

# EC1 ECHO

APR/MAY 2021 • N°.9 FREE

  
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Filming 'The Last Letter' in Wilmington Square © Filmfixer

## Welcome to 'Clerkenwood'

The EC1 area has long been attractive to filmmakers seeking a historic location. Here, *EC1 Echo* finds out why the area is such a draw

● BY OLIVER BENNETT ●

With Georgian streets and squares, normally busy cafes and streets, and a number of period estates and tower blocks, Clerkenwell is one of those versatile areas that offer locations for many kinds of films.

Hence the high numbers of film crews in the area – and they're mostly

here thanks to company FilmFixer which is, says senior film officer Tim Reynard, "a third party contractor that manages 14 London boroughs, including Islington."

With staff that are all passionate about film, working for FilmFixer is rewarding. "Everybody's got a film and TV background," says Tim. "It's a great feeling to bring a production off."

With its historic ambience, many films in Clerkenwell are period dramas. "Obviously, the architecture lends itself very well to those kinds of production," says Tim. "Popular locations include Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell Green and Clerkenwell Close, where the church and buildings really lend themselves well to period dramas."

How do they mask off modern life? "Obviously, visual effects take place and productions do use a 'green screen'," says Tim. "But it's absolutely remarkable what they can add and remove, whether it's a parking sign, yellow lines on a road – which can be completely covered – or street lights." Sometimes, a film's director of

● Continued on Page-13



**N°.9**  
**APR / MAY 2021**

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## NEWS

### Tech giant moving to Farringdon

Signs of life are creeping back into Farringdon. The video app company TikTok is taking space above the new Farringdon East Crossrail station in Smithfield. The new office, called The Kaleidoscope building, is being seen as a vote of confidence in the post-Covid office climate and TikTok expects to move in 2022 with some 850 employees. Matthew Bonning-Snook of the developers Helical, said: “TikTok is a perfect business for both the building and the area’s ambition to be a destination for culture and creativity.” TikTok joins other tech giants in the EC1 area, most notably LinkedIn, which is in The Ray building in Farringdon Road. Meanwhile, the Farringdon East Crossrail Station has



become the first central London station be handed over to Transport for London, pending Crossrail’s expected opening later next year. Mark Wild,

Crossrail chief executive said: “I am delighted that Farringdon station has been handed over to London Underground, this is a huge milestone for Crossrail.”

### Blocks left without heating

BY ED SHERIDAN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Councillors on Islington’s housing scrutiny committee have hit out at both housing officers and contractors over significant communal heating failures on two council-run estates in the borough.

Residents at the Redbrick Estate, Old Street EC1 and Braithwaite House at Bunhill Row both suffered “significant and continued failures” over the weekend, according to housing scrutiny chair Cllr Michael O’Sullivan, though residents are understood to have been suffering continued problems as far back as 2017.

Cllr Phil Graham said that, while he had previously been proud of the Town Hall’s Bunhill energy centres, which capture warmth from the London Underground to heat homes, he “won’t even mention them now.” He warned that the council will lose all the benefits of the innovation “if we don’t have residents happy with the service they’re provided with.”

Graham said: “Two blocks in particular, Vickery Court and Bartholomew Court had con-

tinuous failures of their heating and hot water.

“What would happen is Gem, the contractors for repairs, would turn up, they would get it working, leave the site, then 10 minutes later I’m getting another call saying it’s gone down again. Then it would take forever for them to come back.

“This shouldn’t be happening. We’ve got the old blocks

*“The more council properties we build the better”*

falling apart, we’re building lovely new places and the more council properties we build the better, but we cannot treat residents as second-class citizens.

“Residents are furious, they’re going to the papers, they’re going everywhere to try to find out what they can do. We need to totally turn around how we look at and treat our residents. They deserve better.”

Graham called for a backup system for the blocks, while branding the response times of contractors an “absolute disgrace all weekend”, having been informed of delays because of another heating failure caused by a power cut at Rahere House

in Central Street.

Council officers were also criticised, with communications with residents on the issue slated by Graham as “bloody condescending”.

The councillor accused certain officers of “total disrespect” in a meeting held on 2 March in which his representation of residents is said to have provoked eye-rolling amongst housing officers.

It is understood that one breakdown occurred on the same day that a bill for £15,000 was sent to leaseholders for insulation in the heating system, with Graham adding: “When they’re sitting there freezing, they’ve got no hot water, and they’re looking at this bill on the table for £15,000 from us, it’s pretty appalling. The timing was all wrong.”

Addressing a meeting with housing lead Cllr Diarmaid Ward and corporate director for housing Maxine Holdsworth, the Bunhill ward councillor warned that the problems at Redbrick and Braithwaite were representative of a wider issue with older housing stock in the borough. Graham called for an audit of all the older properties to see what needs to be done rather than waiting for things to go wrong.

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### Barbican due a revamp

*Although the Centre for Music has been cancelled, the Barbican Centre is now to get a major refurbishment*

Plans for a £288m London Centre for Music – which was to have been on the site currently occupied by the Museum of London after the museum’s move to West Smithfield – have been axed in favour of an upgrade to the Barbican Centre, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year.

Although the concert hall had been seen as an upgrade from the Barbican Centre’s concert hall, the anticipated expenditure after a year of Covid and the departure of its main cheerleader, the conductor Sir Simon Rattle from the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) to Munich are thought to have been contributory factors.

Instead the City of London is to revamp the Barbican Centre.

“We’re delighted that a major project to renew the Barbican will be launched in 2022, its 40th anniversary, updating our iconic venue in line with sustainability, climate action, and the ever-changing needs of audiences, communities, and our many performers, including our superb resident orchestra, the LSO,” said Sir Nicholas Kenyon, Managing Director of the Barbican.

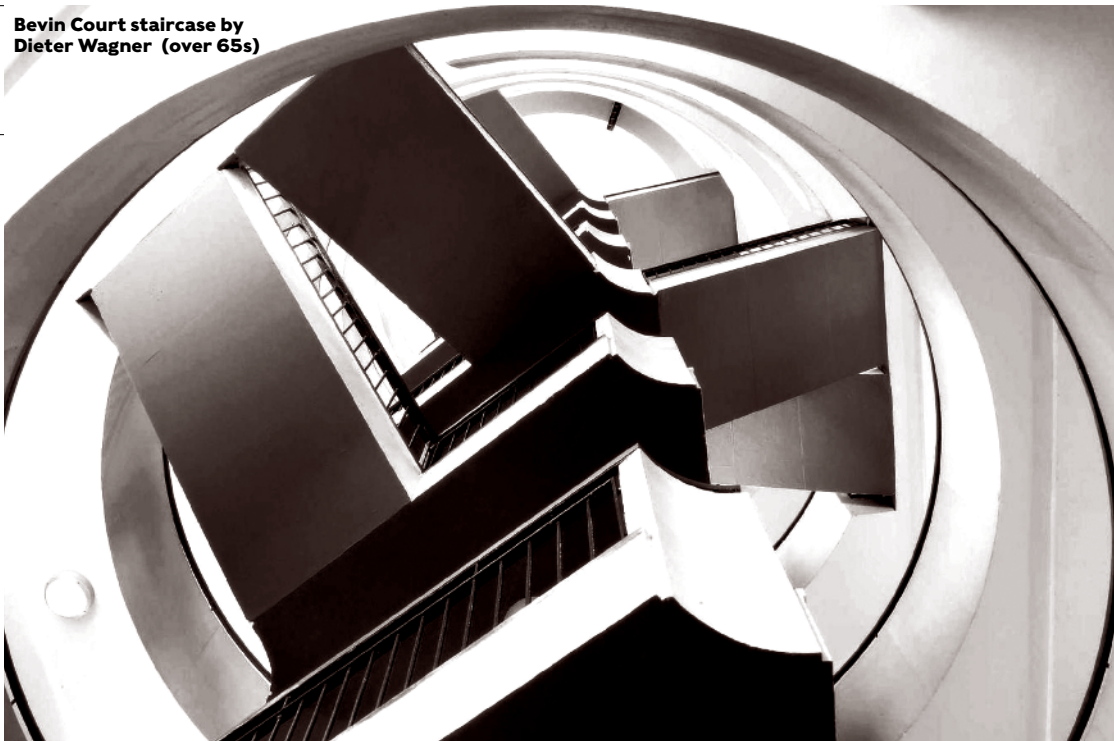
“Accessibility and inclusivity will be key, with new civic spaces for our community and creative learning programmes. This renewal will enhance the civic role of the Barbican and make it the creative home for the next generation.”

barbican.org.uk



Barbican conservatory Credit: Wikimedia

Bevin Court staircase by Dieter Wagner (over 65s)



### EC1 photography competition gets off to an encouraging start

BY CHRIS WALKER

In our last edition we featured news of a new local photography competition. Now the Clerkenwell Community Photography Competition is up and running and has already attracted some great entries, a few of which are featured here.

Aimed at everyone from school children with camera phones, to older people with point-and-shoot cameras and pros with all the kit, the initiative is intended to let people share what Clerkenwell means to them.

The inclusive, non-profit competition will be free to enter and will have four age groups: under 18s, 18-29, 30-65, and over 65s.

“It’s deliberately weighted to make sure there’s plenty of opportunity for those at the younger and older ends of the community,” says Chris Walker, the initiative’s creator. “Younger photographers are encouraged to take part and we’re keen to attract entries from older locals. Some may not be as familiar with technology, but they’ll be very familiar with the area, and may bring a different perspective”.

There are some small cash prizes of £50 for the winners of each age category, but also chances for some to get an introduction to the professional photography world – from individual advice and portfolio reviews, to a mentoring programme and the chance to spend a day on a professional photography shoot.

To make the competition as easy as possible to enter, the theme is completely open – as long as the

pictures are taken in Clerkenwell or EC1. There is also a special £100 prize for the image that best captures the phrase ‘Connected Community’. This is based, says Sara Bloch of The Peel, on its “mission for more than 100 years to make Clerkenwell a more connected community.”

Clerkenwell has a great photography heritage. Kodak’s factory and storefront once sat at 41–43 Clerkenwell Road and many commercial photographers have set up their studios here. The world famous Magnum Photos are in Clerkenwell, as is Metro Imaging – both of whom are involved with the project. As part of our partnership with Metro Imaging, based on Great Sutton Street, we are offering a 12 month bespoke mentorship as

part of Metro’s long established mentorship programme.

The competition is being supported by The Peel and *EC1 Echo* alongside some great sponsors and highly recognised judges.

