



## THE NEW LOVE TREND- Giulia Chiarito



Move over, Valentine's Day! There's a new love affair captivating hearts and headlines in 2024, and it goes by the name of Galentine's Day. While Cupid may have been busy shooting his arrows, it's the bonds of friendship that are stealing the spotlight this year.

In a surprising turn of events, Galentine's Day has taken social media by storm, overshadowing its romantic counterpart, Valentine's Day, with its message of female empowerment and fellowship. So, what exactly is behind this shift in celebration, and why are girls everywhere ditching traditional romance for a day of sisterly solidarity?

### The Rise of Galentine's Day

Galentine's Day, originally popularized by the hit TV show "Parks and Recreation," has evolved from a fictional celebration into a cultural phenomenon. Held on February 13th, it's a day dedicated to celebrating the bonds of female friendship, with women coming together to support, uplift, and cherish one another.

Unlike Valentine's Day, which often emphasises romantic relationships, Galentine's Day celebrates the importance of platonic love and the friendships that enrich our lives. From heartfelt brunches to fun-filled outings, women around the world are embracing this holiday as an opportunity to honour the incredible women in their lives.

### The Appeal of Galentine's Day

So, what makes Galentine's Day so appealing, especially in 2024? For starters, it offers a refreshing alternative to the commercialisation and pressure often associated with Valentine's Day. Instead of stressing over finding the perfect romantic gesture, women can focus on celebrating the meaningful connections they have with their friends.

In a world where female empowerment and solidarity are increasingly valued, Galentine's Day resonates deeply with women of all ages and backgrounds.

Of course, it wouldn't be a modern phenomenon without the influence of social media, and Galentine's Day is no exception. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have played a significant role in spreading the word about this alternative celebration, with hashtags like #GalentinesDay and #GirlsSquad flooding feeds everywhere.

From sharing heartfelt messages to posting photos of squad gatherings, social media has become a virtual hub for Galentine's Day festivities. It's a way for women to connect, express gratitude, and showcase the strength of their friendships to the world.

### The Future of Love and Friendship

As we look to the future, it's clear that Galentine's Day is here to stay. Its message of female empowerment and friendship is timeless, resonating with women across generations. In a world that often prioritizes romantic relationships, Galentine's Day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of platonic love and the bonds that unite us as women.

So, as we bid au revoir to another Valentine's Day, let's raise a glass to the women who lift us up, support us, and make life infinitely more enjoyable. Whether single or coupled up, Galentine's Day offers a chance to celebrate the love that truly knows no bounds: the love of friendship. Cheers to that!

## **The Diwali festival shines its light for all Londoners! - Liv Nolan**

**On October 29<sup>th</sup>, The Diwali Festival was held in Trafalgar Square, celebrating the festival of lights, with food, music, dance, and smiles!**



In a time of tension and upheaval worldwide, the Diwali festival, celebrating the story of light overcoming darkness, is a welcome and positive event for all Londoners to enjoy! Although Christmas festivals are held in Trafalgar Square every year, commemorated by the gift of a 20 metre Norwegian spruce tree, to celebrate the birth of Christ in the Christian calendar, it is also equally imperative to champion other religious festivals, like Diwali, Eid or Hanukkah, whilst still respecting those of no faith, in a multi-cultural, multi-faith, inclusive London.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan organised this wonderful annual event and I was fortunate enough to be given the chance to have a chat with him, where he stated that his favourite part of the Diwali festival was “meeting the different people...you meet different

people from our great city, and their different backgrounds... those of us that aren't of that background (Hindu, Sikh or Jain) get to know about Diwali, get to know the stories and learn about each other and get to know each other, with making friendships and kinship and joining each other's families - that's what's so fantastic!"

