

# EC1 ECHO

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Credit Alistair Levy



## The spirit of Christmas present

As the Charles Dickens Museum approaches its centenary, *EC1 Echo* talks to director Cindy Sughrue about the museum, his life in this area, and how Dickens gave shape to Christmas

● BY OLIVER BENNETT ●

Although he died in 1870, Charles Dickens' reach seems to grow each year. The two Georgian houses on Doughty Street in Bloomsbury that constitute the Charles Dickens Museum are the mere bricks and mortar manifestation

of a continuing and growing interest in the 19th century writer – one that sees a huge seasonal spike every Christmas.

It's remarkable to think that when the Dickens Fellowship – a group of admirers, associates and two of Dickens' 10 children – bought the houses in 1922, it was to keep the writer's

name alive lest we forgot him. "They feared the impact of Dickens might be lost," says the museum's director Cindy Sughrue. "But now the Dickens Fellowship today has branches all over the world." Next year will see 100 years since the house was acquired, followed by the museum's centenary in 1925,

and although Sughrue won't be drawn on plans, it can only further his fame.

But firstly – and taking *A Christmas Carol* into account – why is Dickens quite so associated with Christmas? "He's widely credited with inventing Christmas, and while some think that's

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1<sup>st</sup> DecWaning  
Crescent

11%/0.54

31<sup>st</sup> JanNew  
Moon

1%/0.54

*EC1 Echo* is the area's free community newspaper. We publish bi-monthly and distribute 7,500 free copies of each issue – and we will continue to do so during the ongoing public health crisis.

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## NEWS

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## TfL troubles could affect net zero target

BY JOE TALORA,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**T**fL's precarious financial situation could jeopardise efforts to tackle poor air quality and achieve net zero in London by 2030, a leading thinktank has warned.

With TfL facing a state of "managed decline" due to the £1.2 billion funding gap revealed this week, several projects and upgrades across London's transport network are facing the axe beyond 2023, while bus and Tube services may be reduced.

Back in September, Sadiq Khan announced that all new buses in London would be zero emission in a bid to have a completely green fleet by 2034, three years earlier than originally planned. There are currently around 550 zero emission buses in London out of a fleet of 9,000, with the rest powered by diesel.

But TfL may be forced to scale down the roll out of electric and hydrogen-powered buses, while plans to make improvements to safety for cyclists and pedestrians at busy junctions may also be scrapped.

Claire Harding, research director

at the Centre for London think-tank, has said that London's role as a "leader" in green transport is "now at risk", with a reduction in services likely to lead to more car use.

Ms Harding said: "In recent years, London has become a leader in greener and cleaner transport – it's been good for the planet, and good for Londoners' health. But this is now at risk.

"Without a sustainable and long-term funding deal, Transport for London won't be able to invest in better walking and cycling routes. They will have to keep using older, more polluting buses for longer. And to make matters even worse, they might have to cut Tube and bus services, forcing Londoners back into their cars for everyday journeys.

"We'll never get to net zero if more people travel by car, but there's a real possibility that this will happen – and it doesn't need to."

Campaigners have also warned that plans to scrap TfL's Healthy Streets scheme, which promotes walking and cycling, will also have a negative impact on air quality and the climate, further encouraging car dependency in London.

Simon Munk, campaigns manager



Credit  
Suzi Kim/Unsplash

at London Cycling Campaign, said that it is "absolutely vital" for TfL to secure a long-term funding deal from the Government to continue London's shift away from car use.

Mr Munk said: "We wrote to Alok Sharma and Grant Shapps only a few weeks ago, in the shadow of COP26, to point out that it is absolutely vital that London gets a fair, long-term funding deal for transport, because we're

leading the country on shifting away from cars, reducing pollution, moving to climate safe streets, increasing walking and cycling and reducing car use.

"Many of the DfT's own targets on things like mode shift are predicated on London continuing to deliver on these issues. London leads the country on these actions."

While Sadiq Khan has been banging the drum for London since the scale of TfL's financial woes was revealed this week, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps on Friday accused London's mayor of "public lobbying".

Mr Shapps said: "I think what we're seeing here is a bit of public lobbying in advance of the next settlement which takes place in December.

"People can see we've stepped up to the plate and been able to keep TfL running. It's really important that the mayor does his part and addresses some of the for example, terms and conditions of pensions, where the taxpayer is paying a lot of money in and we need to make sure that this is run in a manner which not just benefits Londoners, but actually the rest of the taxpayers in the UK as well."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## New exercise group for SEND children

*A group for special educational needs or disability children has been started*

**A** group for SEND children in the City and nearby areas has been set up in Golden Lane. In partnership with the Fusion Lifestyle gym, the City of London Parent Carer Forum funding has gained access to free sports and leisure for SEND children, parents and carers in the City of London and surrounding boroughs until March 2022. Activities on offer at Golden Lane Sports Centre will be dedicated SEND swimming lessons, SEND football for



ages 7-12 and SEND teen gym for ages 15-25. The funding will allow these lessons to be offered to SEND children at no cost.

Founding member of the City of London Parent

Carer Forum, and a parent herself, Harshita Patel is pleased at this outcome.

"When the pandemic happened, we felt very isolated and it was a great trial just getting the families out there to services," she says. "It's a great achievement to get the funds and I hope that a lot of carers will attend – including those in charge of children with autism, ADHD, dyslexia and other learning difficulties."

For more information visit: [cityparentcarers.org](http://cityparentcarers.org)

## Recognition for EC1 Echo

**W**e're pleased that since we started in 2019, *EC1 Echo* has already been shortlisted for an award – the ICNN Independent Community Newspaper of the Year. Speaking about the *Echo* the judges said: "A lovely looking local newspaper with good, crisp design and well printed throughout. It has a distinctive masthead with a wide, interesting mix of stories giving the whole of its area a voice."

Our stablemate *Enfield Dispatch* was also on the list as 'highly commended'. At the event the excellent 10-year-old *Hackney Citizen* won the category and we congratulate them. All in all, it shows that the appetite for local news is actually growing. At this time, we'd like to take the opportunity to thank all our readers and friends, our backers The Peel and our advertisers, for helping us to get this far. We're looking forward to a great local future as the voice of EC1.



● Continued from Page 1

an overstatement, he did make it hugely popular,” says Sughrue. “Of course a festival in the darkest days is universal, and Dickens drew on that tradition. But the celebration of Christmas is fixed throughout Dickens’ writing, beginning with his first novel *The Pickwick Papers*, where he describes this beautiful family and friends’ gathering for Christmas, with ice skating, walks, feasting, party games and telling ghost stories around the fire – just like in *A Christmas Carol*. This was the kind of Christmas that Dickens had with his parents, John and Elizabeth, although gift-giving didn’t really take hold until the later Victorian era.”

Multifarious film and TV adaptations have tied Dickens in with a picturesque London full of snow, carriages and top hats. Has it all been airbrushed? “While some adaptations remove the grittier scenes, all his novels were accurate descriptions of what life was like at that time,” says Sughrue. And thereby hangs a seasonal message, she adds, “that no one is beyond redemption, and that we all can do something to make the world a little bit lighter.” It’s a powerful message that galvanises the message of Christmas – or as Dickens described it, “a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely...”

This is a very important facet of Dickens, who had political antennae. “Dickens was a very active social reform campaigner, social commentator and critic, who realised as early on as early as *Oliver Twist* that he could draw attention to contemporary social issues more powerfully through fiction than he could through his letters to the *Morning Chronicle*,” says Sughrue. “He threw the spotlight on how real people lived to the widest audience. Even Queen Victoria admired *Oliver Twist*, while her prime minister at the time, Lord Melbourne, didn’t want to dwell on poverty.” In Clerkenwell, then poor, he chose locations – Saffron Hill, Cowcross Street, Smithfield, Mount Pleasant, Pear Tree Court, Hatton Garden et al – which suited his true-to-life writing. And while Tiny Tim, Fagin and ‘Artful Dodger’ Jack Dawkins were fictional characters,



▲ Dining Room at Christmas  
Credit Dickens Museum

says Sughrue, “he was writing about real people, places, situations and issues”. He’d go drinking alone in the One Tun, near Leather Lane, just to observe the clientele and it became fictionalised as the “Three Cripples” where Bill Sikes was a regular. Small wonder he term ‘Dickensian’ now denotes grim conditions and abject poverty, and that Ebenezer Scrooge, ‘as solitary as an oyster’, is a word commonly used without people consciously thinking of where it comes from.

“People see the film *Oliver!* and think *Oliver Twist* is a children’s book, which it isn’t,” says Sughrue. “Dickens was a chronicler and his characters were based largely on people he knew.

“When *Oliver Twist* is accused of pickpocketing he’s hauled up in front of a magistrate at Hatton Garden’s magistrate court, Mr Fang. This was actually Mr AS Laing, a magistrate notorious for sending children to prison ships. In our collection is a letter from Dickens to a court reporter where he says, ‘I know about this magistrate and want to accurately describe him. Could you smuggle

me in one morning?’ Dickens wanted people to know exactly what he was talking about.” For anyone interested in following his trail, the Museum has a number of walking tours that depart or return here, including an *Oliver Twist*-themed one.

As ever in London, the poor and rich lived

cheek by jowl and Doughty Street was then a 30-year-old gated development for Dickens’ “frightfully first-class family mansion, involving awful responsibilities”. Here, Dickens lived with his young wife Catherine and his growing brood. He wrote *Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Barnaby Rudge*, edited a monthly magazine, wrote short stories, sketches, theatre reviews, and letters to editors. “He was incredibly dynamic and when he left here he was a worldwide phenomenon, achieved international fame at the age of 30,” says Sughrue. The museum is a luscious recreation of the era, with Dickens’s writing desk and walking stick among thousands of other items.

