

# THE HIGHGATE VILLAGE BROADSHEET

Highgate's local monthly on-line paper is produced by Highgate HQ, a not for profit collaboration set up and run by local volunteers

April, 2026 hello@highgatehq.co.uk Edition 16

## APRIL ABUNDANCE HIDDEN HISTORY

Greetings Highgate,

This month we apologise for the publication of the Broadsheet being late; we have both been away- Lucy to Portugal and Spain, and Helen to New Zealand, Australia and Canada, both of us enjoying some family time.

We arrived back in Highgate, refreshed and renewed, and have been working day and night to bring you this wonderfully eclectic edition.

Thank you to everyone who has sent news for us to share in this month's issue, helping to keep the Broadsheet rooted in community life. As the season turns, we hope this edition encourages people to come together; to try something new or to lend a hand, and to make the most of all that is springing up around us.

Helen and Lucy

**Know your Neighbour:**  
Helen interviews Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley, Minister at the United Reformed Church, Highgate

**Feature**  
Red Phone Boxes Turn 100

**Arts and Culture:**  
Alicia in the Arctic by Jane Hill  
The Highgate Horticultural Society Show  
Nowruz Festival at Lauderdale House

**Hidden History**  
Waterlow Park Gardeners

**Highgate's Books, Reviewed**  
The Glass Maker by Tracy Chevalier

**Announcements**  
Jacksons Lane calls for people to host visiting artists  
Highgate Art Fair call for all artists  
Meet the Author at Highgate Library  
North London Book Festival

**STOP PRESS!**

Hi Helen and Lucy

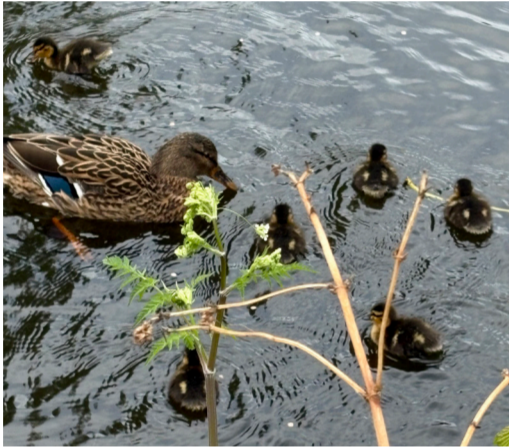
Hope you are both doing great!

Here at Riverstone Bishops Avenue, we are hosting a talk from Barclays Bank on avoiding fraud and scams for the wider community.

Please if you could pass along to anyone who you think would be of interest and tell them to contact myself to book. There will be a presentation for 45 mins, alongside an opportunity to ask questions and have a private 121 with the Barclays advisors.

**Date:** Monday 27th April, 2026  
**Time:** 12:00pm to 2:00 pm  
**Location:** Riverstone Marketing Suite, Address: 1 Hampstead Lane, N6 4RS

Many thanks  
Danni O'Connell  
**Community & Events Manager**  
M: 07561 109 390  
Riverstone Bishops Avenue Information Suite  
1 Hampstead Lane, N6 4RS



Ducklings in Waterlow Park at just 2 days old!

By 1920 the park would have been well established, part of a growing network of LCC-managed green spaces created in response to rapid urbanisation in the late 19th century. Parks like Waterlow were not only recreational but also social infrastructure, intended to improve public health, reduce overcrowding pressures and provide ordered, supervised environments for leisure.

The men in the photograph would have been employed by the LCC to look after the park, mostly as gardeners, responsible not just for planting and maintenance but for shaping the park as a civic space. Bedding schemes, lawns, paths and ornamental planting were all carefully managed, reflecting the Edwardian and early 20th-century emphasis on tidiness, structure and seasonal display.

Under the LCC, gardeners tended to wear their own clothes to work. Here most of the men seem to have dressed up for the occasion, wearing three-piece suits and straw boaters or flat caps — suggesting that this photograph marked a moment of pride or formality rather than everyday labour. It also reflects a period when even manual workers often maintained a clear distinction between workwear and what might be considered respectable public dress.

