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Local news that matters to you



Credit Stephen Furner

Deal or no-deal Haringey Council prepares for Brexit

By Luchia Robinson

Haringey Council has put Brexit plans into action in preparation for Britain's exit from the European Union at the end of the month.

The council has identified 14 main risks that a no-deal Brexit poses to the borough, including possibilities of hate crime and disorder, the potential disruption to food and fuel supply, and the effect on utilities and other essential services.

Brexit is also expected to have an economic impact upon Haringey's businesses.

The council says it is planning a series of advice sessions for local businesses owners, in the coming weeks, in conjunction with the Greater London Authority and other partners to deal with this.

Haringey Council's initial Brexit planning at the end of last year was focused on the likelihood of a deal being reached; however, contingency planning was run in parallel as the prospect of a no-deal Brexit increased.

Last month, local organisation, Haringey Welcome submitted a petition to the European Parliament outlining concerns for the rights of

migrants, refugees and asylum seekers should a no-deal Brexit go ahead.

The campaign organisation raised the issue of family reunification in the UK, which will not be allowed after the October 31st Brexit deadline, being an infringement of human rights.

The impact of Brexit is likely to be felt most harshly by the least well-off households in the borough. A no-deal Brexit is predicted to affect citizens' employment status, rights, and access to public services.

The council has received guidance from the London Resilience Forum, looking into a range of these possible impacts, which include citi-

zens' eligibility for various forms of support, issues relating to health and social care, and consequences for businesses and key elements of the workforce.

It has set aside a reserve of funds (received from the Home Office's EU Settlement Scheme Grant) towards dealing with unexpected pressures from Brexit.

EU citizens living in the borough are being advised to apply for settled status, via the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), should they wish to remain in the UK beyond Brexit.

To date over 15,000 (35%) of the 42,000 non-British and Irish EU

"Haringey Council is firmly opposed to a no-deal Brexit"

citizens living in Haringey have obtained either settled (granted to applicants with proof of five years of continuous residency in the UK) or pre-settled status (granted to those who have lived in the UK for less than five years).

Alfred Jahn, a sales manager from Seven Sisters ward said: "I have been living in London for 18 years now. I still have my Austrian passport; so far, this has not been an issue and I haven't spent too much time even thinking about it.

"Whether it's a no-deal Brexit, soft Brexit, hard Brexit—it doesn't make a difference to me. The country I have been living in for the last 18 years has turned around and slapped me in the face."

Cllr Joseph Ejiofor, Leader of Haringey Council, said: "We are immensely proud of Haringey's diversity and to be home to 42,000 EU citizens.

"Haringey Council is firmly opposed to a no-deal Brexit, which the council believes will be damaging to the country; creating instability and uncertainty for people and businesses alike.

"We are committed to making thorough preparations to mitigate its effects on our residents. We value the contribution EU citizens make to Haringey life. We will work hard to support them and ensure that they continue to feel welcome, safe and at home in Haringey."

Turn to page 10 for information on the Settled Status Scheme

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COMMUNITY

STEADFAST IN DIFFICULTIES

SEPTEMBER 2019 – Nº. 26

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Latin Village campaigners protest outside of TfL's head headquarters Credit Clive Carter

Hello and welcome to issue 27. As the United Kingdom prepares to break away from the European Union (EU) this autumn, *TCP* looks into what this means for Haringey residents (front page), whilst the Bridge Renewal Trust outlines the assistance available for the borough's EU national citizens (p.10).

Climate change campaign group, Extinction Rebellion brought the North London Uprising to Haringey last month – the collaborative awareness movement included talks, demonstrations, and a parade.

Climate Change activist, Greta Thunberg has been a key figure in bringing the plight of climate change disaster to international attention – Exposure's Harry Pollard, shares why the teenage activist is an inspiration to him (p.13).

Book specialist, Helen Swinyard talks to author Sita Brahmachari, who discusses the importance of activism, and how fighting for one's rights in the face of injustice is a key focus of her book *Where The River Runs Gold* (p.12).

Karin Lock provides a review of

book, *An American Affair* by Tayari Jones (p. 14) and Artistic Director of the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Hannah Azieb Pool tells *TCP* about the launching of Tottenham Literature Festival, and why it aims to put the works of black creatives, centre stage.

Luchia Robinson, Editor

I am Elizabeth Arifien, founder of Visceral Creative, a community organisation dedicated to assisting and expanding creativity into under represented communities through films, workshops and events.

I use dance as a vessel for self-expression and to generate positive change. I seek to unearth the creative voice in those that are often unheard and I create a platform for them in mainstream culture. As a director and choreographer, I conceptualise moving image for stage and screen to invoke discussions and raise awareness.

My community work is based in Tottenham. Tottenham is thriving with art and local events; I like the mix of cultures, and the community of people that join our sessions and

our friendships.

For me, community is the key to success. It is embracing one another and supporting the growth of those around you – building on visions that are bigger than ones self.

Elizabeth Arifien, Contributor

My name is Victoria Sharkey, and I work for the Bridge Renewal Trust. I'm running the EU Settled Status project, helping to make sure that vulnerable EU nationals in the borough are registered on the scheme before the deadline.

The best part of my role is seeing the community work that goes on in the voluntary sector, with people giving up so much time and effort to help Haringey residents who, for whatever reason, are unable to get the help they need from elsewhere.

