



## Newsletter

## Wandsworth

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I had a job drilling holes for water – it was well boring.



I took out a loan to pay for an exorcism. If I don't pay it back, I'm going to get repossessed.

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### NEWSLETTER TEAM

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## Slavery – and *that* song

The recent row over not singing the words of Rule Britannia at the BBC Proms prompted U3A member Barbara to point out that the bit about Britons never being slaves is a bit of a historical fib.

### Britons as Slaves

Drawing on the book **White Gold** by Giles Milton, she says that in the 17th century the seas around Britain were ruled by North African slavers. They stopped British ships and carried off the crews to be sold in Algiers and Tripoli. Fishermen from Devon and Cornwall wouldn't put out to sea in case they were captured. Indeed In 1625 a raiding party landed at Mount's Bay in Cornwall and 60 people who had taken refuge in a local church were captured by the slavers. That year the Mayor of Plymouth wrote to London for military help after 27 ships were seized in just 10 days. In 1645, 240 people were seized in Cornwall.

Between 1609 and 1616, 466 British ships were captured by slave traders in the English Channel, Irish Sea and North Atlantic and the crews were sold into slavery.

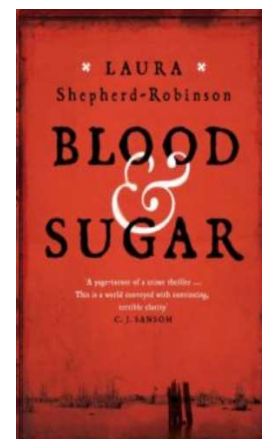
It was Oliver Cromwell who built up the British Navy and scared off the North African slavers. It was in celebration of this that in 1740 James Thompson wrote 'Rule Britannia'. It is a hymn of thanksgiving rather than a proclamation of aggressive nationalism.



### Britons as Slavers

Fast forward to the 1780s and British society is in the thick of the slave trade. The extent to which all levels of society were drawn into it is revealed in **Blood & Sugar** by Laura Shepherd Robinson.

Set in Deptford's docks at the height of the slave trade which is fuelling Britain's trading empire, it's a pacy thriller which opens with the discovery of the body of an early abolitionist. The investigator Captain Harry Corsham uncovers alarming and uncomfortable truths about the horrors of the slave trade. There are insights into the lives of the freed slaves who were early black Londoners.



## My lockdown diary: 28 July

After 48 days, today I shall feel fresh air on my face once again. Locked in no more, but I am still unable to hug my loved ones – the government has ensured they be shielded me from them these last days, more for their safety than mine, I warrant. I have been deprived of decent food and wine and of decent company, but I have been able, like so many in my predicament, to seek solace in reading. Erasmus has been by my side throughout, his *Preparations unto Death* a constant reminder of what the future holds – indeed the future for all of us, yes, so perhaps I should not feel so maudlin on what is a day of release.

I can walk the last few steps with my head held high (although, of course, it will not be for long). Who would have thought that this Putney boy would climb so high in this fractured nation, to end his days lording it over Wimbledon? But if tomorrow I am confronted by that ghastly Anne woman, I will know that our Lord has not looked kindly on this faithful servant.



A bear caught fishing on Clapham Common without a permit. The bare-faced cheek of it!

## Bring out your beds!

Wandsworth Council is inviting you to get rid of your bulky rubbish for free. Normally there's a charge for the disposal of bulky waste but on Saturday 12 September, between 10am and 2pm, you can bring anything – from sofas to mattresses and other large items – to one of the seven mega skips placed at seven spots round the borough.

But household waste only please! Nothing hazardous such as sharp objects, needles, dangerous chemicals, plasterboard, asbestos, white paint and concrete will also not be accepted.

The 'mega skips' will be found in areas which have endured a high level of illegal fly-tipping in recent years and council staff will be collating figures of fly-tipping prior to the event and afterwards to judge their effectiveness. The day itself is part of the MyWandsworth campaign to keep the borough looking its best. Council staff will also be on hand to provide recycling bags as well as offering advice. If the trial is a success, then the council will repeat it.

**"Fly-tipping and littering is environmental vandalism that can ruin people's communities," said Cllr Sutters, council spokesperson for the environment. "They not only create eyesores but are an unacceptable nuisance to public health that pollutes an area and attracts vermin."**

## Group news

Helen Long had hoped to restart her London Walks on Monday but her plans immediately fell foul of the new restrictions on the size of gatherings. Hit for six by the Rule of Six! The planned meetings of the photography and wildlife groups are not affected owing to the smaller numbers they attract.

## A Wish Fulfilled

Last Saturday some 50 bikers (not Hell's Angels!) descended on Huron Road off Balham High Road to give a dying woman her very special farewell present. Some weeks ago local resident Rachel put out a plea for her terminally ill mother. Anne is 83 and one of her last wishes was to sit on the back of a Harley-Davidson outside her house and see one ride past – she has been a huge fan of the motor bike since a teenager.

Daughter Rachel set to social media and her request went viral. In the event not one but over fifty riders and their Harleys (from across the South of England) swept up Huron Road to fulfil Anne's wish. You can share her joy here:

<https://twitter.com/balhamnewsie/status/1302268706223992832?s=20>

