

The Community Magazine for the
Sudbury Court and Pebworth Estates

December
2020

The Courier

90th
Year



Photo: Pradeep Luther

**Welcome to
The Season of Goodwill**

Free valuations for sales & lettings

2021

January 2021							February 2021							March 2021							April 2021								
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The Courier



December 2020
Number 218 (1,058)

The official publication of the Sudbury Court Residents' Association.

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Dear Neighbours,

Well, what a year! I don't suppose many of us will be sorry to say goodbye to 2020. Part of the reason why I liked the front cover picture—sent in by resident Pradeep Luther, taken in Northwick Park—is the break in the clouds in the middle and the glimpses of beautiful blue sky behind. The pandemic has led to many feelings, I'm sure, but it certainly felt like a cloud over the year—and maybe news of a vaccine is that little break in the clouds we've been hoping for. Obviously, we still need to make sure we follow guidelines and keep safe—but perhaps we can now have our fingers crossed with hope for a better year to come. I have a feeling there will be a lot of celebrations once the clouds clear—not least the SCRA's 90th birthday, that we missed this year. 🍷

Please do check out all our contributors and features, and make sure you nominate for the Christmas Lights competition, as well as send in recommendations for local suppliers and shops. Please take the message from the Cautionary Tale on our Letter Page, backing up what PC Kennedy keeps telling us—Cold Callers might be dodgy, and join the WhatsApp group to keep up to date with goings-on in our streets.

I would also like to, personally, wish you all a very Happy Christmas, and a special big **thank you** to all our Courier deliverers (pg12).

Until next time, please stay safe and well.

Kaye

Our Regular Contributors:

	Page
Safer Neighbourhood Team	4-7
Councillor's Comments	8-9
St Cuthberts/Memory Cafe	10
Sudbury Court Horticultural Society	19
Northwick Park Community Garden	21
Kids' Page	25

Features:

Letter to Editor	11
Christmas Lights Competition	12
Tree Update—Martin Page	13
Perfect Peace . . . At 4mph	15
Season of Goodwill	17 ❄️

Most of our holidays this year will be somewhat different, I imagine. If you have any photos or stories of how you're celebrating, and you'd like to share—please send them in to:
editor@the-scra.co.uk

If you don't have email and you would like to contact the SCRA, please call:

07933 958 166

(available Mondays and Thursdays 9-5pm, or leave a message/text and we'll get back to you)

Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhood Team

PCSO Charlie Charalambous 7271NW

PC Finn Kennedy 2621NW (author of this article)

PC Daniel Kubik 1579NW

Sergeant Steve Brown



It would appear that there may be some light at the end of the COVID tunnel with news of progress on a vaccine. However, can residents please keep up to date with, and abide by, the Restrictions for all our sakes - they are in place to protect lives and the NHS from being overwhelmed. Police are monitoring the compliance of residents and businesses in an effort to curb the infection rate.

Anyway, let's hope 2021 is better than 2020!!

Street Robbery:

I urge parents to speak to their children about general safety, especially to and from school. Street robberies mainly target cash and mobile phones - often with threats for the victim to unlock their phone before handing it over.

Encourage your children to be aware when they are out and about, and not distracted on their phones; to be aware of youths that might be loitering around with intent to rob. Please read the safety advice: 'Keeping safe when out and about' (pg 5-6).

Scams at Cashpoints:

Can elderly residents please be cautious when using cashpoints? - check to see if there is anyone loitering as you approach the machine to use it. Anyone loitering might try to come up to you as you put your bank card in the machine and enter your PIN, and try to distract you, cancel your transaction and steal your bank card. This happened to an elderly woman at the ATM by the Tesco Metro East Lane on 28/10/20. In this instance, an eagle-eyed local business owner saw the men loitering, rang PCSO Charalambous, who then immediately notified police mobile units. The car that the thieves were in was chased down and one male was arrested; a large quantity of suspected stolen bank cards were retrieved. Other men who

had decamped the car and ran have been identified and the investigation is ongoing.

These thieves spend their day going from cashpoint to cashpoint looking to distract someone. The main advice I can give you is to try to make sure that there is no one immediately behind you as you are using the cashpoint, and gauge whether someone else is behaving suspiciously: ensure that they are well back from you and hide your PIN from their view.

