

December 2023 – It's Christmas!



The Bush Telegraph

The quarterly newsletter of The Bushwood Area Residents' Association



DECK THE HALLS COMPETITION
JUDGED 17 DEC

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS

SANTA'S CHRISTMAS WALK
17TH DECEMBER

LETTERS TO SANTA
BEGINS 6TH DECEMBER

Join us for all the activities we have planned this Christmas. Keep an eye out for announcements on where Santa's postbox will be and where you can see the big man himself when he visits Bushwood



THE BARA 2024 CALENDAR

The 2024 BARA Calendar is available now in our online shop. Get a piece of Bushwood history featuring thirteen photos taken by BARA members along with all the important pre-filled dates for next year
www.bara.london/shop

Note From The Chair



There's certainly no denying that winter is truly upon us. Football managers are already talking about the Christmas fixtures, loved ones are dropping hints about potential presents, and the trees are shedding their leaves everywhere. All of which means the festive season is just around the corner.

On the subject of presents, one sure-fire stocking-filler is the BARA 2024 calendar, showcasing the photographic talents of some of our members. It's a limited run, so be sure to place your order as soon as possible from our website shop.

This is also the season when all of us at BARA HQ reflect on everything we've done this year as we begin planning the programme for the coming year. This year has certainly been a bumper one in terms of social events, with walks, quizzes, competitions and our annual Party in the Park. We're far from finished though, with Santa's walkaround coming up on 17 December, the BARA Christmas postbox making a return appearance and our Deck the Halls festive decoration competition.

Since the last Bush Telegraph we've had two excellent and well-attended supper clubs at Flavours of India on the High Road and The Rear Window on Whipps Cross Road. If you haven't been to a BARA Supper yet, I recommend it. Not only do you get a great value meal but it's a perfect way to get to know new people in the neighbourhood – especially if you come on your own. Look out for more opportunities to get involved in the new year.

It will soon be time to renew your annual BARA membership. If you've given us your email, you'll soon receive a link to pay your subs online. Alternatively, you can always drop the cash to your Road Rep in person using the envelope enclosed with this magazine. As previously decided at our last AGM and mentioned in earlier editions of the Bush Telegraph, membership this year is rising to £5 after 10 inflation busting years at £3. The quarterly Bush Telegraph is worth at least that, but when you add in the social programme, the Library of Things, gazebo hire, our high street discount scheme and the email newsletter, it has to be one of the best value memberships anywhere in London!

Please make a note of the date of the BARA AGM – Monday 22 January 2024. Last year's meeting was a great success with a lively, upbeat and informative AGM followed by a great many members staying to socialise for the rest of the evening at the Mammoth Tap. We will be repeating that format this year. I can't wait to see as many of you as possible on the evening.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the committee.

Andy Irvine

BARA Chair

The BARA Team

BARA Committee

Andy Irvine
Chair and Membership
Leybourne Road

Doug Sheedy
Vice Chair
Barclay Road

Anna Davies
Social
Browning Road

RoseMary Warrington
Environmental
Mornington Road

Kate Duffy
Social & Facebook
St Augustine's Court

Katy Smith
Social & Planning
Harvey Road

Will Higham
Town Team & SNT
High Street Liaison
Leybourne Road

Nadia Higham
Secretary & Social
Leybourne Road

Robbyn Linden
Social & SNT
Aylmer Road

Joyce Quarrie
Bush Telegraph & Planning
Leybourne Road

Fiona Sinclair
Membership & Town Team
BARA e-Mail Newsletter
Leybourne Road

John Buniak
Treasurer
Leybourne Road

Gareth Dimelow
Barclay Road

James Cowen
BT Editor, Library of Things,
Website
Lister Road

BARA Road Representatives

Aylmer Road
Alex Maws, 1 Aylmer Road

Barclay Road
Doug Sheedy, 11 Barclay Road

Barfield Road
Alex Maws, 1 Aylmer Road

Beacontree Road
John Mallinder, 21 Beacontree Rd

Browning Road
Anna Davies, 21 Browning Road

Bushwood
Brian Hopson, 49 Bushwood

Carlton Road
Alex Maws, 1 Aylmer Road

Colt's Yard
Nadiya Ismail, 6 Colts Yard

Dacre Road
Alex Maws, 1 Aylmer Road

Forest View
Liz Maloy Jollands, 5 Forest View

Grove Road
Hanisha Vasiliou, 34 Grove Road

Hartley Road
Andrew Shields, 9 Hartley Road

Harvey Road
Katy Smith, 37A Harvey Road

High Road
Doug Sheedy, 11 Barclay Road

John Drinkwater
Anna Davies, 21 Browning Road

Leybourne Road
Joyce Quarrie, 67 Leybourne Road

Leyspring Road
Benedikt Humm, 63 Leyspring Road

Lister Road
Helen Westerby, 50 Lister Road

Michael Road
Sue Birdsall, 32 Michael Road

Mornington Road
RoseMary Warrington, 88 Mornington Rd

St Augustine's Court
Kate Duffy, 29 St Augustine's Court

St John's Court
Kate Duffy, 29 St Augustine's Court

St Mary's Court
Kate Duffy, 29 St Augustine's Court

Stanmore Road
Tony Pamphilon, 28 Stanmore Road

Woodville Road
Janet Taylor, 14 Woodville Road


For membership, please visit your road rep to make the £5 payment and receive your discount card or subscribe online at our website at www.bara.london. If you would like to get in touch with BARA or require further information please email BARACONNECT@GMAIL.COM or visit the BARA website.