I have lived in Bruce Grove since 2011, and prior to working for the Bridge Renewal Trust, I ran my own immigration law practice, mainly helping EU nationals to be reunited with their families and assisting

undocumented residents to get their leave to remain.

I love living in Tottenham and I am proud to be working in a role which really helps my local community.

Victoria Sharkey, Contributor

I am Veronica McKenzie, I am a filmmaker – my film *Nine Nights* is currently screening around the world.

I am a Black History advocate, working with London Metropolitan Archives to collect oral histories from the BAME LGBTQ+ community.

I was born and raised in Tottenham. I enjoy Downhills Park – Neri and her team at the cafe are amazing and so friendly, and I recently went to San Marco – a traditional Italian restaurant in Bruce Grove, that's been there practically all my life.

Community means acceptance, being positive, and supporting each other whilst being open to new experiences and people. I feel we have to be careful to include everyone in the big changes happening in Tottenham.

Veronica McKenzie, Contributor

NEWS

Extinction Rebellion: North London Uprising

Climate change campaigners mobilise in Haringey

By Luchia Robinson



Extinction Rebellion host talks and workshops in Downhills Park
Credit: Stephen Furner

“Many people don’t know about the existential threat climate change poses”

Climate change campaign group Extinction Rebellion brought their collective awareness movement to the streets of Haringey, for a weekend of action, last month.

The campaigners from Haringey, Camden, Barnet, Enfield and Islington came together for the North London Uprising– a series of zero waste events, workshops, talks and musical performances.

Hundreds of people took part in the activities, which were based in two main locations: Downhills Park– the centre for discussions and training; and Turnpike Lane, where public engagement and staged actions were focused.

A parade along Green Lanes also brought attention to the message of

climate change breakdown.

“According to social science, 3.5% of the population are needed to be mobilised to achieve system change,” said Extinction Rebellion activist, Jessica Peverell.

“To achieve this, we need to aim high and work with our neighbouring boroughs– together we have the strength, numbers and experience to make our voices heard.”

Uprising team member, Jen K L, added: “Tottenham has especially polluted air, even for London.

“A very small percentage of Tottenham residents are car owners, and yet vehicle emissions are stunting the growth of its children’s lungs.

This is a microcosm of the compounding threats to health that all of us face the world over.

“Whilst we’re fortunate to be close to the lovely River Lea and water reservoirs, our location means parts of Tottenham will be at higher risk of being affected by flooding as a direct result of climate change.”

Haringey Council declared a climate emergency in March this year, pledging to become carbon neutral by 2050 (this date is intended to be brought closer), and taking steps to address key issues, including committing £2 million of the £14.4m Sustainable Transport Works Plan towards the promotion of sustainable methods of transport around the borough.

Leader of Haringey Council, Cllr Ejiofor said: “While we may not always agree with some of the ways Extinction Rebellion choose to share

their message, it is a message that we broadly encourage, promote and support.

“Action on the climate needs to be taken, and it needs to be taken now.”

Members of Extinction Rebellion say they are keen to work with Haringey councillors to lobby the government into taking immediate action.

Jessica Peverell said: “There is

an urgent need to raise awareness. The government failed to educate the general public on environmental issues and consequently, many people don’t know about the existential threat climate change poses.”

The next ‘rebellion’ takes place on Monday 7th October.

For more information:

Twitter @XRHaringey



Credit: Stephen Furner

NEWS

New disabled parking policy introduced to borough

Improved parking system for disabled residents

By Luchia Robinson

Haringey Council has ushered in the first wave of policy changes to disabled parking across the borough.

A new Dedicated Disabled Bay parking system, which is to be launched from December onwards, will see parking bays (allocated to disabled residents for their sole use) installed either outside, or near their home or workplace.

At present, applicants can apply for a disabled bay, and if fulfilling the current criteria of automatic entitlement (which is based mostly upon the receipt of benefits), they will have a bay installed close to the home.

Residents currently with one of the 2,800 disabled bays in the borough, can 'opt in' to the new Dedicated Disabled Bay system, by submitting a new application.

Standard, generic disabled bays that are outside of the dedicated parking scheme, will still be available for other blue badge holders to use.

The parking policy also introduces a new eligibility criteria and a formal disabled bay appeals process.

The eligibility criteria are being introduced because many disabled residents do not receive disability benefits, yet still need a parking space because of their disability.

Cllr Seema Chandwani, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, said: "This policy will introduce a mobility assessment so that residents are judged on their physical need and not their entitlement or claim to benefit.

"This will ensure that disabled bays are allocated to all that require them. It will also remove the discriminatory bias that assumes that all disabled people claim benefits."

The introduction of the appeals process will allow those whose parking bay applications are rejected, 30 days to contest the decision.

The new parking policy will also encompass changes made by the Department for Transport to include hidden disabilities to the blue badge criteria, which came into force in August. This includes people with anxiety disorders, brain injuries, and those who cannot walk as part of a journey without considerable psychological distress or the risk of serious harm.



Credit: Stephen Furner



Cllr Ejiofor at the launch event Credit: Haringey Council

Construction partnership launched in the borough

Council invests in developing construction industry workforce

A partnership set up to secure construction jobs, training and opportunities for local residents has been launched in Haringey.

The Haringey Construction Partnership (HCP) encourages development sites to support residents in finding stable and well-paid work, skills and training opportunities and to strengthen the borough's economy, in line with Haringey's Community Wealth Building priorities.

