




EC1 ECHO

JUNE/JULY 2021 • N°.10 FREE

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Access all areas

Clerkenwell resident and junior doctor Grace Spence Green tells *EC1 Echo* how our area could be better equipped to improve disabled people's lives

● BY OLIVER BENNETT ●

Since she became a wheelchair user after a spinal injury following an incident in 2018, Grace Spence Green has been thrust into the forefront of disablement activism. For many years a Clerkenwell resident, her experience has obviously changed – but at the same time, Grace has continued to pursue her life as before, working as a junior doctor in a central London hospital.

In doing so, Grace has a clear vantage point on how areas such as Clerkenwell could be improved – sometimes in small ways – and how businesses should go beyond box ticking for the disabled, and how we could all adjust our mindsets.

“With buildings and venues that are supposedly accessible, it often appears as if they didn't actually ask a disabled person,” says Grace. “It can be as basic as foot pedals in the wheelchair-accessible toilet – or stopping that toilet from becoming a storeroom.” Entrances – even of just one step – can be confounding, and a mere wooden ramp can make all the difference. “It's usually the little fixes that are the best, and it shows that someone has obviously understood.”

As social distancing has changed the way we socialise, with outdoor chairs and tables, we might expect there to be more room for wheelchair access to cafes and restaurants. “For me there are pros and cons,” says Grace. “It's true that being outside is a kind of bonus. But there are difficulties – for example, disability

advocate Katie Pennick posted a video on Twitter showing there was no room for her to move in Soho because of pavement tables. You either get forced onto the road or you're constantly waiting for people to move.”

Does Grace find people talk over her head? “All the time,” she says, adding that when she's with her boyfriend some people ask him questions about her. “But I think that comes from a real discomfort, as well as lack of knowledge and a fear about saying the wrong thing.”

“We are all disabled at some point in our lives”

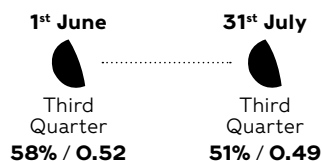
In an area with historic architecture like Clerkenwell, it's inevitable that some buildings are not disabled friendly. “For example, my parents' old house is completely inaccessible to me,” says Grace. “But when I came out of hospital I looked for a flat here and found that few were accessible, even modern places.” Even when she did find one, the sole lift stopped working. “For months, I had either be carried up three flights of stairs, or drag myself up with the wheelchair.” She now lives in a place with two lifts but finds it frustrating that the onus was on her to move.

● Continued on Page-9

Junior doctor Grace Spence Green has become a disabled advocate

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NEWS**2**

Raise repair issues

Residents in properties managed by Islington Council's PFI partner have been invited to raise repair concerns before homes handed back to council

BY ED SHERIDAN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Islington Council is urging tenants of homes managed by its PFI partner Partners for Improvement in Islington to raise damp or disrepair issues before the handback of thousands of properties to the Town Hall in April next year.

Partners, who have long been the topic of debate at Town Hall meetings over satisfaction rates of its residents, are required to carry out repairs ahead of the end of the 16-year contract.

A council survey has identified £466,000 worth of work to be done, but due to the pandemic was only able to access 1,254 of the 2,778 properties.

The value of these repairs will be held by the borough in a retention fund until all are completed and signed off. The cost of any repairs not completed by

the time the council takes over will stay in the fund.

Programme manager Saf Khan said: "We wanted to get into as many basement flats as we possibly could as we know there are concerns around damp particularly in street properties."

Islington holds two contracts with Partners. While PFI2 is set to end in April, PFI 1 is a 30-year contract ending in 2033.

In the Council's survey, broken windows, damp and roofing issues account for 59 per cent of problems, but surveyors also found cracked ceilings and walls, broken boilers, missing wash basins, damaged floors and front entrance doors, and more.

Window-related works are the most common problem and will cost £70,535 in total, with 398 individual works required at 270 homes, with windows missing restrictors, stays, locks, catches, handles and draught seals.

Damp was discovered in 265

homes, with Islington planning to hold on to its reimbursement cash for a couple of months after Partners make a repair job in this area, to make sure

the problem does not recur.

A spokesperson from Partners said: "We encourage residents to report repairs as we have throughout the first 15 years of the PFI2 contract including in every quarterly residents' newsletter. We'd like to thank residents for

their help in this." The Council's independent surveying consultants Ridge recently reported that the properties are being handed back to the Council in better than average condition, with among the lowest proportion of catch-up repairs they have ever seen.

"We have worked in partnership with the Council throughout the contract and we will continue to work together to ensure a smooth transition of service for residents, in April 2022. This date was agreed in 2006 as part of the original contract, so the PFI2 project will end when it was always intended to.

"We are pleased that through the PFI project the Council has been able to retain ownership of thousands of homes in street properties, which in 2006 were desperately in need of investment and are being handed back in good condition."

Additional reporting by EC1 Echo

"In the Council's survey, broken windows, damp and roofing issues account for 59 per cent of problems"

Life cycle

LTN debate still firing up the borough

Islington Council is aiming to provide an evidence base for low-traffic networks (LTNs) in the borough – under the banner of people-friendly streets.

Clerkenwell Green neighbourhood's "mid-trial monitoring reports" claim to show that local people have enjoyed significantly reduced traffic and less speeding in both areas. Traffic on local roads in Clerkenwell Green fell by 34 per cent.

The monitoring process is part of the council's introduction of people-friendly streets as 18-month trials to help create a healthier borough by encouraging walking and cycling, as part of the council's ambition to create a net-zero carbon borough by 2030.

"These monitoring reports show that the trials are helping to reduce traffic, creating streets where it is easier and safer for

everyone to travel, exercise and play," said Cllr Rowena Champion, Islington Council's Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

The monitoring report from the Clerkenwell Green neighbourhood, which was introduced in September 2020, shows that numbers of vehicles speeding fell by 73 per cent on internal roads, but shows that traffic on boundary roads rose by 22 per cent, an increase attributed to

factors such as the work on the nearby Old Street roundabout, Smithfield Market and at Farringdon Station, as well as the introduction of the neighbouring Amwell people-friendly streets neighbourhood.

Islington Council has introduced seven people-friendly streets neighbourhood trials.

"I feel that the LTNs are anti-democratic," says Martyn Perks, who stood as an independent against Labour's Valerie Bossman-Quarshie in the recent Bunhill by-election. "The work at the Old Street roundabout has created masses of congestion."

Ms Bossman-Quarshie, who won the by-election, said: "Islington Council has been implementing people-friendly

"I feel that the LTNs are anti-democratic"

streets schemes across the borough to make our streets safer and encourage more active travel, such as walking and cycling."

"While we are looking into where we can make our streets more people-friendly across the borough, the Council currently does not have any plans to implement further changes in Bunhill at the moment."

Mount Pleasant still growing

The housing developer Taylor Wimpey has put forward proposals to increase the number of flats in its Postmark development in Mount Pleasant. The rise in numbers to 34 additional flats is based on a claim that market demand has changed from larger to smaller flats and that the earlier flats made "inefficient use of the space."

In angry scenes on a Zoom call with the developer, Ed Denison, housing campaigner, university professor and representative of the Mount Pleasant Association claimed that this would "increase the transient population" by encouraging smaller living units.

"You need a broad mix of tenants to sustain make a long-term community and this no extra amenities," said Denison.

Taylor Wimpey said that the changes will "help deliver more homes in the Borough, both affordable and open market" and that no population increase is expected as a result of its redesign.

Food market stays in Cowcross Street

Permission granted for another three years, reports Ed Sheridan, Local Democracy Reporter

A street food market in Farringdon has received permission from Islington Council to operate for a further three years, in the face of continued opposition from neighbours living near Cowcross Street.

The market will be run by specialist food operator Urban Food Fest, which now has separate permission to use its own power supply – potentially avoiding the need for noisy generators.

Objectors had sought to curb the market's operation on the basis of noise issues, the size of food trucks "impacting the appearance of the area", and concerns of anti-social behaviour.

One, representing several flats in a neighbouring building, said: "The main issue we have had is the noise complaint which has been acknowledged now regarding the use of standalone temporary generators.

"The objection here is to the vehicles in particular, because

we feel the vehicles change the character of the market, are detrimental to the quality of this particular open space, and if there were to be 13 stalls, 13 vehicles here, it would just end up looking like a car park."

They added: "If you walk down the street now, you see shop after shop has closed unfortunately because of the situation we have been in, so why are we now allowing a situation where more people would be able to come in their vans to the area, set up a stall and take away from more permanent locations on Cowcross Street?"