“The competition runs until July,” says Chris. “The best way to keep up-to-date is to keep visiting the website. Sign up to the Newsletter, which will include news of spot prizes, special offers, tips and online talks from professionals”



To get in touch: Email photographyawards@peelinstitute.org.uk

For more details: Visit clerkenwellphotography.com Instagram clerkenwellphotography



▲ The Italian Procession, by T Barrington

## COLUMN

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*Tom Neumark is leaving The Peel after four exciting years including supporting the launch of EC1 Echo. Here, he says goodbye and notes the changes he’s seen in Clerkenwell*



No plan survives being punched in the mouth, as the old saying goes. This past year feels as though we’ve all been punched in the mouth. How will we respond, what type of neighbourhood will we create? Do we need a plan?

It’s a difficult question, not least because even before Covid, Clerkenwell never felt to me like a place that loves plans. It’s a messy, organic, higgledy-piggledy kind of place. It feels easier to say what we’re not, than what we are, or what we want to be. We’re not the City, we’re not the West End and we’re not quite East London. What are we?

This defiant character has produced some incredible things. We’re an area that’s known for creativity, for craft and for radicalism. A place for people to dance, to study and to design. So much of what makes this an amazing part of the world seems to be impossible to capture in a plan or a strategy or document.

I am now stepping down as CEO of The Peel so I will not be contributing my voice to future conversations. I have led The Peel for four years. It’s been such a joy to witness firsthand the wonders our part of London has to offer: from

people that want to build a more connected community for us all. Then Covid hit us all like a punch to the mouth and all our plans had to be rewritten. The past year has shown everyone both the pain that loneliness and isolation can cause, and the power of our community. We’ve seen office buildings and restaurants stand empty, but we’ve also seen hundreds of volunteers mobilised, hot meals delivered and Zoom classes attended.

The Peel has been delighted to play its part in this. We’ve all learned a lot and I am sure that if we had our time over we would have done some things differently. But let’s hope we do not have this time all over again!

It has been great working with volunteers from all walks of life, setting up socially distanced or remote groups

for people to bake and sing and chat and tell stories, but it’s been hard losing loved ones and seeing others become more fearful and isolated.

It seems that now we are enter-

places and things to do.

I have also seen the struggles that people face. Young people growing up in overcrowded flats, isolated older people and gang violence. EC1 is not so much a tale of two nations, as a tale of hundreds of nations that do not always interact or have much to say to each other.

This is a challenge but it is one that our passionate community responded to with energy and enthusiasm. The Peel has been honoured to support street parties, local newspapers and scores of other activities started by

ing another new phase, for Finsbury and for our country. What questions should we be asking? I would suggest we ask ourselves how we can make Clerkenwell a vibrant place and also a welcoming place, one where there is a seat at the table for everyone.

I am sure, whatever answers we find to these questions, that The Peel will be part of the conversation. Thank you to everyone who has made my time in Clerkenwell and with The Peel so memorable. Good luck to us all and let’s hope that there are better times ahead.

*“Clerkenwell never felt to me like a place that loves plans”*





A new poetry commission has just been unveiled at the City of London’s Moor Lane Community Garden. The poem, called *A Portrait of You in a Garden, Now*, was written by poet Kit Finnie and appears across eight panels, as part of the urban garden’s structure, which is inspired

by the Barbican and London Wall. The full poem will also appear online, as well as an audio recording by the poet, followed by original poems from members of the community this spring. Along with students, Kit worked with residents and community groups in the local area including Age UK, Claremont Project,

Women for Women Refugees, Core Arts and The Peel, exploring themes of sound and silence; community and coping; home and boundaries and surprise and delight. “This mirrors the content of the poem: it touches on the universal aspects of lockdown in the UK, while also acknowledging that there are as many unique experiences as

there are people,” said Kit Finnie. “Having said that, gardens are all about regrowth and rebirth, so this isn’t a poem about Covid. This poem really grew out of the conversations we had in workshops around the garden, and the complexity and wonder of people’s lives beyond the current moment.” Visit [culturemile.london](http://culturemile.london)

# And... breathe

## Musician Gisela Meyer talks about her lockdown initiative of free weekly breathing workshops

During the first lockdown, I wanted to connect with and get to know more people in the area. It seemed a good idea to do something related to my skills – I am a classical pianist and singer. I think we all have something to share, and I felt it was the right time for me to share my skills and connect with others in this time of isolation. The sessions are always designed for all, partly because of my non-medical background but also because I found we could all use some planned calming-down time. “Take a Breather” was inspired by an ENO/NHS initiative to help Covid

patients – I love interdisciplinary collaboration like that, and I’m personally interested in both wellbeing and music

*“Take a Breather was inspired by an ENO/ NHS initiative to help Covid patients”*

so it was a natural step. I also wanted to be more aware of my own breathing – not just during practice, but all the time – and to share my breathing techniques

with others, whether musicians or not. When we are anxious, we take shallow and ineffective breaths. Stress makes us more vulnerable to illness. Good breathing habits can strengthen the immune system – and help us calm down. It is certainly working for me and from the feedback I’ve received, it also seems to work for others. I would love to continue in person after lockdown, but it will depend on lots of practical factors including finding a suitable venue. It would also be great to meet and still be able to include those who might prefer online sessions, especially a lot of people join in from outside London.

Irrespective of geography, it’s certainly been a lovely way to bring people together. Perhaps blended sessions could work in future – with in person and online – maybe even outside if you can overcome inevitable technical issues like background noise.

**In this article was Gisela Meyer interviewed by Yen-Yen Teh**

**Yen-Yen Teh is the founder of Clerkenwell-based architecture & design practice Emulsion: [emulsionarchitecture.com](http://emulsionarchitecture.com)**

**Take a Breather sessions take place online weekly, on Thursday nights, 6–6.30pm. To read more and sign up to TAB or the monthly online Singalong, please visit: [giselameyer.me.uk](http://giselameyer.me.uk)**

# The secret history

## A new interactive map carries the history of Islington’s LGBTQ+ community

BY SEAN MCGOVERN

When it comes to identifying our community heritage, some reminders of our past, such as notable buildings, statues and street names, are easier to recognise than other less physical presences. The heritage, however, of marginalised or once-ignored groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community, is more diffused. A borough with a background of radical history, Islington is also the birthplace of the gay rights movement in Britain. This began with the momentous, first Gay Liberation Front demonstration at Highbury Fields in 1970. Some of our LGBTQ+ heritage is easier to recall, such as Britain’s first gay Mayor and first gay MP, Bob Crossman and Chris Smith respectively, who even served Islington and Finsbury concurrently. Other aspects of the heritage, unfortunately, often run the risk of disappearing altogether because these were not considered worth keeping or recording or became discarded, lost or forgotten over time. For these areas of history, sometimes all we have to work with is memory itself, and when those recollections are gone – they’re gone.

Thankfully ‘Islington’s Pride’, a project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Islington Council, has been addressing this issue. For the past five years, it has been working hard to preserve, protect and celebrate the queer heritage of the borough. As a result, the project team has built up a broad and diverse collection of LGBTQ+ related material, housed at Islington Local History Centre in EC1. We are pleased to announce that this unique collection will, once again, be accessible by appointment from mid-April 2021, when the Centre reopens following Covid lockdown.

*“We will make the borough’s once marginalised history visible”*

A central showpiece of the project is the soon-to be-released ‘Humap’, our digital LGBTQ+ heritage map. This features biographies, stories, oral-history extracts, images and walking trails and, furthermore, it will be accessible on a wide variety of digital and smart platforms

to enjoy either at home or while you’re out and about. Additionally, we are not just putting LGBTQ+ heritage on the map, we’ve even created our own contribution in the form of 50 eye-catching commemorative plaques, which are soon to be installed across the borough, including in EC1 for Phil Cox and his pirate radio show *Gaywaves*. Community heritage is about celebrating people that we know and also recognising the contributions of those with whom we may not be so familiar. The 50 plaques are merely a cross section of over 150 points of interest on the Islington’s Pride heritage Humap, honouring the people who fought to change laws, contributed to arts, education and politics, as well as the places we went to meet, drink, dance and be carefree. We are cautiously optimistic that by the end of April, and following the government’s reopening road-map, we will be able to install our plaques and to share our digital map with the people of Islington and beyond, as we make the borough’s once marginalised and hidden LGBTQ+ history truly visible.

**Discover more at: [islingtonpride.com](http://islingtonpride.com)**



# Map the streets

## Help us join the dots in Clerkenwell

BY DAVID WILCOX

As pandemic restrictions are eased, the *EC1 Echo* aims to help anyone living and working in EC1, or planning visits, to re-engage and explore an area that’s so rich in heritage and attractions. Shops, indoor leisure and outdoor hospitality venues are due to open on April 12, followed by indoor mixing in homes, pubs and restaurants on May 17. Complete easing of restrictions is planned for June 21. With urban renewal think tank and social enterprise Create Streets, and a group led by myself, local writer David Wilcox and mapping specialist Barbara Brayshay, we are launching an interactive map inviting people to nominate their favourite places and spaces. These could be for entertainment, meeting in the open, food and drink, worship, socialising, entertainment, or learning. We’ll then use the information on the map in several ways that we hope will help residents, businesses and organisations. We’ll build on projects already aimed at improving connections and communications – and develop new ones.

*“We are launching an interactive map inviting people to nominate their favourite places and spaces”*

This new interactive map set to launch will be invaluable for Culture Mile visitors and workers, as they begin to return to the area, as well as for its residents finding the hidden creativity around every corner. With both the Barbican and Museum of London due to open in May, in line with the latest government guidance, Culture Mile’s programme of events and creative activities will begin to extend outside and into the streets including a pop-up choir, guided walks, community gardening and a repurposing clothing venture will start to take place throughout the community. Let’s be creative in recovering from the pandemic, and build on what we’ve learned. Keep in touch with the *EC1 Echo* both here and online at [www.ec1echo.co.uk](http://www.ec1echo.co.uk).

**You can contribute to the map here [communities.createstreets.com/EC1](http://communities.createstreets.com/EC1) and find updates in the News tab.**



COMMUNITY



Migrateful set to open a cookery school in Clerkenwell

Social enterprise Migrateful – which supports refugees and asylum seekers by helping them become professional chefs and access employment – is currently crowdfunding to put down roots and transform The Peel’s Three Corners Centre on Northampton Road EC1 into its main base. The campaign aims to turn space at The Peel into a permanent place to run its cookery classes, with renovation plans afoot to include 20 cooking stations for training, followed by lessons for the public and larger events. The Cookery School, says Jessica Thompson, Migrateful’s founder, will be “a place that can finally be a ‘home away from home’ for all our migrant chefs”. Once trained, the students will teach their traditional cuisines to paying customers through cookery classes – and use food as a powerful tool to connect people. Since 2017, Migrateful has supported 57 chefs and delivered over 1,500 events in different venues across London and Bristol. Cookery classes are continuing online throughout the pandemic.