Cold Callers Permanent Alert:

I take a dim view of residents who employ cold calling builders/workmen as they are encouraging this activity – by employing cold callers you invite them to the area where they can see other residents' movements and get a close up of their houses, and especially the elderly residents. They might not scam you, but they might scam your elderly neighbour or burgle their property.

Examples of the 'work' they might suggest you need doing: driveway work, jet washing, cutting your trees/hedge, cleaning your gutters, fixing a roof tile etc. If you need this work done, do your research on who does this type of work locally, that they have a good reputation and give them the work. **No tradesperson worth their salt has to canvass for work by cold calling.**

Help to keep Northwick Park area a no-go zone for cold callers. (Editor's note: see pg 17)

Dangerous Dog Incidents:

Some residents have reported dangerous dog incidents in Northwick Park—if you know of anyone who walks two Rottweiler dogs together, can you ask them to get in touch with us on 0208 721 2969.

Police are carrying out enquiries to trace the owner.

Vehicle Thefts – from and of:

A number of residents who have Ring Doorbells, and similar systems, have reported trespassers going onto their driveways in the middle of the night and trying the door handles of their vehicles – the males involved in this are opportunist thieves, most likely drug addicts, who are roving around trying door handles and if they find one open, they will search the car for anything valuable - cash or anything that they can sell – glasses, sat nav.

To avoid being a victim of this crime please ensure that you lock your car doors: sometimes the central locking fob can be very sensitive and if you put it in your pocket after locking your car, it might accidentally unlock.

Leave your car empty of cash, and anything of value.

We are also aware that from time to time roads are targeted by car thieves who have devices to boost the signal from your car key to your car to steal the car if you don't keep your car key in a Faraday pouch.

Some people who have high value new cars still keep their car keys in their kitchen or in the hallway but not in one of these pouches - don't be surprised if your car goes missing if you do not take this simple security measure.

Catalytic converter thefts:

As you can see from the crime figures on pg 6, Catalytic Converter (CatCon) thefts are still an issue for Toyota Prius / Auris, Lexus and

Honda Jazz cars. The car parks of Northwick Park Hospital (NPH) are being targeted from time to time.

Please, if you own one of these cars, do some research online as to whether your car is the age of car that is being targeted and what measures you can take in order to limit the chances of this happening to your car.

The men involved in this are mainly a group of white men in their 20s, with Irish accents, wearing baseball hats. They jack up the car and remove the CatCon in a matter of minutes. They use a variety of cars, all on false stuck-on plates.

Keeping Safe Out and About (taken from PSNI website):

- Cover up expensive-looking jewellery. Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards. Carry your house keys in your pocket. If someone grabs your bag, let it go - Your safety is more important than your property.
- Remember - flight not fight!
- Don't take short cuts through dark alleys, parks etc. Walk facing the traffic, so a car cannot pull up behind you unnoticed.
- Self-defence/safety awareness classes may help you feel more secure, but remember - flight not fight!
- Don't hitch-hike or take lifts from strangers.

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- When walking alone carry a personal attack alarm. Carry it in your hand so you can use it immediately to scare off an attacker. Make sure it is designed to continue sounding if it is dropped or falls to the ground.

- Arrange transport home in advance. Do not go out alone. Don't get isolated from your friends.

- Stay in well-lit areas and don't wander in areas you are unsure of.

- Never leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from someone who you don't know or trust.

- If you feel drunk, dizzy or disorientated seek help from a trusted friend or a member of bar staff.

- Consider carefully whether to leave with someone you have just met.

- When jogging or cycling, vary your route and time. Use well-lit roads with pavements. On parkland, keep to main paths and open spaces where you can see and be seen by other people - avoid wooded areas. Listening to music on your phones etc may limit your awareness to the surroundings.

Overview of offences 10th Oct to 10th Nov:

Aggravated Burglary: Sudbury Court Drive, in 90s odds side, 18/10/20 1830hrs, four men broke into a house looking for someone, investigation ongoing;

Residential Burglary: (i) Bengeworth Rd, in 30s odds side, 28/10 2100hrs – 29/10 0700hrs, entry forced into garage and house under construction/renovation and tools and equipment stolen; (ii) Paxford Rd, in 100s odds side, 07/11 2000hrs, entry believed rear patio door, alarm sounded at 2000hrs, police were called by residents and attended quickly along with dog unit, no suspects

found despite area search, believed jewellery stolen; (iii) Nightingale Avenue, in 20s odds, 08/11 2100hrs – 09/11 1530hrs bicycle stolen from shed of dwelling;