This year's Diwali festival exceeded my expectations, and even the large amount of rain on the day couldn't diminish my huge enjoyment of the wonderful array of events on display, with everything from: delicious food from all over the world, spectacular dance sequences representing each state of India, as well as stalls with anything and everything you could hope for. The diverse and inclusive communities of London enjoyed celebrating these events, such as a sign language interpreter translating the entire event (including the music!) alongside children with autism performing on stage, and a myriad of female speakers being given a voice and a platform. Emphasis on cultural appreciation was beautiful to see, with everyone taking part in activities like traditional dances and turban and sari tying workshops, as well as really exploring the Mayor of London's ethos of 'London for everyone' -as one big family of humanity!

This year's celebration of the Diwali festival in Trafalgar Square was a fascinating and uplifting experience, that I found moving, informative and heart-warming. To see Londoners come together with shared open values of respect and inclusivity, making new friendships, and learning new cultures, was a very powerful and unifying event for our great city of London!

## Local Wildlife and why we need it:By Isla Rynne



Our local environment is one of the fundamental building blocks in the society we live in today. It is estimated that there are roughly around 14,000 different species of wildlife living in London. Take Richmond Park for example, a borough in southwest London home to many ranges of biodiversity, with up to 144 types of species recorded. I went to Richmond park to discover the many ways in which we can conserve our local environment and just how important biodiversity in London truly is. It is saddening just how much our wildlife has declined. In fact, nearly half of

Britain's diversity has gone since the industrial revolution.

So, the question still stands what can we do to protect local wildlife? Whilst at Richmond Park, I began to research just how important the wildlife truly is. Richmond Park is home nearly 170,000 trees, as well as a population of 3 billion ants!

But one of the most iconic features of Richmond Park are the deer population. On average there are around 630 deer, who have been roaming freely since 1637. These Deer are crucial in the role of conserving the environment as their grazing of grass prevents seeds from growing so the stunning views of Richmond park can be seen. Despite focusing in on one particular section of land, London's unique range of wildlife between the contrast of the hustle and bustle of city life, compared to the vast range of beautiful landscape on the outskirts, It is important we find ways in which we can healthily protect our wildlife before it is destroyed by global warming.

Ways you can help:

Support local farms and markets: Find your nearest farmers market where fresh fruit and vegetables are sources organically. This way, there is a lesser risk of animals being harmed in the process and methods are used to protect their livelihood as well as yours.

Plant your own fruit and veg:

Sick of buying plastic packaged fruit? Grow your own! This way you know that animals are being protected in the process!

Whilst reflecting on my time spent roaming around Richmond Park, It is evident that we need to conserve our local wildlife on not just a local scale, but as a national scale. We must come together to conserve our environment so animals and wildlife can thrive as one.

## **Festive Tea Party with Old Friends :Tea & Memories! - Shyla Narh**

On Thursday 14th December 2023 Alumni students of *Ursuline High School Wimbledon* were invited for a cosy gathering of festive fun.

The event involved Christmas tea with delightful snacks and fun games and activities to bring the Christmas spirit among old and new friends.

As the guests arrived, sixth form students from the prefect committees assisted in serving tea and





snacks, allowing a warm and enjoyable space for cheer and entertaining conversation.

While engaging with the friendly guests, students learnt about their past experiences within the high school, including a former student who attended Ursuline Wimbledon in the late 1940s to 1950s. She reminisced in her delight for cookery as a school subject, explaining the format of the lessons while going through her original cookery book, straight from the 10th October, 1949. This was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tea party, as students got a perspective into the differences with the post - war London and Modern London, and how these worlds are experienced as a young British girl attending high school.

Among the guests there were also alumni students from international '**Ursuline**' High Schools. This included a former student from a branch in South Africa, '**Brescia House School**'. The Ursuline sisterhood has resulted in multiple branches of Catholic schools globally over the past 100 years, due to their constant work and developments to share good education and to serve, as suggested by the motto '*Serviam*' recognised by all the schools.

In the late 1950's the decision was taken to transfer **St Joseph's South Africa** to a new site in Discovery but when it became evident that there was a growing need to provide Catholic boys' education on the West Rand the property was sold to the La Salle Brothers, while the Ursulines, in 1966, opened a new school for girls in Bryanston, Brescia House, set out in spacious grounds, which is still flourishing. (*Ursulines of the Roman Union Southern Africa*).