But Dickens reforming zeal was never far away. In 1842, a report into the conditions in mines and factories was published and Dickens was horrified. He intended to write a pamphlet, but instead had the *Ghost of Christmas Present* fly over the factories and spy ‘ignorance and want’. “Dickens presented his dire view of what people faced in England in 1843 – and

it was supremely effective.”

In the mid-19th century many charitable foundations were set up with Dickens’ influence to the fore. “In *A Christmas Carol*, three men come into Scrooge’s office asking for donations to the poor at Christmas time,” says Sughrue. “In real life Dickens set up

various charitable efforts to help people from poor writers through to the children of cloth workers and weavers.” Many still exist today, and Dickens was instrumental in the founding of Great Ormond Street Hospital, after a campaigning article called *Drooping Buds* talked of the importance of England’s new Hospital for Sick Children. “He galvanised support and was an activist,” says Sughrue.

He was also a celebrity. When, at 31, Dickens went to America to the first time fans followed him down the street. “It was like Beatlemania,” says Sughrue. “In one of his many funny letters, he talks about not cutting his hair as the barber would sell his locks. Everyone wanted a piece of him.” Even his own father John – the inspiration for the debtor Mr Micawber – cut out his son’s signature to sell to autograph hunters. But Dickens had demons, and was a “complex character with a temper and manic depressive. He was charming, the life and soul of the party. He would have been the most charismatic person you’d ever met, but challenging to live with.” This is also part of his history.

Dickens moved to Marylebone, then Gads Hill Place in Kent, but his soul is in the museum, now reopened after a Covid closure. “We launched an appeal and then subsequently got some grant funding and we’re very grateful for that,” says Sughrue. “It’s also testament to the good people of London who came on board for their museum.”

There’s always more to discover about Dickens. “Items keep coming up,” says Sughrue, showing a newly donated photograph of the writer. “There’s the occasional letter that hasn’t been discovered – there are 16,000 letters so far – publications from the past.” And such is his reputation that he attracts all kinds of people, with half of all visitors from overseas. “Dickens was translated into 18 languages. He’s truly international.” This Christmas alone there are new *Christmas Carol* adaptations with Mark Gatiss and one with Stephen Mangan. “I love the fact that people still have an appetite for *A Christmas Carol* and still finding new adaptations and angles.” And to echo Bob Cratchit’s toast, ‘God bless us, every one!’

**Charles Dickens Museum**  
48-49 Doughty St, London WC1N 2LX  
Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am–5pm

**For more information:**  
Call 020 7405 2127  
Visit [dickensmuseum.com](http://dickensmuseum.com)



▲ A newly found daguerreotype of Dickens showing him in profile Credit Dickens Museum



# How the City is emerging creatively from the pandemic

**T**he City of London – Clerkenwell's close neighbour – had a tough time in Covid. It's only just coming back now, with its half-a-million plus workforce returning in dribs and drabs.

But as the Square Mile slowly fills up again, there's been a change of emphasis as culture is being placed at its heart. The final report of the Culture & Commerce Taskforce – called *A Year of Fuelling Creative Renewal*: it ran for a year from October 2020 – has proposed that culture and commerce could work together more fruitfully. For example, one aspect shortly to be convened is a new Culture Mile Business Improvement District, which will take the recommendations of the Taskforce further.

"The Taskforce was part of a recognition by the City of the value of the creative sector," says Sian Bird, head of Partnerships and Strategic Projects with Culture Mile. "The organisation Culture Mile, which launched in 2017, had developed that idea and now the need for recovery after Covid is bringing it forward."

This does not just mean that the City will promote its institutions such as the Barbican



Credit  
Laura Chouette/Unsplash

Centre and the Museum of London, says Bird – more that it will do more to promote and integrate 'creative' industries.

"We've got almost 600 creative firms registered in Culture Mile area that employ over 7000 people," says Bird. "Within that category there's a lot of different clusters, from media and design to performance and visual arts, but the point is that the City is trying to understand how it can maximise

the potential of this incredible creative sector to help reshape it following the twin effects of Covid and Brexit."

In an area previously known almost exclusively for financial industries, there's another factor afoot, which Bird calls "an appetite between the creative and the commercial sectors to work together better." This could be done by harnessing creativity and innovation – which obviously

spans all sectors – so as to accelerating the recovery from the pandemic.

"Creativity and innovation is now a big thing in the financial sector," says Bird. "There's an interesting crossover point between creativity and commercial sectors." Not only could this new approach attract new talent, she says, it would also help the City become a place with more leisure, "where there's lots for families to do at the weekend and a strong cultural offer." As part of this approach, she adds, the City has an interesting opportunity to think about what people want from a business district. "It could become more animated as a visitor destination, with inspiring work places that feel alive and inspiring. Culture and the creative industries can play a role in those kinds of places."

As an example, Bird cites investment company Helical, one of whose retail units was recently empty. "We put in an exhibition Hidden City that we commissioned with photographer called Emile Holba and we're looking for more sites for where we could do what we've done there – showing creative works ground-floor space spaces, and identifying workspace for creative businesses."

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# Scooter boost

## More e-scooter rentals since ULEZ extension

BY JOE TALORA,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**T**he number of Londoners hiring e-scooters as part of TfL's trial rental scheme has increased since the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone, figures have revealed.

The three operators involved in the trial – Tier, Dott and Lime – reported a 30 per cent increase in the number of new users in the week following the expansion of the ULEZ.

During that same period, the total number of journeys made using TfL-approved e-scooters increased by almost 10 per cent.

Alan Clarke, senior director of policy for northern Europe at Lime, has said that there is a “direct causal link” between the ULEZ expansion and the increase in users hiring e-scooters.

Mr Clarke said: “We had a

bump during the week of about 30 per cent more new riders. Part of that, certainly, is going to be due to the increased focus that was on sustainable travel while the expansion of the ULEZ was underway.

“That week there was a lot of media coverage around the need for Londoners to continually find more sustainable, lower-emission ways of travelling and also the fact that there was going to be an increased charge for older vehicles to drive within central London.”

He added that the coverage of the ULEZ expansion led to people “taking another look at the choices that they make when they travel”.

More than 355,000 e-scooter journeys have so far been made since the TfL hire trial began in June, 100,000 of which occurred between September 27 and October 24, the month leading up to the ULEZ expansion.

Alex Williams, TfL's Director of City Planning, said: “We're determined to clean up London's toxic air and walking, cycling, public transport and

innovative forms of transport such as rental e-scooters and bikes all have a potential role to play in this.

“We're pleased to see more people choosing cleaner forms of transport and will continue to work with councils, e-scooter and bike hire operators and others to invest in low-carbon and low-emission ways to travel around the capital.”

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan officially expanded the Ultra-Low Emission Zone to the north and south circular roads on October 25 and has said that it will bring cleaner air to an additional 3.8 million people.

Mr Khan said: “The initial indications are that we are seeing fewer non-compliant vehicles, we're seeing fewer vehicles which is fantastic because it means that [the ULEZ] is working. But it will take about a month to get the proper raw figures because we deliberately introduced this at a quiet period during half-term, so you've got to compare apples with apples.”



## Ton up kids

**I**n another twist for the area's reputation, a new edition of Triumph Motorcycle's Bonneville has been called the Street Twin EC1 Special Edition. Why? Because it ‘takes inspiration from the vibrant custom-

classic motorcycle culture of London's East End – particularly the historic streets of EC1, the iconic London postcode’. We assume it passes the ULEZ test and won't be driving into any LTNs...

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# News from The Peel



Credit Rob Harris & House of Illustration

**The Peel is your local community centre, based in the heart of Clerkenwell since 1898. We offer classes and activities for all ages and assist local people to set-up projects which benefit the whole community. This includes your favourite local newspaper, the EC1 Echo!**

**From the Archives**

“The Borough of Finsbury is notorious for its overcrowding. It has the highest percentage of tuberculosis in the whole of London.” – *Peel Institute*



Mothers line up for a race on the Playing Field in Ilford, 1933–34 annual report.

*annual report, 1931–32*  
Established by Finsbury MP Sir George Masterman Gillett, The Peel has been at the heart of Clerkenwell life for over 120 years. First opening its doors in 1898, the Peel Institute was established to provide young men with a ‘social centre for recreation’, away from the temptations of local public houses. Initially housed in a Quaker Friends Meeting House, the organisation can thank the building’s previous occupants for its name. A woodyard



Peel male voice choir, 1906 annual report

manufacturing long wooden instruments preceded the Quakers on the site. These wooden tools, called ‘peels’, were used to slide bread in and out of huge ovens. The name clearly appealed to locals, who nicknamed the meeting house The Peel. It seems Sir George must have liked the name too!  
Our archives contain reports which stretch back many decades. I wonder how many organisations still have a copy of their 1906 annual report? These booklets are gems which offer a window into the social history of Clerkenwell and its residents. An article titled “Open Air Work”, featured in the 1931-32 edition, describes the value of an Ilford playing field. This was purchased by the Peel Institute to provide Clerkenwell residents with a healthy green space for picnics, sport and general recreation, away from the overcrowded tenement blocks which dominated the area

at that time. The report proudly declared that ‘many thousands’ of men and women visited this treasured green space at weekends, where ‘children romp in the field to their hearts’ delight.’  
We look forward to sharing more snippets from our archives in future *EC1 Echos*.  
**A Very Caring Podcast**  
One of the many advantages of being part of this area is the wealth of interesting neighbours we live alongside. Opposite our home at 3 Corners Centre on Northampton Road is The London Metropolitan Archives, who are currently leading a project which takes us on a journey back through time to explore the social history of care.  
The archives are home to a fascinating collection of vintage recordings of Londoners talking about their experiences of giving and



receiving care. A group from The Peel are enjoying listening to these voices from years gone by and discovering the stories of how these people contributed to the wellbeing of fellow Londoners through education, health and social care.