A representative for the applicants, real estate company Newsteer, said: "We had a consultation event with neighbours in November and the response we had at that event was very positive. All of those power supply elements can serve every single one of the market, so there will be no stall that cannot access this supply.



"In terms of the shops closing – competition is not a planning consideration, so regrettably I do not think that is a matter for debate."

Denmark House residents addressing the recent planning committee meeting stressed that they "vehemently objected" to the use of the alleyway beneath Denmark House by the market,

citing security concerns.

Quizzed on the council's powers to resolve this dispute, town hall officers said its use was a private civil matter in which they are unable to interfere, and therefore it is beyond the control of councillors to make a ruling.

Newsteer also pointed to a number of public improvement

works installed over the past 18 months, including additional lighting in all alleyways leading to and from the market's location at Cowcross Yard, which it is hoped will reduce anti-social behaviour.

Council officers pointed out Cowcross Street has been a market area for centuries. Smithfield Market was in existence by 1123, along with a separate cow market after which Cowcross Street is named.

Committee chair Angela Picknell said: "It seems to me that we have vans coming and going whatever happens. I'm not sure the issue of whether it is local people or not in the market is a planning concern.

"I don't think that is something we can concern ourselves with, but as they are likely to be coming by van anyway I don't think the distance is something we can really consider.

"The ability to use clean electrical power rather than generators is a definite move forward."

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CLAREMONT SQUARE

The reservoir around which Claremont Square was constructed dates back to the 18th Century. While it's no longer in use it does provide a centre piece for the exceptional Grade II listed Georgian buildings that surround it. One of the remaining terraced freeholds is now offered for sale chain free.

£2,300,000 guide price



CLERKENWELL GREEN

An absolutely fabulous Showroom with retail unit is available for long term lease in one of London's hidden gems, namely Clerkenwell Green. Previously used as an architects' office, this prime commercial property offers circa 850 sq ft split equally across two floors.

P.O.A.



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NEWS

A Greek classic revival

The much-loved Kolossi Grill is being revived for a new generation of diners

When the Kolossi Grill on Rosebery Avenue shut up shop last year, it was considered a sad loss – and another sacrifice to Covid-19. The proprietor Harry Nicola had hosted the Greek Cypriot restaurant for many years, and it had been a beacon of the district since its foundation in 1966, when there were few restaurants in the area.

Now barrister and businessman David Lonsdale has taken a ten-year lease on the Kolossi, and is currently converting it into a modern Greek restaurant.

“We want to keep the name and the Greek food, as that’s what it’s known for,” says David, who also owns and runs the Sekforde pub in Sekforde Street. “But we will modernise the menu and bring in some of the best Greek wines.” With breakfasts and chairs and tables outside, he hopes to attract those attracted to Exmouth Market and theatre-goers from Sadler’s Wells. It will be managed by George Matthews and Tom Raffé, pictured.

The Kolossi was once a haunt of journalists from *The Guardian* when it was on Farringdon Road, and known by expense-account diners as the “Colossal Bill” or the “Colostomy”. It also hosted belly dancers. There are no plans to revive those years, and the folksy interior with its plastic ivy is being cleaned out, but the frontage, with its trademark pediment, pillars and Hellenic script will probably remain. “It’s a local landmark, after all” says David. The new Kolossi Grill will open this summer.



Office politics

Back to work – with a purpose

With Covid work from home guidance due to be lifted on June 21, the hope is that central London workspaces will be repopulated. And on that very day, Better Space London – a new co-working space in the Ray Building, Farringdon Road – opens its doors to the public.

As well as being a brand new venture, Better Space has an objective – to provide a place for businesses with social and environmental impact at their core – and to incubate ideas and businesses, particularly from local resi-

dents. With 74 desks over two floors of the Ray Building in Farringdon Road, it’s already about 60 per cent occupied with a lot of interest in the remainder.

“We’re seeking different kinds of businesses,” says CEO Simon Magness, who says they have a selection of people from tech recyclers to fledgling food and drink businesses. “There will be CICs (community interest companies) and charities too – any impact-driven rather than profit-driven business.”

With its own door, and rents pegged at about 80 per cent of normal market prices, Magness says that one of the

hopes is that it will “ignite local businesses” with a mix of entrepreneurship, mentoring, accelerators, collaborations and meetings with social purpose.

Better Space has backing from City University of London’s City Ventures project from The Business School and has also been supported by Islington Council. Visit betterspace.london



Inner space race

Start-up Clerkenwell Health is pioneering the use of psychedelics in therapy

An innovative mental-health company has started on Clerkenwell Road, claiming to be the first such company in the country to design and manage clinical trials for customers developing psychedelic compounds such as MDMA, LSD, dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and psilocybin mushrooms for conditions such as depression, anxiety and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

Says CEO Tom McDonald, Clerkenwell Health is a “clinical research organisation helping drug manufacturers to get their drugs to the market.

“Globally there are approximately 100 companies in the space – but we are the only one focussed exclusively on delivering clinical trials.”

As research and interest grows across the world in alternative health therapies, this family of drugs is being investigated for a range of conditions.

“In combination with talking therapies, psychedelics allow people to create new thought patterns,” says McDonald. “In the mental health sphere, they would change the need for SSRIs and other commonly prescribed antidepressants.”

Clerkenwell Health is soon to be running clinical trials that aim to provide an evidence base for NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care), psychiatrists and eventually GPs as well as manufacturers. It is also seeking to run its own clinics in four to five years, in facilities which will be “custom-designed to enhance the patient’s experience”, and will feature “preparatory and integration sessions” from trained therapists.

At present psychedelics are illegal and cannot be approved or endorsed.

“There’s still a stigma against them,” says McDonald. “But in the US and Canada there’s a lot of investment and more of these drugs will be approved for prescription. There are positive trials in psilocybin and MDMA (more commonly known as Ecstasy). Used responsibly in tandem with talking therapies, and in the right setting, psychedelic medicines are at a turning point.”

Visit: clerkenwellhealth.com

NEWS

Summer knights

Clerkenwell resident James Richards has started what he claims is London's first outdoor chess club

As lockdown comes to an end, some EC1 residents are looking beyond pub and park visits to mingle again with their fellow Londoners. While desperately trying to cure his boredom during quarantine, and inspired by Netflix hit *The Queen's Gambit*, I took to playing chess with strangers online. Although it rekindled my love for the game, the online format was missing a crucial part of what makes the game great – the chance to meet and chat to a fast friend.

Coming out of lockdown, I created FourCorner – London's first outdoor chess club. Free and open-to-all, the club aims to encourage players of all creeds, ages and abilities to gather in London's underutilised public spaces. You can catch us and other club regulars every Saturday in St John's Square from 12pm until 3pm, whatever the weather. If you'd like to keep in touch with updates about the club, follow it @FourCorner on Instagram or directly by email to James at jfrancisrichards@gmail.com.



FEATURE

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Rising up

One of the effects of lockdown has been to turn an opera singer into a baker

Like others during the long Covid lockdown, local woman Lara Muller found her work as an opera singer drying up.

Rather than sit on her laurels, Lara decided to turn a new passion into a business – baking bread and pastries.

“Covid turned my life upside down,” says Lara. “I started baking and enjoyed the results.

After a while, Lara thought that

she could make it into a business. “There isn't really a local bakery as such.” She attended food hygiene and preparation classes, and as her domestic oven wasn't enough to bake in scale, now has a special baking oven from Rack-master with double the capacity.

“Covid turned my life upside down”

Lara's new business means that she has to get up early but she's already breaking even, and branching out from her core sourdough and pastries into pizza. “I will sing all my life as it's my calling,” she says, “but baking is the way out of lockdown.”



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FEATURES

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Time to draw the line

A space attached to the Holy Redeemer church is to become a new art school studio devoted to drawing

This summer two Islington women will be mobilising EC1's artists, old and new. Luci Eyers and Antje Southern have secured rooms above the church hall in Holy Redeemer on Exmouth Market for their new venture – a micro-art school based around the art of drawing.

The rooms, which are being refurbished for the Drawing Studio, which is to be called Eye to Pencil, have lots of natural light and old paneling, and have hitherto been used for drama classes and yoga among other pursuits. Luci and Antje have taken it on for a long lease to pursue their long-held ambition of creating the studio, where they will be running courses.

Says Antje, an art historian who has worked at auction house Christie's Education Department and at the Royal Drawing School in Shoreditch: "We want this to be an interdisciplinary school for everyone who is interested in drawing and it as a meeting place to draw together." Luci, a painter, website designer and teacher at Turps Art School is to work alongside Antje in the room and they will also offer online classes.

At any time there will be a maximum of 12 students, with long tables and a sink.