The partnership brings Haringey Council, the Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus), and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL) together with senior representatives from key developers in the borough.

Haringey Council Leader, Cllr Joseph Ejiofor said: "The council welcomes development partners who share our values, who put our residents first and are committed to delivering improvements beyond

shiny new buildings.

"The launch of the HCP emphasises the commitment from the council and our partners to support local people to find good work, build lifelong skills and benefit first-hand from investment in our local area."

Virgil Officer, Mayor's Construction Academy Coordinator at CONEL, said: "We will support the initiative by providing training in building services, town planning and quantity surveying right through to trade specific construction skills by working in collaboration with the council and developmental partners.

"Local residents will be able to access and benefit from local investment in the construction industry and will be provided with trade specific skills for the future."

Development partner, Berkeley Square Developments is also a part of the HCP.

Director, Jonathan Carkeet, said: "We are delighted to be part of the

Haringey Construction Partnership. Berkeley Square Developments are committed to sustainable, high quality development within Haringey, alongside ensuring the local community benefit from arising opportunities."

"Local residents will be able to access and benefit from local investment in the construction industry and will be provided with trade specific skills for the future"

Pub takeover thwarted

Founder of the Democratic Football Lads Alliance stopped from running Tottenham pub

The Elmhurst
Credit: Stephen Furner



By Luchia Robinson

A petition to stop a Tottenham pub being run by a member of the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) has been successful.

Last month, campaign group Haringey Stand up to Racism (Haringey SUTR) started an online petition to stop Philip Hickin, a founding

member of the DFLA, from running the Elmhurst pub in Lordship Lane.

The DFLA describes itself as a working class voice that combats terrorism and extremism. According to its website, the group is 'seeking to bring justice to anyone who believes they are above the values and traditions of our country.'

It has close links to the English Defence League (EDL), and is known

to support the former, EDL leader, Tommy Robinson, who is known for his anti-Islamic stance.

Philip Hickin had announced his takeover of the pub through various social media posts. When alerted to this, Haringey SUTR set up the petition calling for Haringey Council and Star Pubs and Bars (a national estate of independent pubs), to refuse Philip Hickin's pub application.

The petition for 4,000 signatures stated that with the prospect of the pub takeover, 'there is a real danger that this would become a centre for organised racists in the heart of Tottenham.'

The petition gathered support from Haringey councillors and Tottenham MP, David Lammy who tweeted: 'Tottenham does not want racist bully Tommy Robinson supporters taking over any of our pubs. Star Pubs and Bars should cancel the tenancy of any DFLA member. If they don't, Haringey Council and the police should block the licencing.'

At the time, Star Pubs and Bars stated that Philip Hickin's involvement with the Elmhurst was a 'rumour', and that they had not entered into any lease negotiations. They tweeted that they would only assign a lease to 'someone the community would embrace.'

Philip Hickin was refused a lease to run the pub following the petition having acquired the necessary signatories.

In response to this decision, Philip Hickin posted online: '[Star Pubs and Bars] have said they would rather leave [The Elmhurst Pub] closed and not trade, than go against the local community that obviously believe I am a racist because of the lies [David] Lammy and SUTR have posted on social media about me. I will have great pleasure in proving

I am no racist.'

The Secretary of Haringey SUTR said: 'We wanted to alert Star Pubs and Bars to who it was they were dealing with, and what the local feeling was. I think this was instrumental in them making a good decision not to associate their business with Philip Hickin and his organisation.'

'I think the supporters of Tottenham Hotspur in general are anti-racist and inclusive people. Philip Hickin - who is a Tottenham supporter, is a minority within the supporters of the club.'

'I've supported Spurs all my life, which is why I don't want to see racists in any way associated with the club, or in our community.'

'I think this is a victory for all of us - all of the people of Tottenham, and all of the supporters who don't want this to be what their media presence looks like.'

"Tottenham does not want racist bully Tommy Robinson supporters taking over any of our pubs"

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Centring black narratives

Hannah Azieb Pool talks to TCP about launching Tottenham Literature Festival



Credit Luchia Robinson

By Luchia Robinson

The festival that should have always been here' is how Hannah Azieb Pool, Artistic Director and CEO of the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, wants people to describe Tottenham Literature Festival.

The festival, which launches next month (1–9th November) is for anybody with a love for words; but there is a clear emphasis on centring black writers and artists.

“It’s a celebration and an interrogation of the black experience through literature, in all its forms,” said Hannah.

“One of the inspirations for this festival was the fact that, I know from my own experience that mainstream literature festivals are often very white, and very middle class, and they often have quite an exclusive feel, as opposed to an inclusive feel.

“It’s very difficult for black authors to get on main stages, and if they are programmed at all, they are often programmed in tents far, far away.”

The vision for Tottenham Literature Festival is to change this energy and feeling, bringing black readers and authors to the centre of the mainstream.

“I want it to be a festival where black stories, experiences and voices are in the majority,” says Hannah.

Poet, Lemn Sissay will open the festival with his

one-man play, *Something Dark*, which depicts the story of his upbringing within the care system and the search for his family.

Writer, producer and performer, Keisha Thompson, will also be bringing her solo theatre show, *Man on the Moon*, to the festival. Described by *The Stage* as ‘a poetic and eloquent piece of storytelling’, *Man on the Moon* portrays Keisha’s relationship with her father, through his books, letters and writings.

Tottenham Literature Festival is part of Hannah’s long term plan of ensuring that the Bernie Grant Arts Centre meets its full potential, and becomes an internationally renowned venue.