The guests wrapped up the meal, but the party continued with exciting quizzes and games. Laughter and friendly competition filled the room as everyone enjoyed a lively game of Bingo hosted by **Giulia Chiarito**, aged 16. Christmas quizzes tested holiday knowledge, with prizes and treats for the winners. The young year 7 students were definitely taken aback by the intelligence of some of the guests!

The school choir led carolling, and the night ended with cherished memories for all. It was an unforgettable experience celebrating the school's history and foundation!



## A Christmas Carol: A review By Isla Rynne

On Saturday 25th of November, I went to watch a live performance of the famous Christmas Carol originally written by Charles Dickens. The production was performed in the old Vic theatre in London, as well as one of the Actors being Christopher Eccleston, who is notoriously known for playing BBC's Doctor Who. As we walked into

the theatre, we were greeted by Actors dressed in contemporary Victorian style outfits, offering out oranges. As we found our seats, live classical music could be heard from centre stage, as actors gathered playing instruments. The set design was truly magical, depending on where you were seated, you could be immersed into the world of A Christmas Carol, as actors often involved the audience in a handful of scenes. One of the most impressive features of the performance were the lanterns which floated above the stage, and flickered to the music, further creating quite a cosy setting and eloquently brought the magic of Christmas into the theatre. At 7pm sharp, the performance began. A grim and cruel Ebenezer Scrooge made his entrance upon stage, cracking mean jokes, likening him to the modern day 'Grinch'. Eccleston managed to capture the cruelty of Mr Scrooge perfectly, allowing the audience to feel a sense of rage towards his cold-hearted character. As the ghost of Christmas past and present made their debut, you could truly feel a 'ghostly' presence amongst the atmosphere, as the actors performed their role with such power, their voices echoing words of warning towards Mr Scrooge. As the first half ended, I felt truly immersed within the production and was truly excited for the next half to begin.

When watching the backstory of Bob Cratchit's family and their utter struggle to survive in the harsh conditions of Victorian London, many audience members were moved to tears, as the actor of 'Tiny Tim', captured a true sense of humbleness and happiness despite his family's financial position. This portrayal of such a kind family, combined with graceful classical music, allowed the audience to reflect, or perhaps even become inspired by the Cratchit's family values. One of my personal favourite parts of the performance was the scene where Scrooge's evil character completely transformed into a kind and generous man, and as a result, began sharing his fortune to the streets of London. Across the stage, actors began funnelling fruits and festive delicacies down sheets into baskets! This was particularly joyful as it provided a moment of comic relief from previous emotional scenes.

After around 2 and a half hours, the performance drew to a close as artificial snow fell from the sky, was uplifting music surrounded the stage. I was completely surprised by the quality of the performance and thought it was absolutely brilliant! Who knew that a story of a cruel man could be turned into a performance so magical, truly representing not only the meaning of Christmas, but the importance of kindness and compassion and how it can truly shape one's character.

## WSL record breaking attendance! Liv Nolan



ARSENAL PUSH FOR SHARED GAMES AT THE EMIRATES!" "BETH MEAD FIRST FEMALE FOOTBALLER TO WIN SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR!" "LEAH WILLIAMSON AND THE LIONESSES BRING THE EUROPEAN CUP HOME!" – Arsenal's Women's team, alongside women's football in general, has had an incredible meteoric rise in the past few seasons; attendance is up, matches are shown live on the BBC and young people are playing and becoming interested in the game. But what are the factors that bring this about, and is there more to be done?

In 2016, when I was 8 years old, I remember attending the women's FA cup final between Arsenal and Chelsea at Wembley. The stadium, which holds up to 90,000 people, had a record-breaking attendance of 32,912, meaning only under half of the seats were filled for this crucial FA Cup Final! Even with future household names such as Alex Scott, Fara Williams, Kelly Smith and Leah Williamson on the world-famous Wembley pitch, women's football had not reached the success it has accomplished today.

