



# Home Office's loss is baby clubbers' gain

**Eleanor Sharples** meets local resident Hannah Saunders whose family raves began in Brixton and now attract thousands around the world

Brixton resident Hannah Saunders waved goodbye to a high-flying career in the Home Office to run DJ and glow-stick raves with a difference.

Her Big Fish Little Fish (BFLF) company puts on raves for the whole family – from age 0 on up. The first was at Effra Social in July 2013.

Hannah spent 20 years fulfilling her desire to serve society by working as a civil servant, rising to deputy director of policing at the Home Office.

Why the sudden change? Having had two children in quick succession, Winter, now 7 and Atticus, 6, meant more time away from the office and an unexpected change in role upon returning to work caused her to “run for the hills”.

Plan B? There wasn't one.

Unsure of her next move, Hannah found a mentor, who helped to build her confidence as she toyed with the idea of creating a “family rave” to combine her love of music and a lifetime of clubbing with her babies' enjoyment of festivals.

“The concept of a family rave is doing exactly what it says on the tin. It is a rave for families, by families who enjoy club music and spending time together,” she says.

“I thought that I would make this thing that I want to go to, which I cannot find anywhere else ... and we'll just see what happens.”

Hannah is supported by her husband David and a few families who help her to organise London events.

Raves usually take place on weekend afternoons and are for adults with children aged 0-8.

Each party is unique, with a quirky venue, a creative theme for fancy dress



and everything from glitter cannons and glow-sticks to craft corners and baby chill out spaces.

Music is at the heart of BFLF. Renowned DJs like Aphrodite, Two Bad Mice and Chad Jackson play club classics. Adults relive their youth, throwing shapes on the dancefloor to songs of their past with their children, who rejoice at the sight of seeing their parents dance.

The enjoyment and vigour seen on this dancefloor would rival any top nightclub across the country. The finale, a rather “hectic” parachute dance.

Since the opening event at Effra Social in Brixton in July 2013, the demand for “family rave” entertainment has seen the company grow.

Its popularity is unquestionable. A well established network of regulars and tribe of super fans enjoy BFLF raves in all four corners of London, other UK cities and even Australia.

BFLF organises raves at festivals including Glastonbury and Camp Bestival and hosts events at top venues including Museum of London Docklands, The National Gallery and, most recently, Alexandra Palace in July 2017 which saw a record 2,000 people taking part.

BFLF, now in its fourth year, has won the nationwide Family Arts Festival Award for best family event every year.... as well as best welcome, best venue and best event.

It's simple really, says Hannah: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work another day in your life.” – Confucius.

■ BFLF is hosting a drum and bass, animal fantastical, family rave with DJ Aphrodite on 14 October from 2-4.30pm at Fire, Vauxhall. Tickets at [bit.ly/BFLF-Fire](http://bit.ly/BFLF-Fire).

## ARTS ROUND-UP

### LAMBETH ARTISTS OPEN FOR VIEWING

Artists and makers across Lambeth open their studios, workspaces and homes on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 October.

First staged in 2009, Lambeth Open showcases a range of arts and crafts including painting, sculpture, photography, textile design, jewellery, ceramics and print making.

You can meet artists face-to-face and learn more about the techniques and technical processes they use. Work will be for sale, so it's a great opportunity to buy direct and support your local artists and makers.



Says organiser and artist Tim Sutton (the man behind the Brixton Urban Art Fair, that's his work above): “Lambeth Open provides an affordable opportunity for artists and makers to showcase work in their local area. We are so lucky we have all this talent on our doorstep and something worth showing off to the rest of London.”

■ Free entrance. 10-6 both days (except private views). Map and full details at [www.lambethopen.com](http://www.lambethopen.com).

### HAPPENING IN HERNE HILL

Herne Hill's multi-genre music festival, from 6 to 15 October, has 19 events across various venues in SE24. Ticket prices are low – starting at £5 for some events – and there are some free performances.

On Saturday afternoon (7 October), five choirs from Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham perform “Herne Hill Sings On” at St Faith's Church, featuring material covering pop, jazz, folk and rock classics as well as show tunes and opera.

The Half Moon provides a new venue with an evening dinner and cabaret – “Catch Me a Song” – on Friday 6 and a celebration of songs about London on Friday 13 covering styles including music

### BRAINSTORM BOROUGH OF CULTURE BID

Mercury Prize nominated and Brixton raised hip hop musician Ty Chijioke will be joining a brainstorming session for 15-25-year-olds in the basement of Squires architects' new Department Store on Ferndale Road in Brixton at 6pm on Monday 2 October. Organised by Ovalhouse Theatre which is due to move to Brixton in 2019, the workshop will look at creating Lambeth's bid to be London Borough of Culture.



The first will feature Alec Schulz (above) – The Vegan Magician – in a night of sleight of hand, wit and wonder. All magic is certified organic, free-range, gluten-free and vegan.

Events include the monthly Midweek Magic Mix show and Bunco Booth (an event for companies held at a location of their choice).

■ Facebook.com/Thellusioneer.

### LEARN HOW TO REALISE YOUR SILLY IDEAS

Brixton Design Trail may be closed for this year, but the Bureau of Silly Ideas in Valentin Place is keeping the spirit alive with creative workshops throughout October.



On Thursday 12 October it hosts an alternative drawing workshop with artist Rhian Sutcliffe who will lead you through an assault course of alternative drawing techniques, using body parts, team work, and imagination to build up striking group compositions. Young people 5 to 6pm; adults from 7 to 9pm.

There's a graffiti workshop on Saturday 21 October and a unique spoken word and yoga workshop for women on Thursday 26.

■ For more information email Abigail at [bosibigail@bureauofsillyideas.com](mailto:bosibigail@bureauofsillyideas.com) or visit [bureauofsillyideas.com/club-silly](http://bureauofsillyideas.com/club-silly).

### HAITI FUNDRAISER AT POP BRIXTON

Impact Hub Brixton in Pop is showing a powerful film at a fundraiser for Haiti at 6pm on 17 October. Set in the wake of the devastating 2010 earthquake, *Kenbe Fem (To Hold Firm)* follows a son's search for his mother after the disaster. Love and strength transform a tragedy into a call for action. Small bites and refreshments, community building, and inspiration promised.

## PODCAST NOVEL SEES BRIXTON BECOME A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

George Lewkovicz (aka Superbard) – no stranger to our pages with stories about his Edinburgh Fringe shows – has made it to home turf with a podcast novel, *The White Beyond the Wall*, set in Brixton.

It is a post-apocalypse fantasy about teenage twins Aron and Jacob, who can turn into an owl and a dolphin respectively.

So far, so standard fantasy fare. But George is just as concerned with them being real teenage boys, including awkward encounters with girls and unwanted erections.

And they learn quickly that it's not that helpful to be able to turn into animals.

George records each 15-minute episode with an immersive

soundscapes and music.

It's now up to episode 14 of 32 and Aron has arrived at a university/commune in a future Ritz cinema.

Brixton feels different yet familiar. It's a place of pilgrimage. The market's still there, but it spills mainly religious icons and it spills onto Windrush Square.

Lewkovicz (right) has lived

in Brixton for seven years, and wrote the novel in F. Mondays on Brixton Hill.

He's set stories in Brixton before, including his show and iBook, *The Flood*, about a Brixton under the sea.

■ *The White Beyond the Wall* is available free from all good podcast providers.



RICHARD JEFFHOOTE