“I’m quite ambitious for the festival, even in its first year,” said Hannah.

“The first year is about an identity and [proving] a need for the festival, and I think from then on, it’s then everybody else helping to build it.”

“What I want is for the festival to be led and informed by the community– not just us.”

The local community is an essential part of the festival, being the audiences of the talks, workshops, readings and performances, as well as the creators, the new authors and voices yet to be given a platform.

“Local artists [and headliners] are on the same bill– I don’t think there’s necessarily a division, which all comes back to this idea of black voices being in the mainstream,” Hannah said.

“I want it to feel as if we are all artists together,

“I want it to be a festival where black stories, experiences and voices are in the majority”

in this space.”

There are three strands running throughout the festival’s programming, uniting the creatives involved: poetry and spoken word, black women writers, and representative children’s literature.

A 2017 study conducted by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education found that of 9,115 children’s books published in the UK that year, only 4% featured a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) character.

Hannah said: “A big part of my whole artistic strategy is to bring children’s books that have black, central characters to life, so that our children can see themselves reflected on the page.”

Tottenham Literature Festival aims to provide an accessible platform for cross generational, literary content, where locals can feel a sense of ownership amongst the greater collective.

“To me, the idea that nothing creative comes out of Tottenham is such a fallacy,” said Hannah.

“I want Bernie Grant Arts Centre to be a home for all of that creativity.”

Tottenham Literature Festival takes place between 1st–9th November at Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Town Hall Approach N15 4RX.

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PHOTOGRAPHY



Along the River Lea By Vicki Co



Duchman

COMMUNITY

Exploring the history of Haringey's LGBTQ+ BAME community



By Veronica McKenzie
Haringey Vanguard,
Community Engagement Lead

There has long been a BAME LGBTQ+ community in Tottenham, and we at the Haringey Vanguard Project are exploring the history of its members between 1970s and 1990s.

The Haringey Vanguard project is a two year archiving initiative, which started last July, in partnership with Haringey Archive and Museum Service (HAMS) and London Metropolitan Archives (LMA).

We are working with participants across the borough to explore existing collections, and provide them with the opportunities to deposit their own digitised, physical or oral history material—bringing formal records, personal and community collections together.

The Haringey Vanguard Project will conclude next year with an exhibition, and a BAME LGBTQ+ archive established at Bruce Castle Museum.

Many of the people we have interviewed for the project to date, either lived in or currently live in Haringey, and have done since the late 70s.

We are currently looking for more people from that time to interview, as well as personal photographs and memorabilia.

We are also offering volunteers who are interested in BAME LGBTQ+ history, training in researching, collecting oral histories and the running of workshops for community groups.

Haringey has played an important role in supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Haringey Council had one of the first lesbian and gay units in the UK, and the Positive Images Manifesto, which heralded positive lesbian and gay representation in schools, was established in the borough.

In 1985, the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre Project (BLGC) was started in Tottenham—it was the first such space in Europe.

“Haringey Vanguard is important because there are few places for the borough’s growing, younger gay community”

The BLGC was one of the more prominent groups of the time, providing support and curtailing isolation amongst BAME LGBTQ+ people. BLGC meetings and socials were held at what is now, the Bernie Grant Arts Centre.

Haringey Vanguard is important because there are few places for the borough’s growing, younger gay community. Many members of the older BAME LGBTQ+ community based in Haringey, are now moving out of the borough, downsizing, or sadly passing away.

A key part of the project is to collect personal materials that could be archived to provide a snapshot of BAME LGBTQ+ lived experience.

People need to know that their possessions are of value. We aim to raise awareness of the importance of individual materials, so that people can think about maintaining and looking after them, and then depositing them into an archive such as ours.

The project enriches the wider Haringey LGBTQ+ narrative about gay rights and it ensures the preservation of important history by placing older BAME LGBTQ+ residents’ experiences at its heart.

The archived materials will reveal the unknown history of the BAME LGBTQ+ community in Haringey, and the important work they did promoting acceptance, both in the mainstream LGBTQ+ scene and wider black communities.

BAME and Lesbian histories are underrepresented in archive records and the project provides a significant opportunity to redress the balance.

If you are interested in being interviewed or becoming a volunteer:

Email haringeyvanguard@gmail.com
Twitter @hgeyvanguard

EU Settled Status: The challenges faced in Haringey

By Victoria Sharkey
Project Coordinator, EU Settled Status, Bridge Renewal Trust

There are between three and four million EU nationals living in the UK, with around 42,000 living in Haringey—one of the highest totals in London.

EU nationals (other than Irish nationals or those who have Indefinite Leave to Remain) living in the UK before the Brexit date of 31st October 2019, will have to register on the settled status scheme by the deadline of 31st December 2020, if they are to keep their right to live and work in the UK.

15,000 people in Haringey have already registered, but many more do not realise that they need to, or do not know how to do it, or don't have the language or technology skills to work their way through the system. Others may have difficulties getting the relevant evidence or they may need support for other reasons. Some quite simply do not want to register.

There are a large number of EU nationals in Haringey who currently have no recourse to public funds; they are unable to claim benefits or get support with housing or childcare, but once they get settled status, they will be able to access the help they need.

Unfortunately, those EU nationals who don't register may find that they have their right to work removed, and they may have problems renting housing, opening a bank account or coming back to the UK after overseas travel.