By December 2023 I was lucky enough to witness the thrilling atmosphere at yet another Arsenal V Chelsea encounter, although this time, even though simply a regular WSL fixture, Arsenal achieved a record breaking 59,042 attendance, being only 1200 short of a sell out at the Emirates Stadium! Through my own eyes, I have seen the great wave of this movement for women's football and the strive for equality and promotion of women in sport. Last season, Arsenal took a large step forward in growing their fan base, by holding 3 WSL matches at the so often called 'Men's Stadium'. Building on the huge success of those games, this season, Arsenal will hold 5 WSL fixtures at the Emirates, for which I took up the '5 game Emirates Stadium season ticket' offer. The results of these efforts have led to many benefits which can be seen on match days: The Emirates Stadium bustling with fans, being women, men, and children alike, the Arsenal dinosaur mascot, Gunnersaurus, exciting the children and entertaining the crowds, iconic music being played to boost the mood before the match, making a push for everyone to feel welcomed with videos of the Gay-Gooners and 'no tolerance for discrimination' posters throughout the stadium, tote bag merchandise placed on every seat for free, as well as fun and exciting half time entertainment to entice and entertain the Arsenal audience. People of all different backgrounds were enjoying and

celebrating Women's football like they would any other football match. No matter if it was a men's game or a women's game, the Arsenal community enjoyed and rallied together for the exciting match!

But there is more to be done. As Arsenal's Commercial officer Juliet Slot said "We intend to build our audiences. The collective growth of the women's game and united marketing efforts of all the different clubs will see a transformation over the next few years". Although Arsenal have made a tremendous push in the women's game, we are not quite there yet. A 56,042 attendance is just the first step towards a sellout, which I can't wait to hopefully experience at the North London derby against Tottenham Hotspur later in the season!

## ITALY - PREZZEMOLE E VITALE- Giulia Chiarito



In the heart of London, tucked away from the city's hustle, lies Prezzemolo e Vitale—a beacon of Italian delight for the past 45 years. In a recent interview with the owner's son, we unraveled the rich history of this cherished establishment, exploring its cultural significance.

"The story begins about 45 years ago, with my parents opening a small deli and grocery shop.

We've always been going back and forth from Italy, even now," revealed the owner's son, highlighting the family's genuine connection to the shop's establishment.

Prezzemolo e Vitale is more than just a grocery store; it's a cultural haven that has evolved over time. "We decided to create a product line that would better meet the needs of Italians who want to discover new products or those who go on vacation to Italy and find everything they ate there. It's nice, and we introduce them to everything they don't know," shared the interviewee, emphasizing the shop's transformation into a bridge between Italy and London.

Our goal is to maintain [the atmosphere] in all our stores, both in Italy and in London. We aim to create a family environment, with us and the employees forming a real family," expressed the owner's son, underlining the commitment to preserving the familial ambience that defined the small shop in Palermo 45 years ago.

In the quest for authenticity, Prezzemolo e Vitale made a strategic choice—to source products directly from Italy. "It's our distinctive feature, what makes this place different from others. It's a strategic choice because everything we want to sell is not found in London, so the only alternative is to bring it from Palermo, really, not just from Sicily," explained the



interviewee, shedding light on the shop's dedication to offering an unparalleled Italian experience.

"It's probably another anthropological reason; Italians are known worldwide for their hospitality. We are recognized for our openness, engagement, and attention to relationships, which makes a difference in the hospitality sector," mused the owner's son when asked about the significance of having Italian-speaking staff. This commitment to hospitality adds an extra layer of authenticity, making Prezzemolo e Vitale a place where customers feel genuinely involved.

In essence, Prezzemolo e Vitale is a cultural bridge connecting two worlds. It's a place where tradition meets modernity, and the spirit of Italy flourishes in the heart of London. With its roots deeply embedded in a small shop in Palermo, this culinary haven has become a testament to the enduring charm of authentic Italian experiences, beckoning visitors to embark on a 45-year-old culinary journey.

Make sure to visit Prezzemolo e Vitale, with locations in Wimbledon, Notting Hill, and Chelsea.