Park keepers, by contrast, were given an allowance for uniform, which included a tweed coat and vest, a felt hat, a white Homburg hat, a pair of gloves, two pairs of boots, a pair of cord breeches, a pair of pigskin leggings, two ties and an overcoat. Their role was more public-facing: enforcing park by-laws, maintaining order and representing the authority of the LCC. As shown in this photograph, keepers could be identified by the LCC badge on their hats, a small but clear marker of municipal presence in what was intended to be a carefully managed public environment.

## Red Phone Boxes turn 100

In 1896, state control of telecommunications was gradually introduced with the GPO having plans for a uniform red telephone box to match the existing red pillar boxes. A series of phone box designs ensued, these being K1 to K8, the K standing for Kiosk.

The K2 phone box, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott, hit the streets a century ago in 1926 and were immediately popular with the public but considered too expensive to install outside London. A series of cheaper phone boxes, K3, K4 and K5, were introduced but were unpopular and short-lived.

In 1935 Scott was commissioned to produce another kiosk - the K6. With the K6, he simplified and altered the design of the K2 to create a cheaper and less obstructive version. The Soanene dome was retained, the reeded fluting removed, the central glazing panels enlarged to improve lighting and the perforated crown replaced with a cast version. Scott's K6 was the last proper red telephone box. The K7 was aluminium and a dozen were installed in London in 1962. Production went no further. The last hurrah for the K series entered production in 1968. The K8 was cast iron and red, but there the similarities ended. Some 11,000 of these eyesores were installed. Fewer than 50 survive. So the phone boxes we see on our streets today are predominantly K6s.

Andrew Sulston, Chair of the Highgate Society, tells us "In the Highgate area we are lucky enough to have five K2 boxes and four K6 boxes. The Highgate Society's Community Projects Group has kept an eye on these for a decade, clearing them from time to time and letting BT, as the owner, know when repairs are needed. I happily remember the early days when Allan Rapley and I painted one of the K2 boxes in Pond Square with paint provided by BT".

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE [left: K2 on Highgate Hill nr Dartmouth Park Road, and right: the less ornate K6 by the main entrance to Waterlow Park]



**Nowruz Festival**  
Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park

An after-school visit to Waterlow Park with Arthur and his friend led us, quite by chance, into Lauderdale House's Nowruz display that celebrates the 3000 year old Persian festival marking the arrival of spring, and "a moment to come together, share stories and find connection as the seasons turn". Rather than being able to finally appreciate the seasonal shift ourselves, we spent the time trying to keep up with two 5 year olds, racing around looking for the hand-painted, egg-shaped boards and information sheets fixed to railings and trees around the park.

I was interested to read on Lauderdale House's website that "events in the region" had made organisers think twice about going ahead with their exhibition but due to "the significance Waterlow Park holds to local families and



Image Copyright: London Metropolitan Archives (City of London Corporation)

Taken just after the end of the First World War, the photograph also sits within a wider moment of social transition. Public parks became increasingly important in the post-war years as places of recovery, routine and community life, offering a sense of stability after years of disruption.

If you look closely, you can also see a cat sitting patiently on the knee of the man in the flat cap on the bottom row — an informal detail within an otherwise formal composition, and a reminder that even within structured civic spaces, there was room for the everyday.

## ALLY PALLY OPENS ROOFTOP ADVENTURE!

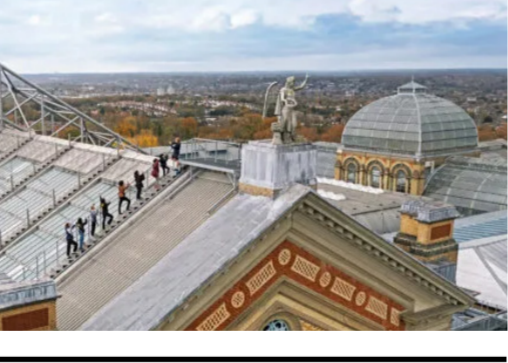
A new visitor attraction has opened at Alexandra Palace, offering a different perspective on one of north London's most recognisable landmarks.