One group participant commented, "It was an amazing session - I love it!" and others have told us this journey into the past is very interesting and informative.

The group are now busy making a podcast of their own about the social history of care. You'll have to make sure you pick up the next edition of the *EC1 Echo* to find out how to listen in!

### Mapping Clerkenwell

Our relationship with our friends at London Metropolitan Archives doesn't end with care! We are also working with them on another exciting project, alongside the wonderful House of Illustration, to create a new, illustrated map of the area. Over six weeks participants from The Peel explored the history and stories of Clerkenwell and shared their own life stories linked to the area, favourite places and memories. Working with an illustrator, they explored the LMA's historical maps and images and created their own illustrations, which will be used to create a brand new map of the area. We look forward to publishing and distributing Clerkenwell's new illustrated map very soon!



Credit Rob Harris & House of Illustration

### Celebrating Black History – with lunch!

Throughout Black History Month our youth club delved back in time, researching prominent black politicians, activists, sports and media personalities to create an eye-catching display of their

findings. However they saved the best celebrations until the end of the month, which happily coincided with the October half term holiday. Arriving at Peel in the morning, a group of our young people cooked a delicious meal of jerk chicken, rice, mac n cheese, salads and cake. The lucky recipients of this delicious spread were members of our Over 55s Social Club. Sitting down to lunch together – young people, older adults and staff – was a joyous and tasty occasion. The young people even washed up!



### Weaving for Wellbeing

The Peel's Direct Action Project facilitates mental health awareness workshops and creative programmes with groups of young people and parents across the borough. After 18 months of leading workshops on-line the team were excited to be back in a venue, running a creative programme with Islington charity Chance UK. Whilst discussing stress and anxiety, a group of parents and carers wove wools of many colours and printed images with wellbeing messages onto

fabric, under the expert guidance of textile designer and creator Charlene Sandy.

One mum commented, "I enjoyed every bit of this programme, especially the knitting and painting", whilst another told us how much the art work had helped her to relax and that she had particularly enjoyed conversations with the rest of the group as they worked.

The individual pieces of art will collectively form a large textile mural which is set to grace the walls of Chance UK's new Finsbury Park premises.



### Autumn Highlights

We've had a great autumn and our Over 55s Social Club has been especially busy. Particular highlights were making paper hearts and butterflies in our first ever origami workshop with Toshiko from Origami Happy Wonderland, learning to weave with crafter Brooke from Make Town, a hilarious improvisation workshop with actor Liam Brennan and a wonderful afternoon of live music, courtesy of musicians Luck Penny. Added to which the patties (and other dishes) our youth club cooked-up were delicious!



### Meet Nermin

We asked Nermin Shefik, one of our Community Organisers, what she likes the most about working with our Over 55s Social Club.

**Q: What do you like the most about the social club?**

**A:** *I love our members! I particularly like the banter and the stories they tell.*

**Q: The social club has a busy programme. Are there any activities or classes which you particularly enjoy?**

**A:** *I really like knitting and the weekly art class – it's nice to see what the members have drawn. But I also love just listening to members chat and the atmosphere when we have parties is really lively. I'm also getting quite good at calling bingo!*

**Q: What does working with our social club members mean to you?**

**A:** *It's like spending time with aunties and uncles! The social club always feels like one big happy family.*



**For more information about The Peel**

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A big feature of the fallout from Covid has been our return to public spaces. Sometimes it's been tough – many of us will have experienced tongue-tied encounters as we relearn how to speak to people outside our bubbles.

Small wonder, as Covid has been like a huge experiment, says neurologist Sophie Scott. "Right at the start of the pandemic, when we went into lockdown, I can remember saying to my partner (who's also a neuroscientist) that we should scan everybody's brains," she says. "Because seeing what this will do to us will be extraordinary."

It was particularly difficult as humans are social primates, adds Scott. "We're very reliant on our social networks and the main way that we maintain them is by chatting to people – meaning that things like serendipitous bumping into people in streets and shops is important.

"Those kind of things may feel like a trivial part of your day, but actually you're reinforcing your social network. So removing people from that is completely devastating, at the same time as losing much of your ability to see the people you're really close to as well. I'm the extroverts' extrovert and love going out and meeting people but I'm noticing my own reluctance to do that, and having to make myself move. Like many, I retreated and I'm having to push myself back out there."

This is because our social 'muscles' withered during the pandemic. "Our networks were put under terrible strain and we had to invent reasons to get in touch," says Scott. "Although we set up Zoom calls – better than nothing, but not the same – it has been like a weird experiment on our brains, and on our ability to communicate with each other. When we talk about loneliness, one of the worst things that can happen is the removal of social networks. Now all of us have been pushed in that direction and some were more fortunate than others.

"I was locked down with my partner and our son so I was lucky. I knew students in lockdown who didn't even live in the UK and who didn't see anybody and they were unlucky in comparison. But it constrained all our social lives, and we had to learn to cope."

Does Scott think our emotional lives have changed for good? "Well, there was a really terrifying study



## The season to be merry

*It's time to learn to laugh again says neurologist and local resident Sophie Scott*

done before lockdown where they tracked a lot of people over a long timescale," she says. "What they found was the lonelier people got, the less empathetic they became, which is an interesting demonstration of the fact that social emotions like empathy and laughter are things that we get good at through practice, and we need to be with other people to maintain them.

"A laugh is a very good example of an expression of social joy and it's something we do when we're with other people – indeed, you're 33 times more likely to laugh with somebody else than if you're on your own.

"That was one of the hardest things with lockdown – it was hard to find reasons to laugh and learn. Maintaining social bonds is a very important way of reinforcing relationships with people you know, and for making new relationships – and it was suddenly gone. And it's very hard to do online. Zoom, for example, is terrible for laughter because it prioritises the spoken word."

Scott was able to remedy this to a degree. "One thing I did in the first lockdown, after making sure we had food, I said to my partner and

son that at the end of each day at 5.30pm we'd stop home-schooling and working, sit down and watch something funny. Every single day we watched something like Brooklyn Nine Nine, to create a reason to laugh together."

Post-lockdown, a lot of people have also become worried about their memories. "It's very common for people to have had problems with their memory during and after lockdown," says Scott. "Because every day becomes very similar to every other day. Even weekends aren't different and everything just merges."

In terms of our attention spans, social media hasn't exactly helped. "Remember, their policy is to grab your attention and we have endless pressure from these apps saying 'look at me'," says Scott. "The more they've got your attention, the more they can refine the algorithms to send you more. They're like a machine for stealing your attention – and it's worth doing the odd diet." Scott doesn't get involved in conversations on Twitter any more, for example: "There's no point. Nobody's mind is changed."

*One of the most important things for your mood is to have something to look forward to*

So, how can we make ourselves feel good again this winter?

"Some people consider Christmas to be a bit cheesy but basically every culture that's not on the equator, has a celebration at the deepest, darkest point of winter when the days are shortest," says Scott. "It's a way to try and cheer things up at that time and worth embracing. Anything that gets humans dedicated to enjoying themselves for a while is worth valuing, and what was so shocking last year that suddenly all the things we planned, we couldn't do any more. You couldn't see people, or go to the shops and buy presents.

"This may sound trivial, but one of the most important things for your mood is to have something to look forward to. Last year when I had Covid, I've never looked forward to Christmas so much in my whole life – and then it all went peculiar. But we still found ways of doing things to make it special. So have something to look forward to. It could be anything. It doesn't have to be Christmas, but give yourself something – even if it's the promise of a walk in the park to see the parakeets."

And if you can build up your social networks again, says Scott, so much the better. "There's evidence that if you give people a common purpose, they can all feel like they're working towards something where everyone's got a stake. There was a study in the Middle East looking at persecuted groups of people and they got the opportunity to play football with diverse teams, drawn from very different sides of a conflict.

"They found tremendous cohesion, because they had a new role: playing together. So if you can find just one thing with a common goal – and it doesn't have to be football, it could be a church or other community activity – where people are acknowledged and recognise that they're doing it together, it's one of the best ways of building cohesive communities."

### Meet Sophie Scott

Professor Sophie Kerttu Scott, CBE, is a neuroscientist and the director of the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience. A Clerkenwell resident, Scott's work has been devoted to investigating the neuroscience of voice, speech and laughter. With various awards to her name, she has also done stand-up comedy, Ted talks and the Royal Institution's annual Christmas Lectures – not to mention being on BBC TV series 'Horizon' in a programme called 'The Science of Laughter' with comedian Jimmy Carr.



## COLUMN

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# Back to market forces

BY VALERIE BOSSMAN-QUARSHIE

There's been a lot of talk about reviving the High Street of late and it's time to turn to Whitecross Street market in Bunhill Ward. It's a great street but following the pandemic it sometimes looks like a ghost town. The busiest stalls seem to be lunchtime food places catering to office workers and that makes the street feel a bit limited.

We understand this is an incredibly difficult time for local businesses in Islington and we're determined to support them. As with Chapel Street market in Angel, now set to get an additional boost, it could become a destination that even attracts tourists, as well as a place to get keys cut, buy fish, vegetables, dustpans and brushes, mobile phone covers and doormats.

During Covid, it has been tough. For many small businesses for whom the Council is a landlord, we provided a rent holiday or deferral to ensure that no business was forced to pay rents when it couldn't afford to. All retail, hospitality and leisure businesses received 100 per cent discounts on business rates for 2020/21 through the Rate Relief Scheme.