Thanks to all of this issue's contributors. We are always looking for interesting articles, stories and ideas related to Bushwood or Leytonstone for the Bush Telegraph. If you would like to contribute please get in touch with the editorial team at BARACONNECT@GMAIL.COM

 BARACONNECT@gmail.com

 www.bara.london

 [Bushwood Area Residents' Association](https://www.facebook.com/BushwoodAreaResidentsAssociation)

 [@BARA.e11](https://www.instagram.com/BARA.e11)

WORD ON THE (HIGH) STREET

BARA's regular update on the latest High Street news from the Leytonstone Town Team.

News of the month has been a planning application to redevelop the Matalan site into two separate retail units – rumours are flying as to who it will be! *Mum Likes Thai Food* (682 High Road Leytonstone) and *Red Fort* (748 High Road Leytonstone) have finally opened their doors as well as the more niche *Go Doughnut* (opposite McDonalds). And we have a new vintage shop *Slope* at 562 High Road Leytonstone.

The Town Team has produced a programme of Christmas initiatives to promote local business, including a best Business Christmas Window Competition, an Insta advent calendar and a Christmas Trail for Kids. Look out in school bookbags for the trail card or pick it up from the library, Stone Mini Market or the Good Shepherd Building. Prizes are available from Fitness Hub East, 771 High Road Leytonstone when completed www.leytonstoneevents.co.uk



Autumn Walk, Epping Forest



BARA Quiz

AN AWESOME AUTUMN OF BARA EVENTS

BARA events are popular, bringing people together while supporting local business. This autumn saw walks, quizzes, supper clubs and guided tours. If you came along to any of our events we hope you had a good time. Please come again. We have big plans for 2024 with pub crawls, cocktail nights, supper clubs and much more.



Flavours of India Supper Club



Gary Lewis Hitchcock History Walk



Rear Window Restaurant Supper Club

Miso salmon, Rear Window

After being saved from development into flats the Good Shepherd Building on Davies Lane is proving to be a popular and lively local hub. Fiona Sinclair investigates what's happening.



BRINGING THE FLOCK TOGETHER

It's been a couple of years since the Good Shepherd Building (GSB) on Davies Lane was saved from development by the *Save our Pastures* group of local residents. GSB was leased by the council to a team of three local people (including Bushwood residents Jake Green and Zak Crafer) who are committed to making the space work for the whole community, alongside carrying out their day jobs.

The third member of the team is Danie Gilbert, a born-and-bred Leytonstoner, mother-of-two and ex-commercial property lawyer. She describes herself as having a 'portfolio' career. Alongside her Good Shepherd job (running Little Sing Song classes for children), she sings at functions and runs an interior design business and still manages to exude massive amounts of positive energy and enthusiasm. I feel exhausted just writing it all down...

There are three main functions coming out of the GSB building. First, **Good Shepherd Studios** that provides affordable studios for artists and creative people. Leytonstone favourites such as Eonce chocolate, Paul Dash and Aaron Williams of Raw Canvas are in situ. Second is the not-for-profit community interest company, **We Flock CIC**, created to bring together the local community and make sure they have affordable access to the arts in many different forms. Lastly the popular **Back to Ours** café run by local, Tim Vincent.

"Given the huge funding cuts to the arts, we wanted to make sure that the local community still had access to the them and ways of working and sharing arts in the local community" explains Danie. Affordability and accessibility were always key, and We Flock CIC is experimenting with different pricing models with space hirers to enable them to offer something for everyone. This might be free activities and classes subsidised by fee-paying ones or pay-what-you-can activities. A host of activities run in either the downstairs Annex or the large upstairs hall (aka as the Auditorium) includes chair yoga, baby groups and life drawing. There are different rates of hire available for charities/social enterprises.

CHURCH LANE POP-UP SPACE

Not ones to sit on their laurels, the team have now taken on a new project at No.1 Church Lane which they aim to run as a pop-



up space. Depending on how long you've lived in Leytonstone this space has been a florist, a mini Boots, the Fillybrook pop-up and Laura Lea Design. More recently, it's been just another closed property, despite its fantastic location right outside Leytonstone Tube station. We Flock CIC had previously indicated to the council that they would be interested in taking on empty properties on the High Road and so were offered access to the shop. "We can't stand waste" says Danie. "If there is a building just sitting there it could be a life-changing opportunity for someone".