"Summit", described as the UK's highest roof walk, takes visitors onto the roof of the historic palace, 130 metres above sea level. Opened in 1873 Alexandra Palace has been a prominent feature of the skyline for over 150 years, with views stretching across Muswell Hill towards Highgate and beyond.

The experience, developed in partnership with Wire & Sky, is fully guided and leads participants across the palace roof to the Angel of Plenty statue. From this vantage point, visitors can take in 360-degree views across London, extending up to 25 miles on clear days. Looking south-west, the view takes in Muswell Hill and across to Highgate, where the tree canopy of Highgate Wood and Hampstead Heath is visible, along with the rise of the Highgate ridge and church spires marking the village skyline.

Timed climbs are available during the day, at sunset and in the evening, when the city is lit, with options for groups, private bookings and educational visits. The initiative forms part of wider efforts to open up more of the building's structure and history to the public, allowing visitors to engage with the palace's architecture while taking in views across north London.

Visit [here](#) to book tickets.



friends during these celebrations" they chose to do so "in the hope for a better tomorrow" and asked visitors to respect the festival as a "safe space" rather than as a "forum for polarising political or religious debate".

Parks at springtime, particularly after a winter like the one we have just endured, offers us all the chance to reconnect with nature; to reflect upon the simple and universal experience of renewal and enjoy the unifying pleasure of being outside again. Sadly, the exhibition was more imposition than it was celebration and left me hoping, more than ever, that we will all be granted the freedom to appreciate the season of reawakening next year together and in peace.



## Know your Neighbour: Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley Minister at the United Reformed Church, Highgate

We agreed to meet in his office, otherwise known as The Angel Inn, which is where Jonathan likes to conduct all business, where possible, in particular at his self-designated table just inside the entrance. I arrive before him and shock, horror, there is someone else at his table - a cuckoo in the nest!

I watch him through the window as he approaches - not walking, but striding - a very fast purposeful stride, barely slowing before bursting through the double doors with a rush of wind and a flourish and joining me on the green banquette. I have not previously met Jonathan and my first impressions are that he's congenial, approachable, chatty and smiley and every now and then he rocks back in his seat and hoots with hearty laughter. And he's rarely still - such is the mark of this high achiever with not only six university qualifications under his belt, but also four marathons, all run for charity, the most recent being last year when he ran the Rome Marathon to raise money for the Children's Ward of Whittington Hospital - what a fantastic effort! I ask if there are more marathons on the horizon and the answer is a definite 'No!', adding that having turned 40 in February this year, he has hung up his running shoes and his leisure time is now spent as a self-confessed 'gym bunny', 'theatre geek' and avid reader - his current book recommendation being This Is Ireland by Brendan O'Hehir.

Jonathan has now been in Highgate for nearly four years, loves it, and wants to be here for the long term.

Becoming a Minister of religion was not something which, as he explains, is typically suggested by careers advisers. "When you get to school and start talking to career advisers, being a minister is not something which is pushed so I thought about being a history teacher, but I failed A-level history so that was clearly not going to happen; it seemed being just short of the required grades for my preferred university to study history was a "Sliding Doors" moment and a moment where I thought "Ok God, maybe there is something in this ministry thing."

On leaving school Jonathan went to Queen's University Belfast where he completed a Degree in Scholastic Philosophy and Politics and following this, at the age of 21, he applied to become a minister "but I was told I was too young and that I needed to go away and get life experience". Jonathan embraced to the full this instruction to obtain life experience, becoming a freelance professional in the world of events and PR, and for the ensuing 3 years threw himself into a "sparkle and champagne" lifestyle. But as much as Jonathan enjoyed gaining necessary 'life experience' his desire to become a minister continued to bubble under the surface and in 2012 he started his ministerial journey at Queen's University where he completed a Diploma and Masters Degree in Divinity, followed by a Masters in Literature at the University of Glasgow.