Now we're emerging from those times, Whitecross Street market could be revived and start fulfilling the needs of a wider group of people. Coming here again as a newly elected councillor, I feel it is time to come back as a trading street and be given the opportunity to build itself back up again.

There's an opportunity to make the market – and other markets that have suffered, like Leather Lane in Camden – to become more diverse shopping streets, catering for all demographics in the community.

It could also offer a gateway to talent. There are lots of entrepreneurial people around who could

do great stalls – especially now that working standing up and in the open air is considered a healthier option. Shopping outside also has its benefits in the Covid era, too and for many, would be a better option than sitting in a stuffy office on a headset. And it could mean that people with limited mobility, including older people for whom Angel is a long hike, can do their shopping here instead of having to travel. It could be a way to find those hard-to-reach communities and cater to them, as well as providing employment opportunities for them as well.

There could be things done to incentivise this.

Some might say that people don't want work in markets. To them, I'd say that markets are a good place for testing the waters for new businesses, and that many a big company began on a stall – Alan Sugar once was a market stall trader.

We should encourage stall-holding, whether it's selling brushes or organic juices and we're determined to make sure all businesses in our borough are supported and administered almost all applications for business grants, to ensure they can survive through this and thrive when it is over.

Wherever it takes, we need to get Whitecross Street market up to scratch with about 100 or so stalls. Soon enough it could be a bustling market with all kinds of goods and services, old and new, and become a great mix that would become the fabric of our community.

It's been done before. Chapel Market was once in jeopardy for a while and was revived. And although it's cold, December and January is a great time to think about reviving the market. We've all experienced that buzz when we go to a street market at Christmas time – let's now try to bring that feeling all year round.

Valeria Bossman-Quarshie is a Labour councillor for Bunhill Ward



*“Whitecross Street market could start fulfilling the needs of a wider group of people”*

# The mystery strolls

*The Museum of Walking group has created a dynamic new open-air Clerkenwell theatrical experience – The Walking Cure*

BY ANDREAS BRANDT

The Walking Cure is billed as “an immersive geolocated audio experience. Part crime reenactment. Part metaphysical game. Wholly unreliable guided walk for two people.” Sounds intriguing – what does it mean?

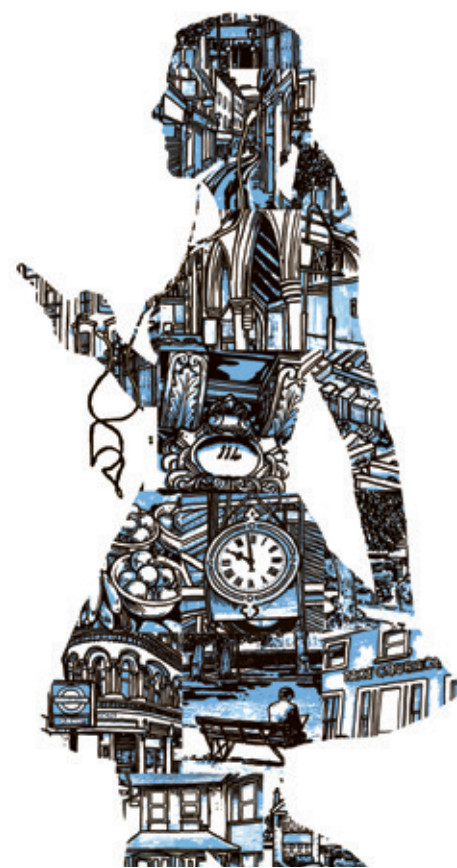
Andrew Stuck, one of its creators, explains: “It’s an immersive mystery story staged as a walk through the streets of Clerkenwell. You’re guided through the route by a voice responding to the GPS signal on your phone.”

The walk has to be done in pairs. Why? “This is where the

reenactment part comes in,” says Stuck. “One of you follows the last-known movements of Alex Mann, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances, without leaving any trace. The other walker follows the route taken by one of the key eyewitnesses.”

Stuck’s co-creator, filmmaker and artist NG Bristow explains further: “You and your partner catch sight of each other at various points. We can’t say too much without revealing spoilers, but it’s as if the streets of Clerkenwell and its inhabitants become the stage set and cast of supporting characters for a play that you’re starring in. Or co-starring, since there are two of you.”

The walk, which takes 30 minutes, starts at The London Metropolitan Archives near Bowling Green Lane, and finishes up at Clerkenwell Green. “It’s a tightly packed labyrinth with intriguing sight-lines, best



a giant game board. We’ve had architects responding to the opportunity to see a familiar part of London from an unfamiliar angle. And of course, the story is essentially a yarn, so it should appeal to people who enjoy a twisty mystery.”

NG Bristow has also recently published *A Week To Walk A Fortnight*, a 40-page illustrated book of stories set between The British Library and Smithfield Market – a large number of which occur in Clerkenwell. Hatton Garden, Leather Lane and Clerkenwell Road hardware store Clerkenwell Screws all feature and each

experienced about an hour before sunset,” says Bristow, with evident enthusiasm for his chosen ‘stage set’ of streets.

Walking creative and psychogeographer Andrew Stuck says that Clerkenwell was chosen as the location for the piece for its sense of intrigue “Location location location is the mantra of estate agents but in terms of Clerkenwell it’s also the case for movies and now immersive stories,” he says. “The pattern of the streets and alleyways, what is overlooked and what is hidden, were key in why we chose Clerkenwell for the setting of *The Walking Cure*.”

It should appeal to drama lovers as well as typical walkers. “Different aspects seem to attract different types of people,” says Bristow. “Fans of immersive theatre relish the prospect of chancing upon bits of incidental action. People who play scavenger hunts like using the city streets as

of the stories explores the theme of a journey on foot. There are charmed pub crawls and three-legged dog walks, a daughter stalking her own father, a trainee spy learning surveillance, a magical ritual to open a portal to another dimension, and a man taking his late father’s winklepickers for an eventful stroll.

Alongside their print form in the book, the stories have been recorded and geolocated (there’s that word again!) allowing you to hear them in the locations where they are set. For those of you who don’t fancy walking the route (which I’d definitely recommend as the best way to experience them) it is also possible to hear them in ‘armchair mode’ on your computer.

The walk is available to download via this link: [wlc.zone/twc](http://wlc.zone/twc)

*‘A Week To Walk A Fortnight’ is illustrated by Alban Low and published by Sampson Low and is available through the Museum of Walking: [tinyurl.com/jjdaxrj2](http://tinyurl.com/jjdaxrj2)*



# Modern times

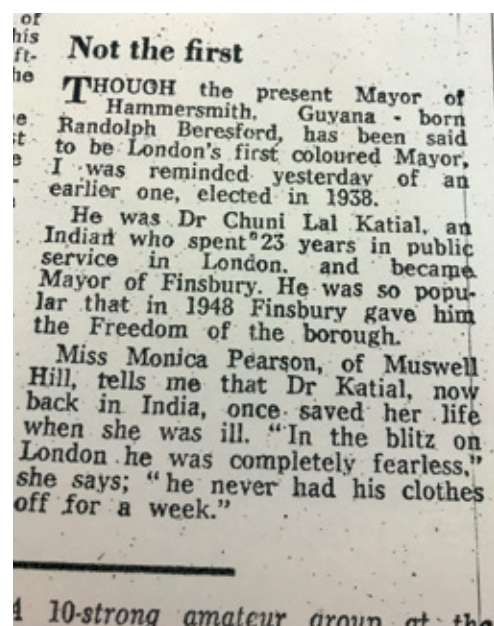
A friend to Mahatma Gandhi, the UK's first Asian mayor was the force behind the Finsbury Health Centre. As a new building is named after him we look into the life of Dr Chuni Lal Katial

**O**n Goswell Road a new block of flats has been erected bearing the name Katial House. Passers-by might miss the connection, but it commemorates Dr Chuni Lal Katial – not only the Mayor of Finsbury, and thus the first Asian mayor in the UK, but also a key instigator in the celebrated Finsbury Health Centre in Pine Street, EC1.

