

EVENTS & LEISURE

PLAY

Watch Christmas play in library

Get in the festive spirit by watching *A Christmas Carol* at libraries across the borough.

The popular Charles Dickens tale of the miserable Scrooge, who changes his ways after a series of ghostly visits, is coming to the libraries to bring some Christmas cheer for free today (Weds), tomorrow (Thurs) and Friday.

See newham.gov.uk/communityevents for the date and time of your local showing.

CHRISTMAS

Children's centre hosts festive fun

Festive sessions for babies and toddlers are taking place at Discover Children's Story Centre.

Enter a wintry cave and see if you can find the Glitterbugs, a collection of sparkly and glittery creatures, which are hidden in the cave at the High Street, Stratford centre.

Tickets cost £6.50 and show times vary throughout the day.

Glitterbugs is running until Sunday, January 15. Visit discover.org.uk to book.

MUSIC

Have your say on music at the pub

Fancy listening to your favourite album with a few friends and a few pints?

The Tap East pub is that place tonight (Wed) and next Wednesday from 7.30pm.

The Westfield Stratford City pub lets you tweet or email suggestions to info@tapeast.co.uk with the subject title Long Playing Wednesdays and the LP you want to hear.

The pub is open from 11am to 11pm.

SINGING

Get up on stage to belt out classics

Do you have a voice worth sharing or just love the attention of being up on stage? If so, the Goose is the pub for you tomorrow (Thurs) night.

The pub, in Stratford Broadway, will be hosting a karaoke night with cheap pints and food served until 10pm.

The stage is open to singers from 8pm, although the pub doors are open from 9am to 11.30pm.

Call 0208 221 0761 for more details.

EXHIBITION

How girl power helped to drive the BNP out of the East End

Girls from Tower Hamlets have been learning how the women of the borough stood up to racism in the 1990s.

Journey to Justice's new exhibition at Rich Mix in Brick Lane looks past the Battle of Cable Street to tell the lesser-told story of the East End's victory against the BNP in 1993.

Girlz United, a young women's community group, learned how their forebears came together when Derek Beackon was elected to the Millwall ward in 1993, as the British National Party's first councillor.

His election victory shocked the area and indeed the nation, with figures as diverse as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner condemning his racist comments.

A group of Tower Hamlets women decided to make a stand, and, inspired by the US civil rights movement, they set up Women Unite Against Racism (WUAR).

The group met at each other's houses and encouraged people who didn't normally engage in politics to get involved.

Julie Begum, 48, still lives in Tower Hamlets and remembers being part of the movement: "It was a really intense time of protests and meetings and action with women from different backgrounds."

At their first meeting, more than 150 showed up, and Julie said they knew they needed to be tactical.

"The BNP had got in because there was a lot of skinheads at the



Julie Begum, second from right, with other women painting a WUAR banner.

Picture: KIPPA MATTHEWS

polling stations and people didn't want to go out to vote," she said.

"We wanted to make sure there were safe ways for people to vote so, along with other organisations, we gave people escorts to help them vote without fear so we didn't end up with a fascist councillor."

WUAR's tactics worked: they mobilised voters and Beackon lost

his seat in the 1994 election.

"We were from all backgrounds – black, white, Bangladeshi, some religious, and some not religious, and we all came together."

The exhibition also looks at the ways that the US civil rights movement influenced Britons - included the story of how Welsh schoolchildren gave their pocket

money to pay for a memorial for four little girls who were murdered in the Ku Klux Klan bombing in a church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.

■ **Journey To Justice is on in the Mezzanine Gallery at Rich Mix, Brick Lane until Sunday, January 1. Admission is free.**

PANTOMIME REVIEW by Kat Hopps

Sinbad the Sailor is feisty fun

It's all about girl power at this year's Theatre Royal Stratford East panto.

Sinbad the Sailor may seem an unusual Christmas story but in a further break with convention, it's the leading ladies that seem to be having the most fun.

Sinbadda, played by Gabby Wong, is Sinbad's brave and adventure-seeking sister, and the person to whom the hero owes his good name.

When his marriage proposal to the Sultan's daughter – played by a sparky Marianna Neofitou – is challenged by an evil foe, Sinbad must sail away with Sinbadda and monkey-puppet sidekick Funky to find the treasure in order to win the princess's hand.

Along the way they encounter an effervescent mix of characters.

Panto regular Michael Bertenshaw is an ever reliable form playing baddie Prince Naw Ze Uzz but it's Rina Fatania as Green Genie Uzz who really sticks in the mind.

The bright-green, good-hearted sensation at first fizzles with animation before touching the audience's heart, stealing every scene she's in along the way.

There are laughs aplenty throughout while an up-to-date script references numerous tongue-in-cheek Trumpisms.

With so much going on, the story can at times seem a little overwrought, but the production and sets are inventive and captivating.

All the kids at our show loved it. Director Kerry Michael should consider that job done.



Sinbad the Sailor at Theatre Royal Stratford East.

Picture: SHARRON WALLACE