He explains that his decision to work in a congregational/reformed church, rather than the Presbyterian religion he had been brought up in, developed over time. "Following the execution of my father by the IRA, when I was two, relatives took me under their wing and introduced me to the more liberal end of the Presbyterian denomination in a congregation that was actively involved in the work of peace and reconciliation during The Troubles. When I went to college to train I discovered that my expression of Presbyterian was not the norm nor in the majority and began to question whether God might have something else in mind or in store for me and an opportunity presented itself at the right time to work with the Congregational Church which I took as one of those 'God moments' and haven't looked back since."

While it is easy to envisage him leading a church service on a Sunday, he describes a varied week. "There are no typical weeks in Ministry ... every day is different, but some of the regular events that punctuate a busy diary are the ever-popular community lunch on a Thursday, which is preceded by an informal Bible study, and volunteering. The winter shelter we host several months of the year in conjunction with C4WS Homeless Project, and being part of a writing group we have created for those within the church community who are working on creative writing projects and of course, pastoral visitation. At present, I currently supervise some dissertations for King's College London (the university from which I obtained my doctorate) and give the odd lecture on subjects relevant to my area of expertise."

He describes one of the joys in ministry as walking alongside individuals, families and the community as they mark moments in life together. "During my ministry in Highgate, we have had several weddings, funerals, and baptisms, but we are always open to any approaches from the community looking to mark key milestones with us as we seek to be a place of welcome and embrace."



He asks "Ever wondered what happens behind the blue doors? A whirlwind of community throughout the week, and an all age gathering on Sundays. We range from 8 weeks to over 80 years old! Whether you have just moved to the area or are passing through... feel free to drop in and give us a try. We are informal and friendly. Just come as you are, whether you have faith or whether you have none. After the 10.30am Sunday gathering, we meet for a coffee and chat in the front lounge. If the idea of attending a service is a big step, then why not just step by at around 11.30am to have a nose around and meet a few folks.

Jonathan sums up his Highgate ministry as "an international group of people from many different backgrounds who have decided to join positive forces in this beautiful building," and I have no doubt that, should you wish to visit, a warm welcome would be extended to all.

## HIGHGATE'S BOOKS, REVIEWED

Written this week for The Highgate Village Broadsheet by local resident Helen Rapley

The Glass Maker by local author, Tracy Chevalier

I loved this book. Initially I balked at the time frame - 5 decades of life spun out over 5 centuries, with the reader dipping into the main characters' lives every time a skimming stone, representing time, hits the surface of the water. But I soon accepted this and revelled in the wonderful story of Orsola's family woven through the history of Murano. Orsola is 9 in 1486 at the height of the Renaissance when Venice revelled in being the trade centre of Europe. The story then jumps to 1574 when new trade routes bypass Venice, but glassmaking still flourishes - until a plague hits, killing almost half the population. Orsola, being a woman, is forbidden from the family's glassmaking trade but in secret learns to shape glass, ultimately saving her family from financial and emotional ruin. A skip of the stone to 1755 lands in the middle of the age of enlightenment when Venice is known for its parties, gambling and Carnevale season, and the climax of the Grand Tour. But fortunes change at the turn of the century as Venice is alternately plundered and controlled by France and Austria. The final skip of the stone brings the reader to the present day and Orsola is now 65.