Attempted Burglary: Northwick Ave, in 80s evens side, 13/10/20 0420hrs, suspects have tried to force entry to house, have driven off not getting in;

Theft of Motor Vehicle: (i) Littleton Cres., 11/10/20 0420hrs – 0800hrs, 18 plate Range Rover stolen in keyless theft, subsequently found on false plates in the area of Maybank Rd; (ii) Sudbury Court Road, in 40s evens, 61 plate Audi stolen in keyless theft; (iii) Abbotts Drive, in 70s evens side, 03/11 0420hrs keyless theft of 15 plate Land Rover; (iv) Pasture Rd, in 10s evens side, 05/11 0041hrs, 60 plate Ford van stolen in keyless theft, suspect arrested following vehicle pursuit on A406 later that morning;

Theft from Motor Vehicle: (i) Northwick Park Hospital (NPH), 23/10/20 0830 hrs – 1735hrs, CatCon stolen from 18 plate Lexus; (ii) NPH, 23/10/20 0830 hrs – 1830hrs, CatCon stolen from 12 plate Auris; (iii) Nathans Road, 20s evens side, 27/10 2300hrs – 28/10 0700hrs, CatCon stolen from 62 plate Auris; (iv) The Crescent, in 10s odds side, 27/10 1100hrs – 28/10 1000hrs, CatCon stolen from 14 Plate Auris; (v) The Link, 28/10 1400hrs -1915hrs registration plates stolen from Audi A3 11 plate; (vi) St. Francis Lodge Harrow Rd, 26/10 0800hrs – 29/10 2330hrs, CatCon stolen from 53 plate Honda Civic; (vii) Peel Road, in 80s evens, 03/11 1830hrs – 2100hrs, laptops stolen from back seat of car that wasn't locked;

Theft person: NPH, 12/10/20 1341hrs, suspect brushed past elderly person as she was using the cashpoint, stole money from the cashpoint, suspect arrested and charged.



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Crime Prevention Advice:

Burglary -

- Ensure that your perimeter fence/wall, your house doors and windows are fit for purpose. Boundary walls and fencing along with shrubbery is the first line of defence to an intruder and should be good enough to keep a potential burglar out. A lot of houses in the Sudbury Court Estate have a shared driveway with easy access to the rear, if at all please try to get this open access gated off - most burglars gain access via the rear of a house.

- Please ensure that garden sheds are locked and that all garden implements are locked away as frequently these are used to break in to houses.

- Consider getting an alarm / alarm box fitted, CCTV cameras or dummy ones.

- Keep your car keys hidden and not on/in the cabinet near your front door.

- Make sure to secure your side gates when you go out and ensure that your garden fence or wall is durable and designed for purpose - to keep out intruders!

- Consider installing an alarm system and a safe for your jewellery and valuables.

Vehicle Crime -

- do not keep valuables in your car; ideally leave your glove box open and do not leave any goods/property in the car.

- do not leave a sat nav holder on display and rub off all marks of sat navs from your windscreen.

- Be on the look out for tow away vehicles, these are being used to steal cars from people's driveways - if you see someone load your neighbours vehicle onto a tow truck/a truck with a hoist and your neighbour is not present then you may be witnessing a theft of your neighbour's car so consider ringing the police - try obtain the registration number of the tow truck

Robbery -

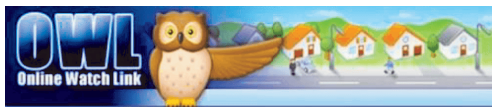
- Stay alert! - try be aware of your surroundings when you are out and about, this is especially important if you listening to an iPod or on a mobile phone.

- Stay clear! - if you think you are being followed or that someone looks like they're up to no good, then cross the road or go into a shop/address - ring the police if necessary.

Bicycle Thefts -

- Ensure that you secure your bicycle with a substantial lock at all times and leave in a well lit place.

- obtain your frame number and register your bicycle on www.BikeRegister.com or www.immobilise.com - this could assist police in recovering your bicycle if stolen.



We use the OWL (Online Watch Link) to send out alerts to residents about crimes happening in the area as well as other information of benefit.

Please register on OWL to receive these alerts—it is a FREE service:

www.owl.co.uk

The various residents' WhatsApp groups receive the same alerts. (please email: membership@the-scra.co.uk) for details

Please consult the websites below for more crime prevention tips or if you do not have access to the internet, perhaps speak to us and we might be able to arrange that you obtain a crime prevention pamphlet.