Deliberately not advertising who they were to give people a chance to suggest anything, they asked the public for ideas on what they would like to see in the space and got over 200 replies. The replies were varied but trended towards gifts, a healthy food outlet, flowers and locally made things. "It became clear that lots of people didn't actually know what already existed in Leytonstone" says Danie. A plan crystallised to make sure that No.1, with its amazing location, would also serve as an information hub.

The team is now looking for people to take on and use the space for anything from a couple of days to a month as a pop-up (similar to the Host shop in Leyton). Ideally, there would also be a staple provision of affordable gifts and cards, etc, from local businesses and artists that could be sold every week at set times, or more often when a pop-up is in situ.

If you'd be interested in taking on the space, providing arts and crafts or would like to join a bank of volunteers to make sure that there are always two people on site when it is open (a wise precaution given the prevalence of anti social behaviour in the area) please go to www.goodshepherdstudios.com/no1 or get in touch at hello@weflockcic.org.uk.

Look out for the first pop-ups coming soon which include an exciting Christmas collaboration between Eonce chocolate and designer Tamasyn Gambell, both of whom have studios at GSB.

Website: goodshepherdstudios.com

Instagram: @GSSstudiosE11

Facebook: GSstudiosE11/

Email: hello@weflockcic.org.uk



Given the huge funding cuts to the arts, we wanted to make sure that the local community still had access to the them

Danie Gilbert

REACHING OUT FOR FAMILIES

In the current climate with many facing financial difficulty there are services available in Leytonstone for families who might need support. Susan Birdsall catches up with Joanna Wilby, Leytonstone Neighbourhood Family Outreach Worker, about her role and connecting those families with the support they need.



Joanna Wilby

Joanna has lived in the area for 27 years and brought up two children while running a business with her husband Alan. She has a long history of volunteering including supporting families at the food bank at Southwell Grove Road and serving food at Sally's Kitchen (sadly closed). More recently she volunteered at an early-help community drop-in centre and enjoyed it so much she decided to apply for the role of family outreach worker.

Background

The Family HUBS and Start for Life programme objective is to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs in local authority areas, ensuring all parents and carers can access the support they need when they need it.

Waltham Forest (WF) is one of 75 local authorities eligible for the programme which includes the creation of family HUBS.

What this means in Waltham Forest

Multiple agencies and linked initiatives including Best Start in Life and Space4All have been brought together to make it easier for families to access services. These one-stop shops are called Family HUBS.

There are four WF Family HUBS; in Leyton, Chingford, Walthamstow and Leytonstone. The Leytonstone HUB is based in Cathall Road in the old Harrow Green Library.

Through the HUB, residents can access local services including Citizens Advice, activities for under-fives, signposting services to financial support including benefit checks, debt management as well as various drop-in

support services including support with domestic violence or for quitting smoking. Space4All is the umbrella term for youth services which includes two youth clubs in Leytonstone; one at Pastures Sports Centre on Thursdays from 4.30-6.30pm and one at Langthorne Park on Tuesdays from 5.30-7.30pm. Young people aged 11-18 can get access to a mentor, employment opportunities and creative workshops.

Waltham Forest residents can go to any of the HUB facilities to access the borough services. The family HUB phone line on 020 8496 4965 is open for advice and support from 9am-9pm Monday to Friday and 10am-2pm on Saturdays. There is also a website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/families-young-people-and-children/family-hubs.

How did Joanna approach this new role?

"One of my main concerns is to reach out to families who may have barriers accessing services" she says. "I want to go beyond the usual settings of schools and nurseries to other places such as food banks and community groups" she explained.

"I had built up a big network from various sources – my voluntary work, having lived in the area for a long time, and bringing my kids up here. My starting point was making use of my contacts and that is what I have spent the first six months doing.

"My job is about drawing people in to understand what support there is available and getting them access. I want families to know what help is on offer and where to find it. If we can look after and support the wider family, we

will be looking after the children. A big part of my role so far has been to create connections".

How will you know you have succeeded?

"Seeing more residents accessing services is a key indicator and we have already seen an improvement in the numbers of people visiting the Leytonstone HUB" Joanne explains. "I have also had anecdotal feedback. For example, a local mum said about her children 'I really wanted somewhere for them to play and make friends. They really enjoyed the library and found other children interesting and made friends.'"

"This is about families feeling cared for and supported in various ways. For example, I organised a birthday cake for a child. Small things can have a big impact".

What help would be useful to you from the wider community?

"Please spread the word about what's available to friends and neighbours. Or tell that mum you might be chatting to at the bus stop or that teenager you know" Joanne says.

"Every month we do a bag pack, packing goody bags for 400 babies and 400 toddlers for health visitors to hand out. I was surprised to learn there are 400 babies born every month in Waltham Forest" says Joanne. "This is a big job, and I would really appreciate any volunteer support. BARA residents Clare and Andrew Thorne usually pitch up every month. I would also love to hear from faith groups in the area as I think that could be a great way to reach different groups of people. You can contact me on the family HUB phone line".