The scheme is designed to be straight forward. To complete the

process, most people will need to download an app, scan their passport with their phone, and enter their National Insurance number and contact details.

If the EU national has lived here for five years or more they will get settled status, if they have lived here for less than five years they will get pre-settled status, which can be converted once the five years is reached.

The Bridge Renewal Trust is working with some of the many voluntary and community groups around the borough to provide information, resources and practical assistance where needed.

We specifically want to help those who are in danger of slipping through the net: such as the elderly; those who are homeless; victims of domestic violence; the Charedi and Roma communities; and single migrant workers, but we are happy to provide information for all those who want it.

We want to make sure that every resident knows where they can get the help they need. Over the coming months, we will be hosting open days, workshops, outreach events and registration sessions to keep residents updated.

If you or any of your friends, family or neighbours are EU nationals, do keep an eye on our website:

Visit bridgerenewaltrust.org.uk/settled-status-scheme



Residents find out about the Settled Status Scheme Credit Maria Orthodoxou

COMMUNITY

Exposure

Why Greta Thunberg
is an inspirationPage
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The Frocking Cancer Diary



Kaz Foncette Credit Nikolai Sangrenegra

By Kaz Foncette

I can't believe it's October already. Where has the year gone? September was crazy; it not only involved the weather turning cold, then warm, then cold again, but also marked the start of the autumn fashion season and the end of my chemotherapy journey.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and this is my third year educating people about the importance of self-examination, and normalising conversations about cancer in my community. At least this Halloween you won't see me dressing up like Uncle Fester again, trying to make people comfortable with my appearance, laughing at myself without bursting into tears.

If you didn't already know, I'm a cancer patient. I'm a 33-year-old from Tottenham, who nine months ago, was told that my breast cancer had made a comeback. It wasn't exactly the words anyone, let alone a 'survivor' wanted to hear, but still, I digested the devastating news with a ton of kebabs and curry goat from West Green Road, before gracefully jumping back into the cancer patient role (and the NHS couture gowns), one more time.

Chemotherapy ending for me,

means no more nausea, no more cancelling plans with friends and no more cold-capping to preserve my hair. But it's not always the party and bell ringing one would expect.

Every cancer patient assumes that it is going to be a celebratory moment – which I can't deny it is – but for a person who has experienced a second diagnosis, and who is yet to finish the rest of their treatment, it's not that simple.

Transitioning to a new way of life post treatment isn't easy. To the average person it may seem straightforward – go back to work, go on holiday – but when you've been a cancer patient for so long, it's hard

to know how to be anything else.

I can't remember what everyday life was like before. Oddly I do remember hating my body and not having any confidence. Funny how losing all my hair, growing it back again, and having a breast removed and then reconstructed, has made me so much more comfortable in my own skin. So comfortable in fact that it took me to London Fashion Week where I mingled with fashionistas, raising awareness and talking openly about my experience.

In my world nowadays you can never be overdressed or overeducated – so here I am continuing to try and be both.

At London Fashion Week
Credit Nikolai Sangrenegra

The joy of dance

Over 60s dancers express themselves in local dance classes

By Elizabeth Arifien, Dance Facilitator
& Founder of Visceral Creative

Dancer Jackie Richards founded Creative Dance 60+ almost ten years ago, having found that there was a lack of creative and expressive dance classes for older dancers in the Tottenham

area. Jackie has been on a mission to have older dancers recognised in mainstream culture ever since.

Creative Dance 60+ is run by Visceral Creative, a community organisation that is dedicated to assisting and expanding creativity into underrepresented communities.

This past June, after partnering with Haringey over 50s Forum, Fusion Gym and Haringey Council, we received funding from the National Lottery to set up a new dance class in Tottenham.

We now have two weekly classes for people to join, each with a strong

“Dance is very beneficial to older people as it helps reduce depression and isolation”

social aspect, where ability levels and background doesn't matter.

The aim of our project is to bring a diverse group of older local people together for expressive dance. The classes help build relationships, confidence and community, improving health and wellbeing.

Dance is very beneficial to older people as it helps reduce depression and isolation. It protects against dementia, builds strength and flexibility, and reduces joint pain and stiffness.

Despite a growing recognition of the benefits leading to more dance classes for older people in London, there are limited creative dance classes for over 60s in Haringey or Tottenham, that celebrate creativity and the joy of dance.

Tottenham has a high percentage of older people, and Creative Dance 60+ offers these residents a sense of community and support.

We provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment for those who are otherwise lonely, isolated or mostly

inactive, to meet others and get active. We also provide performance opportunities for those that want them.

Creative Dance 60+ has already made a difference to many people's lives, enabling them to build a strong community, which has led to long lasting friendships.

"This dance group is the highlight of my week (and my life is full of interesting and enjoyable activities). It combines flexibility with creativity and a lot of humour. A close bond has formed within the group, while at the same time, we welcome new members," said Sylvia Finzi.

We hope building on this dance project will give more people who are in need of a space to express themselves the chance to do so.

Classes take place every Wednesday, 10.00–11.30am and 12.00–1.15pm at Tottenham Green Pools and Fitness, N15 4JA. There is a £2 suggested donation which goes towards an activity of the group's choice at the end of each term.