Your team would welcome any information on anti-social behaviour or criminal offences occurring in the area—please contact us:

020 87212 969 or
07920 233 752

northwickpark.snt@met.police.uk

Useful numbers:

Dial **999** in an emergency—where a crime is in progress or life is in danger.

For non-emergencies, ring **101**

To give information anonymously call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

Useful websites:

Find a whole host of useful info: e.g. crime prevention, crime statistics, identity theft!

www.met.police.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
www.cifas.org.uk
www.direct.gov.uk



Councillor's Comments

Cllr Robert Johnson - Northwick Park Ward

Email: cllr.robert.johnson@brent.gov.uk

I hope you are having a wonderful autumn period and that this article reaches you in the best of health.

COVID-19 Update

At the beginning of November Covid cases had risen in Brent and London, although the rise has slowed, and not as devastating to our community this time around in comparison to March/April. The reduction of cases may be partially due to the change in behaviour of many people - people abiding by the rules - and may in part be due to the second national lockdown and the tiered approach adopted by the Government. We are likely to see a further decline between now and the proposed end of the national lockdown due to end on 2nd December, due mainly to the additional restrictions implemented as part of the national lockdown. At time of writing the Brent 7 day incidence rate is currently 117 per 100,000 with London being at 146. There is good availability of testing. Testing rates are 276 per 100,000 in Brent with a positivity rate of 6.6%. Our highest rates are in the 16-29 year olds, followed by the 30-44 year olds. BAME are still being affected, however people of Asian origin are more acutely affected this time around.

COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough

News of a breakthrough for a vaccine was reported on 9th November, which is a game changer for all of us. However, the vaccine has yet to be certified as safe. The projection for mass vaccination is likely to happen in the new year. We cannot afford to relax on following the rules because of this breakthrough and I would urge everyone to continue to wear a mask in public areas, allow 2 metres spacing when you go out to the shops or in any outdoor/indoor spaces and wash your hands frequently to stop the spreading of the virus.

COVID-19 Testing capacity

Brent currently has 3 testing centres (Wembley, Willesden and Harlesden) as well as a mobile centre in Neasden. There is more than enough capacity to service the Borough through these centres.

Who can book a test?

You can book a test if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19
- You can travel to the test site on foot or by motorcycle or bicycle and don't need to use public transport
- You have a face covering
- You adhere to social distancing at all times, when travelling to and from the site

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Most people with COVID-19 will have at least one of these symptoms:

- A high temperature
- Or a new cough
- Or a change in sense of taste or smell

If you have any of these symptoms, you should book a test.

Tests must be booked by calling **020 8937 4440** available every day 9-5pm.

What do I need to bring with me?

- You must bring a **valid form of ID**, proof of your **appointment confirmation** and a **face covering**.

If you do not have a valid form of ID or access to a mobile phone or have an email account, please discuss this when making your appointment.

Can I bring my family members with me?

Only those being tested should be at the test site. If you can't leave your family at home, they may come with you but must wear a face covering. NOTE children under the age of 3 will not be permitted as it would be unsafe for them to wear a face covering.

What do I do while waiting for my appointment or my test results?

You and everyone in your household **must** stay at home to prevent the spread of the infection.

When will I get my results?

Test results will not be held by the council. The testing site will send you your test results by email and text message within 24 – 72 hours of completing the test. If you don't have an email address or a phone number, you can contact 119 for your results.

Brent set to launch local Test and Trace service

Brent Council is set to launch a local Test and Trace service to help contact residents who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Residents who have tested positive will be phoned by a team from the council if the national NHS Test and Trace team have not been able to reach them in the first 24 hours. The council will be making sure that those with a positive test can be linked up with council services and local community support to help them while they self-isolate. They will also be asked for information about their recent close contacts so that these people can be told to self-isolate too.

Calls started on 11th November and will come from a local phone number beginning with **020 8937**.

To ensure this information can be captured as quickly as possible, rather than waiting for a call, residents are encouraged to log their contacts **online** as soon as they receive a positive test result. Residents won't receive a call if this information has already been provided.

If you have been asked to self-isolate, you may be entitled to a Test and Trace Support payment of £500. This is for residents on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result.

Go online to find out more and check if you're eligible.