Prices for classes will be "as affordable as possible". Their key offering is a four-day course but the pair are also hoping to offer many other slots including open drawing session on Mondays and early morning "pre-work" classes, early evening "pre-pub" classes and whole morning "drawing clubs" on Saturdays, with forays into Spa Park. The school is due to start on 21 June.

"There's no good and bad drawing here, it will be about enabling people to be more confident"

The pair emphasise that it is not just how to draw academically still lives and models, but to "take drawing apart", as Luci puts it. "Many people use drawing," she says. "It's a way of making you think and a process that will help your life in different ways." So the school will not invite its students to make the perfect depiction of a vase of flowers, say, but rather to enable their sense of seeing and interpretation of the world.

"It's not about making finished products," adds Antje. "What we're doing is inviting people to slow down, take notice

and observe – it's all about heightening the powers of looking." This will not be done in an academic way, with a "right and wrong" way of drawing. As Luci says: "We are non-judgemental and non-hierarchical."

Classes will be open to everyone with different levels of experience. "We want to be intergenerational," says Luci. "Exmouth Market has such a great range of residents from different walks of life and the market brings this all together."

As to those many people who decided at school that they "can't draw", Antje and Luci hope to make them think again.

"There's no good and bad drawing here," says Luci. "It will be about enabling people to be more confident and open about drawing

– inviting them to see how drawing connects us to the world." With guest speakers from different spheres – Luci and Antje have already set up lectures from an engineer, a designer and a composer, talking about how they use drawing to think things through – the art school hopes to get us all to pick up our pencils and look at the world anew.

The Drawing Studio, Eye to Pencil, 1st Floor, 26 Exmouth Market, EC1
Instagram @eyetopencil website
Visit eyetopencil.art

Full sto

Free Word's Clerke

The Free Word Centre, known for housing organisations devoted to literature and free expression closed at the end of May. Housed in a building once occupied by *The Guardian* on Farringdon Road, owned by 2007 Fritt Ord, a Norwegian philanthropic organisation, the Centre opened in 2009 with eight organisations. Hosting events, a lecture theatre and a café as well as offices, it became a cultural lodestone in Clerkenwell and the Arts Council supported the running costs. The Free Word Centre claimed to be the "world's first centre for literature and free expression," dedicated to the transforming power of words. Among the organisations represented at Free Word were Article 19, English PEN, The Reading Agency, Reporters without Borders and The Arvon Foundation.

On Twitter, Daniel Gorman, director of English PEN, said: "It will be hugely missed and

Dog d

Local dog-owne through the pan

One of the more unexpected results of the coronavirus lockdown has been the huge increase in dog ownership. I have paired with my dear Cockerpool hearing dog Barley for almost four years and pre-lockdown it was quite rare for us to come across many dogs in St James's Park, which Barley views very much as his own back garden. All this has changed over the last year.

Pre-lockdown he was the only dog living on the Peabody Estate, where I live, as the terms of my lease only had provision for assistance dogs. However Peabody Trust changed their rules at the end of 2019 and now allow up to two dogs per household, in recognition of the mental health benefits

p?
nwell base has closed – but may continue in another form



I’m very hopeful they get support to continue their crucial work amplifying underrepresented voices.”

“It will be hugely missed and I’m very hopeful they get support to continue their crucial work”

The loss has been felt by the literary and journalistic world but while the building is being sold the organisations within are set to continue, and it may not be the end for the Free Word as an entity. A statement on Free Word’s social media says: “We are currently in talks with Arts Council England who have expressed an interest in helping us continue to deliver our vital work of amplifying underrepresented voices.”

ays
r Philip Tsaras says that his dog helped him
demic – and introduces his canine calendar

of owning a dog. According to a 2016 study, pet ownership is estimated to save the NHS up to £2.45bn annually as pet owners make 15 per cent fewer visits to their GP. Reportedly pet owners are also 60 per cent more likely to get to know people in their area whom they had not known before and are also more likely to develop stronger community ties and help others locally.

I have certainly found this to be true and I have met more people from around my area since having Barley than I did in the whole previous 30 years that I have lived here. Indeed Barley is very popular and has become an expert at eliciting treats from various establishments on his walks.

Travelling through Europe with

Barley, we noticed, at least in France and Switzerland, that local authorities are more dog-conscious there as they provide free dog waste bag dispensers in parks and on some of the streets. Perhaps this is a service we should also look into providing.



Dogs certainly bring people together. For the last few years, my partner and I have produced a desk calendar as a gift for our friends and family, usually using photographs of the local area, but this year we decided the dogs of EC1 should be our theme. We asked various local dog owners to submit their photos if they would like to be included and the response was huge. In fact, we had more dogs than we had months and choice was extremely hard. It also proved to be by far the most popular calendar we have ever produced, and we had to keep ordering extra copies as contributors kept purchasing them for their friends and family. The Dogs of EC1 calendar could well be here to stay.



Little Italy and my ghosts

The Paris-based Belgian author Jean-Pierre Orban talks about the inspiration for his Clerkenwell-based book, The Ends of Stories

I have travelled and lived in many countries, but I have not explored any other city in the world as much as London. Between 1994 and 2001, when I lived here I walked, cycled and took public transport around the capital from west to east, north to south – as if to find the shadows of a history that was close to me.

I found these shadows in and around Exmouth Market and Clerkenwell Road. I am Franco-Belgian, born of an Italian mother whose family emigrated to Belgium in the 1920s. In this neighbourhood, once called Little Italy, the houses, schools, churches and people told a story that intersected with that of my own family: the warmth and the dramas of a community, the tenacity of ordinary people – but also the drift of fascism between the two world wars and, for Italians in London and the UK, the sinking of the Arandora Star [sunk in June 1940 by a German U-boat transporting Italian and German civilians to Canada] in the porch of St Peter’s Church, a bas-relief that reminded me of its horror and absurdity.

I spent years immersing myself in the archives about London’s Italian community and the neighbourhood, in documents and in the press from before and during the World War II, and created the character of Vera who lives in Little Italy, is seduced by Mussolini’s fiery speeches and ends up losing her father in the waters that engulfed the Arandora Star. I was so immersed in my characters, in their stories, that they became real. In the 2000s, after years of writing and before concluding my manuscript, I searched Clerkenwell for someone who had lived through what I was writing about and found, thanks to Backhill Online, a lady who was exactly the same age as my heroine and who had experienced most of the episodes I had written about. That was magical! I could then finally write the words “The End”.

But it wasn’t the end, it was the beginning of a new story, that of the book. It has won a number of awards and been translated into several languages including now in English – back to the country and neighbourhood where it originated.

The Ends of Stories can be purchased from www.francisboutle.co.uk



Read the small print

The country's finest magazine shop is based in Clerkenwell

BY ANASTASIA GEORGOUSIS

In a parade on St John Street, alongside a laundrette, Nisa local and takeaway restaurant sits magCulture – a hidden treasure trove of independent magazines. Founder Jeremy Leslie has over 30 years' experience in the magazine industry and in 2003 wrote a book called *magCulture*, which turned into a blog and subsequently a shop in 2015.

"I was travelling abroad to attend conferences and I'd find these amazing magazine shops in Berlin and Amsterdam," says Jeremy. "I thought London

“
*London
deserved to have
a really good
magazine shop*
”

deserved to have a really good shop and realised that somebody was going to do it, and it wasn't going to be good enough. So I thought I'd better do it first."

So why Clerkenwell? Jeremy explains that the location was almost accidental – he was searching for a space that could be a retail space alongside an office and studio – but it was serendipity. "It's next door to City University, which has one of the biggest journalism schools with a very strong MA course, and Clerkenwell is the heart of the old printing world," says Jeremy. "We're near St John's Gate where the first magazine was produced – *The Gentleman's Magazine* about 250

years ago. And I like it here. It's a little peaceful triangle even though you're right in the middle of London."

In an age when social media and streaming services dominate our lives, many have heralded the death of print. At magCulture though, there's a feeling that people want to move away from the screen and read something in print.

"Digital has empowered print," says Jeremy. "None of the magazines we stock, nor us as a business, could survive without the web. New publishers can reach a market they wouldn't have been able to get to, and sell directly."

Both the magCulture store and its online journal have brought together a community of likeminded magazine enthusiasts – an aspect Jeremy believes is inherent to magazines.

"What the new generation of independent magazines is achieving is going back to what magazines always were – focused, niche, community-based projects which pull people with similar interests together to share and develop their passions."

The shop stocks over 600 magazines based on themes including mental health, cheese, architecture, vinyl records, plants and board games, to name but a few. Enthusiasm and expertise shines through these publications.