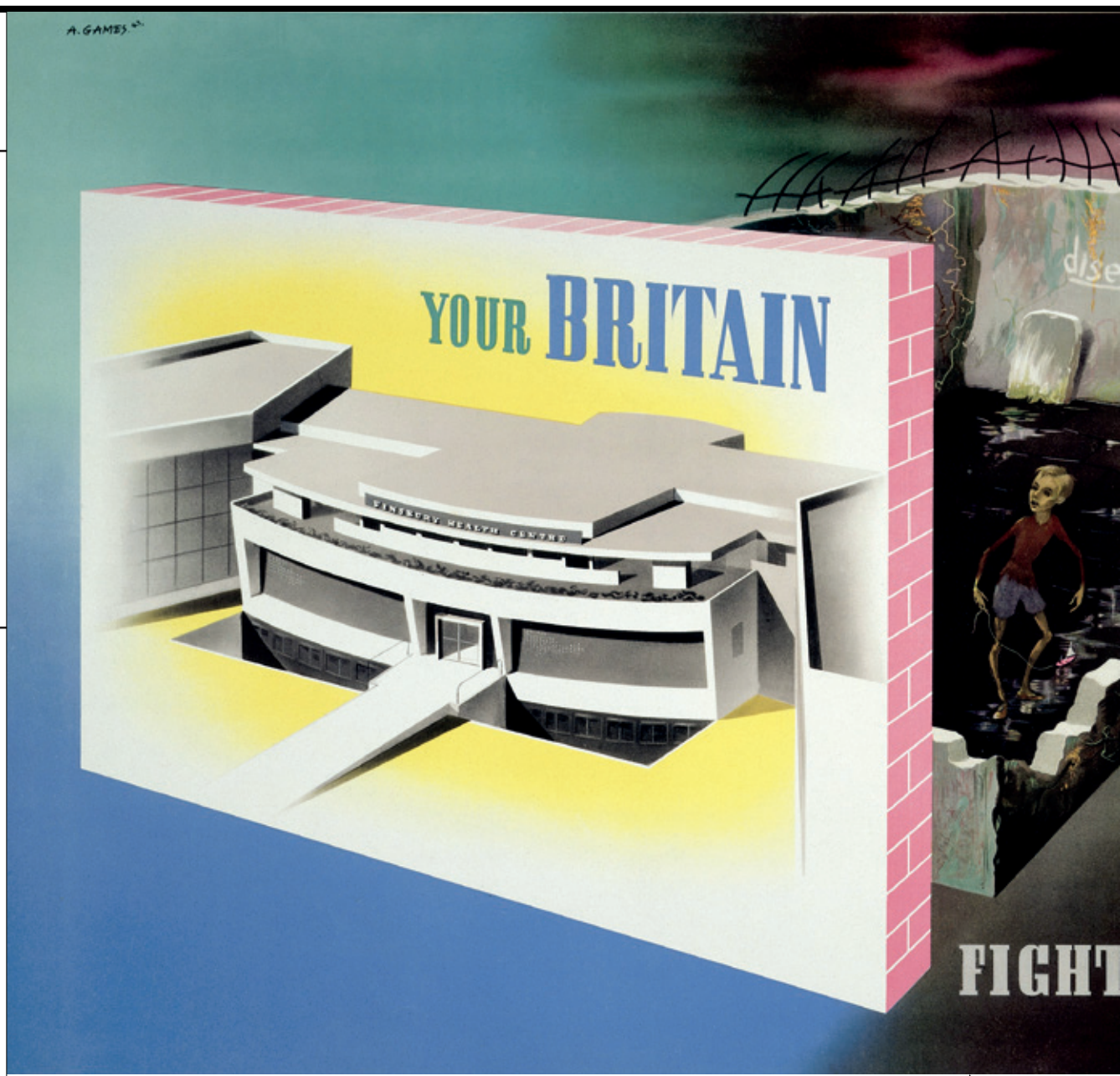
The Grade I-listed FHC is now one of the most feted Modernist buildings in the country. Its origin story as a precursor to the NHS, and its role as the project of architect Berthold Lubetkin, is well known. Less well known is the role of Dr Katial, considered by many to be the FHC's "driving force".

Katial, born in the Punjab in 1898, came to the UK in 1927 as a qualified doctor. Moving to London in 1929, he took up practice in Canning Town where in 1931 he introduced his fellow advocate for home rule in India, Mahatma Gandhi, to Charlie Chaplin – an historic photograph exists of them on Katial's practice in Beckton. The relevance for Clerkenwell is that while living in the East End, Katial saw a design for a TB clinic in East Ham in 1932 by Berthold Lubetkin and his firm Tecton. This became the 'eureka' moment for the Finsbury Health Centre.

A member of the Labour Party, Katial moved to Finsbury where he became councillor in 1934 and rose up the ranks. As chairman of the Public Health Committee of Finsbury Council, he had significant input



Katial in the news



*Katial had the medical background that was vital to informing the project*

into a pioneering medical project and himself commissioned the Lubetkin to lead the building. Tecton provided four designs in 1936, one was chosen and with the site bought from the landowner, the Marquess of Northampton – and 21 houses and assorted shops cleared – the build began.

Katial's medical ethos infused the FHC. "For some time the disadvantages of a service which has grown up piecemeal... and scattered here and there through lack of accommodation, have been only too apparent to my council... we have unanimously gone forward to erect this new health centre," he said. "Its opening marks...the dawn of a new era in public health service."

It opened in 1938 – the same year that Katial was elected Mayor of Finsbury, as the first Asian mayor in Britain – following the trail blazed by the first Asian MP, Dadabhai Naoroji of Finsbury Central in the late 19th century (see *EC1 Echo* Oct–Nov 2020).

Lubetkin's design, and his oft-quoted saw: "Nothing is too good for ordinary people", appealed to many.

The FHC's design, with wings, was designed, said Lubetkin, to be like "opening arms" and the engineering work was undertaken by the celebrated Ove Arup, whose many other contracts included Sydney Opera House. Katial's input included the plentiful use of light and air and the FHC became a patriotic symbol, as seen in the 1943 Abram Games wartime poster (right): "Your Britain, fight

Abram Games wartime poster of Finsbury Health Centre  
Credit Wellcome Collection

Chuni Lal Katial & W L Prowse & Others (1939)  
Credit Islington Local History Centre







for it now!” Behind was a boy in wartime ruins, with the word ‘disease’ written on a war-torn wall. The message could hardly have been clearer, although Churchill didn’t approve of it.

Katial, who had moved to Meredith Street in 1934 and Spencer Street later, had a strong local presence but has been somewhat forgotten in the FHC’s history, according to EC1 resident and ex-Islington Council councillor David Hyams.

“Katial was the advisor with Lubetkin and between them they were involved in a huge process of thinking about the future of health in the borough,” he says. “Katial had the medical background that was vital to informing the project and should too be remembered.”

After the war, in 1948, Katial was given the Freedom of the Borough of Finsbury. In that same year he left to go back India – where, adds Hyams, he recommended Lubetkin to be the architect in a Delhi project. He returned to the UK and died here in 1978, having made his mark on the direction of British healthcare and directly, to the NHS. Perhaps the naming of that block in Goswell Road should be the start of his rehabilitation in public life.

# London goes to the shops

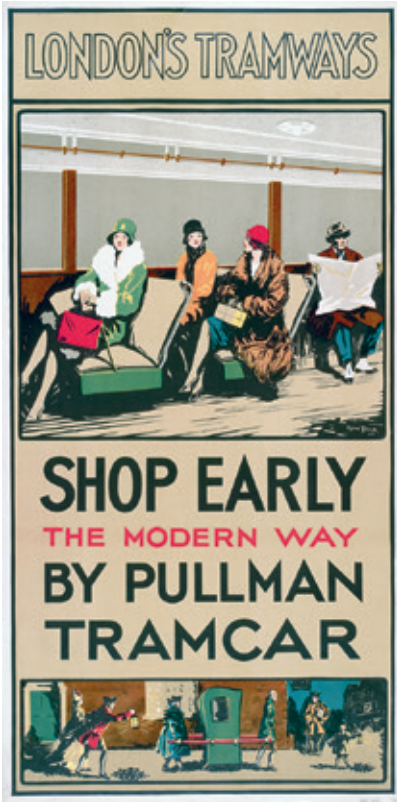
Curtailed last year by the Covid pandemic, there’s something about Christmas shopping that is an intrinsic part of the season, and it’s good to see it return. Unbearable as it sometimes seems, the rush to the shops is part of winter’s social experience, compounded by the fact that we are often buying gifts for others. And while there’s always a reasonable scepticism about consumer creep, particularly in manifestations like November’s Black Friday and Cyber Monday – not to mention the pressure of Secret Santa in the workplace – there’s a thrill to shopping under the lights.

As these pictures demonstrate, the shopping tradition in London has long been linked to the marketing of now-defunct tramlines, keen to get fares on board to the fleshpots of the West End – and a picture of Leather Lane in its wintry pomp.

The photographs are courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) and available to view on the London Picture Archive website along with 250,000 historical images and maps of the capital [www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk](http://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk). Located in the heart of Clerkenwell, LMA is London’s historical archive, providing free access to millions of documents, films, maps and images from 1067 to the present day.

These pictures can be seen in *London: Portrait of a City*, an exhibition at the LMA that looks at the different techniques used by artists to record the capital, including these LCC Tramways posters, using colour lithography.

**London: Portrait of a City**  
Until 6 April 2022  
Monday to Thursday, 10am–4pm  
40 Northampton Road EC1R 0HB  
[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma)





# Early morning muse

## Brighton artist moved to paint Clerkenwell's buildings



BY OLIVER BENNETT

**T**his painting of a building on St John Street EC1 – called 5:37AM, after the time of day it was painted – is by Tony Mills. Something of the light captures the dawn atmosphere, which came out of Tony's early morning perambulations in the area during lockdown, when – against the general flow – he moved into London.

"I moved from Brighton to be with my girlfriend in Islington about ten months ago and in lockdown took up running," says Tony. "I'd never run before and found it a great way to explore London. I found myself running from Angel

into Clerkenwell and that's when I saw this Ingersoll building. I thought: gosh, there's something about it and decided to paint it." As Tony relates, the precision of the time in the title is about the early morning and also a nod to Ingersoll itself, which used to make watches here when the building was a factory in the 1930s.

Tony has wanted to be an artist since he was young. "I grew up with family and friends thinking I'd make a career out of art in some way," he says. "But then that turned into the idea that I should do a 'real job'. About 10 years

ago, a friend of mine told him to start painting and he went to an evening class and started painting.

Then another event then moved Tony to truly follow his calling. Five years ago, his son Scott died unexpectedly aged 18. Then in Brighton, Tony spent the first year after the awful experience "in a daze", then decided he needed to do something. He befriended a homeless man who lived on the seafront in a bus shelter and asked if he could paint his picture, with a view to selling it and donating the fee to him. A woman in Australia bought it online, while Tony

sold prints, and it went so well that Tony painted eight other homeless people, raising £26,000 to give them a fresh start. "It was a win-win – good for them and good for me as well too," he says. "I needed a focus, they needed some help, and if people liked the paintings, the money they paid would be help get somebody off the street." Tony is always looking for interesting buildings and will take commissions. *5:37AM*, in acrylic, is for sale at £2,300 (40cmx30cm) and unframed prints are available at £60 for A3, £120 for A2 and £240 for A1.