Dr Melanie Smith, Director of Public Health at Brent Council, said:

"We are looking forward to launching our local Test and Trace service which we hope will make sure residents self-isolating get the right support and help us see where the virus may be spreading so that we can protect the community from COVID-19.

That's why it's important that if you get a call from us, you provide as much information as possible. Or better still, don't wait for us to call – go online first.

As well as this, everyone should continue to wash their hands regularly, wear a face covering in public spaces and keep a safe distance from others.

Please also carry on following the government's guidance and remember, **if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, book a test straight away by calling us on 020 8937 4440.**

If we all do this, together we can help keep Brent safe."

To find out more about COVID-19 and the latest advice, visit

www.brent.gov.uk/coronavirus

Councillors Surgeries

We will run a virtual surgery 5th December at 11am. Please send us an email as soon as you can requesting a meeting. We will then send the link.

You can also call/FaceTime/email us:

Cllr Robert Johnson **07876 138 676**
Cllr.Robert.Johnson@brent.gov.uk

Cllr Margaret McLennan **07949 398 193**
Cllr.Margaret.McLennan@brent.gov.uk

Cllr Keith Perrin **07711 561 848** Direct calls only
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Hello folks.

With so much uncertainty around all I can say as far as church and Christmas is concerned is please do check our website www.stcuths.org We will certainly be continuing to run Memory Cafe At Home so please do email us on

memorycafeathome@hotmail.com

I hope that the following brings much cheer. I am a great animal lover. I think it runs in the family. As I write this, my lovely little black cat, Luna, is curled up and sleeping on the desk beside me. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of having a cat friend (we never own them) will tell you that each cat has its own unique personality. What all cats seem to share is a sense of fun and adventure, which is most comforting in our strange times.

I also love dogs and one day aim to have one. As I have said before in my column, each Sunday we get a lovely dog visitor, Faith, in church. She comes with her owners Margaret and Ruth. Margaret tells me that Faith knows when it is a Sunday and loves coming to church. Faith sits right at the front and pays great attention. I have noticed that whenever I use the word, *Faith*, in my sermons that the little dog always seems to prick up her ears.

One of the things that has come sharply into focus during these awful times is nature and creation. Our pets have been a great comfort to us. Watching the changing of the seasons is awesome. The garden birds have been a delight. As winter draws in let's keep the joy of nature in mind and remember that Spring will come, and one day this will all be over

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Letter to Editor

A Cautionary Tale

"My house was recently burgled at 8pm—while I was tending to my newborn in hospital.

The front of the house has cameras and a Ring doorbell. The burglars have gone through the road behind my house and broken the fence panel to get into my garden. Removed the garden floodlights on my fence and property and broken through into the house.

Fortunately the alarm was triggered and although they had entered the house many items were not stolen.

Looking at my Ring doorbell footage and

things I noticed in the lead up to the robbery:

1) Someone suspicious wanting to clean my front porch a few days prior. He had a small white van and with a distinct Irish accent. He was particularly pushy and looking around.

2) A silver grey van (not sure the make or model) had passed by my house 3 days in a row whilst I was at the hospital at around the same time of the robbery day. It wasn't seen a few days prior to this or since.

Hope this helps."

Resident, Paxford Road

Anyone who hasn't already joined the WhatsApp groups, please do so—this kind of information and things to look out for can be passed on between neighbours and help us help each other keep safe. Thanks—Kaye

Letters to the Editor/SCRA must be signed and include an address; this information will not be published. The Editor reserves the right to shorten any letters, as space dictates. Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, SCRA Committee or SCRA policies.



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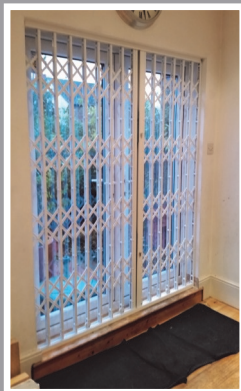
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Judging for the

Christmas Lights Competition

will take place during the third week of December. Winners will be published in the February issue of The Courier.

If you 'd like to nominate your favourite display, for consideration by our Secret Santas (Judges), please email: editor@the-scrs.co.uk (before 17th Dec)



Courier deliverers

We'd like to take this opportunity to say a HUGE 'thank you' to our residents who, once a month, whatever the weather, deliver our Courier magazine to every doorstep on the Sudbury Court and Pebworth Estates.

And especially those who stepped in to help when some of our regular deliverers were shielding during lockdown.