"It's fascinating, having that little window into that world," says Jeremy. "Even if it's not a topic I'm personally interested in, I'm interested in a bunch of obsessives getting together and telling me about it. We've got 600 windows into 600 little worlds."

More than just a store, magCulture is trying to inspire the next generation of magazine makers, featuring online interviews with magazine creators and hosting masterclasses with experts to help people launch their own magazine. Jeremy is also a judge on the newly launched Clerkenwell Community Photography Competition (see page-9). What will he be looking out for? "I really like this area and there's all sorts of opportunities to record it: lots to recall, stories, and very distinct local areas and histories. It's a great source of material and I'm fascinated to see what people enter."

magCulture can be found at 270 St. John Street or by visiting their relaunched website magculture.com

Privy chamber

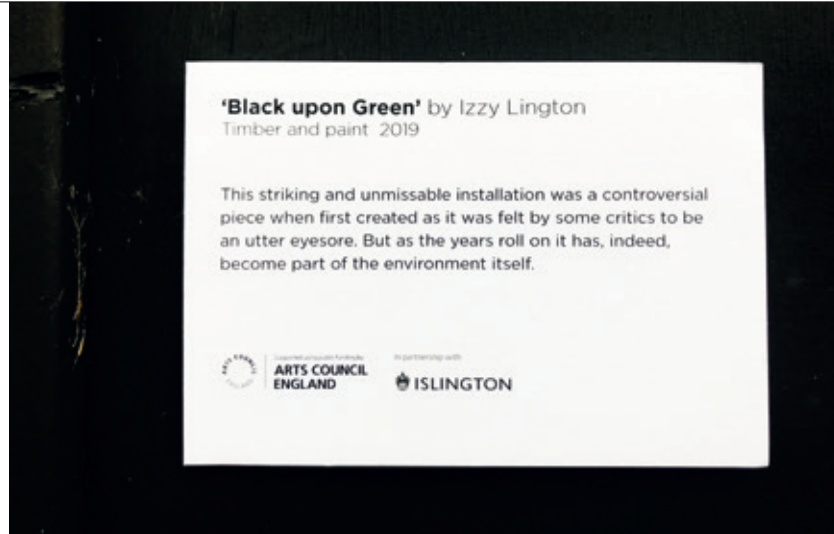
Campaigners for the Clerkenwell Green toilets are calling on Islington Council to preserve and open the historic underground facility

Last month, a prankster drew attention to Clerkenwell Green's disused and hoarded-up toilets in novel fashion – by putting up fake art captions. In one, it labels the hoardings top be as an artwork called *Black on Green* and says that rather than be an 'eyesore', it has become 'part of the environment itself'.

The artist, who wishes to remain anonymous, has serious intent. "The toilets have been shut and hoarded for years," he says. "Although I'm joking, there's a serious point there. The other day, I heard a film crew complaining about the hoarding. It is an eyesore."

Now veteran campaigner Ann Pembroke is also calling for the historic underground toilets to be opened. Pembroke, the founder of the Clerkenwell Green Preservation Society, wants the toilets to be restored and the hoardings removed so that they can be revealed in their historic glory.

"These public lavatories were made by the designer George Jennings in the 19th century," says Pembroke. "I've been shown around inside and saw brass plumbing, porcelain



fittings, marble slips, Italian tessellated flooring and pine panelling." These contents are now said to be in storage, adds Pembroke, but the wooden palisade around the site for two years, cuts off views of the 18th century Old Sessions house, now a venue. Worse, Pembroke says there was an attempt to pour cement down the Victorian tiled steps, with a view to preventing access.

It's a shame, says Pembroke, as the Society's approach to Islington Council has led to four new heritage-style benches placed beside the toilets. "The

lavatories are historic," she adds. "Jennings was a pioneer who also made underground public lavatories at the Hyde Park Exhibition of the 1850s."

The toilets have long been a fixture at the Green, with the 'liberty cap' placed on their central post during Mayday celebrations.

Previous, the toilets had been on the market for conversion but hadn't sold. Islington Council acknowledges that the hoardings have been in place for almost two years, and they are there for protection of the site but are "temporary".

Snap and crackle

Last call for the Clerkenwell Photography Competition

The Clerkenwell Photography Competition – backed by The Peel's Connected Community programme in conjunction with the *EC1 Echo* – is moving along apace with an exhibition due this summer. One of its aims is to see how different people see the same area. Recent entries include two bus shots on Rosebery Avenue, one by a young person, the other by a photographer just short of the oldest category. In one week we had separate three nature shots taken in Wilmington Square, entered by three different members of the same family, the youngest nine years old, and a photo of a fox taken by a 73 year old in Wynatt Street. Architecture



Prayas Gurung, 'Drunk Dial'

has been popular too, from old buildings to new. Lockdown has meant fewer people are out

and about, but now restrictions have eased, entrants are starting to capture the diverse range of people who live or work here. Get snapping but remember that it's important and polite to always ask permission, especially if the shot may end up on a website or in an exhibition.

Find out more about the Clerkenwell Photography Competition and sign up at www.clerkenwellphotography.com Various prizes include the main £100 prize – so join up – soon we will be announcing the venue for the prize-giving and the exhibition.



Continued from Page-1

As to the wider area, it's a mixed-bag. "Sadler's Wells theatre is brilliant for accessibility, and I love Exmouth Market," she says. But the area's streets, cobbles, bollards, uneven pavements and high kerbs can be, she says, "really challenging, as are those places where trees have broken up the pavement. It forces you onto the road."

For Grace a key problem is that "the difficulties seem to be all on me. Disablement is seen as an individual rather than a community matter and there's a lack of awareness of how disabled people move, how they live, how they interact with others." Disabled design is often considered special and separate, which Grace thinks is about seeing disabled people as a minority – although their numbers are much higher than we normally think at about 20 per cent of the UK population.

"Everyone, at some point in their lives, is going to be disabled in some form or another – and we could all become disabled," she says. "We should look after people, not because we're scared, or because we think disabled people need help, but because we're looking after the whole community." Think of ageing, she says, and how the agenda is turning against age segregation. "It's a huge problem because if you segregate disabled people you don't learn about their lived experiences – they're kind of seen as the 'other'." This isn't driven by "malicious intent", she says, more "a lack of awareness of how disabled people live".

Sometimes people can be undermining without meaning to be. "In hospital I've been called the 'patient' when I'm in full scrubs," says Grace. "I also find it difficult to say 'no, thanks' to offers of help. It's meant well, but sometimes people say it over and over, as if they've decided they know my needs better than I do. Then, if you show irritation, you're seen as bitter, angry and ungrateful." It's better, she says, when people just say "I'm here if you need anything."

What would you say to a local authority like Islington? "They just need to have more disabled representation, people who can talk to those in power." And the large design and architectural community in Clerkenwell can put their thinking caps on, too. "It's about finding creative solutions and collaboration – while acknowledging that disabled people live fulfilling, rich lives too, and want to do the same things as everyone else. There's been lots of great work – but a lot more to do."

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EC1 ECHO
Nº.10

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Eye level

Colin O'Brien's photographs are a superb window on Clerkenwell's past



“I’m fascin
the ordin

Winnie Leinweber taking
Hazel to a birthday
party in her party dress,
Clerkenwell Road (1956)

Although many of the buildings and roads in them are familiar, Colin O'Brien's photographs of Clerkenwell are like looking into a lost world. Sooty, war-ravaged and undeveloped, the district as depicted in his photographs is very different in tone from the shiny Clerkenwell of today with its tech companies and coffee shops. Which is one of the many reasons why O'Brien's photographs are now so feted: as historical documents as well as great photographic compositions.

When O'Brien was born in 1940 he lived in Northampton Street, then his family moved to Victoria Dwellings, at the junction of Clerkenwell Road and Farringdon Road – now the site of a modern block housing and a branch of Pret a Manger. The Dwellings, as they were known, still housed many of the Italian residents that made up this "Little Italy", and were then surrounded by bomb sites and derelict buildings. As O'Brien put it in the book *London Life* (Spitalfields Life, 2015): "For us children, these sites became our playgrounds with many exciting adventures to be had". That joyful atmosphere of "playing out" shines from his early pictures.

Helped by his uncle William, a taxi driver and amateur photographer, O'Brien developed the habit of taking photographs, first with a Box Brownie camera. He took the photograph for which he's perhaps best known – of his pals Raymond Scallionne and Razi Tuffano with a car in Hatton Garden – at the precocious age of eight and continued photography all his life. Some of his early pictures of his father Edward, who worked at Mount Pleasant post office, and his mother, Edith, show the straitened conditions that people lived.