CHOCOLABORATION

If you are looking for an unusual and local gift for Christmas look no further. Two Leytonstone specialists have got together to create something unique.



Two of the tenants at the Good Shepherd Building have got together on a Christmas special that combines both their talents. Eonce chocolate makers, Julia and Jose Jarrow, and print designer, Tamasyn Gambell, have created a bespoke collection of three Christmas chocolate bars individually wrapped in hand screen-printed patterned papers. Julia and Jose produce ethically-sourced, additive-free bean-to-bar chocolate. Tamasyn has brought her vast design experience of working with such names as Ercol, Toast and Liberty to the project. There are three designs per flavour that fit together to make a larger pattern. Once the chocolate is eaten the wrapping makes a great display. Buy the bars at the pop-up at No 1 Church Lane with a BARA discount. Or order via the Eonce advert in our classified ads on pages 14 and 15.



In conversation with Mornington Road's Yahya El Droubie (known as Yak), founder of independent publishers Korero Press. Words by Gareth Dimelow.

Bushwood residents already know that our area has a real affinity for art and artists, from the well-loved Arts Trail to The Stone Space gallery. Here to shine a light on some less celebrated corners of the art world, is Korero Press, a Bushwood-based publisher of weird and wonderful art books.

The story of Korero begins in 2007 when Yak was working as a graphic designer for big publishers like Dorling Kindersley and Guinness Book of Records. "I noticed that there weren't any coffee table books on 'Pinstripping' (the 1960s art of painting lines on cars to accentuate their shape) so I pulled a proposal together, which a friend took to the Book Fair in Frankfurt. We had a firm offer for the rights but decided to publish ourselves once we had US distribution.

"After that initial success, people were keen to know what we could do for the next season so we started coming up with more ideas and Korero was born."

“There’s lots of incredible art out there that gets ignored, dismissed or forgotten because of its lurid nature or associations with exploitation and B-movie subculture.”

Sticking with the car theming subject, their next project involved Kustom Graphics, which covered Hot-Rod and Rockabilly designs, with a little burlesque thrown in.

And why the name Korero? "Korero is the Maori word for chatting, telling stories and sitting around sharing gossip. As a publisher, we feel we're telling stories, even though ours are mostly visual. At the time, we were also heavily into Tiki and Polynesian pop culture."

Although the company's early works were all broadly related to Hot-Rods and 'psychobilly,' Yak's interests drew him first towards photography, then to the lurid art of 'sexy fumetti', an Italian subgenre of adult comics that were filled with sex, humour and violence.

Korero published several volumes of work celebrating these eye-catching horror comics from the '70s and '80s. "At a convention marketplace I happened to meet Graham Humphreys, who'd built a name for himself in the early '80s during the video-nasties era. He was there selling his own stuff and I thought it would be nice to do a book with him. That relationship began with our first volume *Hung, Drawn and Executed*, which has now been through several reprints."

Graham and Yak teamed up again recently for a second volume, *Nightmares On One Sheet*, which came out last month, just in time for Halloween. It's a collection of mostly new art painted by Graham since 2019, much of it during lockdown.

"Many of the pieces were created to accompany new DVD, Blu-Ray and 4K re-releases of classic horror and exploitation titles, as well as a number of illustrations specially commissioned by film fans and collectors" Yak explained. "We had a great launch event at Forbidden Planet, where Graham got to meet his fans, followed by a party in Holborn attended by some of the celebrities and Hammer scream queens he's immortalised in print."

The philosophy of Korero is a simple one says Yak. "There's lots of incredible art out there that gets ignored, dismissed or forgotten because of its lurid nature or associations with exploitation and B-movie subculture. The artistry that goes into that work is no less valid. I quite like that we look in the dark recesses of culture for things that have been developing outside of the limelight. There is some fantastic stuff out there that is worth celebrating and elevating."

Many of the collections that Korero publish are representative of a pre-internet age. "We're capturing work that wasn't archived or collated online because such a thing didn't exist at the time. I suppose it shows my age, and my reference points! But like they say to authors, you should write what you know. The work is always going to be better, not to mention more interesting, if it's an area for which I have some genuine passion."

Another interesting aspect of Yak's books is how they can inspire a reappraisal of someone's work. "When we released the sex and horror collection, we revitalised Emanuele Taglietti's career, and now there's a whole load of stuff being published in Italy featuring work that everyone had totally forgotten about. I like to feel I played a part in bringing that stuff into the zeitgeist, by celebrating the art of people who've been ignored for too long. It could be argued that our Kustom Graphics books helped define that phrase in the cultural lexicon. It's always nice to feel that you had an influence, no matter how small."

Take a look at the Korero Press website and you'll see an eclectic range of titles. "We tend to lean towards more lurid, exploitation

work. Think along the lines of the old iconic Scala cinema and the B-movies they used to celebrate, we're a lot like that. Everything from spaghetti westerns and Giallo to Russ Meyer, and everything in-between."