I think it's true to say that we wouldn't have a magazine without your commitment.

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Tree Update—Martin Page



White Birch



Birch



Rowan



Hawthorn



White Cherry

You may have noticed the Autumn tree planting season is underway: SCRA and Brent Council Landscape Team working together on funding and placement of trees.

Last winter we planted around 45 new trees in the south east area of Sudbury Court: Shelley Gardens, Oldborough, Blockley and Holt Roads.

We are also planting 10 trees secured by Kaye as a donation from the contractors from the Byron Court School expansion - these will be planted near the school in Nathans and Spencer Roads.

If you want to have some input in planting in your street, please contact SCRA or myself as soon as possible, the window for planting is fairly narrow.

We aim to avoid reliance on too many trees of the same type, instead propose a mix of species to enhance biodiversity, so trees we will plant are a mix of:
Silver Birch - *Betula pendula*
Chinese Birch - *Betula albosinensis*
White Birch - *Betula utilis* Grayswood Ghost

River Birch – *Betula nigra*
Rowan - *Sorbus aucuparia* varieties
Hawthorn e.g. *Crateagus Pauls Scarlet*
White Cherry – *Prunus umineko*
Pink Cherry e.g. *Prunus Shirofugen*
Field Maple – *Acer campestre* varieties
Turkish Hazel – *Corylus colurna*
Hornbeam – *Carpinus betulus*
Purple Leaf Plum, *Prunus cerasifera nigra*.

If anyone has any preferences from the list, or special requests for other species, please do contact me:

martin.page@brent.gov.uk 07876 001 712

If you've already given your contact details or emailed Keith Barker at SCRA or your Councillors re: trees, we will be in touch.



Pink Cherry



Field Maple



Hornbeam



Purple Leaf Plum

A Safe & Healthy Festive Season

Greeting, salaam, shalom and namaste to you and all. I trust you're safe, well and in good spirits.

At the time of writing this article, we are in lockdown 2.0 and it seems uncertain where we will be in December. I hope the month of lockdown is enough to bring us out of this challenging period and we can share the festive period with more of our loved ones, rather than locked in and alone.

At Foot Comfort Centre, we have withdrawn non-essential services, but our doors will remain open whilst we continue to provide essential and emergency foot and ankle care and maintain our enhanced COVID-19 safe protocols.

During this challenging time remember to eat healthily and take your daily walks in safety with comfortable footwear and, now that winter is upon us, in warm clothing and head covering.

For those of you who are shielding but still in need of advice and care, remember that we continue to provide FREE telephone consultations and advice to anyone who needs it.

For those of you suffering from foot and ankle pain or need attention for any of the range of conditions we

treat, we remain at your service.

I hope you have a peaceful and enjoyable festive period and remain safe and healthy,

Firoz

For foot care tips visit our website
www.footcomfortcentre.co.uk

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Suffering from covid & lockdown pressure? Blocked off from your usual sun & sand break? How about some 'canal medication'? For the mildly stressed a canal towpath walk might be sufficient, while more acute cases may need a few days gentle rest & recuperation actually on board. The first of many marvellous canal boat holidays for my family started from Cowley Marina just down the road, and with stretches of the Grand Union canal nearby it's been a great exercise walk when everything else was closed.

"There's absolutely *nothing* so much worth doing as messing about in boats" says Ratty in *Wind in the Willows*.

Now, despite his name, he was actually a water vole whose favourite dwelling place is canal banks and he wasn't talking about ocean going cruises. The thing is, the legal *maximum* speed allowed on a canal is just 4mph and it completely transforms the whole world you're in. Everything slows down. Including, I suspect, your pulse and brainwaves! The most vigorous activity comes with negotiating locks – and you simply can't hurry those if you try. Filling one takes as long as it takes, so you just sit and perhaps sip something until the gate beam gently moves to show it's ready.

But the tempo also gives you time to look at what's around you. The puttering engine

doesn't disturb the fish-stalking grey heron in the slightest; 'one step at a time' for him means about one a minute, freezing in between. A sudden vivid flash in an overhanging willow? Yes, it *is* a kingfisher, so cut the engine while he poses on a branch for your camera. Stately swans demand attention, moorhens and coots splutter about; a fox trots along the towpath as if she owns it, a louder splash is likely to be Ratty himself, and if it's a river section, otters are making a great comeback.