As O'Brien developed his art, his work moved onto themes: fairgrounds, panoramas, the Traveller community. After his family moved to Michael Cliffe House, O'Brien used the block's vantage point for panoramic shots of St Paul's Cathedral, and went on to take pictures of London at work entirely in black and white. An O'Brien photograph of the nocturnal city was used on the cover of the novel *Alfie* by Bill Naughton (1966), the film of which subsequently used locations in Exmouth Market.

Now O'Brien, who died in 2016, is properly acclaimed as one of the great London photographers alongside Bert Hardy and Bill Brandt, and one of the great chroniclers of London in the 1950s. Although he moved to Hackney with his wife Jan, and took photographs of Soho, the Elephant and Castle among other subjects, a huge number of photographs in his archive are of the Clerkenwell area, a place he always considered home. Never lured by advertising or celebrity photography, he remained an uncompromising observer of everyday life.

"I'm fascinated by the ordinary," said O'Brien. "Famous people and famous things just don't interest me. The ordinary is of as much importance as the extraordinary."

As to whether he'd have wanted the old Clerkenwell back – his attitude was that there was no point in that. In 2014 he said "London is a great cosmopolitan city that is always evolving, always changing." That will be as true for post-pandemic Clerkenwell as it was for O'Brien's early years in the post-war era. To find out more, visit colinobrien.co.uk

Remember to keep an eye on our photography competition, see page-9



▲ Raymond Scallionne and Joe Bacuzzi, friends of O'Brien's, posing on Hatton Garden. O'Brien was eight years old at the time (1948)



▲ The junction of Clerkenwell and Farringdon Road on the day of the Italian procession in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (early 1950s)

▲ A Carmelite nun sweeps dirt into the gutter on Clerkenwell Road (late 1950s)

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nary"

HISTORY

Penny gaffs and picture palaces

As cinemas reopen, Mark Aston looks at the pioneering history of cinemas in our area

Following months of closure, once again cinema-goers can sit back, popcorn at the ready, and enjoy the latest movie magic. On our very own doorstep, the EC1 area was among one of the first places in the country to embrace the new medium of moving pictures. So, in celebration, we look back at the district's cinematic pioneers, penny gaffs and picture houses.

Pioneers
Islington was the birthplace of the 'Father of British Cinema', Robert William Paul (1869-1943). Born off Liverpool Road, he attended Finsbury Technical College and began making electrical equipment at 44 Hatton Garden, EC1 ('Kinetic House' stands on the site). It was here that Paul, assisted by photographer Birt Acres, designed and manufactured the 'Paul-Acres Cinematograph Camera' which in March 1895 was used to shoot the first

successful British film, which featured Paul's friend Henry Short outside the home of Birt Acres in Barnet, North London. Paul achieved screen projection the following year with his 'Theatrograph', the first commercially produced 35mm film projector to be constructed in Britain.

Films first appeared at music halls, theatres and travelling booths, and were silent and very short. Sadler's Wells Theatre, quick off the mark, included Robert Paul and his 'Theatrograph' in its variety programme for 12 December 1896, advertised as "Paul's Perfect Palpitating Promethean Photographs ... a superb, brilliant and electrifying entertainment specially adapted to cheers the toiling millions." The Mayor of Finsbury reopened Sadler's Wells the theatre as a cinema in September 1914, with box office receipts that day donated to First World War relief fund. Unfortunately, the cinema was not a great success and the venture closed the following year.

Penny Gaffs
But Sadler's Wells was not the only picture house in Rosebery Avenue. At number 64, the Avenue Picture Palace was established in 1910. Neither a purpose-built cinema or shop conversion, it was the ground floor in a multi-purpose factory, doubtless trying to cash-in on the Cinematograph Act

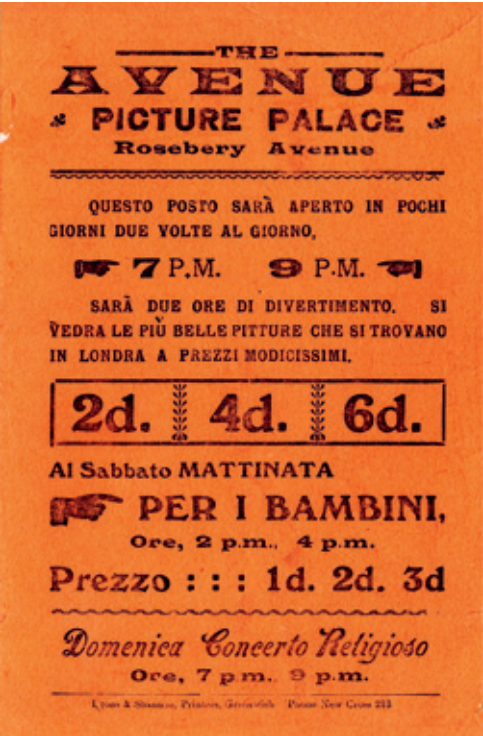
of 1909 which forced public cinemas to become licensed by local councils due to fire risk. As a result, cinemas began to rival music halls. The Avenue initially seated 574 on benches, with 66 standing, later reduced to 376 and shared the building with two printing companies and included subtitled screenings for the Italian community. Its closure was probably due to nearby Sadler's Wells Theatre opening as a full-time cinema. By 1915, 64 Rosebery Avenue had reverted to industrial use and the building survives today.

In the few years or so before the First World War, nearly all of the cinemas in the EC1/Finsbury area had opened. Among the earliest were virtually next to one another in Pentonville Road:

Angel cinema, Islington High Street, 1950s

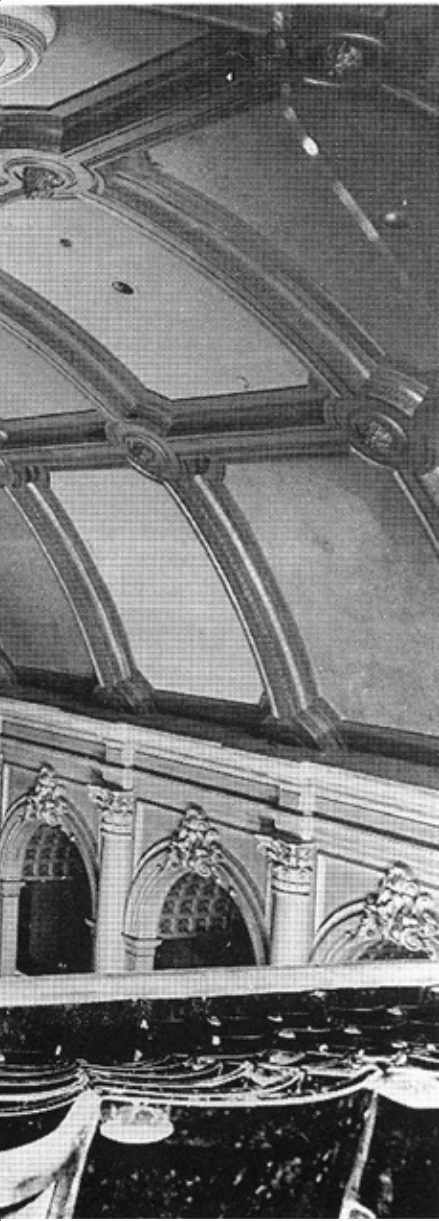
Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, 1907. It was presenting film as early as 1896, becoming a full-time cinema in 1914

Flyer announcing films for EC1's Italian community at the Avenue Picture Palace, Rosebery Avenue, 1910



HISTORY 13

Send in the clown



Flyer announcing the opening of the People's Picture Palace (later, the Rio), Skinner Street, 1913



650 and boasted “the latest and most perfectly projected pictures in the World”, as well as tip-up armchairs and being “perfectly heated and ventilated!” The Playhouse enjoyed a good run until it closed in October 1955 as the Rio – having been the Globe since 1920 – with a striking dome and semi-circular portico. During its final years it was known as a ‘flea-pit’, showing B-movies and re-runs. One customer described it as having a stiflingly humid one-storey, barn-like interior and during intervals the attendant would “spray some concoction of water and scent into the air.” The last film it screened was *Down Three Dark Streets* (1954), a US thriller.

