

DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

A HIVE OF ACTIVITY

T&L discovers unique Christmas gifts on Northcote Road

As Editor, there's nothing better than unexpectedly discovering a local gem. This month, I was walking along Northcote Road in the crisp autumn air and stumbled across The Hive Honey Shop. Stepping inside, not only did I discover 20,000 live bees in a beehive housed in a 5ft glass case on the wall, but the fascinating owner James Hamill, who is a third-generation beekeeper. James has been a beekeeper since he was five years old and in 1995 he was awarded a QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) Scholarship for Beekeeping & Bee Disease by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Every jar of honey in The Hive Honey Shop is handmade and its contents come from all around the world. During our impromptu conversation, James told me his prediction for the future of honey: "Honey is going to be like caviar. In fact, I think it's going to be more expensive than caviar. It'll be the most expensive food commodity in the next 50 years. You're going to look back and think '

My God, I used to go to the supermarket and there were shelves full of it".

It's becoming known that bees are currently under threat and there are now more challenges, he adds: "The latest news is that there's a hornet from Asia that's going to take out about 80% of the beehives in this country. There's no way to track them or eradicate them and this was only discovered a few weeks ago".

If you're looking for unique gifts, I'd recommend a trip to The Hive Honey Shop. James told me what products are most popular this year: "The things that people love at Christmas is our pure beeswax candles and English Honey & Cinnamon and English Ling Honey from Dorset".

Bees play a crucial role in our ecosystem and their plight is increasingly worrying, so it was a real joy to meet a passionate local that's fighting on their behalf – with the late Queen Mother's approval, no less! And I can attest that his bees also make wonderful pots of honey, an ideal Christmas gift for all foodies. www.thehivehoneyshop.co.uk



FESTIVE BIKE RIDE



Join fireworks, lanterns, lights and entertainers as you ride across Lambeth, guided by travelling soundscape. The ride will be escorted by safety marshalls

and leaves from The Polygon in Clapham Old Town, then goes around Clapham Common and right through to Brixton Windmill. All proceeds from ticket sales go to Wheels for Wellbeing charity. 11 December; 4pm; £3

■ www.omnibus-clapham.org

time & leisure
Christmas
POP UP
is back on **2 December** at Hotel Du Vin, Wimbledon featuring a day of food, style and gifts. Get your tickets now at www.wimbledonpopup.co.uk

LIGHT UP A LIFE THIS CHRISTMAS

Remember loved ones this Christmas, starting with the lighting of a spectacular Christmas tree at Royal Trinity Hospice at 6.45pm on Thursday 8 December. Immediately afterwards, there'll be a candlelit procession to Holy Trinity Clapham, for a special service with guest readers and carol singing followed by wine and mince pies. Every penny raised from 'Light up a Life' will help the hospice provide skilled, compassionate end-of-life care for patients and their families.



TALKING POINT

Wandsworth residents are being asked for their thoughts on one of the new 'Quietway' cycle routes being developed across London by Transport for London. Designed to offer more low-traffic options for cyclists, particularly for those that are less confident on the main roads, the route in question is from Clapham Common to Wimbledon and is known as 'Quietway 4'.

Modifications have already been integrated following initial feedback and Wandsworth's transport spokesman, Cllr Jonathan Cook, is encouraging further community comments: "It is important that people study these new plans carefully and tell us what they think... It's vitally important to ensure these routes are as well designed as possible and do not have an adverse impact on other road users, pedestrians and visitors to our commons and open spaces".

■ To see the proposed route in more detail, visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/quietways. All comments need to be submitted by December 18.



TAKE A FESTIVE BITE

The Christmas Shopping Evening at Eric Lanlard's Cake Boy in Battersea is back by popular demand on 14 December. An opportunity to sample their Christmas goodies and gifts, as well as tasting delicious bites served up by local French bistro, Gazette.

■ www.cake-boy.co.uk/events
Find our interview with Eric on page 16

A LOCAL MARKET



Visit the SoLo Craft Fair for all your Christmas gifts, and a day of festivities, food, drink and crafts. The Polygon, Clapham Old Town, SW4 OAF. Free entry 12-6pm with families and dogs welcome.

■ www.solocraftfair.com