As for the future, Yak's excited to be working on a couple of new volumes. One celebrates the work of pin-up artist Arthur Ferrier, who famously illustrated many of the covers for *Blighty* magazine in the 1950s. The other looks at Don the Beachcomber, the "founding father" of TIKI culture, which returns Korero to its Polynesian pop roots.

If you'd like to explore an alternative take on art history, or you'd like to gift someone with an unforgettable coffee table book, Yak has generously offered BARA members a 10% discount. Simply enter the word BUSHWOOD as the discount code when ordering from the website. If he has the title in stock he might even hand deliver it!

www.koreropress.com



Credit: John Ford

In the early days of video, Graham Humphreys was almost impossible to miss. His hand-painted posters featuring grisly ghouls, dripping zombies and other hideous creations turned low-budget VHS-titles into must-see movies. For a generation of young horror fans, Humphreys' art became an indicator of quality far greater than any positive critical review. Sadly, on some occasions, the lurid, hyper-colourful video covers often displayed more inventiveness and creativity than the films contained within. Which may well be one of the reasons why Korero's collections of Humphreys work have become bestsellers.

A YEAR OF BARA

Look at all the things we've been up to this year! They help make the Bushwood area the best place to live. A big thank you to the committee, road reps and event volunteers who made our lively and varied calendar of events possible.

- January:** BARA AGM & Member's Party at Mammoth Tap. Litter Pick.
- February:** BARA Houses of Parliament Tour. Litter Pick.
- March:** BARA Kids Prize Bingo. Litter Pick. Bush Telegraph. BARA Quiz.
- April:** BARA Cocktails @ Stone Mini Mart. Easter Egg Hunt. Litter Pick.
- May:** Road Rep Party. Spring Walk. Litter Pick.
- June:** BARA Bar Crawl. BARA became 'Friends of Henry Reynolds Garden'. Litter Pick. Bush Telegraph.
- July:** BARA Party in the Park. Litter Pick.
- August:** Litter Pick.
- September:** Litter Pick. Bush Telegraph.
- October:** BARA Autumn Walk. BARA Quiz. Hitchcock Walk. BARA Flavours of India Supper Club. Distribution of WF Great Bulb Giveaway bulbs. Litter Pick.
- November:** BARA Rear Window Supper Club. Litter Pick.
- December:** BARA 2023 Calendar published. Bush Telegraph Delivered to 1500 households. Santa's Walkabout. Christmas Letter Box. Deck the Halls competition. Litter Pick.

BARA represents residents on three panels:
Epping Forest Consultative Committee
Safer Neighbourhood Team Leytonstone Ward panel (BARA's Robbyn and Will are co-chairs)
Leytonstone Town Team Steering Group

BARA has re-established the Friends of Henry Reynolds Gardens Group and will be looking to develop that next year.

Other meetings attended: Church Lane Development Meetings; Meetings with other Residents' Groups; Council Ward Forum Meetings.

The BARA Stats

2296 BARA e-mails	49 Food bank deliveries
1389 e-mails sent by BARA	12 Litter picks
775 Facebook members	95 Items in the Library of Things
561 Member households	12 e-mail newsletters
1111 Instagram followers	10 Committee meetings
15 Gazebo & table hires	4 Issues of the BT delivered



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2024

JOINING FOR THE FIRST TIME

We love welcoming new members into the fold. If you're new to the area, BARA membership is the perfect way to meet new people, get up to speed on what's happening and gain access to a sea of local knowledge. There are two ways you can join.

Via your local Rep: Just pop £5 into the envelope provided with this magazine and drop it through the door of your Road Rep (see page 2). Please make sure that your name, address and any email addresses you want to add to our newsletter distribution list are very clearly written on the front of the envelope.

Online: go to www.bara.london and click on 'Join us'.

RENEWAL FOR CURRENT MEMBERS

Either use the brown envelope provided (see above) or pay online by waiting for an automatic renewal reminder from our membership system and following the link.

N.B. If you are already a member please don't try to create a new account using the joining option on our website as you will already exist on our system.

GET ALL OF THIS FOR £5 PER YEAR



PLUS ALL THE SOCIAL EVENTS, GIVEAWAYS AND FUN STUFF WE HAVE LINED UP FOR 2024 FOR ALL AGES

HOW TO BEAT THE JANUARY BLUES

Susan Birdsall explores some of the low-cost activities for adults within walking distance of the BARA area.



It may seem a long way off, but January will slap us in the face all too soon. We will be suffering with long dark nights, no money and feeling both sluggish and porky. However, a new, fit, mentally sharp, creative you could be just around the corner.

GET PHYSICALLY FITTER

I can personally recommend the Chicken Shack classes at O'Neills. The venue is changing in 2024 so check the-chicken-shack-rnr.square.site for details. Run by '50s lovers Malc and Tricia there are two classes on Tuesday evenings: Rock and Roll stroll at 7pm and a jive class at 8pm. Your first class is free then one class is £5 and both classes for £8. It is great fun and a clever way to get your steps in. Emma Scarr and I have been strolling for a year and are now learning jive as well. We both love it.