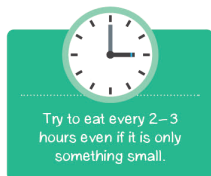
The canal network's commercial life was relatively short of course. It was a brilliant solution to a need that quickly got met by even better ones. But fortunately, from the brink of total disuse and disappearance, they were saved to become a vital leisure resource. Our nearest is the Grand Union which fringes Harrow at Greenford (Easily accessible from the shopping centre/ Paradise fields carpark on the Greenford Road). Turn east in a boat and you reach the Regents Park canal (you can spot the animals in the Zoo) and on into the very centre of London. Turn west and you can choose between joining the Thames at Brentford or heading north to Birmingham and the Black Country with countless junctions to almost any point in Britain. Walk (or jog) in either direction till you're ready to turn back. Even easier, in nearby Uxbridge there's the Swan & Bottle pub and a lock where you can become a 'gongoozler' (idle spectator) as boats manage it.

I still vividly recall on my family's first such trip stopping, after a few hours only, where the map said there was a pub (have I told you about the wonderful canal-side pubs?). They're often where there's a road bridge so they're 'above' the canal level. Once we'd climbed up, we were simply stunned by the traffic – cars seemingly hurtling past. In fact, just doing 20mph over the bridge on a quiet country road. The pint was terrific ... as was going back to the tranquillity of 'our' boat.

Terry Emery

Nutrition & Hydration

Eat little and often



Add to your food to increase energy without increasing portion size.

Use milk powder to fortify milk, sauces and soup



Buy a tub of skimmed milk powder to use for fortified milk and in sauces or soup.

Eat with others



This is called fortifying food



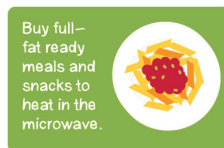
Adding cheese to your mashed potato is not just tasty, it helps boost your calorie intake too.

Have more protein



Add extra pieces of meat or tinned lentils into soups, casseroles, stews or pies.

Make meal preparation easier



What is a fortified diet?

A fortified diet describes meals, snacks and drinks which have had additional high calorie and protein foods added to them, e.g. cream, milk and butter. This helps to prevent weight loss, improve energy intake and maximises the nutritional content of a dish so that every mouthful counts.



Use full fat milk/cream - make milkshakes or use in teas, coffees, soups and puddings.



Whisk 2-4 tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder into a pint of milk.



Add butter, margarine, cream or cheese to dishes, e.g. potatoes.



Add cooked meat, fish, beans and other pulses to soups and sauces.



Add honey, chopped nuts or dried fruit to puddings, cereals or porridge.

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Season of Goodwill



Thinking about others at this time of year; here are a few local charities that need help throughout the year, but often find Winter particularly challenging—and I'm sure that's amplified this year.

If you can't donate money, food or your time, maybe consider having a clearout and donating your unwanted goods or clothing to a local charity shop.

Obviously, there are many other excellent and worthy causes, I have just picked a few local ones that might inspire you to make a difference to somebody else's life to end this year on a high.



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And don't forget to shop local and help save our local shops and high streets. As I said last month—any local shops, trades people or services that you use regularly and can recommend, please let us know who they are so we can try and get them in The Courier.

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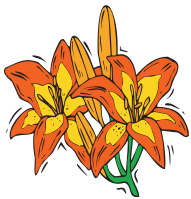
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Sudbury Court Horticultural Society Your local gardening club

The dark evenings of December encourage us to turn on the lights, not only indoors, but in our gardens too - to celebrate the festive season. There is no shortage of lighting displays on sale, illuminated snowmen abound and you will find lighted reindeer, some of them even have a fawn alongside, all designed to give your garden a festive twinkle.

As well as taking the lights outside, the season invites us to bring garden greenery indoors for festive decorations.

Holly and ivy are traditional favourites, but twigs with berries are also seasonal, while seed-heads sprayed silver, white or gold sparkle with a new life indoors. Scent is important too. The myrtle is a lovely shrub with fragrant white flowers in July that become fragrant purple berries in December, well worth a place indoors. The dark leaves of the myrtle bush give structure to the garden throughout the year. In fact, once the autumn leaves have blown away, evergreens take centre stage in the design of all our gardens.