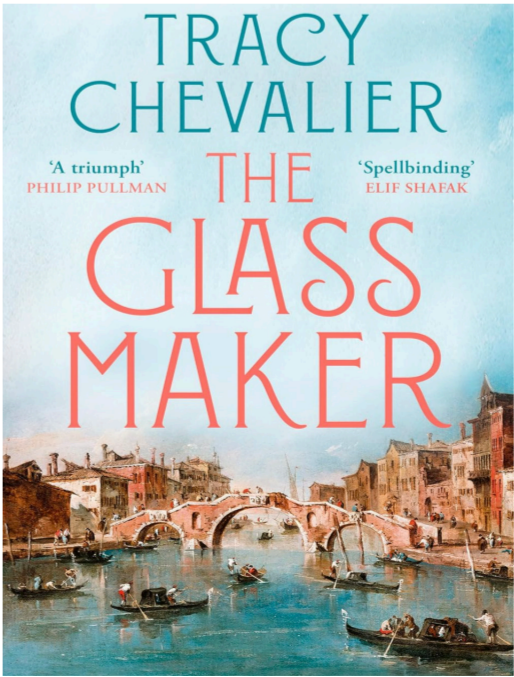
Throughout 500 years we are taken on a journey through Venice's history, cultural influences, and follow the thread of Orsola's love story which is bound into the detailed history of glassmaking and the blossoming of feminism.

Chevalier was born in Washington, D.C., and moved to the UK in the 1980s to study at the University of East Anglia, where she completed a Master's degree in Creative Writing. Before becoming a novelist, she worked in publishing, including as an editor at St Martin's Press in New York. She published her first novel in 1997 and went on to achieve international recognition with Girl with a Pearl Earring, which has sold over 5 million copies worldwide and was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction.

Since then, she has written a number of historical novels, many centred on art, craft and place, and her work has been translated into multiple languages.

I highly recommend this book- just accept the time travel and enjoy!

[The Glassmaker, is also available on Audible, narrated by Saskia Maarleveld, and if you are interested in knowing more about the inspiration behind this novel, an interview with her can be found [here](#), alongside her top 5 books most influential books written by women.]



LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE A BOOK THAT FEATURES HIGHGATE, OR THAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY A LOCAL AUTHOR, THAT YOU WOULD LIKE US TO REVIEW!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS FROM OUR CHERISHED LOCALS & RESIDENTS



**JACKSONS LANE HAS PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING CALL-OUT FOR PEOPLE TO HOST VISITING ARTISTS**

"Have you ever dreamed of being a theatrical boarding house? Or a circus-sanctuary for brilliant humans who spend their days flying through the air, balancing on each other's shoulders and making audiences gasp? At Jacksons Lane, we're welcoming more artists than ever into the building, from across the UK and around the world. And while we can offer space to rehearse, perform and connect, we're always on the lookout for good places for them to land at the end of the day.

**So... Highgate, Haringey and nearby lovely humans, might you have:**

- A spare room or two?
  - A self-contained flat or studio?
  - A short-term rental that's occasionally available?
- We want to build a small, friendly network of local accommodation for visiting artists and performers. Not faceless, not corporate, but warm, human and welcoming (and ideally with a functioning kettle).

Stays might be a night or two, or a week or more depending on rehearsals and performances.

**What we'd love to know...**  
How many people you can host  
Whether the space is accessible for wheelchair users  
The cost per night or week  
What's included (breakfast, kitchen access, towels, WiFi, strong tea, mild gossip...)

How far you are from Jacksons Lane / how easy the journey is  
Anything else we should know about the space  
And a little about you too, because this is about people as much as places.

**Why it matters...**  
Where artists stay shapes their whole experience; a warm welcome, a decent night's sleep and a sense of being looked after goes a long way. And a good deal very much helps our tight artistic budgets!  
**Interested?**  
Please go [here](#) and fill out the form and let's see if we can make something simple, useful and quietly brilliant"



**HIGHGATE ART FAIR: OPEN CALL TO ALL ARTISTS** to participate in this year's show, taking place from 6-8th November at Highgate Primary School.