“It feels like the next step for the organisation to have our own space, and it will become a reason for people to want to come to Clerkenwell,” says Thompson. “It’s great that it’s next to Exmouth Market and our chefs who are getting more and more inspired by their careers will be able to go to those local restaurants.” Migrateful also runs team building cookery classes with corporate organisations. “We hope that we’ll be able to

reach lots of local businesses in the Clerkenwell area that come and attend the cookery classes as team building activities,” says Thompson. “And that also allows us to open up classes to residents in the local community that might struggle to afford to pay for a cooking class but want to come along.” The charity’s campaign has received donations from local backers, Migrateful supporters and even the Duchess of Sussex. The Mayor of London will

also contribute to the project. “We’re more concerned about getting lots of people pledging small amounts to show that we have the support. And then that will inspire the Mayor to then put in a much bigger pledge,” said Thompson. The crowdfunding campaign is running until May and Migrateful is aiming for a June opening. Donate at [www.spacehive.com/migrateful-cookery-school-a-long-term-home](http://www.spacehive.com/migrateful-cookery-school-a-long-term-home)



6

Journey to Justice’s Carrie Supple hopes to spread a message of change and hope

All over the country people are hoping for change. Change in what neighbours can do together maybe, or improved services to the community – perhaps changes in the law, or for a safer, healthier, more equal world. Recently, the pandemic, Black Lives Matter, the climate crisis and the womens’ protests have made us think even more about what kind of society we want to live in. Journey to Justice is a national human rights education charity. We tell the stories of ordinary people who have managed to make change and which can galvanise us to act. That is our mission. For five years we’ve taken our travelling multi-arts, multi-media, interactive exhibition to 15 places telling little known stories from the UK and the US civil rights movement. And people have told us again and again how this has inspired them. In summer 2019 the exhibition arrived in Islington where it was hosted by Resource for London in Holloway Road for two months, thanks to a cross community partnership including CANDI (City and Islington College), ROTA (Race on the Agenda), Ringcross Community Centre, the Lillesleaf Project/ Anti-Apartheid, Islington Museum, Islington Guides and London Metropolitan University. We told local stories of ‘ordinary’ Islington people whose actions have made change for social justice.

We were spoiled for choice because the borough is teeming with examples and ‘firsts’ – the first women’s bookshop, the first phone line for gay people, the first community centre for people with learning difficulties. Our stories included Oscar Abrams, architect and founder of the Keswidee Centre, the first Black community centre in the UK; Edith Garrud, who at 4’ 10” tall trained suffragettes to use jujitsu and James Watson, the radical publisher and

Chartist, whose shop was near Bunhill Fields and who endured six months’ imprisonment here at Clerkenwell. At the exhibition students from CANDI welcomed visitors, including school groups, and there was a full programme of events with walks and talks, workshops, music and history and discussions about Holloway Prison, climate justice and being Jewish in Britain. Over 3,000 people visited and nationally, the exhibition

has been seen by over 180,000 people. We now want to widen our impact to reach more people. To ensure our online exhibition is as engaging as the physical one, we will work with a design agency who can bring all aspects of the exhibition to life online, including music, poetry and art. Your contribution could galvanise thousands of people to take the first steps towards making the change they want to see. Visit [avivacommunityfund.co.uk/jtoj](http://avivacommunityfund.co.uk/jtoj)



Bob Marley on a visit to the Keswidee Centre in Islington

Clerkenwell local and mother Juliana Lottmann explains her family project to connect and spread love in the neighbourhood

I feel that this crazy period of the past 18 or so months of lockdowns, face masks, alcohol gel and the 2m rule has taken a huge toll on our communities. When sneezing leads to hostile looks instead of ‘bless you’, we all know that something is missing and I think that this ‘something’ is the explicit understanding that we’re all in this together. Belonging is a basic need and Covid is creating a lot of distance between us. So, I stopped to think how we can bring back our sense of community and kindness even in this long period of enforced distance. The result is Kindness Stones

Project. The mission is simple: to decorate stones with vibrant designs and inspiring messages, and scatter them around our neighbourhood to lift the spirits of those who find them. When the first lockdown came, with three active boys at home, we started painting kindness stones. This wasn’t only a calming and family bonding activity, it was also a way to spread some joy to the community. Painting rocks can be a fabulous mindful activity for all ages as expressing yourself with a message, drawing or colouring, can bring calmness. When we engage in creative activities, we flood our body with stress-reducing hormones, and we activate the rest and relaxation.

Then, there’s the process of hiding the painted rocks around the community, taking us out of the house, into fresh air, and then seeing the photos and posts of our art, uplifting yet more of us. The person finding a surprise gift will experience a feeling of happiness, it’s a way to connect with our community.



To find guides, ideas, free workshops, and to talk to other members of our community, join our Facebook group. For now, we are online only, but we hope that we can take our workshops back into the community, face to face. Otherwise, you can just start painting stones, and keep an eye out for the stones we leave in the nearby parks. Our first face to face workshop, and Easter egg hunt, is on 10th of April, from 11am at Fortune Street park. Booking is essential, as we must keep the groups very small. Come and join us.

For booking: Email [talktoembrace@gmail.com](mailto:talktoembrace@gmail.com) To join our community: Facebook.com/groups/embracekindness

7

COLUMN



Life cycle

Cllr Valerie Bossman-Quarshie took to her bike to escape the confines of lockdown

Lockdown left many of us at home and isolated. Local bike hangers have been full, street bike storage filled up and some bikes just ended up occupying space within one’s home like a wall-mount displaying a work of art. It’d been a long time, but encouragement from a cycle buddy gave me confidence to get out and ride on a hire bike. The thrill of getting into the outdoors was immense. Once we hit the road, the challenging part of the cycling session came when a few specks of rain trickled down but although from the north of the borough, I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the south Islington streets in Clerkenwell and Bunhill and the local amenities. What especially caught my eye was the architecture and the blue-grey winter skyline, local people walking and chattering, the cuisine of Whitecross Street. I felt a real sense of community. There was a pepper-pot mix of housing which really speaks to the richness of diversity within the local area. I found that after all the confinement, I did not want the cycling experience to end. In reflection it had been a real ecowarrior experience. Observing the architecture of the local area, from the bike, I enjoyed clean green hot spots and free clear roads which paved the way for my cycle buddy and I to continue our morning exploration. The feeling of having a social cycling experience gave me so much pleasure. We cycled to the highest point of south Islington whereby I felt a rush of endorphins as I had physically exhausted myself as we had reached the crossroads of the Santander bike station return. I felt revitalised, liberated, refreshed, and a real sense of achievement. Valerie Bossman-Quarshie is the local Labour and Cooperative Party candidate for Bunhill Ward byelection on May 6 2021



# Underneath the arches

Even locally, it's little known that one of the country's most acclaimed contemporary art galleries is in Clerkenwell



▲ The Tenderness Only We Can See, Lubaina Himid, Hollybush Gardens, 2018 Credit Andy Keate

The EC1 area is best known for having a proliferation of architects and designers – but not so much in the way of contemporary art galleries. So it's something of a surprise to find an internationally renowned gallery secreted beneath the Rosebery Avenue viaduct.

That gallery is Hollybush Gardens, which has had two Turner Prize winners: one of whom, Lubaina Himid – now one of the UK's foremost artists – is having a big retrospective at Tate Modern in November this year: a Himid painting from 2016, *Le Rodeur*, named after the 1819 journey of a French slave ship, hangs in Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Oliver Dowden's office. Another, Charlotte Prodger, won the Turner in 2018, and yet another Hollybush artist, Andrea Büttner, was nominated for the art world's top prize in 2017. The gallery sells across the

world, mostly to public collections, including most recently to the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Poland and Tate itself.

That's an impressive record, so it's curious to find that Hollybush Gardens has little street presence. Tucked into an arch in an alley off Warner Street, deep in the valley once occupied by the River Fleet, it's the sort of place you'd have to know about in order to visit. Although by-appointment right now in order to comply with social distancing guidelines it is normally open to the public Wednesday through Saturday with no appointment necessary.

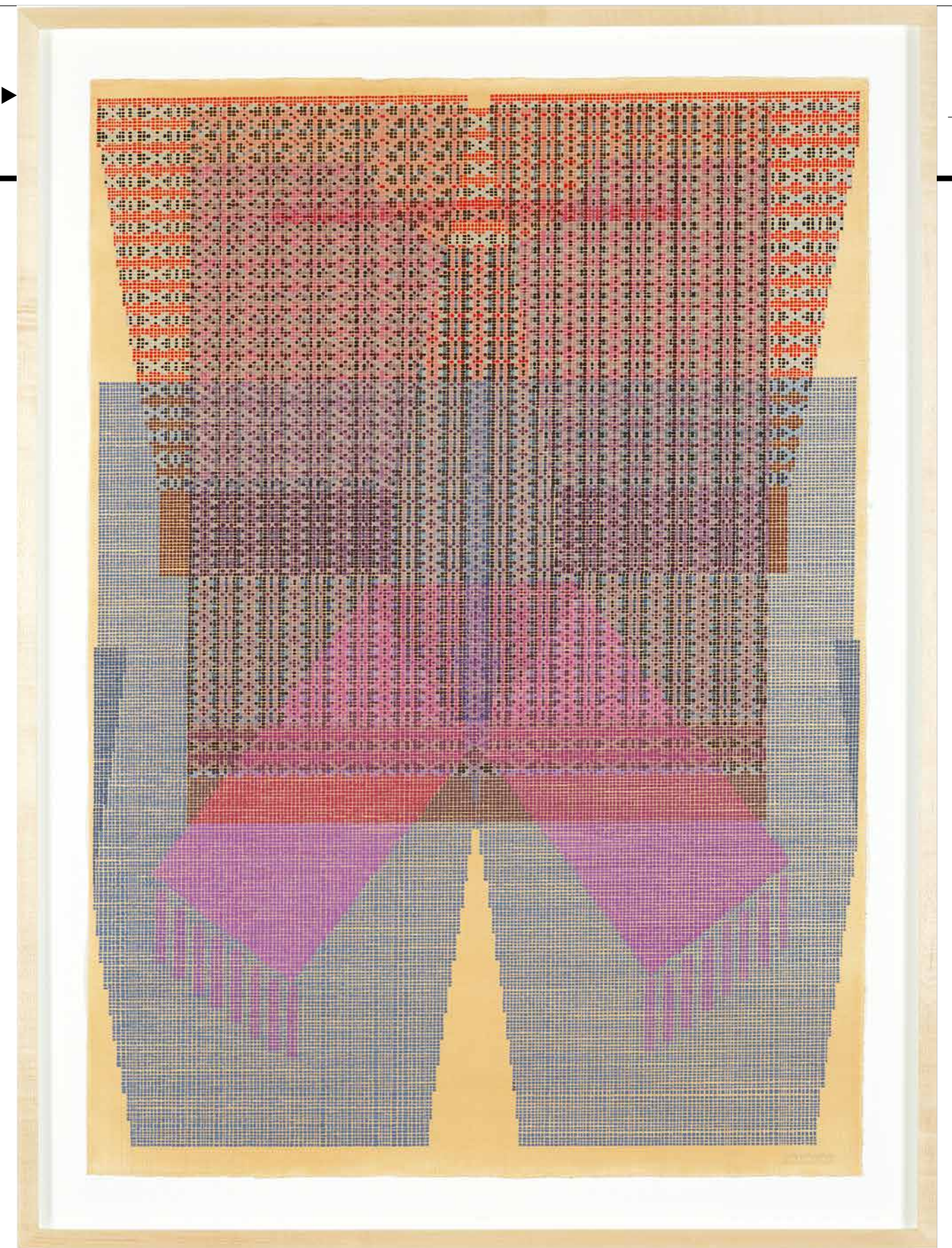
"While we're tucked inside Warner Yard, we welcome anyone to come in and have a look at the exhibitions," says Hollybush Gardens' co-founder, Lisa Panting (the other founder is Malin Ståhl). "We regularly welcome groups, especially student groups, and aside from that, the majority