Two months after the Skinner Street cinema opened, Finsbury’s most luxurious picture house opened which, said the *Islington Daily Gazette* of March 1913, was “a temple beautiful in the realm of picture palaces.” With its 100ft-tower, the 1,938-capacity Angel Picture Theatre offered a new movie-going experience, with an exclusive front entrance at 7 Islington High Street for circle patrons only, and a stalls entrance on White Lion Street. Plush, with marble floors, ornate brass, deep carpets and stained-glass windows, films were accompanied by the Angel Orchestra and an in-house organ. Unlike others, the Angel survived the silent years and on 29 July 1929 presented Al Jolson in *The Singing Fool* (1928), his follow up to *The Jazz Singer* (1927), itself the first feature to feature a music score, lip-synchronous singing and speech. Becoming the Odeon in 1963, the ‘temple beautiful’ finally closed in March 1972 with *Burke and Hare* (1972) and the former entrance is now a Starbucks coffee shop.

One last picture palace deserves mention. Although not in EC1 this outstanding survivor is Islington’s, and one of Britain’s, oldest surviving picture houses – The Empress Electric Theatre (1913), later the Rex (1951), and now Upper Street’s Everyman Screen on the Green (1970). While the atmosphere of the old picture houses can never be truly recaptured, with its intimate size and comfortable seats, the Screen may offer the nearest thing to that golden age of the silver screen.

the King’s Cross Cinema and the Cosy Corner Picture Playhouse at numbers 246 and 234 respectively, which both opened in 1911. The King’s Cross Cinema (later, the Cinema de Luxe) was a converted ‘shop cinema’ with 180 seats, run as cheaply as possible and not well regarded. By 1914, it had been converted to a rifle range, but closed in 1915, one of many cinemas to close during World War I. The 270-seat ‘Cosy’, was another ‘shop cinema’ that managed to survive beyond the war, finally closing in 1926.

Picture Palaces

The Cosy’s demise may have been caused by competition from the comparatively luxurious purpose-built King’s Cross Cinema that opened opposite in 1920. Originally planned for opening in 1913 (but halted due to the war), it lasted considerably longer than the Cosy, only closing in 1993 (as the Scala), following an illegal screening of Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and other financial difficulties. It is now a music and nightclub venue and snooker hall.

EC1’s first purpose-built movie house was the People’s Picture Playhouse at 12-15 Skinner Street. This opened in January 1913, seated



In his ‘Sticks in the Smoke’ project, artist Nick Andrew researches and draws London’s gardens and parks. Here, he visits Joseph Grimaldi Park where lies Clerkenwell’s pioneering showman...

The dusty, straight rise of Pentonville Road brings one to Joseph Grimaldi Park. Iron railed, it occupies the former churchyard of St James’s, built in 1788 to serve the newly laid-out suburb of Pentonville. Grimaldi Park House stands in the footprint of the original chapel, its façade catches the warming autumn sun, scribbled across by shadows from the trees.

I push open the stiff gate into a shady rectangular area and weave along the shady paths between rust-leafed chestnut and plane trees. Ancient gravestones, inscriptions eroded, stacked like ill-matched teeth against the walls, separate this quiet tree-cast area from the bright and active sports courts and the children’s playground beyond.

The park is named after the famous actor, comic performer and dancer, Joseph Grimaldi (1778–1837) his grave enclosed with curlicued railings. A pair of tragi-comedy masks hang at the foot. The comic mask grins up at the dappled sunshine turning leaves



to gold; the tragi-mask frowns down at the grave, choked with drooping plants and weeds. Grimaldi lived in this area for most of his life, best-known and celebrated for developing the role of the white-faced clown. I set up to draw where I can just glimpse the grave through a gap in the wall. It’s a warm morning but gusty bursts of breeze rattle the lime tree foliage and send scatters of maple, lime and plane leaves across the grass. Cascades of virginia creeper drape the stone walls, as red as a passing bus, a traffic light – or a clown’s nose.

“Grimaldi lived in this area for most of his life”

The leaf-strewn length of this segment erupts in grassy bulges like giant underground bubbles ready to burst out of the lawn. A dad and young daughter run up and over the hummocks. There are happy squeals from the little girl as they race back down. Buses, lorries, vans, cars growl as they start and stop on the Pentonville Road. Bright coloured rectangles flickering left to right behind the trees.

Extracted from Nick’s ‘Sticks in the Smoke’ drawing blog which began in January 2016. Nick regularly visits, researches and draws public gardens and parks in London and has illustrated ‘Bloomsbury’s Squares and Gardens’ written by Susan Jellis and recently published by The Association of Bloomsbury Squares and Gardens. To see more: Visit nickandrewdrawingprojects.wordpress.com/sticks-in-the-smoke



Grillz and thrills

Goldsmiths mentoring scheme is unearthing local talent

A student has been mentored at Goldsmiths as part of a programme to bring new talent into the jewellery business. Mohamud Sheikh Abukar, 18, who has always wanted to work in the industry, has been mentored by jeweller Ben Hawkins, who in turn learned alongside a working jeweller.

“From when I was young, I always knew I wanted to get into business, but I didn’t know which industry,” said Mohamud. “My neighbour was a manager for a jewellery shop. I remember him showing me two watches and, just by holding them, he could tell which was real and which was fake! I thought, ‘maybe I can do that.’”

After college, Mohamud bided his time for a while and then met Ben, who became his way into Goldsmiths. “I was over the moon,” he says. “Goldsmiths is a very prestigious place and I thought it might be very formal.” With Ben’s assistance, he researched designers who made chains and grillz (teeth decorations), then tried out his skills with great results.

His plan is now to start a jewellery course and gain work experience,

with a view to one day opening up his own jewellery shop. “I want to change the industry,” he says. “It has been the same for generations.”

Ben was delighted to mentor Mohamud. “So many talented people had helped me out in the past,” he said. “It’s a culture that gets passed down and after I did a foundation year at

“The industry would really improve by having new people filter through”

Goldsmiths, and a year in industry I had a bench next to a prestigious maker and I learnt from him.” He found Mohamud “really impressive. He was really clear about what he wanted to do and was interested in the commercial side of it – buying and selling, which is a huge industry. His goal was to have his own shop and help out other people like him.” When lockdown lifted Ben and Mohamud came into the workshop for a day and took moulds of each other’s teeth to make grillz, then went around Hatton Garden.

“The industry would really improve by having new people filter through it,” said Ben. “The hardest thing in this industry is getting your foot in the door. It’s trust-based. You need to get your face known and I learnt a lot about the logistics of my industry from mentoring Mo – about how hard it is to get in. I feel lucky to have been in the right place at the right time.”

The project was part of the Culture Mile Learning Mentoring Programme. Manager Rosemara Mather-Lupton matches young Londoners who have faced barriers with mentors from their chosen professions. “Mo was fascinated by jewellery design but had a limited understanding of the possible routes in,” she says. “We spoke to Goldsmiths, one of our Culture Mile Learning partners, and they suggested Ben as a mentor. The relationship has been a rich learning experience for both of them with the outcomes far exceeding the initial goals of the programme.”

For more information on the mentoring programme, contact Rosemara Mather-Lupton at RMatherLupton@museumoflondon.org.uk

The real

During the pandemic experiences in Fins

Despite being locked down for most of last year St Luke’s Community History Group found a way to stay in contact – by making a film.

The resultant film, *After the War: Finsbury Stories*, was produced by the group of about 20, among them several octogenarians who remember the war.

Among the memories were ones from member Irene, who was in the tragedy at Wenlock Brewery off City Road which became an air raid shelter by night, and which took a during the Blitz when the brewery’s refrigeration plant leaked ammonia gas, with many casualties. “It was kept not publicised and quite secret,” says Irene, in the film.

“They all grew up here and live here still,” says Polly Mann, convenor of the group. “Some of the group were refugees, and others remembered playing in the bomb site that became the Barbican. Some of their memories were quite horrific.”

The film also includes the members’ recollections of Finsbury as a stand-alone borough – which was discontinued in 1965 – and innovative housing and health projects such as Pine Street’s

Learnin

After a year of lo residents are aim

Kate Willoughby and Juliana Lottmann, two residents of the Barbican are united in the desire to re-connect and nurture a stronger sense of community after lockdown.

Kate is an actor/writer, whose work with grassroots initiatives #Emilymatters and #SheMatters draws on the powerful Suffragette legacy, using drama and creativity to help empower women and young people to use their voice and be heard. She is collaborating with Juliana on a series of interactive pop-up events in and around the City and Clerkenwell.

Juliana started a kindness stone community in gardens and parks

‘Blitz kids’

this local history group made a film about their bury during the war years and its aftermath



Finsbury Health Centre, catering to what group member, David Hyams recalls as “the second most densely populated borough in London” with 12,000 residents only 200 of whom had baths at home in the 1920s. Chris Smith, now Lord Smith of Finsbury, is also in the film talking about the role of Finsbury Council, discussing the Health Centre: “The architect, [Berthold] Lubetkin, had this fundamental philosophy about all his work that nothing was too good for ordinary people.”

