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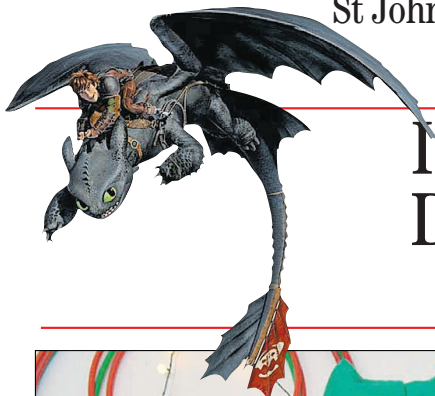
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GOLDSCHMIDT
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Thursday November 27, 2014

80p



Interview with Dragon author

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Calls to save book barge

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Christmas festivities begin

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Neighbourhood forum launched

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■ Father Christmas at Francis Holland's fair

Marylebone revellers kick off festive season

Traders, shoppers and schoolchildren show off their Christmas spirit as they raise thousands for charities

by Emily Banks
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Christmas spirit lit up the area as residents, traders and pupils kicked off the festive season.

Revellers flocked to Marylebone High Street on Wednesday to see the Christmas lights switched on.

Pupils and staff at Francis Holland School held their own festivities on Saturday at their annual Christmas Fair to raise money for charity.

In Marylebone, the crowd were entertained with music, stalls,

mince pies and mulled wine as the lights were turned on by actress Jessica Hynes, star of TV's *Spaced* and *Twenty Twelve*.

A tombola with prizes donated by local businesses and run by Sandfords estate agent raised £2,050 for disability charity Scope.

Sandfords local director Julia Garger said: "We got into the spirit of things this year by dressing up as Christmas trees. It's always lovely to be involved in such a great event."

At Francis Holland, in Ivor Place, girls raised around £6,000 for charities including Swiss Cottage

School, for children with special educational needs.

Stalls and activities run by the girls and their parents included a Santa's Grotto, inflatable jousting games and a cake sale.

Mother Laurel Rafter said: "We had a fantastic array of stalls and something for all ages. It was a lovely festive start to the holiday season."

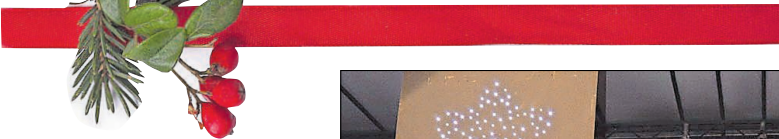
Headmistress Vivienne Durham added: "The parents, pupils and staff make the annual Christmas Fair such a thoroughly happy and successful event, raising money for all the charities we support."



■ Enjoying the lights switch on (above) and twins Sofia and Britain, three, on the children's fairground rides.



■ Musical act the Rockabellas at Marylebone lights switch on
LIGHTS PICTURES: POLLY HANCOCK



■ FHS head Vivienne Durham (left) and Jessica Hynes in Marylebone