## Wimbledon book fest 2023 - book writers – Shyla Narh



During the black history month of **October**, it is increasingly important that we allow space for black speakers, artists and activists to express and narrate their views on modern culture. A perfect example of how this has been achieved is the **Wimbledon Bookfest festival** which took place between the **12th and 22nd of October** as London's leading Literary festival. Inspiring speakers such as **Mikaela Loach**, a climate activist explaining the wider topics of her book *'It's not that radical'*, and **Peterson**

**Joseph**, a well known actor and writer appearing in top shows such as BBC's book adaptation of *'noughts and crosses'* by **Malorie Blackman**, open the local people's perspectives in a light and interactive manner.

Many of the guests appearing throughout the festival were notably influential and had deep connections to British literary culture. Childhood classics such as **David Walliams and Steve Backshall** also made appearances across the different venues in Wimbledon such as the **New Wimbledon Theatre** and the **Merton Arts Space** inside the local library. From books that illustrated animated stories for children to strong autobiographies, historical novels and

passionate political breakdowns, this arts festival was essential to ensuring that Wimbledon locals of all ages were immersed with culture and lifelong stories. David Walliams heartwarming children novels such as *'The midnight gang'* (a personal favourite!) and *'Gangsta Granny'* have sold over 50 million copies since being published.

Moreover, during the highly celebrated black history month, it is important to highlight and recognise the narratives and personal truths that the black authors at this festival have discovered allowing them to verbalise it into such enlightening books.

While **Mikalea Loach's** conference came across as highly educational and passionate, it gave a sense of validation for global topics that are currently being clouded by false media and politics. By simply opening up the topics of discussion on a personal level and explaining the importance of climate activism in our daily lives and how they interconnect with other social issues such as racism, **Mikalea Loach** effortlessly sells the idea that *"it's not that radical"* in a way that listeners that had not even read the book were immediately engaged and hooked to her story.

Being a medical student based in Brighton, her powerhouse of a book was published just this year in 2023 by the publishers 'DK'.

#### **"WE ARE LIVING IN A WORLD WHERE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN IS THE REALITY."**

The book is showing *"we have an opportunity to talk about the crisis" - "it's not just doom and gloom"*. It preaches that the climate crisis *"isn't that radical"*, and that it can be approached in a more open and strategic manner. It also explores simple but effective ways local communities can come together and advocate for change for the better. Mikaela mentions in her conversation with Sofia that *"We are all connected to each other"*, and that she wants to illuminate these connections within climate change, racism, colonialism, classism. However, it was clearly illustrated that approaching these topics in a logical and fluent way can lead to better and more productive outcomes for the future.

There are also more problems affecting the cohesiveness of our world, as well as in London. So far the talk involved issues on a global scale; geography, class, race, how they are intertwined. However, this is also paramount in different London communities. There are different forms of racism, and **Mikaela** has experienced interpersonal racism. She lived in Surrey and experienced this growing up in a predominantly white area. In this area there was a large incinerator, with a high percentage of illegal air pollution. **Environmental racism** is about power and how certain communities are given power for large unsustainable projects in highly urban areas, but if a population of minorities were involved in the protest it would be rejected and is seen as violent, angry and rebellious. Unfortunately this case goes beyond sustainability as a young girl, at the age of 9 years old died 3 weeks before her birthday due

to the extreme air pollution conditions in her community. **Ella Rosmund's** family are continuously campaigning for a law on air pollution.

**Peterson Joseph**, a famous British actor and author, also took the stage with **Sofia Akei** the following week. With a love for literature and a visual interest for the arts, Peterson commented '**Thank God for Libraries**'. His book is from the perspective of a historic slave born on a slave ship in **1899**, describing the conditions, his journey and the thoughts that run through his mind. '**Complex web of life**' describes the conditions of the slave ship. From a young age Peterson was always an aspiring reader and writer, with some of his references and inspirations including the Shakespearean book **Hamlet**, **Carol Philips articles** from the **national art gallery**, and the movie starring **Leonardo DiCaprio** '**The Beach**'. He references Hamlet with the famous quote - '*against self slaughter*'.