Get in touch with Tony at [tonymills.com](http://tonymills.com)





Love Crown



Dream Crown



Luck Crown



Hope Crown

# When we were kings

The Christmas cracker, as our writer Chris Walker noted last winter in *EC1 Echo No.7*, was invented in Goswell Road. So it is in keeping that the artist Emma Douglas, who was featured in *Echo No.4* for her public paintings in Clerkenwell and elsewhere commemorating her late son Cato, has been inspired by the paper crowns in crackers to paint her own collection, with seven crowns, including Love

“*I’ve always loved the paper crowns in Christmas crackers*”

Crown, Kiss Crown, Dream Crown, Luck Crown, Hope Crown, Look Crown and Wish Crown, all in limited edition prints of 50 and in two sizes: 30cmx20cm for £65 and 59cmx40cm for £95.

“I’ve always loved the crowns you get in Christmas crackers and the crowns on Twelfth Night cakes,” says Emma. “These images are inspired by them.” Interested? Get in touch with Emma at [emma@emmadouglas.com](mailto:emma@emmadouglas.com)



Look Crown



Wish Crown



# COMMUNITY

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## Knowledge is power

Clerkenwell-based data company Centric Lab is aiming to give citizens as much information about their environment as possible

**A** Clerkenwell tech company has launched an app that hopes to improve public health and empower citizens to better understand hazards in their environments.

Centric Lab – which describes itself as a ‘neuroscience research lab’ – has launched a digital tool that offers a rapid postcode analysis of environmental pollutants and deprivation data. Called Right to Know, its aim is to offer ‘health justice’ by connecting citizens with environmental information in their communities.

“Most of us do not know if the places we live could be making us sick,” says Centric Lab founder Josh Artus. “This tool gives us the right to know if there are environmental factors in our neighbourhood that could be affecting our health.”

Key issues in this regard are high levels of noise, too much light at night and air pollution. As well as these issues having an effect on wellbeing and quality of life, Artus says they can sometimes affect people’s long-term health outcomes.

To use Right to Know, people enter their postcode into a box and receive environmental and health information on their area. The intention is offer further information about other environmental matters like planning issues and proximity to green space, and Right to Know will be building its presence nationally in the next six months.

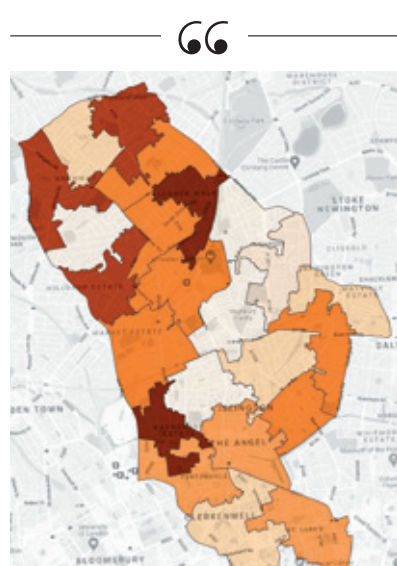
Artus, a Clerkenwell resident for much of his life, believes that we remain in the dark about environmental health.

“We developed the tool because people’s access to environmental data is very weak,” he says. “Open data from the Government is

almost impossible to navigate and local authorities are little better. It feels sometimes like they’re being intentionally obscure – and that’s not good for democracy.”

The Localism Act of 2010 aimed to empower citizens but didn’t go far enough, he adds. “A lot of local authorities at the moment are in the process of redesigning or updating their local plans,” says Artus. “So when it comes to community engagement with the authorities, it is best directed by planning groups rather than individuals.” That’s because, in the face of an environmental problem, it is very difficult to find who to talk to, and it’s a major challenge because, says Artus, “policy protects commerce over people.” There are tools that people can use, such as

“If you face an environmental problem, it’s very difficult to find who to talk to”



EC1 shows high levels of pollution

decibel reading apps that you can log to show the local authority, but as Artus says, the best vehicle for raising concerns is still to become part of a neighbourhood group – a process that takes time from busy lives.

In Clerkenwell, there are high levels of exposure to air, noise and light pollution, with lorries still driving through residential neighbourhoods and heat stress in summer. Construction sites, says Artus, expose residents to high levels of stress. But conversations about wellness tend to favour accessibility to organic foods, gyms and accessibility to outdoor spaces.

“It’s very important to how we look at these metrics to define quality of place,” says Artus. “People should not be allowing places where we live, our habitats, to be making us sick, and that goes right down to building materials. For example, commercial buildings with glass fronts reflect sound. Yet local authority planning guidance does not talk about things like that – it’s always more about what colour they are.”

Artus also says that numbers of deliveries are increasing in central areas, with attendant problems of parking and storage. “When we look at the number of vehicles that are driving around, such as lorries from the Royal Mail, we could ask if there more ancillary storage spaces as well as opportunities to use smaller and greener vehicles.”

Centric Lab is now building an app about clean air, looking at how high levels of risk disproportionately affect social housing in areas like Clerkenwell, with a view to further pursuing the citizen’s right to know about their environment.

More information and to try the app, go to [right-to-know.org](http://right-to-know.org)

## A sorry tail

An EC1 estate is plagued by aggressive squirrels

BY STEVEN SEPAROVICH

**F**or the last three years the residents of the St Luke’s Estate in the Old Street area have complained about squirrels climbing onto balconies as high as the 19th floor, destroying tenants’ plants, and leaving waste. Some elderly resident are too afraid to go onto their balconies when the squirrels are on their balconies, and they have entered residents flats

The reason that we are in this situation is that Islington Council placed a perfect vertical climbing frame on the outside of our buildings with service cables and service pipes installed to the building’s facades. These are also conveniently located directly against residents’ balconies – giving ready access for squirrels.

The Council agreed for a pest-control consultant to install some vermin spikes and vermin ‘domes’ on the façade to deter them, but this

The ideal solution would have been to install services within the existing building that don’t act as climbing frames and protect the services within. Rather than residents removing plants, the solutions are simple: remove all external cabling and gas pipes, and regular squirrel trapping and prevention measures such as plastic domes on vertical cables, together with spikes on the horizontal pipework.

Only one clear plastic dome was installed earlier this year, and that dome was incorrectly placed adjacent to a balcony, which meant the squirrels simply climbed onto the balcony to avoid the dome. The domes also need to be located on the facade of Godfrey

House over at least three storeys. In addition, without encasing the external services, the Council has also created a fire safety issue as squirrels gnaw through

“Some elderly residents are too afraid to go onto their balconies”

did not resolve the problem. Trapping worked for a few months then stopped, which has resulted in the squirrels returning to balconies, resulting in the suggestion that residents should remove plants from their balconies to stop attracting the squirrels.

exposed cabling and wiring cause faults and fires.

We believe the Council should have carried out necessary risk assessments of the external services with due diligence and care. Squirrels are loved by many, but they can be a menace.



# COMMUNITY

*David Harrison explains how the London Footways campaign can help residents of EC1*

**T**he pandemic has heightened awareness of the importance of our streets and public spaces. Our campaign Footways starts from the premise that we choose the mode of transport which is easiest and most enjoyable. With the help of London Living Streets and the support of local authorities and others, we spent many hours walking the byways of Central London, establishing a network of attractive and low pollution streets that linked major destinations. The results were plotted digitally. Our website ([footways.london](http://footways.london)) has been visited over 800,000 times. TFL then funded us to produce a beautiful paper map.

Points of interest add much to our pleasure, and the back of the map contains a wide range of these, including art (ancient and modern), fine steeples, food and drink, literary and musical connections and urban fossils. Time is a major barrier to walking so we show how relatively quickly many journeys can be walked: ie, 35 minutes from King's Cross to Smithfield.

We are reprinting the paper map in the Spring, and are thrilled to have as a partner Network Rail, who will be distributing it from 11 London termini. This is massive news for walking – connecting one form of sustainable transport with another, and boosting life and footfall.

We are keen to refine the routes and add to the features. We were delighted to be approached by David Wilcox (see below) to work together on EC1. Few areas are better for walking than Clerkenwell with its intriguing views, architecture and history.

Footways routes are now available on the map-based history website Layers of London, where anyone can add notes, photos or videos about historic places and people. We could populate the EC1 routes with our current research, and invite residents and visitors to add their own.

We can also campaign to make improvements. Transforming Clerkenwell Green into a great public space would be a start.

Garraway's Coffee House in Exchange Alley, London Credit: Wikicommons



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## Clerkenwell should become a big 'coffee house' says Mike Franks

**I**n 1974 I came to Clerkenwell searching for a building to house what was to become Clerkenwell Workshops. A battle with Islington Council ensued because of its understandable concern to build housing. But that blinded them to the plight of the old local economy that had one of the most sophisticated micro-engineering and instrument-making networks in the world. So we built 140 small workshops which became known as the 'Clockmakers' Supermarket'. In 1977, a charity I formed tied to the Workshops' social enterprise was granted money to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee Year. We planted trees, made pop-up gardens, and set

out a Historic Trail that continues to evolve.

Many of our 1977 projects have run into the sand. But the trees are thriving, and ideas for area improvement – some drawn up years ago – remain valid. Most of all, there is renewed enthusiasm from many. This is where my Coffee House idea comes in. Not just one indoor venue to meet but the whole public realm, including the parks and squares from Exmouth Market to Smithfield's Grand Avenue. Covid is bringing dramatic changes to the area and a 21st century version of the 17th century coffee shops could start, both online and in real life, to recover what we have lost.