"It's time, applications are now open for Highgate Art Fair. We're inviting artists across all disciplines to be part of this year's exhibition. Share your work, connect with new audiences, and exhibit in the heart of Highgate." Apply now [here](#), on via their Instagram page @highgateartfair Applications close on 26th April 2026

**MEET THE AUTHOR, 5-6pm Thursday, 21st May, 2026, Highgate Library Chester Road** As part of the National Year of Reading 2026, you are invited to join the celebrated physician, philosopher and author, Dr Anand Gokani for this special event as discusses his book, A Fistful of my Sky, and explores reflections, memories and meaning. Entry is free; no need to book- just turn up!

**NORTH LONDON BOOK FESTIVAL 23rd - 26th April 2026, Alexandra Park and Palace** "Welcome to North London Book Festival 2026 - a vibrant literary gathering featuring debut and iconic authors across multiple stages at Alexandra Palace. Expect an inspiring mix of readings, panel discussions, Q&As, workshops, and book signings. It's a true marketplace of stories for every genre and every reader. This year we are thrilled to welcome back audience favourites Laura Bates, Natalie Haynes, and Michael Rosen, who captivated crowds in 2024. Joining them are an exciting line-up: Rachel Parris, Alan Hollinghurst, Tessa Hadley, Jeffrey Boykne, Ben Aaronovitch, Kate Muir, Charlotte Mendelson, Natasha Brown and many more.

The North London Book Fest has something to delight readers of every generation. Young book lovers can write poetic verses about creepy crawlies and dinosaurs with Simon Mole, dress up as great women from history with suffedgette descendant Kate Pankhurst, and join Onjali Q. Rauf for an inspiring workshop on writing and activism."

Book your tickets [here](#).



## WORD ON THE STREET

COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY UPDATES & LOCAL GOSSIP

**REPAIR CAFES: "Be the change you want to see in the world"**

The first Highgate Repair Cafe took place 14 Feb in St. Michael's Church Hall. Twenty six booked repair requests in advance and items brought along included 16 household appliances, 6 lamps, 5 items of clothing and 3 vacuum cleaners.

There are about 900 Repair Cafes in UK and about 6,000 worldwide and now there's one in Highgate! It is run by Haringey Fixers and is held on the **second Saturday of every month from 10am - 1pm in St Michael's Church Hall in South Grove.**

The man behind the Repair Cafe mission is Chris Setz of Haringey Fixers. Chris started his IT career before Bill Gates and has done every job in Computing in several countries, including Chair of a Professional Association. He has been closely involved in a number of community groups in Haringey for decades and is an experienced repairer

Chris is always looking for new volunteers and explains that within the Repair Cafe operation there are 'public facing' roles and 'behind the scenes' roles, all voluntary and all essential to the success of the Repair Cafe:



"You can volunteer at our weekend events or work behind the scenes. Please note we operate from community centres across the Borough.

- 1. Repairers/Fixers/Menders [public facing]**  
Love solving problems and repairing household items? No professional expertise needed—just bring your life experience and curiosity!  
Commitment: Just 3.5 hours a month.
- 2. Event Volunteers [public facing]**  
Be the friendly face that welcomes visitors and helps our events run smoothly.  
Help with setup, guiding attendees, timing repairs, and more.  
Commitment: 3.5 hours at one of our monthly events in Haringey.
- 3. Keyboard Helpers [behind the scenes]**  
Support our team remotely by recording data, handling bookings, emails, light admin tasks, and updating social media [currently only Facebook].  
Commitment: Only 1 hour a month at your own pace.

Pick your approach - either generously donate your existing skills or let us help you expand them. We use mainstream methods - standard office software and Facebook, hopefully in a straightforward way. We need help administering our process and we can find a use for many different types of skills.

We are a small, local charity with no employees - we all work unpaid to help bring about a change in the amount of waste, saving the planet by rescuing / repairing / upcycling one household item at a time."

