

Zumba at Fellowship House

NICHOLA BROWN (TIMED SELFIE)



Zumba teacher Nichola Brown lead her class at Fellowship on the last day before the November lockdown. Fellowship had reopened its doors a month earlier for a permitted few of its

30 regular activities, having made its premises 'Covid Safe'.

We're all ready for another reopening whenever Boris gives the word. In the meantime, Nichola and her crew will

switch again to Zoom. If Zumba is your thing, call her on 07516 560380. Go to fellowshiphouse.co.uk for more info about this lively Suburb community centre.

ANDREW BOTTERILL

It's for Yoo (Hoo) update

(to Andrew Botterill's article on p.12, issue 142)

Readers may have already noticed that the four remaining red telephone boxes in Northway (one at the top and one at the bottom), Emmott Close and Meadway Gate have

now all been spruced up by BT. As Andrew Botterill, who spearheaded the campaign on behalf of the RA, put it "The Holy Grail from Bangor has come up trumps. The (remaining) phone boxes are all newly resplendent in BT red." The Holy Grail, of course, being Angela from BT's Bangor office who, true to her word, organised the BT repair and repainting team to complete

the restoration work. The four remaining BT phone boxes in the Suburb are now on par with the telephone box in Willifield Way (in front of Fellowship House) which was repaired and repainted last Autumn. Please do go and have a look when you next go on a walk. They are indeed splendid.

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

PHOTOS: ANDREW BOTTERILL



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Foxes in the Suburb

The red fox is one of the most recognisable wild animals in the UK. It is also extraordinarily adaptable. Much has been written about urban foxes, but they are no different from countryside foxes. Many foxes move between town and country. Generally speaking, a fox is a fox is a fox and it is as much at home in urban and suburban areas as it is in the countryside.

Foxes have been documented in Britain's southern urban areas since the 1930s. They are very resourceful in exploiting new territories. In 2011, as the Shard skyscraper was being built, a fox moved in on the seventy-second floor, surviving on food scraps left by workers. The animal, named Romeo by staff, is thought to have entered the 288m (945ft) Shard building at London Bridge through the central stairwell.

It was eventually captured and taken to Riverside Animal Centre in Wallington where it was fed and given a check-up.

The problem with foxes is that they are capable of polarising opinion and, in recent years, there have been cries for local councils to 'do something about the explosion in the fox population'.

The fox is sometimes referred to as vermin, but it is not, and, was never categorised as such by the Department for Environment,

Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Foxes are protected under a series of wildlife protection laws with anyone convicted of harming or killing a fox being liable to six months imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine per animal.

The media occasionally carry stories of babies being attacked by foxes. Foxes are wild animals and they do explore using their teeth and will nip things to see what they are. This is their normal exploratory, inquisitive behaviour, although you really don't want to be on the receiving end. Foxes will only attack out of fear and tend to shy away from humans and larger animals.

Foxes do seem to like our gardens here in the Suburb but there are some simple steps that can be taken to ensure foxes do not interfere with you.

Do not leave ground-floor windows and, in particular, French windows, wide open – especially after dark. Keep wheelie bins shut tight and make sure you tidy away any litter that may be a temptation. Foxes are attracted to garden ponds for a drink, bird tables where food has been left out, compost heaps to search for insects and rodents, lawns where they look for insects and to gardens with trees for windfall fruit or berries.



Small pets, like rabbits and guinea pigs, can be prey to foxes so they need to be securely housed to ensure foxes cannot get access to them. Do not leave them out at night, make sure their hutches are securely bolted and have weld mesh, not chicken wire (which foxes can easily break) on the front. If you take these precautions, there should be little risk.

There is an urban myth that you are never more than six feet from a rat in London: if that is the case, then, we should be grateful for foxes as they keep the rat population down.

The presence of foxes in the garden can mean incredible hours of wildlife observation at its finest, and, you never know, it is always possible that seeing a fox might inspire someone to write a poem as fine as Ted Hughes 'The Thought Fox'.

MARIE-CHRISTINE O'CALLAGHAN

Suburb Pets Suzy



A month ago, I had never heard of Suzy (the pictured Yorkshire Terrier, who had the temerity to take the selfie!), and who has significantly changed my life! I always knew that I would have a dog at some point after retirement from my paid work, once I had enough time to commit to one properly. I had applied to foster a dog from All Dogs Matter (ADM), who telephoned me three weeks ago. It was love at first sight, with her wonderful ears and sweet-faced teddy bear looks, and I took her for a short walk. Most uncharacteristically for me, I decided there and then to foster her (I had two days to decide about adoption!). ADM take in dogs who are in need of homes for various reasons. Suzy is an older girl at nearly 12, but resembles a puppy! While I had asked for a younger dog (not a puppy), life with Suzy is really rewarding; no rigorous training schedules to do, although we're learning about each other's odd quirks! As we're both past the first flush of youth, she's a really great companion, and we're learning to synchronise our exercise, eating and resting times! I don't know how much time we'll have together (Yorkies, as a toy breed, live longer than some dogs); however, nothing is certain of course, but she's great company, and it's good to

know I can make a difference to whatever time she may have left. We're lucky to live right next to some of the Suburb's best green spaces, and our hour long daily walk gives her a terrific time, playing, exploring, meeting new dogs and their owners (socially distanced of course for me, if not Suzy), and has given me the added advantage of losing 3 kg in just over as many weeks!

I thoroughly recommend adopting a rescue dog, rather than buying from breeders, too many of whom are unscrupulous. Currently, many are taking advantage of lockdown by charging thousands of pounds for pups likely to have been taken from their mothers far

too early. Many such mothers are robbed of sufficient time to bond and care for their puppies, clearly in the interests of neither. Frequently, the mothers are used time and again to produce litters, when they are clearly far beyond their optimum age to do so. Often such breeders will tell buyers, untruthfully, that their pup was from an accidental one-off litter. ADM are terrific at giving advice on after-care, especially to new dog owners (like me).

A dog is definitely not just for lockdown, but can reward you with a richer life and lots of fun! All Dogs Matter is located at 30 Aylmer Parade, N2 0PE. 0208 341 3196.

MARYLIN GROSSMAN



Selfie taken by Suzy (with the help of Marilyn).

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Views expressed in Suburb News are not necessarily those of the publishers the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

Submissions deadline for issue 145 is 1st February 2021

The RA website is www.hgsra.uk



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