of our visitors tend to be people with specialist interest in the arts. We would welcome more local footfall."

Despite this sense of discretion, once inside the gallery the visitor finds a remarkable place, in an old archway. Panting says that when they moved in they found lettering from the 12th century as well as a big crane in the ceiling. "It's fantastic to see the beauty of the London brick and 19th century engineering," says Panting. "We do events and a lot of site-specific work here in the gallery space. It works well for us."

The gallery moved to Clerkenwell from Hollybush Gardens in Bethnal Green (hence the name) in 2013, as it needed more space. It now meets their needs and they love the area. "We can walk anywhere from here," says Panting. "Bloomsbury's a short walk and it's easy to get to Notting Hill and Kensington where some of our clients live." Because it suits

Ellen Lesperance, *XOXOXOX*, 2019  
Credit Andy Keate



"The artists we represent show a strong interest in social issues"

them to be here, a mooted move to Mayfair was squashed: "Not our style, somehow".

So what sort of art does Hollybush show? "It is all contemporary," says Panting. "Most importantly, we have about 65 per cent female representation and we're intersectional. The artists we represent tend to show a strong interest in social issues. For example, Charlotte [Prodger] works on queerness in social space."

From the outset, Hollybush has also worked with older artists – including Lubaina Himid, Charlotte Johannesson, Joachim Schmid and Claudette Johnson – an "intergenerational" approach that subsequently became fashionable.

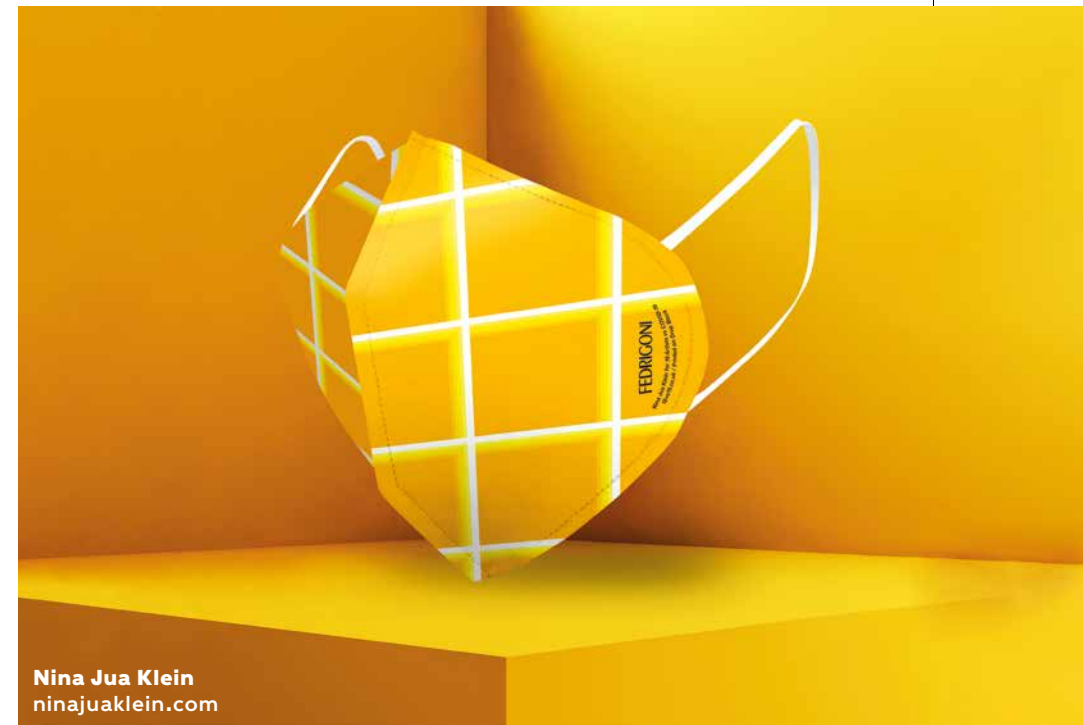
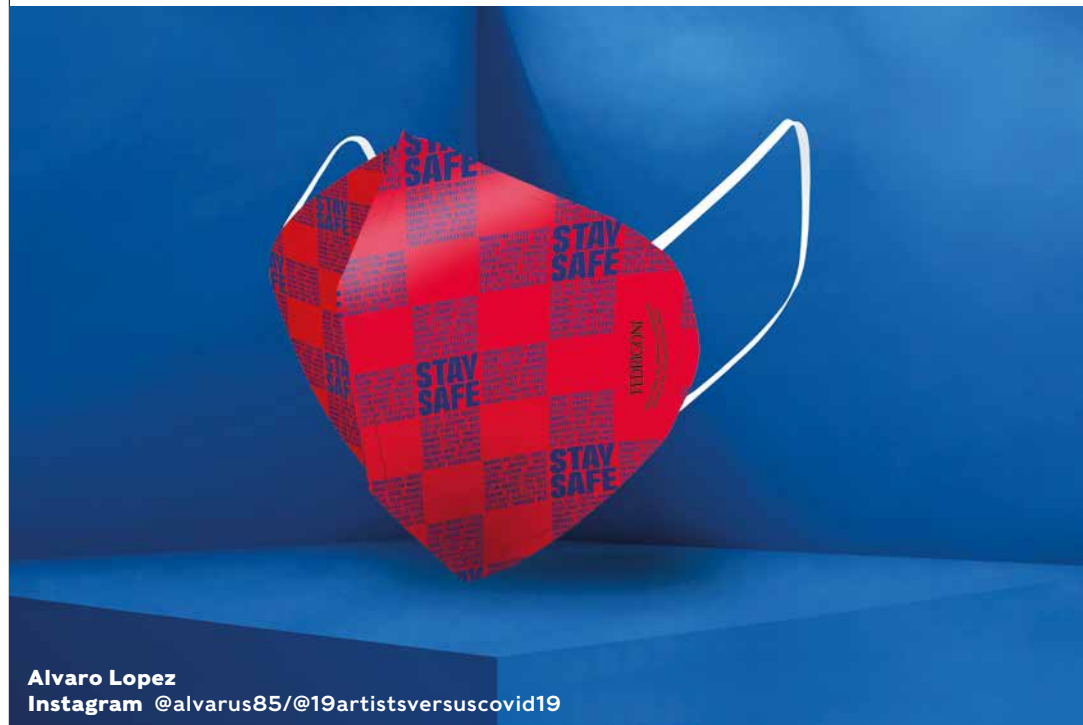
With an ethos of collaboration, Hollybush pushes at older patterns of class and access in a constricted sphere. "Our work as gallerists is to change that," says Panting. "We mostly work with public galleries where collections have previously been conservative." Now Panting is pleased that numbers are slowly rising for women represented in galleries and museums, particularly as art by women has historically tended to cost less than art by men.

"We're also very keen that artists should be part of the public conversation," she says. "In doing so, we can change access to public collections in all kinds of ways."

**Upcoming exhibitions at Hollybush Gardens, Covid permitting, are:**  
• Claire Hooper, 16 April–1 May  
• Jumana Manna, exhibition reopens 16 April, and on view until 1 May  
• Ellen Lesperance, 7 May–5 June  
• Reto Pulfer, 7 May–5 June  
Hollybush Gardens, 1–2 Warner Yard, Farringdon EC1R 5EY  
hollybushgardens.co.uk



# 19 Artists vs Covid-19



## The initiative making staying indoors more bearable – and helping the NHS

By Elena Vardon

Italian paper manufacturer Fedrigoni, whose London studio is located on Clerkenwell Road, has collaborated with 19 artists to create a series of limited-edition posters to fundraise for the NHS.

First devised by London-based Spanish graphic designer Alvaro López last spring, the project was relaunched as the country entered its third lockdown earlier this year. Each order now includes a free pack of face-masks made from Fedrigoni's high filtration recyclable paper, featuring five of the designs.

"Some designs were slightly modified to say Stay Safe from Stay Home, as of course most people would wear these outside," said Ambra Fridegotto from Fedrigoni.

"As the mission is to increase the money raised for the NHS, we thought it was a nice way of giving some artistic perspective to something that we need to use daily to protect ourselves," says Lopez. "Showing support through art and design is a very powerful mode of transmitting an important message to society."

The artists were briefed to create an A1 poster design around the universal Stay Home directive. Only 75 copies of each poster were printed by PUSH in Bermondsey. The first edition will be auctioned at a later date. Around £22,000 have been raised for NHS Charities Together, with more than 1,200 posters sold so far.

The remaining posters are available for purchase for £19 on [19vs19.co.uk](https://19vs19.co.uk). An exhibition to showcase the designs will take place at Fedrigoni's studio when restrictions are lifted.



## Storming the citadel

By Paul Lincoln

The London Wall has shaped London for 1,800 years. Built by the Romans, covered up for ages then uncovered by the devastation of the Blitz, its impact on the City and on London is immense but rarely noticed. Which brings us to London Walled City: a printmaking and walking project supported by Culture Mile. It looks at the history of the wall, its changing appearance, its impact on its neighbourhood and the relationship with neighbouring buildings.