## On a good footing

The oldest form of transport could transform our cities, writes David Wilcox



**F**ifty years ago the official solution to London's transport problems was Ringways – four motorway circuits that would speed up some journeys,

but destroy thousands of homes along the way. Those plans were dropped, after a Home before Roads campaign by amenity societies, supported by the *Evening Standard*,

where I was planning correspondent.

Today the focus has shifted to cutting car use, and supporting cyclists. We have a growing network of Cycleways but we need also to support walking. It's time for Footways.

The campaign group London Living Streets has mapped a Footways network of quiet and enjoyable routes through our busy streets, with links to interesting places along the way. The aim is to encourage more people to walk from station to office, home to shop, cafe, theatre, or museum and the times often surprisingly short. For example, Liverpool Street to Barbican is 15 minutes and Euston to British Museum is 20 minutes. There's a great paper map, with routes on one side, and places on the other.

The challenge now is to get those routes – and interesting places en route – on to the map and journey apps that we use on smartphones. To that end, EC1 is going to be one of the first places to experiment with technology that helps people navigate and enjoy their walk, engaging with people and places along the way.

For the past couple of years I've been experimenting, with my son Dan in various online mapping tools in Clerkenwell and City. With Emma Griffin of Footways and her co-founder David Harrison, we agreed to collaborate on two Footways routes – one

from the Angel to St Paul's, and one through the City from Smithfield to Liverpool Street.

I want to develop a route along the City of London's Culture Mile from Holborn to Moorgate, exploring the past, present and future of the area. The opening of Crossrail next year will make Farringdon the most accessible place in London, so shops, bars, venues and heritage sites could benefit from the additional footfall that Footway routes could bring. Footways could also support the City's "Square Smile" campaign to encourage people back into the Square Mile.

Footways isn't just mapping routes – it's also a campaign for improving roads, reducing motor traffic, developing wider, accessible pavements and greening. As David Harrison says: "Footways has a vision of a city where walking is the primary and most attractive form of transport in our towns and cities, which should be designed from a pedestrian perspective with key destinations connected with low-traffic or car-free streets. We want to point people to intriguing routes – and make them a focus for improvements".

**If you are interested, get in touch at**  
[david@socialreporter.com](mailto:david@socialreporter.com)

**Footways in London:**  
Visit [footways.london](http://footways.london)

**Footways in Clerkenwell and City:**  
Visit [commons.london/footways](http://commons.london/footways)



# 16

# Right up my alley

"The words are from all parts of the community – past and present – etched into the glass," says Thuring. The effect is to give a building that can be read – quite literally – and as it is on a narrow alley, that draws people in to read it. The point is, she says, to be "both historic and welcoming".



London is a city of bricks, says Thuring. “I’m inspired by them. Bricks are both manmade and natural – and the Georgian houses and warehouses in the area are all made of them. So I wanted to make something timeless.

*The building can be read – quite literally*

referring to bricks and through them, mapping the history of the area.”

The building, which is for all ages, continues the theme within, with brick-printed linen lining the main hall. Paul Crozier, the director of Holborn Community Association which runs the community centre and the 1A Centre on Rosebery Avenue, says that it hopes to raise the game of community centre building.

“One of our ambitions is to make a space that stands up and bring worlds together,” he says. “The term ‘community centre’ sometimes comes with a bit of a label. We want to say that they’re worth taking as seriously as any other building.”

**Holborn House is at 35 Emerald St, London, WC1**



# 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*, *Barnet Post* and *EC1 Echo* cover a wide area of North London and part of The City.

We distribute 70,000 free copies to readers via local newsstands, community venues, and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 210,000 people.

### Example full page advert



### Example half page advert



### Example full page advert



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**Email** [klaudia@socialspider.com](mailto:klaudia@socialspider.com)





# CULTURE MILE

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## A year of creativity and culture



range of sectors within the City.

To learn more and see all of Emile's *The Hidden City* photography, visit the Culture Mile website.

### Festive events across the City

Winter is upon us and with it comes a series of festive events for adults and families alike! The star of the show is Borealis at Guildhall Yard – a dazzling light installation by artist Dan Acher in the heart of London from 11-22 December. This one-of-a-kind light show is free to view for 12 consecutive nights. Advance tickets are sold out but there will be free walk-ups available for each session, so grab a friend and head for a mulled wine and a night under the northern lights.

Elsewhere across the City, some more familiar events make their return. If a trip to see Santa is top of your Christmas list this year, then what better place to visit than the Museum of London? Take a stroll through the twinkling Victorian Walk, transformed with festive decorations and the sound of carols in the distance, and discover Santa in his secret grotto. He'll be there from 3-23 December but make sure you book your tickets in advance as they sell out very quickly!



*If a trip to see Santa is top of your Christmas list this year, then what better place to visit than the Museum of London?*



Around the corner from the museum, the Barbican will host the return of the Raymond Gubbay Christmas festival. There are over ten festive events to choose from, taking you right through to New Year's Day. Highlights include a Christmas Carol Singalong, the ultimate Christmas party with Jingle Bell Christmas, the London Concert Orchestra performing the music of Hans Zimmer & John Williams, a celebration of West End and movie musicals, plus an uplifting New Year's Eve gala ahead of the prom that kicks off 2022.

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

CULTURE  
**mile**  
SPONSORED CONTENT

**C**ulture 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.

### A Year of Fuelling Creative Renewal

When the Culture & Commerce Taskforce delivered the *Culture & Commerce: Fuelling Creative Renewal* report, it outlined three key recommendations and ten proposed projects where culture and commerce could work together for mutual benefit. All with the aim of accelerating London's post-pandemic recovery and helping to secure its position as one of the best international cities in which to live, work, visit and invest.

A year on from the launch of the Culture & Commerce Taskforce, and armed with learnings from the Fuelling Creative Renewal report, new and innovative models have now been tried, tested and shown to work.

*A Year of Fuelling Creative Renewal* is a brand new report celebrating and reflecting upon a year of collaboration between cultural and commercial sectors that has stimulated economic growth

and shown that working together has a stronger impact on recovery.

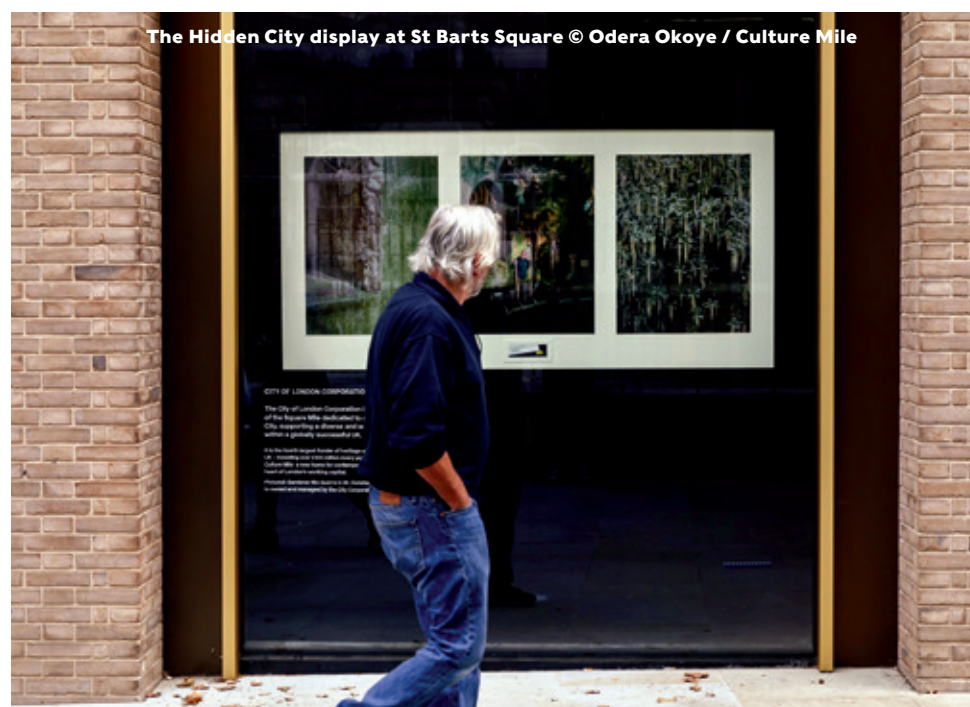
Accompanying the report is a digital knowledge bank of various free resources that help share insights, good practice and recommended ways of working. These include case studies, think pieces and how-to guides as well as a short film that provides an overview of the wealth of work achieved by the Taskforce over the last 12 months.

Visit [bit.ly/CultureCommerceTaskforce](http://bit.ly/CultureCommerceTaskforce) to find out more.

### The Hidden City

Culture Mile has taken photographer Emile Holba's *The Hidden City* to the streets, thanks to their partnership with Helical and ARTIQ. Next time you are in the area, why not pop down to Barts Square and view some excerpts from the commission, which highlights the everyday creativity of businesses in the area.

The commission tells the untold stories of Culture Mile, exploring what creativity means not only within cultural institutions but also across the wide





LETTERS

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LISTINGS



London  
The 24-hour City

Emma Hartley  
E1

Our app 24 Hour London has a database of around 500 of London’s late-opening bars, restaurants, pubs and clubs and more than 12,000 people have downloaded it so far. It’s a free app that you can locate yourself in when it’s 11pm and you don’t want to go home, showing where the nearest late-opening places are. It uses ‘geofencing’ that sends notifications to users when they pass within 200m of a retail outlet or hospitality venue that has a promotion with us.