For more information:
Email info@visceralcreative.co.uk

Express yourself Credit Roy Calhoon



YOUTH

Release your voice

This month, Helen Swinyard talks to author Sita Brahmachari about her latest book, *Where the River Runs Gold*, which was nominated as Waterstones Children's Book of the Month in July and was also Sunday Times Book of the Week in August



Author Sita Brahmachari shows she is part of the resistance by doing the 'secret skep heart sign'

Why should Tottenham's young people give your book a try? How will they see themselves reflected in it?

I don't shy away from some of the difficult things we face in today's world. *Where The River Runs Gold* is set in a fantasy future where young people have to fight for the leaders of the land to act in the face of great injustices.

Young environmental activists like Greta Thunberg are leading the way in bringing awareness to the climate crisis. In my story the green spaces that I love so much; the playing fields, allotments, woods and heath land are no longer available to most children—Shifa and her brother Themba must fight to protect their rights. They are under constant surveillance and it is illegal for them to grow flowers, fruit or vegetables.

When I meet young people I see how much they care about protecting the natural world—of course it matters; it's the air we breathe.

What connections do you have to North London and what are your favourite things about it? I have lived in and around North London for 27 years. It's where my family have grown and gone to school.

I love the diverse communities of people who live here with roots and branches stretching out all over the world.

The ground on which I walk every day is full of wonderful stories. There's

always something wonderful to do—a market to visit, a theatre, cinema, gig or festival to attend.

I especially love the green spaces, from my local park where I walk my dog, to the ancient Queens Wood (where my book *Red Leaves* is set) and Hampstead Heath, which featured in my first novel *Artichoke Hearts*.

I'm inspired by street art, which features in *Where The River Runs Gold*, but most of all the thing that I am inspired by is a sense of community that these open spaces offer everyone—for a game of football, to grow vegetables on an allotment, enjoy nature or just stop and take time to talk to a neighbour.

Community features large in my stories and in London life—if these spaces are taken from us all our lives will be smaller.

What were you like as a teenager? What were your favourite things to do?

I was a daydreamer and a doodler. I wrote a lot (diaries and poems mostly).

I was part of a youth theatre and I enjoyed improvising dramas. I loved going camping, getting lost in the wilds of nature and travelling, especially to India where many of my cousins live. Everywhere I went, I took my sketchbooks and writing books. My eleven-year old travel journal turned into my novel *Jasmine Skies*.

When I was growing up I hardly ever saw wide representation of my family and friends in stories, so now I write characters that reflect the people I

know and meet and their first, second generation or ancestral journeys from all over the world. I think this matters. If you can't read something of yourself into characters, it can stop you feeling invested in reading or imagining yourself as a writer.

I had a strong sense of justice when I was a teenager. Whenever I experienced or came into contact with injustice like racism, poverty inequality or homelessness, I felt outraged and wanted to do something about it. You'll find that spirit in my teen characters.

What advice would you give to any Tottenham teenagers hoping to become writers?

Look around you, and look to the people who inspire you. If you are lucky enough to have family elsewhere in the country or world, travel to see them or speak regularly on skype—then drink in all your experiences. You have access to landscapes and characters that could make you into a writer.

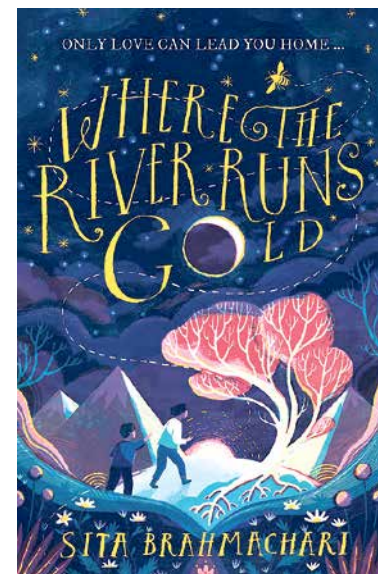
Write from the gut and heart first.

Keep a diary or journal and write down your ideas. Write songs, poems, travel journals, stories, random thoughts; sometimes you don't actually know what you want to express until you start writing.

Play with words (invent your own as I did in *Where The River Runs Gold*). Enjoy the sound and rhythm of the way people speak and try and capture that on a page (have a look at my story *Zebra Crossing Soul Song* to see what I mean). Don't let anyone put you off.

In the first instance, don't worry about grammar, spelling or rules you think you need to follow. Be free to express yourself—if you care about what you've written enough, you will work on it and polish it afterwards.

There are amazing access schemes available looking to change the lack of diversity amongst authors and in



books, like *BookTrust Represents*—send your work to them and look for opportunities to publish your work.

Your voices will make for fantastic stories, and stories are powerful creatures that release your voice.

I hope one day to read your stories. I am looking forward to seeing a new generation of artists and writers growing, and a re-wilding of the imagination!

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Credit: Anders Hellberg



Why Greta Thunberg is an inspiration

Harry Pollard discusses Greta Thunberg's achievements and how her Asperger's is received

Twelve years – that's how long we have to prevent or, at least, lessen a global climate catastrophe.

We are already feeling the effects – deadly fires are ravaging the Amazon, our coral reefs are dying, and our summers are getting hotter. July 2019 alone was the hottest month on record. If no action is taken, we face mass extinctions, global food and water shortages, and the collapse of civilisation as we know it – possibly as soon as 2050.

While it's fantastic that the British government has declared a climate emergency, until definite action takes place I believe we must continue to pressure politicians. Now is the time to spread awareness and advocate unprecedented changes to society ourselves.