The group reflected on the huge changes

happening once again in the area. Joseph Trotter (whose father was Mayor of the old borough) discussing the huge new buildings on City Road, said “It’s unbelievable that ordinary people can’t afford to live here any more.”

The film, which was produced with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, can be seen on YouTube. Meanwhile Polly is currently seeking a special screening for the community in July. If anyone is interested in seeing the film at the screening – or offering a cinema for the purpose – please get in touch with Polly Mann at polly.mann@wickaward.co.uk

Tech’s not all bad and can help us to connect says local therapist Al Tyers



Clerkenwell, like no other place I have lived or worked, blends the old with the new. I have lived here since 2004 and work here as a psychotherapist: I love to walk from my consulting room in Coldbath Square to the St John Priory flower garden, or to Smithfield, knowing that people have been coming there to trade for maybe a thousand years. That takes me past furniture designers, bike engineers, digital agencies, post-production houses... we’ve got a history here of history, but also of being at the cutting edge. A couple of hundred years ago it might have been watches and musical instruments being made by craftspeople here, now it is software and tech start-ups.

Therapy, however, has tended to regard itself, perhaps a bit loftily, as being future-proof: two humans sitting in a room. Talking. Listening. Recognisable, in process if not necessarily in values or thinking, from Sigmund Freud’s time – although I don’t know of any therapist who smokes a cigar while seeing their clients. Therapists rhetorically asked: how can you replace that human connection, that physical being there with someone? Well, since March 2020, when the first lockdown took hold, we have found out: by meeting with people for online therapy.

What was once a niche or maybe a service that might be offered if a client was on holiday became not just the mainstream but the

only stream. There were losses: some clients felt it wasn’t right, that they couldn’t connect as meaningfully. For some clients, their home situation was the very reason they needed counselling in the first place. I’ve done sessions online with people who are in their cars or in the park, trying to make things work, to offer something that is good enough. Does it fit exactly with the old fashioned classic ideal? No. Does it work and help people? Yes.

Necessity might have been the mother of invention (it’s always mothers, isn’t it?) but clients and therapists alike have now had a taste of a world where people can get support and a space to talk that can be more immediate and more flexible, that can be lower-cost, and hopefully more inclusive.

It also encourages us to think about what else tech could bring. Lots of us might already be familiar with heart-rate watches or step-counters, and wearable tech is already in use that could relay heart rate, skin perspiration, and sleep cycles to monitor, or predict, panic and PTSD-type episodes. Online sessions could become augmented reality: an on-screen recreation of the therapy room and the therapist, or a virtual reality consulting room. Science fiction, and the more out-there behavioural scientists, have been considering whether a robot could provide psychotherapy since at least the 1960s. You’d hope that a therapybot might not replace a human counsellor just yet, but among the many lessons we have learned since March 2020 is that connection, even if it looks different to what we had thought, is something we all need and deserve. In Clerkenwell, I am sure we are as well-placed as anywhere to hold true to our foundations while meeting the future with optimism.

Al Tyers is a psychotherapist in Clerkenwell and online: altyerstherapy.com

g to reconnect

ckdown, two Barbican

ing to reconnect the community



and creates events for kids and adults, around mindfulness, meditation, and mental health. She also leads local groups with St Luke’s and LAWRS (Latin American Women’s Rights Services).

Together, Kate and Juliana are running multiple projects in the area, including free mindfulness groups, a playgroup to support parents with children born during the Covid lockdown, as well as creating stories that celebrate the people of this part of London and their neighbours.

A partnership with the Barbican Library is coming soon and will help bring more events and workshops to residents. Partnerships with St Luke’s, The Peel Institute and other community centres are also in the making. Keep in touch at https://linktr.ee/Re_Connect

COMMUNITY

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A student from the YES Outdoors workshop for young people



Mind how you go

As lockdown abates we should remain vigilant about our mental health

By Elena Vardon

The easing of lockdown restrictions has lifted some spirits but the effects of prolonged stay at home directives may have caused longer-lasting mental health scars. Raising awareness around the triggers and coping mechanisms for stress and anxiety is more prominent than ever.

According to a study conducted by the Stress Management Society, 65 per cent of adults in the UK have felt more stressed under Covid-19 restrictions than in pre-pandemic times. Its founder and chief de-stressing officer Neil Shah told *EC1 Echo* that in fact “we have a secondary pandemic, a mental health one.”

“The lack of connection, the lack of certainty, the lack of control we have in our situation is causing people to experience a lot of stress and anxiety, which in turn is affecting their mental health. If you don’t get the support, poor mental health can become mental illness.”

Taking steps to mitigate the damage that the coronavirus pandemic has caused at a personal and collective level. Educating people to retake control, certainty and reconnect with others can be the way forward.



“We have a secondary pandemic, a mental health one”

Take care of your physical health

Moving your body, exercising and seeking medical attention in case of pain, are ways to prevent and relieve physical aches before they become chronic.

Annie from Islington and Clerkenwell Chiropractic and Complementary Health Clinics and her team are “encouraging people to prioritise their health and their wellbeing and to come and visit [them] for any back and neck and shoulder problems.”

Take care of your mental health

The Stress Management Society has put together a series of free resources to practice mindfulness, available at stress.org.uk.

“The key thing is giving people the tools, skills and confidence to be able to start taking control of their experience,” said Neil Shah.

Based on Rosebery Avenue, the charity Body & Soul has been mobilising to bring a community response to the coronavirus pandemic. One of their initiatives, MindSET, provides digital resources for young people in psychological distress, available at bodyandsoulcharity.org/mindset.

Frontline staff and family can also book crisis counselling appointments with one of their trained therapists.

Take care of those around you

Reconnecting with the community and restoring those ties lost in virtual encounters is crucial. Children and teenagers in particular have suffered from the lack of development opportunities. Islington Giving raised £35k by mid-May to support young people and respond to increasing needs in the borough. The funding will be awarded through the Young Grant Makers programme, through which 15 young people aged between 16 and 23 meet every week and choose in which local groups and projects to support (see picture). Anu Liisanantti from Islington Giving said, “It’s so important to engage and involve the young people themselves in developing this area of work.”

For more information:

Visit islingtongiving.org.uk

Visit bodyandsoulcharity.org

Visit clerkenwellislingtonclinics.co.uk



#Mellow – a meme created by a school student for #Mood
Courtesy of Culture Mile

to create memes with a hashtag describing how they have been feeling at this significant moment in history. Using a webcam, viewers can put themselves at the centre of the artwork as the students’ memes take the shape of the viewer’s face, allowing them to move around and interact with the various artworks like a digital mirror.

“The #Mood project gave students an outlet to create during the pandemic”

Stuart designed the piece in collaboration with two groups of students, from both primary and secondary schools, who attended an online workshop. During the workshops, the students learnt about what it is like to be a professional media artist and created their own digital drawings of the ‘memeverse’, which later informed the final design. Stuart Batchelor said, “The #Mood project gave students an outlet to create during the pandemic and highlighted the importance of art adapting to global circumstances. It turned something isolating into a positive, social and creative experience.”

You can find out more about the project and view the final artwork on Culture Mile’s website.

Stuart Batchelor, the artist who designed the interactive artwork for #Mood
Credit Matthew Kaltenborn

Moor Lane Community Garden
Featured in *Wallpaper** magazine’s list of best architectural gardens around the world, Moor Lane Community Garden continues to flourish in its pop-up home. Most recently, Culture Mile launched a new poetry commission within the garden itself.

Written by Kit Finnie, *a portrait of you in a garden, now* appears across eight panels as part of the urban garden’s structure. In order to develop the poem, Kit hosted eight poetry and writing workshops for multiple community groups and organisations in the local area, together with Guildhall School students, resulting in a series of poems written by local residents.

As well as writing the poem, Kit facilitated eight poetry and writing workshops, alongside Guildhall School students, for residents and community groups in the local area. These explored various themes including community and coping, home and boundaries, sound and silence, and surprise and delight. These workshops helped generate ideas for the final poem alongside poetry written by the workshop participants.

You can read, listen to, or view the final poem as part of a short film on the Culture Mile website, where you can also read the community poems by the workshop participants.

Creativity in the Culture Mile community

Culture Mile is the City of London’s cultural district, stretching from Farringdon to Moorgate. Led by the City of London Corporation, with 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.