Another dance option is salsa on Fridays at St John's Church Hall from 7.30pm. I have it on good authority from BARA residents Mike and Daphne Jeremiah that this is great fun. The first half hour is free to see if you like it. This is followed by an hour-long lesson and another hour of social dancing. Cost is £8 for both. Contact 07947 183668.

Activities at Pastures Sports Centre, Davies Lane include Pilates on a Tuesday and Zumba on a Friday, both free

at 12.30-1.30pm, contact feel.good@walthamforest.gov.uk to join. Email events@ageukwalthamforest.org.uk, if you fancy walking football on a Monday at 10.30am, also free.

Play badminton here by joining the Golden Racquets club, £3 on Wednesdays 11:10am-12:40pm. It is an older crowd but all ages are welcome. Do check first with John on 07904 065802 as classes are often fully booked.

If you want to get fit and socialise at the same time, BARA member Jennie Hawley recommends the tea, cake and table tennis Monday evening session at Pastures from 5-7pm. £3 for adults, children welcome for £1 each.

There is more Zumba on Wanstead Flats, at the Ferndale Road end,

You can learn to knit or crochet or just take along something on which you are already working.



Waltham Forest Feel Good Walk Programme Tuesday 10.30am Pastures Centre.



Yoga at Good Shepherd.



Yarnivores at Stone Mini Market.



Chicken Shack dance classes at O'Neills.

for just £4 on Wednesdays and in the library for £5 on a Friday, both at 10.15am. BARA member, Jo Pile, encouraged me to go. It is fantastic, great fun and very friendly. Contact Giselle on 07932 277379 if you want to be added to the WhatsApp group.

For outdoor exercise, join the free-to-all Waltham Forest Feel Good Walk programme. I lead a walk at 10.30am every Tuesday from Pastures Sports Centre. It would be great to see even more BARA friends there.

The Good Shepherd Studios has yoga classes by Jessica Green for £3 or £5 depending on the class. You can find all the details at jessicagreen.net. Jessica is also running a menopause group on a Wednesday from 6-7pm with BARA resident Amanda Campbell. You will find a fun, warm and loving space here.

GET CRAFTING

Yarnivores is a meet-up for knitting, stitching, crochet and art lovers every other Tuesday at the Stone Mini Market. You can learn to knit or crochet or just take along something on which you are already working.

Leytonstone Library offers card making, knitting, origami and mindful colouring – all free. Card making is a relaxing and fun way to spend an hour and some lucky recipient gets a homemade card. I also joined origami and learned to make a butterfly and a box in an hour. That's Christmas for my husband Paul sorted. Pop into the library to check the latest timetable and how to join.

TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The News from Nowhere Club has been running for 26 years and meets monthly at St Johns Church Hall. This is a terrific way to learn something new and engage in discussion with local people. Upcoming events can be found on the website newsfromnowherewebsite.wordpress.com

The Leytonstone Folk Club



Knit a dog jacket at Yarnivores.

meets on the first Thursday of each month at St John's church hall. It costs £3, you get tea and cakes and the chance to sing and play an instrument or just watch. The committee includes BARA residents Peter Fanning, Danny Jones and Emma Scarr.

Why not join gamers at Stone Mini Market on Wednesdays at 7pm every week? You won't find Monopoly being played but you will find all the latest new games ranging from the complex to the fun crowd pleasers. This venue is BT editor James Cowen's second home where you will find him revelling in this activity. Follow this on the Facebook group Leytonstone Tabletop Games or [@leytonstonetabletopgames](https://www.instagram.com/leytonstonetabletopgames) on Instagram.

Build your digital muscles by attending one of the free sessions at The Geek Café on the High Road at 5-6pm on Mondays and Wednesdays at 3pm. Abdul, the owner, is both expert and helpful.

You could be out every night of the week doing an improving activity at little or no cost. So, no excuses, by this time next year we will be, fit, sharp and making our own clothes and dog jackets.



Leytonstone Folk Club at St John's church hall.



Board Game Night Stone Mini Market.



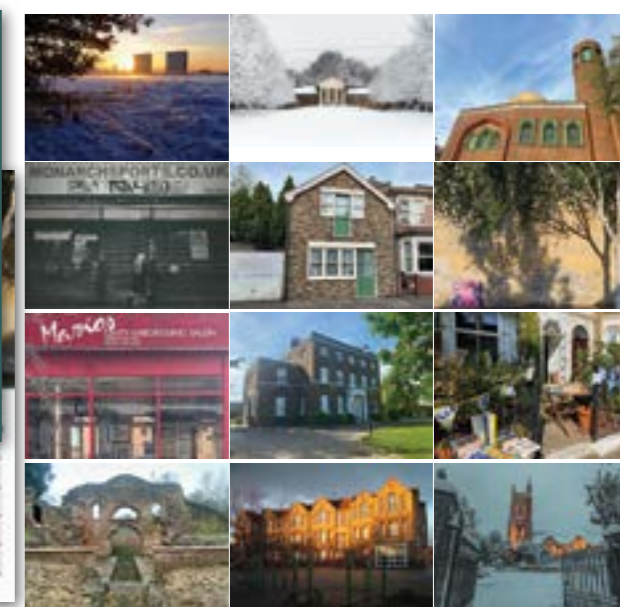
Origami at Leytonstone Library

BARA Calendar

The entries have been judged and the 2024 calendar is now ready to order. The perfect Christmas gift for your Bushwood friends.