This is the season to bring the whole family together making presents for Christmas and decorations for your home. Lavender bags make fragrant gifts and, looped over coat hangers in your wardrobe, they help to keep the moths away. For a table decoration like the one in the picture, use a large potato as a base. If necessary, cut off a sliver so that it stands firmly. Make a hole in the centre for a candle and cover the potato in kitchen foil, tucking the ends underneath. Add the

candle and, using a skewer to make holes, arrange small sprigs of greenery to make the decoration complete. The moist potato will keep the greenery fresh.



Whenever the weather is kind it is good to be out in the garden, breathing fresh air, shaking off the lockdown stress, observing the seasonal changes and finding so many jobs left undone that ought to have been done!

While we are so confined, it is especially enjoyable to work in the front garden, where there is often the chance to chat with neighbours or with passers-by on their recreational walks - time to exchange ideas, sympathise and laugh together. All this is quite therapeutic! Sometimes I am even given a bit of help - the friend who offloaded a heavy bag of compost from the boot of my car into the wheelbarrow was a real blessing. Those chaps who collect our garden waste from the green bin have been really helpful too, cheerfully taking my extra bag or two after an autumn clear-up.

We hope, in 2021 that SCHS will flourish once again and that you will join in and help the Society to thrive. In the meantime, we must obey the restrictions but enjoy the season in spite of them. People are finding ways of using outdoor space creatively - with patio heaters, decorative lighting, cushions and rugs on the garden furniture. Make this a happy time for others and you will enjoy it too.

Margaret Roake

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Northwick Park Community Garden

www.northwickparkcommunitygarden.com



Before lockdown changed our plans, we managed to plant out over 400 plants thanks to our volunteer community working in socially distanced, groups of 6. We are sure you've spotted these new additions to the garden, filling up the spaces that the summer plants have left behind. We hope to be able to resume planting in the New Year.

Something further for the New Year – We look forward to teaching more children about growing food and the natural world.

Oak trees are dependent on the loud chattering bird, the Jay, to bury their acorns some way away so the young oak trees aren't shaded out by their mother tree. This and other amazing facts about the natural world will be engaging local children in a series of free interactive online workshops organised by Northwick Park Community Garden starting in January 2021. As well as interactive learning, the workshops will include practical sessions to learn about planting seeds and how to make felt balls. We are also planning 'treasure-hunt' trips to see how the community garden is changing in spring.

We have already been running online workshops for children and they have asked that they continue. Parent's feedback about the sessions has included: 'great interaction and very engaging', 'excellent structure, content and timing... a very interactive session which D likes very much!'

Aimed at children aged 4-11 years. This is the timetable for the workshops which will run fortnightly on Wednesdays 5.30pm-6.15pm via Zoom.



- **13th January** – Amazing things to learn about insects
- **27th January** – Wool and felt – learning about felt and making felt balls
- **10th February** – How do plants change in spring?
- **24th February** – How do seeds grow?
- **10th March** – Planting seeds to grow on your windowsill
- **24th March** – Birds you can hear singing now
- **7th April** – Where do beans, corn and squash come from?
- **21st April** – All about fruit blossom
- **5th May** – Bees in spring

If you would like your children to join please register by email (below)

We hope that the garden has provided welcome respite during 2020 and we wish you well during this festive season.

Eleri, Joanna, Rishil and Iris

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Kids' Page



Hello Kids—Happy Christmas!

Don't forget to write to me with your favourite jokes and pictures:

preeyaatthecourier@hotmail.com

JOKES

Why did the cow cross the road?

To get to the udder side.

What do you call a thieving alligator?

A crocodile.

What do you call a cow that eats your grass?

A lawn moo-er.

What do you call a baby bear with no teeth?

A glummy bear!

What do you call a cow in a tornado?

A milkshake!

RIDDLES

I am a number. When you add the letter G to me, I go away. What number am I?

One (add G and it becomes 'gone')



Did you spot the deliberate spelling mistake?
glummy should be 'gummy'.

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	Page		Page
Air Con	24	Handyman	22
Boilers/Heating, Plumbing	20,22	Home Carers	16
Building Services	9,17	Home Improvement	17,20
Cleaning Services	24	Painter/Decorator	21,22
Dentist (private)	10,23	Pharmacy	5
Electrical Services	20,22	Printer	18
Estate Agent	2	Property Maintenance	22,24
Financial Services	12	Roofing, Gutters	18,25
Foot Care	14	Security Gates	11
Furniture Repair	20	Soft furnishings	20
Hair, Health & Beauty	6,10,23	Telecoms/CCTV	18
Hall Hire	18	Windows, bi-fold	27

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