During lockdown I started most days by walking the length of the wall. Initially it was a way to keep fit but increasingly I became

aware that places that I had not known were connected by the route of the wall. A city without traffic became a great place to link

**"The Wall has survived the plague, the Blitz and is likely to survive Covid-19"**

Roman and medieval history with contemporary architecture.

With the walk came questions. What is it doing here? What is it connecting? How has it survived? What is it keeping in, and who is it keeping out? And what is the purpose of the huge new buildings,

some not yet occupied, now that so few people are working in the City?

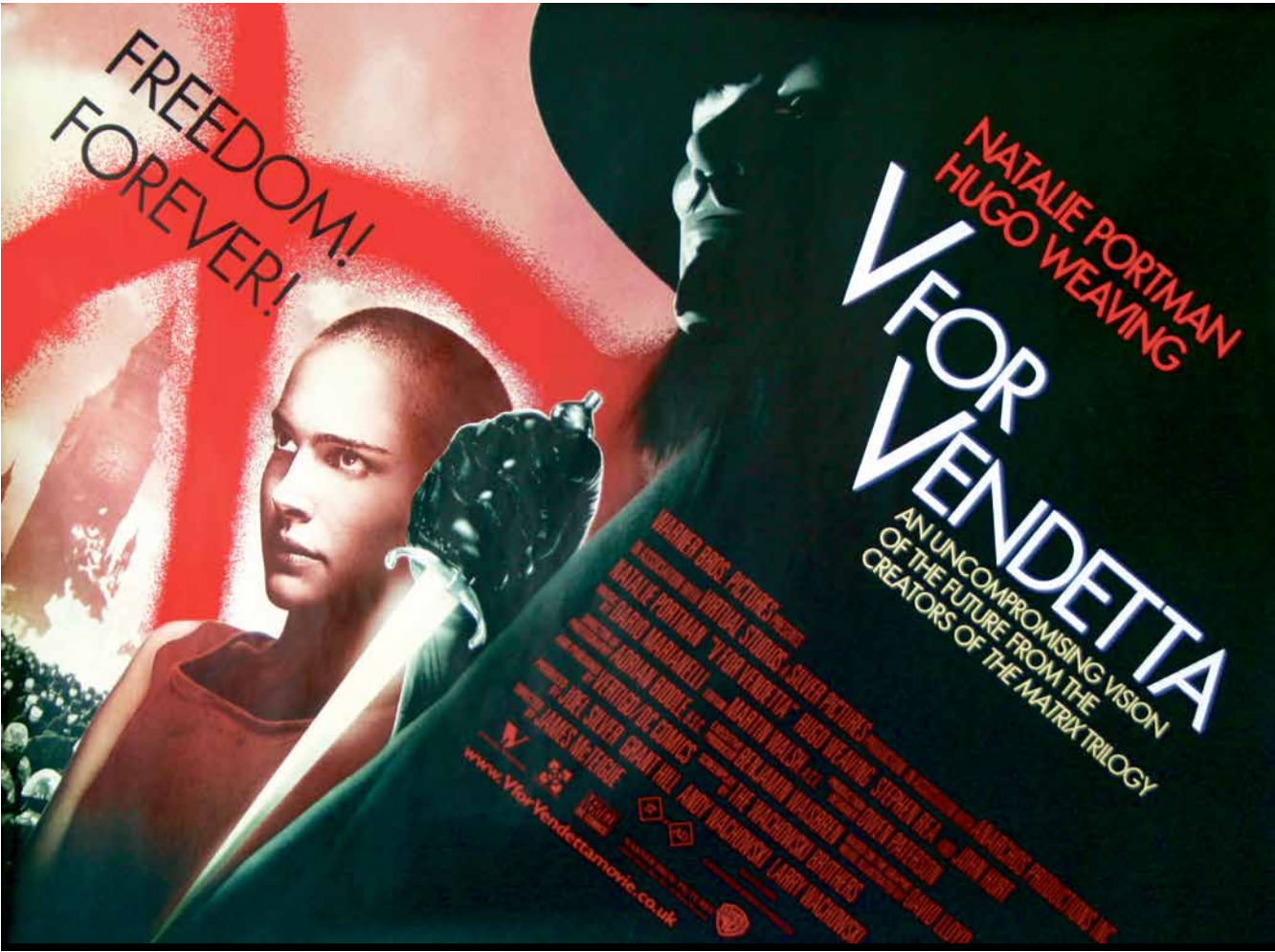
The Wall has survived the plague, the Blitz and is likely to survive Covid-19. But what will happen to the City around it?

This project is inspired by the history and the architecture of the City of London and reflect the way in which the City needs to respond to the pandemic and to climate emergency. It will do so through a series of guided walks and prints to be completed over the next six months.

Paul Lincoln is a printmaker, City guide and the editor of *Landscape Journal*. He will be leading socially distanced walking tours for Open House London Tours. The first is on Saturday 24 April. Booking is open at [open-city.org.uk/events/london-wall](https://open-city.org.uk/events/london-wall). The first stage of the printmaking project can be viewed at: [londonwalledcity.com](https://londonwalledcity.com).



CULTURE



Lights, camera and action  
EC1 goes to the movies

By Mark Aston

London provides one of the world’s most memorable movie backdrops, but did you know that several of the film industry’s top-rated films were shot in the capital’s EC1 district? Covering Clerkenwell and a north-westerly part of the City, the area offers a huge range of authentic, period locations, as well as wonderful settings for action, comedy, drama, fantasy and science fiction films.

*The Batman Trilogy* (2005–2012), Bond’s *Skyfall* (2012), *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Suffragette* (2015) are just a few of many examples that have starred EC1’s buildings and streets. Holloway Prison, Gotham City Police Station, Nottingham Cathedral and even the family residence of Harry Potter’s Sirius Black and the headquarters of the ‘Order of the Phoenix’ have all been re-imagined here.

We take a look at some of the recent blockbusters and classics filmed in and around one of London’s most cinematic ‘movie lots’.

Lights, camera and action...

V for Vendetta (2005)

- Location(s):
- Cloth Fair
  - Cowcross Street
  - Rawstorne Street

In this popular dystopian-political actioner, Cloth Fair is where the film’s joint-protagonist Evey (Natalie Portman) is challenged by the Fingermen after breaking curfew; the location is adjacent to the Parish Church of St Bartholomew the Great, a site of many recent film settings. A short distance away is Farringdon Underground Station in Cowcross Street, outside which a young Evey (in flashback) hands out anti-viral weapons leaflets.

Rawstorne Street, off St John Street, is shown when the music from Tchaikovsky’s bombastic *1812 Overture* is played.



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About a Boy (2002)

- Location(s):
- Charterhouse Street
  - St James Church, Clerkenwell Close
  - Hayward’s Place
  - St James’ Walk
  - Sekforde Street
  - Woodbridge Chapel, Woodbridge Street

Directed by Chris and Paul Weitz, adapted from a novel by Nick Hornby, and starring Hugh Grant, Clerkenwell is the setting for much of *About A Boy*. Grant would have been familiar with the area, as it was one of the locations for his Four Weddings and a Funeral eight years earlier.

The hi-tech apartment of Grant’s character Will Freeman is located at 16-18 St James Walk. However, you now won’t find the conspicuous entrance to his flat. This was added to the address just for cinematic purposes.

Other EC1 locations appearing in *About a Boy* include the French deli Comptoir Gascon at 63 Charterhouse Street, and the Parish Church of St James in Clerkenwell Close where Will almost volunteers to help at the drop-in centre. However, at nearby Woodbridge Chapel (now an evangelical church), at the corner of Woodbridge Street and Haywards Place, he attends SPATs (‘Single Parents Alone Together’) in order to meet single mothers.



Batman Trilogy (2005–2015)

- Farmiloe Building, 28-36 St John Street

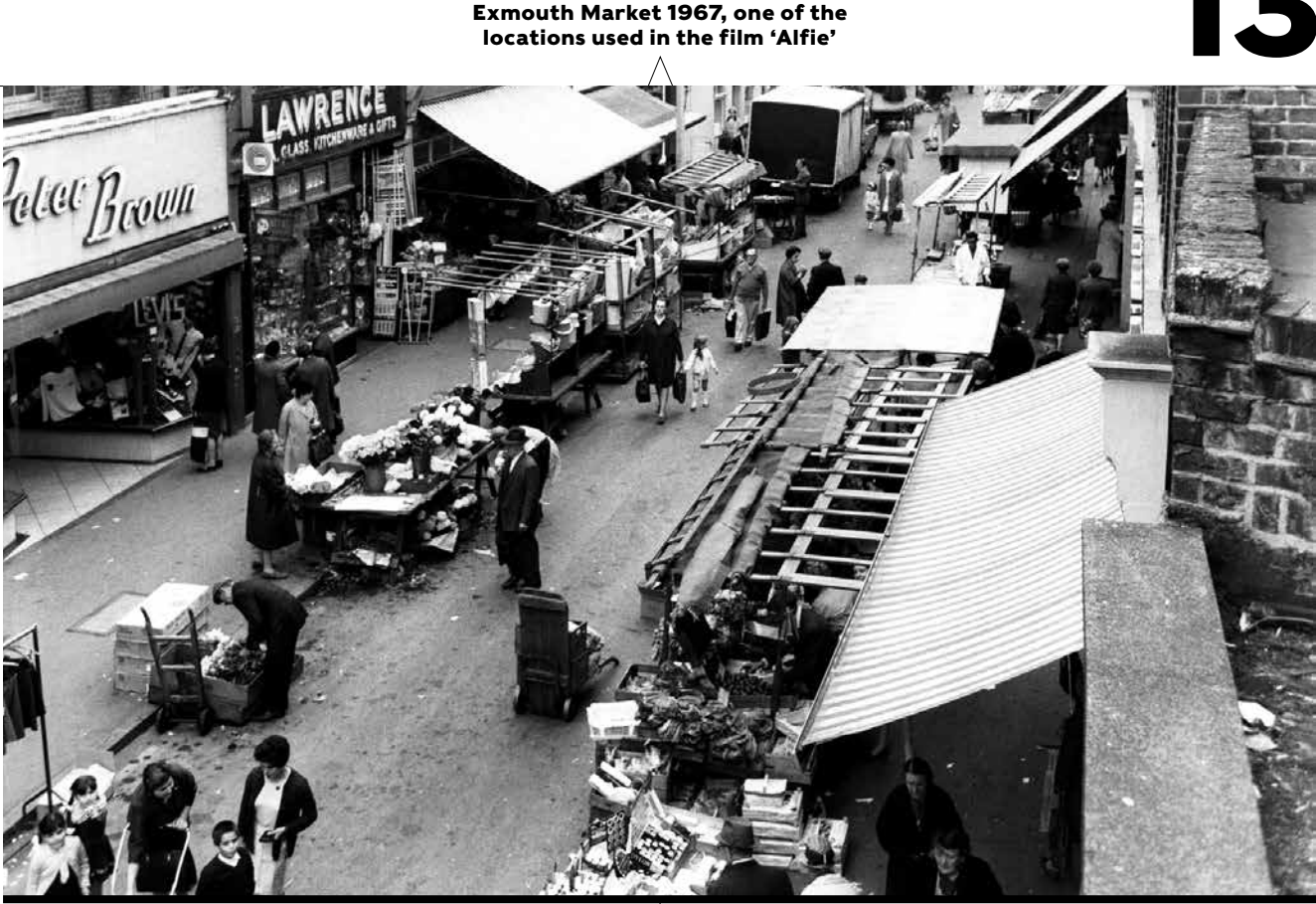
The first-floor offices of the (George) Farmiloe Building at 28-36 St John Street, an 1850s lead and window-glass manufactory, were transformed not once but three times into ‘Gotham City Police Station’ for *Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *The Dark Knight Returns* (2015). The trilogy’s director Christopher Nolan is clearly enamoured with the location, returning to film 2010 science-fiction action blockbuster *Inception* here. Here, he locates the ‘Mombasa’ pharmacy, where the potent dream-state narcotic is sourced.

