew Johnston,
Operations Manager,
The Engine Room

The Engine Room, Tottenham's newest community centre is excited to be opening our ACCELERATE Club for 11-14 year olds this month.

Designed for young people in the Tottenham Hale area, the club will aide them in their learning and will be a great place to hang out after school with homework support, games and food!

In the October half term, last year, local charity Literacy Pirates ran a very successful programme at The Engine Room and parents and carers were asking for more support for children in the local area.

The Engine Room approached property developer, Argent Related who were delighted to provide financial support as part of their commitment to the Tottenham Charter and the local community.

Experienced teacher, Lucetta Deane will be running the club with assistance from Engine Room staff and volunteers on Wednesdays from 4.30pm to 6.00pm.

Since opening in 2017, The Engine Room has run successful programmes for tots, primary children and older secondary school students (COMPACT youth programme for 14-18 year olds) and now with ACCELERATE. We offer programmes for children and young people of all ages!

The Engine Room is actively

"The club will be a great place to hang out after school"

seeking to engage more local companies to develop more programmes for the benefit of the local community.

To find out more:
Visit engineroom.org.uk

If you are interested in securing a place on ACCELERATE for a local child or would just like more information, then call The Engine Room on 0208 808 5490 but be quick, places are limited!

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Here at *Tottenham Community Press* we do things differently. We combine professional journalism with voluntary contributions from people who live and work in the borough and create content which is responsive to and reflective of the community.

These are challenging times for print media with many newspapers closing and advertising revenue in decline, but our not-for-profit model offers a new approach to creating local journalism which is inclusive and accountable.

How you can help

As a not-for-profit publication we rely on the generous support of our community. We look to our readers, who recognise the value of independent journalism, to help support us.

You can do this by becoming a member either as an individual or as an organisation. See the rewards opposite and once you've decided what package you would like, visit our website:

Visit tottenhamcommunitypress.co.uk/join

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