Thankfully, the campaign against climate change is gaining traction. Greta Thunberg has become one of the most prominent climate activists globally, she is known for her role in sparking the 'School strike for climate' movement in 2018.

These strikes began in Sweden with Thunberg alone, but as a result of her passion and persistence, students across the world have come out to join her protests.

Since 2018, Greta has participated in UN conferences, delivered speeches at high-profile events (such as during the Extinction Rebellion protests earlier

this year), earned a Nobel Peace Prize nomination and even collaborated with the English indie band 'The 1975'.

It is also no secret that Greta is on the autistic spectrum, with Asperger's syndrome. Though some may class this as a disability, Greta sees it as quite the opposite.

In an interview with Nick Robinson of BBC Radio 4, she described how Asperger's helps her 'see things in black and white.'

"I don't fall easily for lies, I can see through things," Greta said.

"It makes me different, and being different is a gift, I would say."

Greta also added that if she had been 'like everyone else,' she may not have been interested in the climate at all.

Despite her achievements, Greta is frequently on the receiving end of criticism, with her autism being a common target for personal attacks.

Andrew Bolt of *The Herald Sun* described her as being "deeply disturbed", with "so many mental disorders", and chairman of the CO2 Coalition, Patrick Moore tweeted "Greta = evil".

Brexit campaign donor, Arron Banks joked about "freaky yachting accidents" when Greta recently sailed across the Atlantic to attend UN climate summits in New York. Some have even compared Greta to the young girls used in Nazi propaganda.

Greta herself tweeted that she is "indeed 'deeply disturbed' about the

fact that these hate and conspiracy campaigns are allowed to go on and on and on, just because we children communicate and act on the science." She also recently added that her motivation for being public about her diagnosis is that "I know many ignorant people still see it as an 'illness' or something negative."

As somebody on the autistic spectrum myself, I think it's appalling that some climate sceptics feel attacking Thunberg based on her condition is acceptable. So many well-respected people are on the spectrum.

Just a few examples include singer Susan Boyle, actor Anthony Hopkins and author HP Lovecraft, possibly even Einstein, Newton, Darwin and Mozart! It's certainly reassuring to know that many people with autism are successful and groundbreaking in their respective fields, and are continuing to lead the way.

Greta Thunberg truly is an inspiration, who is compelling young people to fight against climate change. She is an effective influencer for people on the autistic spectrum, for students, and for our society as a whole. Even in the face of harsh criticism, she continues to advocate for climate justice.

I leave you with one of Greta's tweets: "When haters go after your looks and differences, it means they have nowhere left to go. And then you know you're winning!"

Poems by Keyonte Brissett about her British Caribbean ethnicity

What's the Time, Mrs Wolf?

I built my curls with water,
The clean vibrancy of some shampoo.
Time to cement each strand together
With some conditioner.
Mrs Wolf is one question away from
Blowing that all down with a hairdryer.
The fork combs its way through my
Kinky afro like Moses parting the red sea.
Until finally Mrs Wolf is a wizard with a wand.
'What's the time, Mrs Wolf?'
'Braidin' Time.'

Marley and Me

Marley and Me; like the pup.
MC reload that one dere!
The hook's got me all danced up.
I'm the dog, going barking mad
As he sings, sings, sings.
Suddenly, I'm a buffalo soldier,
Lost in fusions of red, gold and green.
The heart of the Caribbean,
Oh, my dearest Marley and Me.
Dancin' to the tune of three
Little birds.
Fly in the skies,
Take me high.
The chords begin to rise,
Sparkling the power of Jah in my ebony eyes.
Marley and Me; like the pup.
MC reload that one dere!
The hook's got me all loved up.
Spreading words of harmonic wisdom
As he sings, sings, sings.

Slice o' bread

"A slice o' bread, when all is said would be nothing without tasty butter nicely spread."

Slice O' Bread was Exposure's summer project, celebrating friendship – with music and dancing, singing and rapping. Young people conceived and created a song and accompanying video, in classic Hollywood style, designed to transcend the generations.

The lyrics were gathered from young people's testimonies on friendship, while the orchestral score was composed by Exposure journalist, Harry Pollard.