The Farmiloe also appears in David Cronenberg’s gangster film *Eastern Promises* (2007), in which the building’s exterior becomes the ‘Trans-Siberian Restaurant’. Other films featuring the Farmiloe include: *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (2011), marking a return to the location for actor Gary Oldman, replacing his Batman character James Gordon with British spy-master George Smiley, the Krays’ biopic *Legend* (2015) and Tom Cruise’s *Mission: Impossible-Rogue Nation* (2015).

In 2006, after the making of *Batman Begins*, film and media agency Film London listed the Farmiloe Building as the sixth most popular film and TV location in London; then, the London Eye topped the list.

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• Continued from Page-1



Dance With a Stranger (1985)

- Location(s):
- Three Kings public house, Clerkenwell Close
  - St James Church, Clerkenwell Close

Miranda Richardson plays fated Ruth Ellis in this Mike Newell-directed biopic about Ellis who in 1955 became the last woman to be executed in Britain. The original shooting took place outside Magdala Tavern in Hampstead, but the Three Kings pub in Clerkenwell Close stood in for the Magdala and, with comparable exterior beige tilework, there is a resemblance.

Across from the Three Kings are the railing of St James’s Church where, with pistol in hand, Ellis waits for her boyfriend David Blakely, played by Rupert Everett.



Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy (2011)

- Location(s):
- Farmiloe Building, 28-36 St John Street
  - 18 Lloyd Square

EC1 is a second home to Oscar-winning actor Gary Oldman. Not only playing Batman’s ally James Gordon and the Harry Potter character Sirius Black in scenes shot in Clerkenwell, he also features as George Smiley who lives at 18 Lloyd Square in Tomas Alfredson’s film adaption of John Le Carre’s classic novel. The Farmiloe building in St John Street, in which it stars as the down-at-heel Hotel Islay where Smiley and colleagues attempt to expose a traitor.

End of the Affair (1999)

- The Parish Church of St Bartholomew the Great, Cloth Fair
- 63-65 Myddelton Square
- St Mark’s Church, Myddelton Square

In Neil Jordan’s drama, private detective Mr Parkis (Ian Hart) spies on the devout Sarah Miles (Julianne Moore) in St Bartholomew the Great, while she remonstrates with God. Further north is the home of Sarah’s religious confidant Father Smythe (Jason Isaacs) at 63-65 Myddelton Square, and across the square, is the priest’s church St Mark’s, where Sarah finds the investigator’s boy asleep in the doorway.

Sherlock Holmes (2009)

- Location(s):
- The Parish Church of St Bartholomew the Great, Cloth Fair
  - Former Middlesex House of Detention, Sans Walk

The interior of the Parish Church of St Bartholomew the Great can be seen in Guy Ritchie’s *Sherlock Holmes* acting as a surrogate for St Paul’s Cathedral, while the subterranean prison of the former Middlesex House of Detention cells become the Houses of Parliament’s sewerage system. Here, Holmes (Robert Downey Jnr) and Watson (Jude Law) diffuse a biological weapon.



photography puts a coloured gel on a light to make it a bit warmer, or simply uses its own lighting. “There’s not really anything that we can’t cover in order to facilitate a period feel,” says Tim.

In Clerkenwell, there’s been big budget shoots like *Suffragette* in Middleton Square, a major TV show called *Anatomy of a Scandal* recently filmed at the House of Detention and at the Fox and Anchor pub, and a drama called *Last Letter from Your Lover* in Wilmington Square, which stars Felicity Jones set in the early 1960s.

But it’s not all about Georgian terraces. “We’ve had three major shoots at Bevin Court and Hatton Garden,” says Tim. There’s also a big call for TV dramas, fashion shoots, music videos and other shows in the area, including *Ant and Dec’s Saturday Night Takeaway* – anything and everything that demands a good location. “It’s remarkable how attractive Clerkenwell is to film-makers and TV producers,” says Tim.

Much of the location manager’s art is in diplomacy. “We make sure we’re not overusing certain locations,” says Tim. “And we’re also very heavily involved in resident engagement, whether that’s dropping letters or doing Zoom meetings.” Parking is one of the biggest issues, which is why Northampton Road is popular, as it’s not very residential and offers plentiful parking opportunities as well as local “green rooms” at The Peel and Bourne and Hollingsworth for costume and makeup. A BBC3 TV show called *Starstruck* was recently completed in the area, for airing this year.

“Clerkenwell lends itself well to period dramas”

Money exchanges hands, of course. “The majority of location fees go to the local Council – usually to specific departments,” says Tim. “So if, for example, we’re filming in a park the income is distributed for park improvements: perhaps maintaining a pavement or new signage or security.” And if they’re featuring somebody’s house, there might even be the good fortune of a financial transaction between the filmmakers and that resident, or potentially to a Residents’ Association or community group. The company has a training and development manager who works to source talent from local communities to often get that first step on film and TV sets.

In New York people seem to be very excited about on-street filming – is that the same in London? “On the whole people are supportive, as long as they’re not impacted too much,” says Tim. “And residents usually like seeing their local area on the big screen. You just have to give people as much information in advance as possible, and give them an opportunity to speak directly with production so they can relay any concerns that come up, whether it’s an elderly person who’s reliant on meals being delivered to them, or a disabled parking space.” There are ways of ensuring that the show goes on.

filmfixer.co.uk



HISTORY

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Gently up the stream

In the first of two instalments, Barnaby Rogerson walks up the watercourse that created modern Clerkenwell – the New River

One of the features of Covid life is the importance of walks. Whether we bump into our friends by accident or have made an advance weekend plan, a walk date is high social currency. Clerkenwell can boast the best selection of pubs, restaurants and cafes of any parish in England but we are not so well provided with long distance footpaths. Or so I thought. Step forward the New River.

The New River begins at a pair of springs in Hertfordshire (Chadwell and Amwell) and runs downhill all the way into the heart of London. The New River is famously neither ‘new’ or indeed a ‘river’ but an old aqueduct built in the reign of Good King James. The first sods were cut in 1609 and the river was opened in the reign in 1613. Sparkling fresh spring water flowed into a great reservoir that stood in Clerkenwell, tapped to provide the City of London with clean water. Subscribers received their water through elm-wood trunks (which last well when sodden) which had been cored to make pipes.

The New River followed no seasonal stream, but was designed by a pair of surveyor-engineers (Edmund Coulthurst, later assisted by Edward Wright), and has been constantly amended over the last 300 years. Hugh Myddleton, a City goldsmith, got involved to sort out the finance which was only finally put in order by encouraging King James to come on board.



The New River at Clissold Park, Stoke Newington

The New River was always a very flexible thing. Corners were cut, sections were piped and route maps marked up with the variable historical courses, just as we found out that they need to be

“accessible for walkers”, “visible but totally inaccessible” and completely invisible. Various London boroughs and planners have worked over the last 20 years to tease the different sections of the New River into a 28-mile path, a single long urban lung. It is a lovely ambition but it has not yet been achieved, and the New River Pathway (even when completed) may ever join iconic British walks such as Hadrian’s Wall or the Ridgeway. It is simply not pretty or romantic enough. The New River way will never have any appeal to a foreign tourist. Like any section of our great metropolis, you are as likely to find mud, dog mess, submerged traffic cones and graffiti. But I have found it strangely addictive and satisfying, and have now walked it half a dozen times. As ever,

”Various planners have tried to tease the New River into a single 28-mile path”

early morning midweek, is prime time, when I have encountered a sunbathing fox alongside regular meetings with geese, swans, coots and moorhens. For those of us who live in Clerkenwell the New River path can provide you with a bus and tube free walk that takes you to two of the greatest green spaces in north-east London.

Most of the route and web maps start at the beginning in Hertfordshire so I have mapped out a Clerkenwell variant.



Charles Lamb’s cottage in Islington

Start at a war memorial in Spa Fields Green. This coincidentally stands near the end of the old New River, which in its heyday poured itself into a round pond, which once stood the other (northside) of Rosebery Avenue, now remembered by that small fountain in a round pond.

The New River flowed down the centre of Rosebery Avenue, giving a lovely watery southern frontier to Sadler’s Wells theatre. We have to imagine this as we cut across St Johns Road, then pass through Owens Fields - that little oval park that can sometimes feel overshadowed. It may be haunted by an incident of the Blitz when the bombing blew apart the New



The River passes Canonbury Grove

River whose waters flooded an underground bomb shelter and drowned a hundred school children. Then we pop over Goswell Road to enter the long tree-lined park at the centre of Colebrooke Row. This is one of the most satisfying sections, overlooked by handsome 18th-century terraces which in their heyday would have reflected the waters of the New River and whose names, Duncan Terrace, and Vincent Terrace (like Exmouth Market) made use of popular naval heroes in an attempt to shift real-estate.

Halfway along Colebrooke Row, the New River would have flowed over Regents Canal, which here dives underground into the Islington tunnel. Look out for Lambs Cottage (64 Duncan Terrace) home of that young London poet from 1823 who sheltered his sister (after she had killed their mother with a knife) and who made a small name for himself with Lambs Tales from Shakespeare. Walk right to the end of Colebrooke Row and join the pavement of Essex Road. Even in its heyday the New River went underground for this busy London street.

