

news

The Duchess launches Young Writers' Competition

Cover Story

On 3 March Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall visited Wimbledon Chase Primary School, Merton, to celebrate World Book Day and launch the Wimbledon Bookfest Young Writers' Competition. Bookfest had invited eight schools from the Borough to hear the American author Betty Birney talk about her much-loved Humphrey Books. Fiona Razvi, Festival Director, said: 'It is a huge honour for us to have the Duchess of Cornwall launching our Young Writers' Competition with Betty Birney on World Book Day. Developing and nurturing the creative talent of children and young adults is at the heart of Bookfest's activity. All schools in Merton are invited to take part in the competition which this year has the theme The Great Escape.' The Duchess met representatives of Wimbledon Chase Primary school, Wimbledon Bookfest, World Book Day and Merton Council including the Mayor, Cllr Oonagh Moulton, as well as actors Timothy West and Prunella Scales, and authors Penny Vincenzi, Gemma Malley and Michelle Paver, Jonathan Lloyd from Polka Theatre



Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall visits a classroom at Wimbledon Chase primary school

and Steve Coulson, vicar of St Mark's, Mitcham. Susan Tomes, Head Teacher, showed the Duchess - who commented on the high standard of work on display - round the school. Pupils and teachers were all dressed in costumes of their favourite literary characters. After her tour of the school the Duchess spoke to the children and read an excerpt from *Winnie the Pooh*. She commented: 'I like to support events like this as I think it is so important to encourage children to read as much as they can. I always read to my grandchildren - which I enjoy.' Two winners from the 2010 writing competition read their prize-winning entries, Alex Riley from Wimbledon Chase, and Madeleine Kent-Philips from Wimbledon High School. The Duchess said that she would like to return next year to hear winners of 2011.

20 seconds with 
 Fiona Razvi, Wimbledon Bookfest Director

Why launch a book festival in SW19? Well, I went to Hay Festival a few years ago and was blown away by it... and felt it was something that could happen here.

Highlights so far? The Big Tent on Wimbledon Common. We use over 20 venues across the area but running a series of events in the Big Tent just felt like we had a home.

Most interesting guest? It has to be Salman Rushdie. I found him interesting, engaging and personable. Then, coming a close second, it's Orinocco. It was so good to have the Wombles back on the Common.

Wimbledon Bookfest takes place from 1-9 October 2011 www.wimbledonbookfest.org.

Wandsworth centre hosts trade fair

Southside Shopping Centre, Wandsworth, has hosted its fourth annual Young Enterprise Trade Fair. Twelve companies from nine local schools participated. Through the programme, students are able to come up with innovative new business concepts and then bring them to Southside to test their saleability. As many of these students had previously only sold their products to friends and family, they found selling to the general public a much tougher challenge. Neil Churchill said: 'What better place to hold the trade fair than at Southside Shopping Centre; the businesses of today alongside the business people of tomorrow.'



Merton boys cricket team

Team Merton boys cricket team recently took part in the London Youth Games

Movies coming to Southfields

- Plans are afoot to turn a billiard hall in Southfields into a cinema. Robert Richman, who is the brains behind the idea, has spent the last three months developing the scheme. 'We have the community behind us,' he told T&L. 'I wrote an open letter to the community in November and in the short time since we have collected pledges for £65,000 from all parts of Southfields, including an 'angel' who will be underwriting the cost of the building.'
- The vision is to have a two-screen cinema with a coffee shop, restaurant and all the facilities that modern cinemas have. In addition there will be theatre space and an edit suite for local talent. The plan is to open in 2012.
- Renovation costs are estimated at £1.6 million. 'This could make a huge difference to the Southfields area,' Robert said. 'It is just what we have all been waiting for.'