Chris shares the praises of Mischa and Leo Haller, a father and son 'fixit duo' who attend the Repair Cafes to offer their repair skills. Leo is 16 and in his first A level year with an ambition to become an aerospace engineer. Both delight in curiosity and encourage their repair customers to take a proactive approach to their problems. Leo said he finds the Repair Cafes to be a huge amount of fun and finds immense gratification in solving a problem. Leo said "making something work again is like being given a reward."

To have an item repaired, all you need to do is book a repair time slot [here](#) and give a brief description of the item needing repair and the problem you are faced with e.g Magimix Toaster slide won't stay down to operate; woolly jumper with a moth hole; Dell laptop lid won't close; clock/radio can't turn alarm off. Then, turn up at your appointed time where a repairer will give you tuition about your problem and guide you through the repair process. The emphasis is on teaching you to do your own repairs so you learn new skills and meet new people.

Contact Chris Setz: [mailto:chair@HaringeyFixers.org](mailto:mailto:chair@HaringeyFixers.org). 07887493658



**Bin Less Save More Challenge** and save up to **£1000 a year**

Come along to our **FREE FOOD WASTE WORKSHOP AND COOKING DEMONSTRATION** to find out how to use up your leftovers and make your food go further.

Where?

When?  3pm - 6pm

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

To register email

or call / text

**CHAMPIONS**

THE ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S BRAINTEASER: 15cm

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH IF YOU'D LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE: [HELLO@HIGHGATEHQ.CO.UK](mailto:HELLO@HIGHGATEHQ.CO.UK)

## LOCAL ARTS AND CULTURE

**Alicia in the Arctic**  
written by Jane Hill

For two weeks in January, Alicia Pivaro, ACTIVIST-EXPLORER, PIRATE and PRESIDING GODDESS created an exhibition at BOTH gallery (opposite Highgate tube), founded in 2023 as an art project space. "Anarchy in the Arctic" follows Pivaro's residency on the 2025 Arctic Circle Spring Expedition to the International Territory of Svalbard, a polar region beyond the timber line, alongside artists, scientists, writers and educators concerned with Earth jurisprudence.

As is the gardener, so is the garden. Alicia is a teacher of architecture and urbanism who designed her own house. She teaches Anarchy in Architecture and what is the use of a house without a tolerable planet to put it on? Her work is spatial, perceptual, social, moral, and this multimedia exhibition, spawned in St Ives, by the Gulf Stream, is a medley of architectures, amongst them a library of dissent including the utopian writings of seventeenth century Margaret Cavendish and Ursula Le Guin, of narrative collages and video, plus the daily practice of 'Communal Ships Logs', proxy feelings for a crew navigating a new hierarchy of needs. As water is her element, red is her colour. Pivaro uses the equivalent of a clayey deposit of oceanic abysses, stained reddish-brown by manganese and iron oxides (reminiscent of cave paintings), in her layered abstracts that also capture the cyan blue of ice, the spidery suggestion of a tall ship's rigging. What we witness from the video is Pivaro putting herself in the frame in a form of 'endurance art' entering arctic waters, holding abreast a red flag, the 'Skeletons Rebellion' death imagery referencing piracy and pollutocrats and the 2050 deadline for ecological collapse. The message is Kairos and the urgency of acting deliberately, now, and a publication will follow.



**The Highgate Horticultural Society Show**  
11th April in the Pond Square Chapel, South Grove

The Highgate Horticultural Society Show took place on Saturday 11th April in the Pond Square Chapel, South Grove. There was, as usual, an array of excellent floral displays. There was also a delightful children's section featuring animals made from vegetables and we were particularly taken with the 'eggplant whale' made by Ada Stuart and pictured here.

The Harington Scheme were selling plants, in particular Sweet Pea seeds and seedlings from their Lathyrus project [The Latin name for sweet peas is Lathyrus odorata]. There is still time to sow sweet pea seeds, salad crops and annual flowers so get along to the Harington Scheme Spring sale on 2nd May, 10-1, 54 Cholmeley Park, N6 5AD.