We’re currently piloting it around Bow, Stepney and Hackney Wick. What we’re offering is good, old-fashioned footfall, as well as the opportunity to click through to an online link for the business in question.

It was made as I liked going out for a drink after work 9.30pm and wanted to know where the late-opening places were. And that information just wasn’t available in any coherent form so we built an app. We’ve got more than 12k users. So pretty soon we’ll be a bit like a cross between the *Evening Standard* and *Time Out*, and want to grow in EC1. So if you know anyone who runs a business that could benefit from some extra footfall, send them our way and we’d be happy to add them to our promotions map for free in the short term.

Email [emma@24hourlondon.co.uk](mailto:emma@24hourlondon.co.uk)

Let’s try and close the skills gap

Campbell Robb  
Chief Executive Officer, Nacro

Yesterday’s government figures showed that job vacancies have hit a record high of 1.2 million, an increase of 20% in the past three months. It’s seems like a no-brainer that our young people should be able to train to fill these roles.

Many of the sectors continuing to battle with skills shortages, such as construction, manufacturing, and hospitality, are reliant on Level 2 vocational qualifications as a direct route into jobs in these industries.

Yet, the Government has failed to prioritise these lower level, work-ready qualifications, instead focusing their post-16 policy and funding at qualifications of A Level standard and above.

The Government have a chance to close the skills gap and the disadvantage gap that is so significant among 16-19-year-olds, boost the economy and give young people the future they deserve. But to do this, they must ensure a wide range of high-quality, employer-endorsed options are available at all levels.

**Alive and kicking**

Rose Rouse  
NW8

*Suzanne and Rose*

Advantages of Age is a lively organisation which challenges the narrative around ageing. It was

co-founded by Suzanne Noble, 60, and myself Rose Rouse, 68, in a hot tub in West London, but most of our events have been held at Vout-o-Renees club in Shoreditch. We felt that there were so many tired stereotypes around age and ageing, that we wanted to kick out. So as a community of writers, thinkers, and creative people of age, Advantages of age holds social activities, puts on arts happenings and creates animated discussions around subjects from sexuality to community living, to the politics of getting older.

*“We felt that there were so many tired stereotypes around age and ageing, that we wanted to kick out”*

A vibrant and engaged community hosted on Facebook, its members regularly participate in festivals across London such as the Stoke Newington Literary Festival and I received an ACE grant to create Dance Me To Death, a performance about death in Kensal Green Cemetery, also an exhibition and a film with a group of Over-60s. Advantages of Age also delivers Startup School for Seniors which is a programme to support those over 50 in turning their creative ideas into businesses. Our website features award-winning writers like Monique Roffey, psychotherapist, Philippa Perry, and published poets and emergent writers of age. Writers often recount their personal experiences of ageing which are moving and compelling. We commissioned a series of pandemic stories too where older people related how they were surviving and what their resources were and we don’t shy away from the difficult aspects of ageing like death and dying. If you have any ideas for articles or events, please do get in touch – [rosejanerouse@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rosejanerouse@yahoo.co.uk) or see the Facebook page Advantages of Age and [advantagesofage.com](http://advantagesofage.com)

Got an opinion on something in EC1? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the area:  
Email [ec1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:ec1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk)

XMAS

The Snowman  
26 Nov 2021–2 Jan 2022  
Peacock Theatre  
Portugal St WC2A 2HT

Delighting audiences for 23 years, this magical stage adaption of Raymond Briggs’ much-loved book, has transported a generation of children and their families into the wintery wonderland of a boy and a snowman that comes to life.

Prices from £18.00  
Call 020 7863 8198  
Visit [sadlerswells.com](http://sadlerswells.com)

Christmas Baking Sessions  
3 December 11–1pm, Tuesday 7 December 10.30–12.30pm  
St Luke’s Community Centre, Central Street EC1

Join the St Luke’s team in the kitchen this Christmas and get baking some festive treats.

Call 020 7549 8181  
Visit [www.slpt.org.uk](http://www.slpt.org.uk)

Christmas Services  
Sat 11 December 2021 | 2pm  
Inspire Saint James Clerkenwell, Clerkenwell Green EC1R 0EA

Christmas Comes To Clerkenwell – a special event celebrating Christmas especially for families

Free  
Call 020 7251 1190  
Visit [inspiresaintjames.org](http://inspiresaintjames.org)

Christmas Family Concert  
12 December | 3pm  
The Foundling Museum  
40 Brunswick Square WC1

Get into the festive spirit with this family-friendly Christmas concert, Rebecca Speller on flute and Imma Setiadi on piano flute sonata as well as works by Bach and Poulenc.

Free with Museum Admission  
Call 020 7841 3600  
Visit [foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

London Mozart Players:  
A Christmas Carol  
Fri 18 Dec | 6.30–9.30pm & Sat 19 Dec | 11.30–2.30pm & 6.30–9.30 pm  
Fidelio Orchestra Café, 91–95 Clerkenwell Road EC1R 5BX

A dramatic retelling of Dickens’s festive tale accompanied by the London Mozart Players. Ticket includes concert, three-course meal and a glass of Prosecco.

£100  
Visit [fideliorchestracafe.com](http://fideliorchestracafe.com)

Christmas Events at The Postal Museum  
15–20 Phoenix Place WC1X 0DA

Mail Rail Christmas Ride  
Until 2 January 2022  
The Postal Museum’s festive twist on its Mail Rail ride

The First Christmas Card  
Until 2 January 2022  
The first commercial Christmas card will be back on display in the Museum’s permanent exhibition space.

Letters to Santa Display  
3 November–2 January 2022  
This display will include official cards from Father Christmas sent to children between 1963 and 2010.

Festive Family Fun Days  
4, 11, 18, Dec | 10.00–17.00  
Families can take part in arts and crafts sessions inspired by letters to Santa, with artist Susie

Call 0300 0300 700  
Visit [postalmuseum.org](http://postalmuseum.org)

ART

Foundling Portraits Campaign  
Until 27 Feb 2022  
40 Brunswick Square WC1N 1AZ

Five major artists – Jillian Edelstein, Mahtab Hussain, David Moore, Ingrid Pollard and Wolfgang Tillmans – commemorating the lost faces of children given into care between 1741–1954.

£7.50–£10.50 (free for under 21s)  
Call 020 7841 3600  
Visit [foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

Isamu Noguchi  
Until 23 Jan, 2022  
Barbican Centre EC2Y 8DS

One of the most experimental and pioneering artists of the 20th century.

£5–£18  
Call 020 7638 4141  
Visit [barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk)

Happy Mechanics  
Until 29 January 2022  
Wednesday to Saturday, 11am–6pm

Art exhibition including Lubaina Himid, Knut Henrik Henriksen, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Ellen Lesperance, Nancy Lupo, Manfred Pernice, Stuart Sherman, Hayley Tompkins, Amelie von Wulffen, B. Wurtz

£5–£18  
Call 020 7837 5991  
Visit [hollybushgardens.com](http://hollybushgardens.com)

SOCIAL

Mindful Mondays  
Every Monday 11am–12pm  
St Luke’s Wellbeing Hub  
Central Street EC1

Join us in our new Wellbeing Hub for Mindful Monday, a weekly class that will help to improve your mindfulness.

£7.50–£10.50 (free for under 21s)  
Call 020 7549 8181  
Visit [www.slpt.org.uk](http://www.slpt.org.uk)



# 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](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, Tania Cohen, Brian Jones, Veran Patel, Katrina Fialko, Mirela Popoveniuc, Sarah Wood, Stephanie Pietraszkiewicz, Daron Pike, Sam Harris, David Plume, Conor Harris, Jessie Broadway, Keith Baker, Jennifer Worrall, Hugh Fell, Emma Booty.



## A small selection of properties sold by Winkworth Clerkenwell & City in 2021...

## Winkworth



MYDDELTON STREET, EC1 £2,000,000

A fabulous four bedroom Georgian house, presented to an exceptionally high standard throughout.



ST JOHN STREET, LONDON, EC1 £1,900,000

This spacious five bedroom Georgian Townhouse benefits from many period features, including high ceilings, original wooden floorboards and a large private garden.



ROSEBERY AVENUE, LONDON, EC1 £900,000

A stylish one bedroom apartment finished to an extremely high standard.



ST JOHN STREET, LONDON, EC1 £800,000

Located on the top floor of this period conversion is this excellent two bedroom lateral flat.



FARRINGDON ROAD, LONDON, EC1 £875,000

Situated on the fifth floor of this Grade II, red brick, Venetian/Gothic style Victorian building on Farringdon Road is this spacious two bedroom, two bathroom apartment.



SILVERDALE COURT, GOSWELL ROAD, EC1 £825,000

This exceptionally spacious two bedroom, two bathroom flat is offered with a share of the freehold and a designated off street-underground car parking space.



LANEY BUILDING, BOURNE ESTATE, EC1 £585,000

A larger than average two bedroom flat on the third floor of this very popular Grade II Listed residential building on the fringes of Bloomsbury and Clerkenwell.



BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE, LONDON, EC1 £525,000

A spacious and well-presented one double bedroom apartment on the raised ground floor of a well sought after purpose built residential building.



RAWSTORNE STREET, LONDON, EC1 £375,000

A bright and spacious triple aspect one bedroom flat, arranged over the top floor of a Georgian house located just off St. John Street.

If you are looking to sell or let your property in 2022, call us today...

**Winkworth Clerkenwell & City**

66 Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 4QP | [clerkenwell@winkworth.co.uk](mailto:clerkenwell@winkworth.co.uk) 020 7405 1288 (SALES) | 020 7405 1266 (LETTINGS)