Thanks to everyone who submitted pictures for this year's calendar competition. Our independent judging panel has selected 13 images for the 2024 calendar. All winning entries receive a free copy of the calendar and the accolade of being featured on the walls of many Bushwood houses. This year's winners are Cover: Kate Duffy; January: Martina Leeven; February: Leigh Brown; March: Andrew Shields; April: Andrew Irvine; May: Reem Bortcosh; June: Elle McCall; July: Stuart Cameron; August: Margaret Walls; September: Anita McCullough; October: Ollie O'Callaghan; November: John Buniak; December: Jennifer Laine-Greene. Congratulations to you all.

www.bara.london/bara-shop



BARA's Fiona finds out why, one night a year, marketing executive and Leyspring Road Rep, Benedikt Humm, heads off for a coffee, Red Bull and a snack-fuelled all-nighter in London. His mission? Decorating the Ritz for Christmas!

It started 40 years ago in Koblenz, Germany where a severely dyslexic Benedikt, struggling with conventional learning, chose to undertake a degree apprenticeship in floristry. After graduating, he worked for various top German florists until a colleague showed him a book written by the British floral designer Kenneth Turner. Benedikt immediately knew where he wanted to go next...

Kenneth Turner is credited as being the first celebrity florist. His shop was located in the Thomas Goode building in Mayfair which was the most expensive glass and china shop in England. It was here that, after an interview in which the most important question appeared to be his star sign, Benedikt found himself working, just six short months later.

Exciting, mad, bonkers, wild and crazy are words that crop up frequently as Benedikt remembers this period of his life. The likes of Princess Diana and Freddie Mercury frequented the shop; a colleague decorated the flat of a rich lady named 'Ivana' each week, they even decorated royal palaces including Windsor Castle for the Queen's 40th Jubilee. And then there were weddings... Benedikt remembers turning the Natural History Museum into a wedding venue for 1000 guests in just an hour and a half. "Clients would spend as much on flowers for one event as normal people would spend on buying a house" he says. The next morning, those very same flowers would be on their way to the local tip.

At the tender age of 24 Benedikt was put in sole charge of the Fortnum and Mason, Harvey Nichols and Harrods concessions. "I didn't have the foggiest idea what I was doing" he admits. By the age of 26 and at a crossroads, he found himself choosing between striking out on his own, or turning his back on it all and looking for something 'less mad'.

"The world of high-end floristry is glamorous and exciting but actually quite corrosive" reflects Benedikt. Eighty-hour weeks weren't unusual and he doesn't remember a single florist from that time who managed to sustain a healthy relationship or good work/life balance.

But what to do next? Going back to normal floristry wasn't an option. "You can't play the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury and then gig at the local pub" he says. So he retrained in marketing and settled down with his partner who many of us know as 'Zoe the Gardener' who, he points out proudly, "knows all about growing plants rather than harvesting them".

But back to the Ritz... Benedikt never lost touch with the floristry world and 15 years ago when good friend Paul Thomas won the contract to decorate the hotel for Christmas, he asked Benedikt to help.

Between 11pm and 7am on one night in November, a team of 25 people transform the hotel into a Christmas wonderland reflective of its Louis XVI-style interior.

Paul's responsibility is the 25-foot Christmas tree in the lobby, specifically grown for that space and ordered two years beforehand. It needs 16 people to carry it and pull it upright before it is decorated with 6500 fairy lights and baubles the size of footballs.

The pleasure of decorating the Palm Court, home of the world-renowned Tea at the Ritz, falls to Benedikt. He and his team of eight, which now includes his son Harvey, spend the night wrapping the iconic pillars with 40ft garlands, hanging parliaments of glittering



The decorated Ritz

PUTTING ON THE RITZ

“ You have to think opulent, luxurious and over-the-top but also keep a sense of fun and balance



The tree at The Ritz



Leyspring's Benedikt

owls, securing golden deer heads and cherubs, perfectly placing bows and baubles and arranging tea cups as if they were flowers gently looking up to the sun.

"In the Palm Court size matters" says Benedikt. "You have to think opulent, luxurious and over-the-top but also keep a sense of fun and balance".