We find the pathway again just after the Cross Street (Get Stuffed) crossing. Turn left (up the steps) immediately after the Library building, to join the little park that has been created in the middle of Halton road, labelled Astey’s Row rock garden. The Victorians covered up the river and a rockery was added in the 1950s, so this has walk been used for many years, but still feels like a personal discovery when you first find the iron gate.

Here we find our first water: not a real flow, but a welcome enough urban pond. Thronged in the weekend, it is a happy, secretive stroll in midweek, broken by crossing over Canonbury Road. There is another very handsome terrace of old London houses along Canonbury grove after Northampton Street. The New River path continues as a little sliver of green before emerging at St Pauls Road. We cross over the tarmac, heading north, along Wallace road, passing some tempting cafes near the roundabout after Canonbury railway station.

The route of the New River then seems temporarily lost, but a wide pathway, shaded by old trees is where it once wandered, bang in the centre of the wide Petherton Road. This frames a long and pleasant potter, that leads almost due north to join the corner of Clissold Park. This easy, virtually traffic-free route from Clerkenwell to the heart of Hackney, makes the New River path a winner. Clissold Park also frames by far the most picturesque extent of the New River, bending beneath Clissold House, a splendid Regency mansion made from mellow yellow London brick which is now furnished with cafes.

This is the perfect end destination for this first section of the New River walk, surrounded by places to picnic, a deer-compound and a backdrop of church spires.

The first time we tried to follow this walk, we were exhausted by exploring too many side streets and took a bus back from Green Lane. The second time we walked it we had enough energy to walk home via Newington Green. The third time we walked it, we had time to buy a picnic and eat it in the overgrown Abney Park cemetery.

This is easily the most charming and fascinating section of the New River pathway. Further north is not so decorative and has a different mood.

To be continued.

Barnaby Rogerson helps to run Eland Books, an independent publisher of the liveliest travel writing based in Exmouth Market, [www.travelbooks.co.uk](http://www.travelbooks.co.uk)

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HISTORY

A half century of heritage

As The Amwell Society moves towards its 50th anniversary, it’s reaching out to new members

• BY PEADAR SOINOID •

In 1972, when the Amwell Society came into being, London was still in the grip of slum clearance. More Victorian houses were swept away in the 1960s and 70s than had been destroyed by bombs in World War II. They were thought of as damp and insanitary. It’s true that many houses in Finsbury – even in the 1970s – had no bathrooms and only a basic WC, often in the yard. Nevertheless, some visionary people saw the beauty of the houses built by the New River Company and the Lloyd Baker family between 1820 and 1830, which made these two speculations the earliest suburban developments in, what was then, outer London.

The initial ambition of the Amwell Society in 1972, was to work with the London Borough of Islington [LBI] through the creation of one of Islington’s first conservation areas. The New River Conservation Area is still the principal means by which the Georgian townscape is protected. The vast majority of houses in our area are now Grade II Listed, meaning that they are shielded by planning laws. Even now, any proposed changes have to be approved by LBI.

The Amwell Society has almost 200 families as members. The Society is sociable, active and committed to every nook and cranny of the area. We hold occasional events both social and educational and take part in community life as good neighbours. In recent years we have had major success in the context of preservation.

- We prevented the demolition of the old St Philip Magnus school building, now the Courtauld Institute, on Penton Rise. The

hotel firm, IBIS, aimed to build yet another mammoth budget hotel on the site.

- Across 30 years, we fought for the historical site at the New River Head to be preserved. A gated private development was proposed but now the House of Illustration will be the resident charity on the site and in the fullness of time, the Engine House, adjacent to the New River Head Gardens will be opened to the public as a new museum and cultural facility.



”We are keeping an eye on Clerkenwell Parochial School which is likely to close for good”

Recently we have led a consultation on the impact of the LBI’s Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme with the aim of ensuring the best outcome for residents of our area. The response rate to our online survey was impressive with almost 40 per cent of members giving us their opinions.

Recent events have highlighted the need and value of local communities and organisations to work together as never before. Oh, 2022 is our 50th anniversary year. Keep an eye out for special initiatives and celebrations.

The Amwell Society is always looking for new members and committee activists to enable us to best represent the interests of our community. We are cheap! Membership is £15.00 for three years. So join us through [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk) or [www.amwell.org.uk](http://www.amwell.org.uk)

The Society is currently helping to resist the unsuitable redevelopment at the Children’s Society building at the lower end of Margery Street and we are keeping an eye on the future of Clerkenwell Parochial School which is quite likely to close for good this summer. We are keen that the building, built in the mid 19th century, continues to house an educational organisation which has benefit to our community.



# HISTORY



The reception for writer Andy McNab at The Tardis in Clerkenwell

## Time travel

EC1 resident George Feltham-Parish talks about the thrills and spills at his vibrant 1990s arts space by Farringdon station – nicknamed the Tardis

In 1994 I found a derelict building in Turnmill Street while working for The Serious Road Trip – an NGO supplying aid into the former Yugoslavia. My colleague Howard Jones and myself needed an HQ to start International Humanitarian Aid Concern while working in Bosnia supplying information technology to those in need. Our landlords London Transport kindly charged us a ‘peppercorn rent’ of £1.00 per annum for 14,000 sq ft space on the west side of Turnmill Street.

Howard, who we called ‘the Dark Lord’, wanted to call it the labyrinth, but I pointed out there was already a club of that name over in Hackney, so I chose the name the Tardis as, like the famous police box in *Dr Who*, it looked small on the outside but was big on the inside.

The building had originally been a parcels depot, a pornographic film studio, and also where the Strobe Light had been invented by one David Cecil. Once in, we needed high profile friends to fund our various charitable exploits. These came in all shapes and forms, from disorganised 500-strong raves to organised parties, book launches, record launches and PR think-tanks. As the Tardis was partly below ground and adjacent to Farringdon station nobody ever heard our noisy parties. Every major DJ played there and we never once paid them. They should be have been so lucky...

We were raided once, by the Transport Police only for them to find 50 ladies listening to Tom Jones all dressed in very low cut gowns, launching a magazine called *The Passion* by Siobhan Fahey of Bananarama fame. I never allowed a queue to form in the street as our door was skilfully managed by our team of hilariously

funny but well-respected doormen and one woman – Big Hazel.

The printing company in the adjacent part of the Tardis departed and we quickly acquired their building. It was part of the spirit of the time, and 200 yards away was John Newman’s famous club Turnmills (see *EC1Echo*, Oct-Nov 2020). John was one very interesting character with an amazing eye for detail in his eclectically designed club. We became good friends.

The residents of the Tardis were eclectic, too. Incorporated within the Tardis umbrella was The Smithfield Trust, the Historic Clerkenwell Association, The Clerkenwell Artists Association, and The Miscarriages of Justice Organisation. We sponsored various charitable enterprises here and abroad covering Bosnia, supplying blood testing & vaccination kits to Tanzania and funding The Sunshine Children’s Orphanage in Egypt. One of our many money-raising events was the Tank Girl film launch party held at the Roundhouse Camden. About 3,000 people attended and it cost our sponsors £45,000, which also included 12,000 bottles of beer and 2000 bottles of Smirnoff Black vodka. Financially it was not a success.

The Clerkenwell Literary Festival was based within our building and held over five years, extended with events all over Clerkenwell’s various venues. I managed to entice Andy McNab, David Bowie and Irvine Welsh to become our patrons – indeed, Bowie paid £6,000 for six months usage of our street window with a piece entitled, ‘Window Pain Project at The Tardis’, when he hosted Bowieart. We estimated that about 20,000 people passed the window daily. The writer and ex-SAS hero Andy McNab held his wedding reception in the Tardis.

With several rooms and 17 arches, I was able to let space cheaply to start-up companies, interesting individuals and artists. Clerkenwell Films with John Hannah was an early client – still in Clerkenwell, and whose latest film is the highly successful *The Dig*. One office was rented to six talented journalists who now work for the UK national press. Malkovich once rented the Tardis for a week filming his 2002 film, *Hideous Man*. On Andy McNab’s wedding night it was full. The place was

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full of models which was great fun and highly memorable and his guests were a motley group ranging from the head of MI6 to the Pope’s lawyer. Jim Henson of *The Muppets*, John Torode from *Masterchef*, *The Guardian & Observer* newspapers all held Xmas parties there.

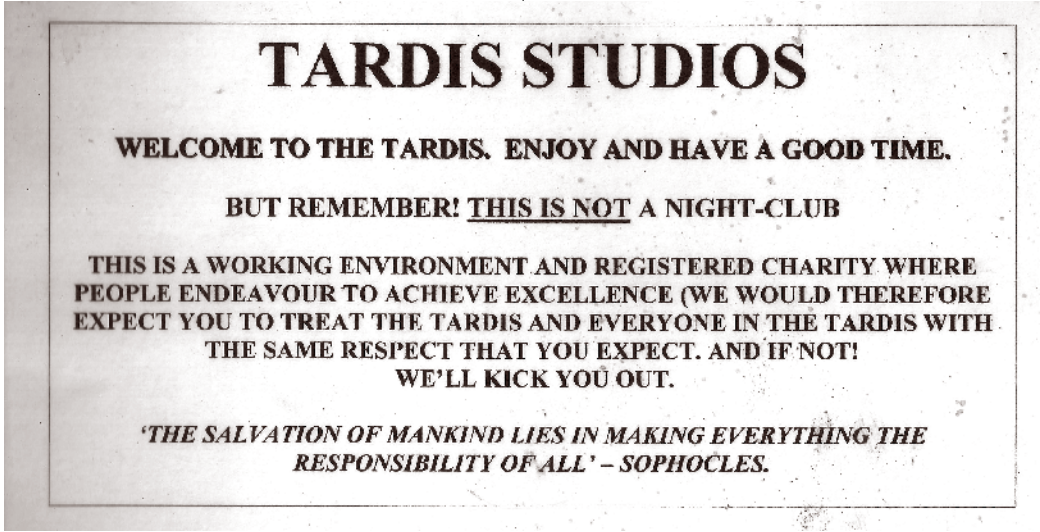
Time moved on and Clerkenwell became the home of the Dotcom boom. It was also full of YBAs or Young British Artists, and we held Chris Ofili’s post Turner Prize party here, with him winning the next day. We were then inundated with YBAs wanting to hold their own parties here as we were considered a ‘lucky’ venue. Banksy’s statue, the *Scales of Injustice*, was unveiled on Clerkenwell Green then relocated to the top of our building for two months until water started leaking down into my office.

