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Thursday, September 18, 2008



READING RACKET

Kids take to Number 1 court for readathon **page 9**

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IS TIDE TURNING?

Late-night booze application rejected to curb loutish behaviour

by **BEN THOMPSON**

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Late-night drinkers in Wimbledon whose behaviour has forced street cleaners to wear stab-proof vests and have blighted the lives of residents, could be moving away from the town centre after the latest decision by Merton's licensing committee. A new policy to control the number of outlets selling alcohol in the Broadway led the council to reject an application on Tuesday from a convenience store seeking to sell booze until 3am on the weekends. Merton's leader, Councillor David Williams, who described how "tidal

waves of urine" flow down Wimbledon Hill and "lap at people's feet" on a Friday night, welcomed the decision. He said: "This is in line with our policy that shows we are taking action," he said. "There should be a limit on the number of places that can sell alcohol, particularly in the early hours. I hope this is a decision welcomed by residents living close to the Broadway." He added: "We've seen far too

many examples of irresponsible behaviour that spoils the area. It is a fine balance, but we need to do more to encourage responsible drinking." According to councillors on the licensing sub-committee, Wimbledon Food and Wines was denied the licence because the area was already saturated with off-licences and pubs. A cumulative impact zone has marked off an area of the town centre to control the level of alcohol sales and antisocial behaviour. But Leigh Terrafranca, from the Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association, said more needed to be

done to stem the flow of loutish behaviour that blighted residents' lives. She said: "There's a drinking culture that's so unpleasant and that's not the way we want Wimbledon to keep going over the next five or 10 years. "This is a community and not a massive conurbation like Croydon." The association keeps a "disturbance diary" where incidents of antisocial behaviour are logged by teams of residents who patrol the town centre on a regular basis. Their findings are then reported to

the council. "Last weekend I saw blood on the pavement in two places," added Ms Terrafranca. "We're used to people having fights on our streets and screaming as they argue in the middle of the night. "And that's not to mention the beer cans and vomit left all over the place. Just last week I saw a pool of vomit outside the library." **What do you think? Write to us at the address on page 2.**

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Scientific proof that pupils love a good story



Telling tales: Author Marcus Chown with children from Wimbledon Park Primary School

Deadlinepix CG0400

He is famous for uncovering the complexities of the cosmos at science journal the New Scientist – but author Marcus Chown has now turned his hand to children's fiction and chose Wimbledon Park Primary School for the launch of his first children's book on Tuesday. But Felicity Frobisher and the Three Headed Aldebaran Dust Devil is still based on Mr Chown's love of the universe, telling the story of an intergalactic boy who befriends a girl and comes to a school on Earth. Mr Chown talked to pupils at the school in Havana Road about the book and read them extracts. For more information on the book visit felicityfrobisher.co.uk or marcuschown.com

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