#Mood
Last month, to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week, Culture Mile launched #Mood – an interactive and collaborative artwork made up of

digital and hand drawn memes created by school students to represent their feelings during the pandemic. Created by Stuart Batchelor and produced by Aphra Shemza from Art in Flux, #Mood combines unique digital and hand drawn artworks by students from City of London and City of London Academies Trust schools with Stuart’s bespoke universe and interactive graphics. Ella James (Head of Faculty, Art Design Technology – City of London Academy Highbury Grove) inspired the idea, which encouraged students to explore past and present art, taking inspiration from artists such as Andy Warhol and Barbara Kruger,



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

CULTURE
mile
SPONSORED CONTENT



Poet Kit Finnie in Moor Lane Community Garden
Credit © Em Davis/Culture Mile

LETTERS •

Making history

Johnny Burns
Myddleton Street
EC1

I am a local resident who received a delivered copy of *EC1 Echo*. This was the first I have seen of the paper and I thoroughly enjoyed the read and its fine layout. The historic features were particularly fascinating as well as how our community is changing (in a good way) during this horrid pandemic. Would it be possible to safely pick up (or receive) past copies of the paper? I would love to read them. Online is fine, but you can't beat a print (better for the eyes too!)

Editor's note: All back issues of EC1 Echo are available for download at ec1echo.co.uk

Walking the pandemic

Janet Dowling EC1

Like most, I've done a lot of local walks during the lockdowns. Rather whimsically we found part of the London Wall and decided



to follow it as far as it would take us. It was a gorgeously sunny day; the reflection created the illusion of an ocean behind St Paul's. The line of the wall, with its foundations especially well preserved, remains intact after 1700 years. You will need to weave in and out a bit. Sometimes we felt like we were in someone's back garden; it was



so quiet. In either direction, the London Wall walk will eventually take you to the Museum of London where you can find out more about what you have seen. A longer version of Janet's walk is online at www.ec1echo.co.uk. If you want to follow the walk, the links below are useful

- archaeology-travel.com/travel-reports/the-london-wall-walk
- londonmymind.com/london-wall-walk

Past and present

Joe Trotter
Goswell Road EC1

I'm writing to let you know how much I enjoy your paper. I've lived in EC1 all my life and love to keep up to date with all the local news. It is so important to know what is going on in your local area. I deliver copies of the paper to friends less able to get out and everybody looks forward to their copy. My favourite section is the local history story -there are so many great stories to share and I hope that your paper continues to bring them to local people.

We accept letters of up to 200 words from people and organisations in the area. Submit your letter by Tuesday 20th July:
Email info@EC1Echo.com

LISTINGS •

Submit your listing
We can include low-cost community events taking place in EC1. For the next issue, email the details of your event to ec1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk

EXHIBITS

Jean Dubuffet: Brutal Beauty
Until 22 August
Barbican Centre, EC2Y 8DS

An exhibition celebrating French artist Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), one of the most provocative voices in postwar modern art.

£5-£18
Call 020 7638 4141
Visit barbican.org.uk

How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces with Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative
Until 23 December

Work by radical 1980s feminist architecture cooperative Matrix.

Free
Call 020 7638 4141
Visit barbican.org.uk

Wish You Were Here: 151 Years of British Postcards
Until 2 January 2022
The Postal Museum, 15-20 Phoenix Place WC1X 0DA

Celebrating the 151st anniversary of the British postcard and its iconic role in connecting people for more than a century and a half.

£16 (with entry to the museum)
Call 0300 0300 700
Visit postalmuseum.org

WALKS

Tunnel Walks
Various dates: 15:00-18:30
15-20 Phoenix Place WC1X 0DA

The Postal Museum is opening up the 100-year-old Mail Rail tunnels for an exclusive underground walking tour that will allow you to discover one of London's best-kept secrets.

£55 per person
Call 0300 0300 700
Visit postalmuseum.org

Clerkenwell and Islington Guides' Festival of Walks
Saturday 19 until Sunday 27 June

Clerkenwell's monastic quarter will explore the area outside the City of London, the influence of Henry VIII and how Clerkenwell got its name. Other walks include the Spa Field Riots, Black Islington, Sadlers Wells, Radical Islington Walks will either be 1.5 hours or 45 mins including some at lunchtime.

Full length walks £6
Shorter walks £5
Reduced rates during the Festival
Visit islingtonguidedwalks.com/our-walks/

LGBTQ

Pride of Place: Celebrating Islington's LGBTQ+ Heritage
21 June - 18 September
Various events

Pride of Place uncovers and celebrates places of LGBTQ heritage across England, ranging from the frontiers of Roman Britain to the gay pubs and clubs that remain important in our lives today.

Visit islingtonpride.com

MUSIC

LSO St Luke's Friday Lunchtime Concerts
11 June, 18 June, 16 July
Fabric London
77A Charterhouse St EC1

Make the most of your lunch break and enjoy a free, 45-minute informal concert at LSO St Luke's

Visit lso.co.uk/lso-st-lukes.html

Celebrating Neckerchief Rock - The Sound, The Clothes, The People
June 6, 3-10pm
56 Farringdon Road EC1R 3BL

An evening of music & chat with Robert Elms & Danny George Wilson

Tickets £30, includes "Kuschty Pie" & Mash
Call 020 7253 4285
Visit thebetsey.com

Come Down And Meet The Folks with Big Steve Arlene
June 27, 5-9:30pm
56 Farringdon Road EC1R 3BL

Live music and DJ on the last Sunday of each month

Free (donation requested)
Call 020 7253 4285
Visit thebetsey.com

Francesca Dego and Francesca Leonardi
2 June, 7-11pm
Fidelio Orchestra Café, Clerkenwell Road EC1

Francesca Dego is the acclaimed London-based Italian violinist. Join her with her long-standing duo partner Francesca Leonardi for an eclectic programme.

From £15
Visit fideliorchestracafe.com

Leonard Elschenbroich and Alexei Grynyuk
17 June, 7-11pm
Fidelio Orchestra Café, Clerkenwell Road EC1

Brahms' cello sonatas played by Leonard Elschenbroich and Alexei Grynyuk.

From £15
Visit thebetsey.com

SOCIAL

Singalong
Every second Tuesday of the month, 6pm

An online singalong with professional pianist and Clerkenwell resident, Gisela. Email gismey@gmx.de for the link.

Free
Visit peelinstitute.org.uk
Call 020 7837 6082

The Betsey Book Quiz
July 20, 6.30-9.30pm

London's only monthly book quiz!

£2 entry, maximum team size five. Prizes to be won!
Call 020 7253 4285
Visit thebetsey.com

Brooching The Subject
Until 30 June, 9am-5pm



Goldsmith's Centre has reopened, it's possible to go and see 'The Brooch Unpinned', an exhibition that celebrates the art of the brooch. A selection from the Goldsmiths' Company's jewellery collection traces the evolution of contemporary brooch design - art that you can wear. Dora Thornton, the curator of the exhibition was partly inspired by a single brooch - Lady Hale's diamanté spider. "It sparked a global conversation," she says. Power, authority, and wealth - and the wearable art.

Call 020 7566 7650
Visit goldsmiths-centre.org

Because of possible Covid-19 restrictions, dates and times might change, so please check with the venue first.

Support local independent journalism



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

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

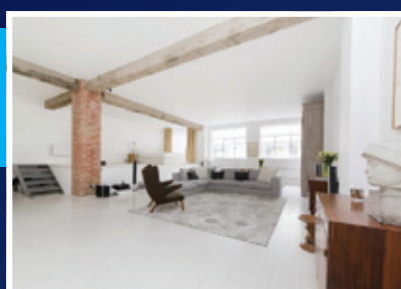
Winkworth

for every step...



Wilmington Square, WC1
£1,400,000 Leasehold

A spacious ground floor and lower ground floor apartment set within this substantial Grade II listed house. This Georgian conversion offers plenty of character overlooking the highly sought-after Wilmington Square.



Ziggurat Building, EC1
£1,000,000 Share of Freehold

An exceptional first floor studio apartment in the Art Deco styled Ziggurat Building. The former print works are located on Saffron Hill and are much sought after.



Bowling Green Lane, EC1
£1,690,000 Leasehold

This large three bedroom apartment is situated on the second floor of this small lift serviced warehouse conversion and offers in excess of 1,450 sq ft.



Lexington Apartments, City Road, EC1
£895,000 Leasehold

Located on the raised ground floor of a secure modern development this spacious apartment offers two large double bedrooms, two bathrooms and large open-plan living dining room with separate fully fitted kitchen.



Radcliffe Building, Bourne Estate, EC1
£750,000 Leasehold

A truly stunning three bedroom, two bathroom apartment in this incredibly well sought after Grade II Listed purpose built residential block on the fringes of Bloomsbury and Clerkenwell.

Winkworth Clerkenwell & City

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