I stopped doing parties because I became concerned for my many guests’ safety and then concentrated on PR companies involved in new products, ranging from trainers, mobile phones, cat food and the highly successful ‘Flat Eric’ campaign for Levi’s jeans. The jeans were accidentally thrown in the rubbish bin and Levi’s had to fly in a new pair at a cost of \$3,000.

“*Bowie paid £6,000 for six months use of our street window*”

There came pressure from our landlord to vacate and they increased our annual rent to 400 per cent. By then I was then paying £12,000 per annum and the continual upkeep of the building was a constant drain on finances. Meanwhile, the regeneration of Clerkenwell had led to the area becoming trendy and fashionable. London Transport upped my rent again and backdated it for five years, forcing me into court. I gave in gracefully.

Turnmill Street and The Tardis is now Farringdon’s European Gateway. Such is life. But since the Covid-19 virus and its repercussions I can see many more buildings remaining empty, just awaiting someone’s entrepreneurial endeavours...



# CULTURE MILE



Shy One performing at the Royal Albert Hall as part of fabric's London Unlocked © Fabric

## Creativity Around Every Corner

Culture Mile is the City of London’s cultural district, stretching from Farringdon to Moorgate. Led by the Barbican, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of London, its five core partners work together on creating a vibrant, creative area in the north-west corner of the Square Mile.

**Play Packs on the streets**

Culture Mile’s Play Packs have proved to be incredibly popular. Over 12,000 packs full of imaginative Play Prompts and activities to help families get creative at home have been delivered to foodbanks and community centres. To celebrate this, Culture Mile began taking their Play Prompts to the streets from Monday 22nd March.

Look out for the colourful posters across the city and brighten up your journey with some fun activities. Pose like a famous London building. Challenge your friend to a game of opposites. Create your own secret code of communication. Go cloud

spotting. These are just a few of the Play Prompts that you’ll uncover. Can you find all 16 of them? If you find one, make sure to tag [@CultureMileLDN](#) in your photos.

**Creative Freelancers Exchange**

Culture Mile is hosting a series of online workshops and spaces of exchange for freelancers working in the creative and cultural industries to develop their skills, creative practice, and wellbeing in our current situation. Covid-19 has brought change, uncertainty and new ways of working for all sectors and this series recognises the significant impact on freelancers

Turner Prize nominated artist Catherine Yass was commissioned to create an individual work responding to the theme of ‘New Skills’ for the new report by the Culture & Commerce Taskforce © Catherine Yass/Culture Mile

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in the creative industries. You can find the full programme of events on the Culture Mile website where you can register for the free events.

**London Unlocked**

London Unlocked is a new live performance streaming series from fabric, in partnership with Arts Council England and supported by Culture Mile. Every Sunday for seven weeks, there will be a new live stream unlocking some of London’s most iconic cultural spaces and raising funds for the Music Venue Trust to support struggling arts venues around the country.

Pairing the city’s most adored arts venues, galleries and historical landmarks with some incredible talent, the series features scene stalwarts, club regulars and fast-rising newcomers including Kode9, Fabio and Grooverider, Djrum, Midland, Shanti Celeste, Saoirse and more. The artists will be performing in iconic institutions including Royal Albert Hall, the V&A, English National Opera at the London Coliseum, Round Chapel, Smithfield Market, Tower Bridge and more. To catch-up on the streams you’ve missed, check out [fabriclondon.com](#).

**Culture & Commerce: Fuelling Creative Renewal**

Last month, the Culture & Commerce Taskforce launched *Fuelling Creative Renewal*, a new report that sets out a blueprint for a deeper relationship between the creative and business sectors to accelerate London’s recovery from the pandemic. In order to celebrate the value, resilience and vibrancy of the creative industries, as well as supporting those artists who work within them, the Culture & Commerce Taskforce commissioned eight new artworks which have been threaded throughout the *Culture & Commerce: Fuelling Creative Renewal* report. The artworks and artists have responded to some of the themes contained within the report which can be found on the Culture Mile website along with a gallery of the final artworks.

**CULTURE mile**

**SPONSORED CONTENT**

To find out more about the above events and to explore what’s happening in and around Culture Mile, simply visit [www.culturemile.london](#) or follow [@CultureMileLDN](#) on social media.



FEATURE

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The EC1 Echo is hugely grateful to its members. Here, we caught up with some of them – and asked them why they like reading about our area

● Veran Patel

Veran Patel  
I discovered *EC1 Echo* as I am a Trustee of the Peel, which supports this publication. Residents and businesses, news, arts, and culture are brought to life through the high quality of storytelling. Above all, the pieces on history and culture always make me glad to live in proximity to an area with such a rich past. As we emerge from this pandemic which has hit businesses so hard, where possible we must support them so that we have a vibrant Clerkenwell for the future.

● Diana Alsobrook

Diana Alsobrook  
I became a member because I loved the sense of community a local newspaper brought to the area. This is something I was missing in the busy and crowded days before the pandemic, especially as a transplant to British culture. *EC1 Echo* has also been a lovely resource for tidbits about local history, and each issue has taught me something new in addition to my own research into Clerkenwell. This area gives me joy and inspiration on a daily basis, and I am happy to support anything that celebrates it and makes it an even more fantastic place to live.

● Mirela Popoveniuc

Mirela Popoveniuc  
From the first months living in Clerkenwell, I knew I'll spend more time in this area because of its prettiness sprinkled with history, gardens, shops, cafes and pubs. So, what better way to start becoming a local than become aware of the community? That's how I found out about *EC1 Echo*. Through their work, I discover what's happening in the neighbourhood and I'm glad to follow an initiative that encourages the local people and their projects and businesses.

● Katrina Fialko

Katrina Fialko  
Being a member of *EC1 Echo* is my way to reconnect with our community and support grassroots journalism. I personally prefer to read local news on paper and this newspaper covers the area I'm particularly interested in. The best thing is seeing the places that you know well in this newspaper, but equally it's nice to discover something completely new. The past year brought challenges to all of us, but if you can afford a monthly membership fee starting from £5 then you should join us here in shaping future of Clerkenwell together and making it a better place to be.

ADVERTISE WITH US

Our newspapers are a growing and valued part of the local community – loved by readers who want to read about what matters to them. Be part of that and advertise with us!

Our publications *Waltham Forest Echo*, *Enfield Dispatch*, *Tottenham Community Press* and *EC1 Echo* cover a wide area of North-East London and part of The City.

We distribute 40,000 free copies to readers via local newsstands, community venues, and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 120,000 people.

Call Klaudia 07732 000 430  
Email [klaudia@socialspider.com](mailto:klaudia@socialspider.com)

The Amwell Society

Preserving local heritage and building community

Amwell Street lies at the heart of our rich historic area and is bounded by Pentonville Road, Penton Rise, Kings Cross Road, Farringdon Road, Rosebery Avenue and St John Street.

Recent events have highlighted the need and value of local communities and organisations working together. The Amwell Society is always looking for new members and committee activists to enable us to best represent the interests of our community.

- Join the conversation on development and conservation
- Learn about the history of this exceptional area
- Meet friendly neighbours
- Social gatherings and talks

Join us – £15 for three years

amwell society

amwell.org.uk

Support local independent journalism

BECOME A MEMBER

What we do

Here at *EC1 Echo* we do things differently. We combine professional journalism with voluntary contributions from people who live and work in the area and create content which is responsive to and reflective of the community.

These are challenging times for print media with many newspapers closing and advertising revenue in decline, but our not-for-profit model offers a new approach to creating local journalism which is inclusive and accountable.

How you can help

As a not-for-profit publication, started by The Peel, a longstanding Clerkenwell charity, we rely on the generous support of our community. We look to our readers, who recognise the value of independent journalism, to help support us.

You can do this by becoming a member either as an individual or as an organisation. See the rewards opposite and once you've decided what package you would like, visit [EC1Echo.co.uk/join](http://EC1Echo.co.uk/join)

Individual rewards

- £3 per month upwards:  
Name in print and online, pin badge
- £5 per month upwards:  
Name in print and online, pin badge, tote bag, paper posted to you every month

Organisational rewards

- £10 per month:  
Name in print and online, 10% discount on advertising
- £20 per month:  
Name and logo in print and online, 20% discount on advertising
- £50 per month:  
Name and logo in print and online, 40% discount, six free small adverts per year

We would like to say thank you to our members:

David Wilcox, Daniel Winn, Laurence Colchester, Diana Alsobrook, Sarah Falconer, David Chapman, Tania Cohen, Brian Jones, Veran Patel, Katrina Fialko, Mirela Popoveniuc, Sarah Wood, Stephanie Pietraszkiewicz, Juliana Lottmann, Daron Pike.



winkworth.co.uk/clerkenwell

Winkworth

for every step...



### Britton Street, EC1 £3,250,000 Freehold

A fabulous six bedroom Georgian house, which has been extended to offer wonderful family accommodation in the heart of Clerkenwell, moments from Farringdon station.

This deceptively spacious Grade II listed home spans approximately 3,235 sq. ft, and is spread over five floors. Located on the highly sought-after Britton Street in the heart of Clerkenwell, this Freehold home offers superb family accommodation, looking over St. John's Gardens.

SALES



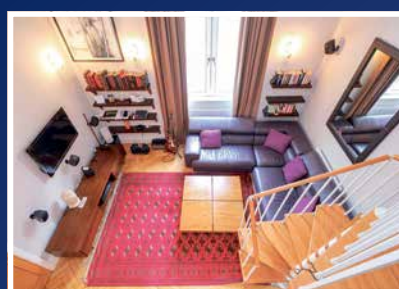
### Myddelton Square, EC1 £599,995 Leasehold

A bright one bedroom flat, arranged on the first floor of a converted Grade II listed Georgian town house, set on the much sought-after Myddelton Square.



### Wynyatt Street, EC1 £1,350,000 Freehold

A beautiful Grade II Listed three bedroom town house set on a quiet and picturesque Georgian Terrace in Clerkenwell. A wonderful example of period and modern features in perfect synergy; this home has been tastefully refurbished to an impressive standard.



### Rosebery Avenue, EC1 £565 PW

A well presented and designed, large apartment in New Riverhead. This two bedroom, two shower room (one en-suite) apartment is situated on the first floor of this very much sought after development.



### Wilmington Square, WC1 £375 PW

A well presented one bedroom apartment on the first floor of this late Georgian building on Wilmington Square. The flat comprises open plan kitchen reception room with access out onto a balcony overlooking the quiet square, double bedroom and a shower room with under floor heating.

LETS

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