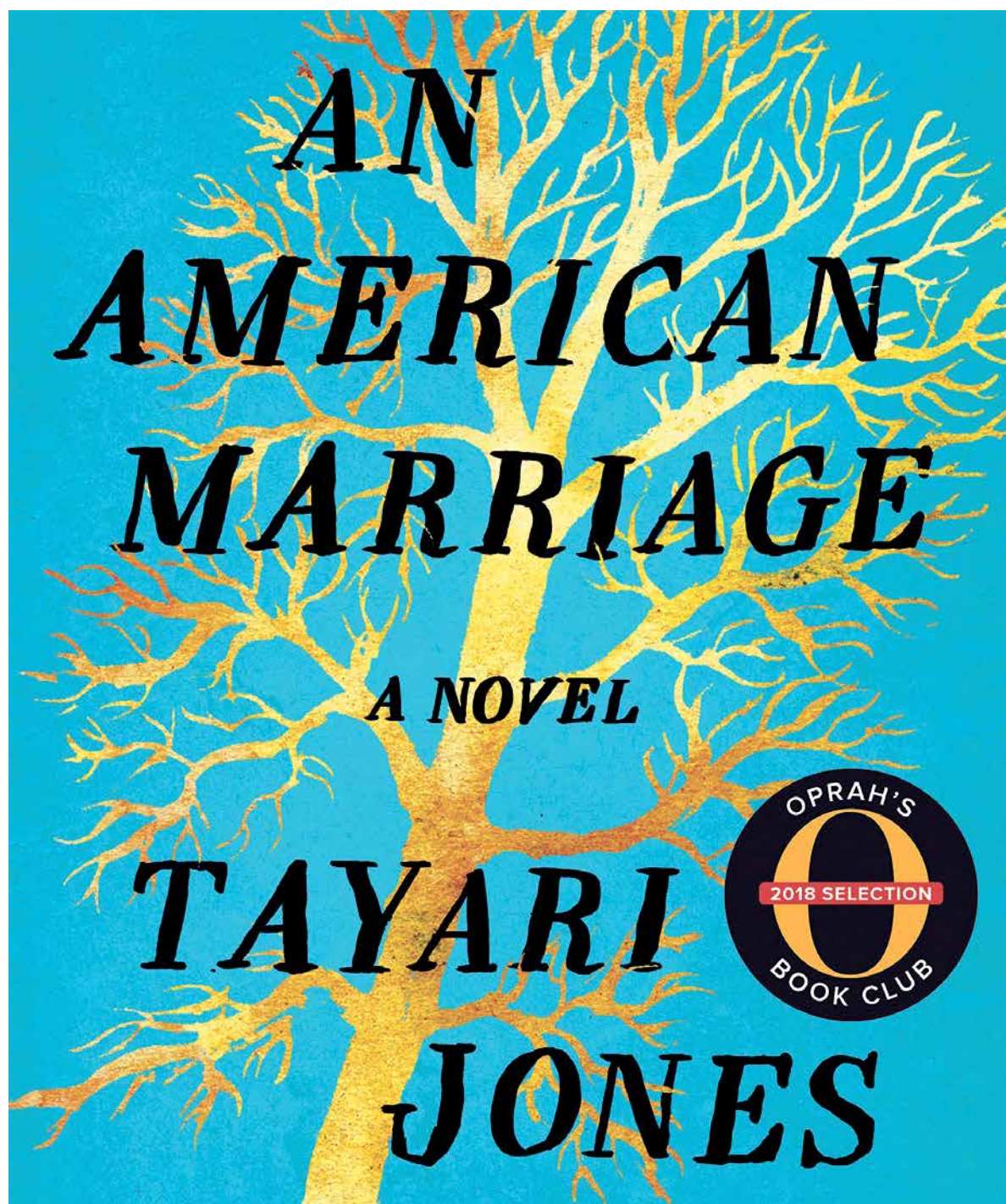
You can view the video by visiting exposure.org.uk. It's a triumph!

This page is funded by Tottenham Grammar Foundation

BOOK REVIEW

First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes heartbreak

Karin Lock Reviews *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones



Endorsed by former US president, Barack Obama and Media Executive and Television Producer, Oprah Winfrey, *An American Marriage*, winner of this year's Women's Prize for Fiction, has dominated top ten bestseller lists for months.

Inspired by an argument overheard in a shopping mall, Tayari Jones' fourth book dissects a marriage's demise from three perspectives— that of newly-weds Roy and Celestial, and their mutual best friend, Andre.

Roy and Celestial are upwardly-mobile African Americans living in Atlanta. However, from the outset,

there is a detectable friction because of their respective backgrounds.

Roy is a 'country boy', a scholarship graduate from Louisiana, who hides his humble origins, and Celestial is the headstrong daughter of a successful inventor, who is building a high end folk-art business.

On a visit to Roy's parents, Roy books them into a cheap motel where his mum once worked, instead of staying in his family home. The couple argue and Roy leaves the room; this decision drastically changes his fate.

An American Marriage is a tender and warm slow-burner. The intricately woven plot jumps around its time-

line, creating suspense and wonder.

Tayari Jones juggles narrators with confidence, and by combining wise contemplation with sharp conversation and intimate correspondence, she reveals the characters' motivations, insecurities and obsessions.

If literature is supposed to reflect truths about ourselves, then *An American Marriage* is about self-acceptance. This is the novel's power— the vanity and self-destructiveness are so familiar.

The story also invites reflection. Is it ethical to exploit another's image whilst denying their existence?

Like all great art, this heart-breaking tale has a higher purpose.

It examines the shockingly disproportionate internment of African Americans across contemporary America. With more Black men in jail than in college, the devastating impact this has on their relationships, mental health, careers, children and wider communities, is often forgotten.

Tayari Jones practices what she preaches. On a recent visit to London, the author shunned the usual tourist sites, choosing instead to visit Brixton prison. Akin to Russia's famous novelist Dostoevsky, she believes a society should be judged by the way it treats those at the 'bottom'.

*“If literature is supposed to reflect truths about ourselves, then **An American Marriage** is about self-acceptance”*

POETRY CORNER

Window Seat by Terry Egan

Leftover puddles
expose the street's unevenness -
this mismatched paving
feet aren't surprised by anyway.
Above them, the slabs of the clouds -
assorted likewise -
won't let me forget how they might
deposit more rain...

Yet aren't they confined
to this corridor between shops,
sky no less than street -
they both just part of some roadway?
And the obvious question is:
to what horizon's
vanishing point are they heading;
where do they go to?

Yes, for all of this
window seat's coffee I enjoy -
leaves wagging in air -
isn't it to the out-of-sight
that my interest is still drawn?

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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.

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