Benedikt lights up with enthusiasm as he talks and I wonder if he ever regrets stepping out of the world of floristry. "Never" is the immediate reply. "But it's brilliant fun and a real adrenaline rush to briefly step back into the world that I left behind some 25 years ago. The most satisfying part is at 7am when the scaffolding comes down and you see everything in its splendid entirety".

Decoration night is always fully booked out by families that come from all over the world to witness the transformation. For us slightly less well-heeled folk, Benedikt recommends a cocktail in the beautiful art deco Rivoli Bar, though he admits that he would much rather be drinking with friends in the North Star Pub, as the pomp and ceremony of the Ritz "Just isn't my cup of afternoon tea!"

If you'd like to see more about this and a video of how the transformation takes place just do a You Tube search for 'Ritz Christmas Tree' and watch the magic unfold.

The latest addition to the BARA discount scheme is the long-established La Bella Vita restaurant on the High Road which has a very loyal client base. Joyce Quarrie dropped in to chat with the manager, Iza Jorayera.

La Bella Vita has been a stalwart in Leytonstone since 2014. Iza Jorayera, the manager, started working here in 2016 and after a break returned in January. Although owned by a local businessman she looks after the day-to-day running of the restaurant.

Iza first came to England as a student from Turkmenistan to study English and she began working part-time at La Bella Vita. Since first arriving she has noticed a lot of changes in the area. "It's a lot more diverse and there are more restaurants and places to go" she says. "That does mean there is more competition but it also means locals have a lot more choice. We are lucky at La Bella Vita as we have a very loyal customer base. Some of our customers have been regulars since we first opened."

The strong Italian theme of the restaurant is down to the Italian chef. He has been in the restaurant since its opening and takes pride in making everything from scratch which shows particularly in the scrumptious deserts on the menu. It is surprising that anyone gets to that course as the portions at this lovely restaurant are always generous. Wherever possible food is sourced from Italian suppliers and vegetables come from Spitalfields in Leyton.

La Bella Vita has a particularly good fish menu which has been added to this year as more and more customers enjoyed the fish dishes on the menu. "Seafood linguine is a real favourite" says Iza. Their prawns are large and juicy and they serve tasty sea bass too. On the desert menu is a mouth-watering tiramisu with creme brûlée being the most popular item. Pizzas too are very popular. Given their size and generous toppings it isn't surprising.

Since early November Bella Vita has been serving breakfasts from 9am-5pm. There is something for everyone on the menu. As well as classic breakfast plates including a vegetarian option, there is banana bread and pancakes and the house speciality – hot pan breakfast – served in a pan direct from the oven. This too offers a vegetarian option. They even have a Hangover Breakfast for the morning after the night before!

The extensive menu is wide-ranging to suit all tastes and at lunchtime and dinner there is an attractive set menu with plenty of choice. For just £14.95 at lunchtime (12-5pm) and £20.95 in the evening you get two courses and a complimentary glass of wine.

La Bella Vita is open every day seven days a week and the generous 10% BARA discount is valid at all times. And for those looking for somewhere over Christmas this restaurant is open over the holidays. They are almost fully booked on Christmas Day so get in quickly if you are looking for somewhere local.

La Bella Vita also caters for parties and is happy for people to take their own decorations, celebration cakes and provide their own music. The restaurant seats 44 and they welcome private parties and weddings.

It is hoped that one of the next supper clubs will be at this Leytonstone legend. Look out for an announcement in the new year. In the meantime get along and enjoy the BARA discount at this great-value restaurant.

Open seven days a week 9am-10pm.

**La Bella Vita, 853 High Road Leytonstone, E11 1HH.
Tel. 0203 441 3465.
info@labellavitaleytonstone.com
www.labellavitaleytonstone.com**



La Bella Vita Italian Mediterranean Est. 2013

LITTLE ITALY

Manager, Iza, at La Bella Vita.

“ As well as classic breakfast plates including a vegetarian option, there is banana bread and pancakes and the house speciality – hot pan breakfast – served in a pan direct from the oven.



Octopus Delight



Banana pancakes



The Full English

BARA MEMBERS AGM

MONDAY 22ND JANUARY
VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED
@7.30PM

BARA AGM & MEMBERS PARTY

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME
ENJOY A FREE DRINK AND SNACK



BARA FOOD BANK COLLECTIONS AND LITTLE LIBRARIES





Food
21 Browning Rd
37a Harvey Rd
11 Barclay Rd
20 Stammers Rd
7 Leybourne Rd
37 Lister Rd

Books
37a Harvey Rd
37 Leybourne Rd
15 Beacontree Rd

BARA collects donations for a local food bank. You can find our collection boxes around Bushwood. We would be very grateful for donations of dried and tinned goods including tinned vegetables, fruit, fish and meat; pasta, flour, long-life milk, tea, coffee, cereals, cleaning products. Standard sizes are preferred.

Bushwood has lots of free books in the Little Libraries dotted around the neighbourhood. The books in our libraries are free to take. It would be great if you return them once read or alternatively drop off any books you've finished with. Please make sure the lid on the box is shut when you use the library.



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