

# EC1 ECHO

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022 • N°16 FREE



EC1Echo.co.uk



EC1Echo@  
peelinstitute.org.uk

## NEWS

Snap! The Clerkenwell  
Photography  
Competition is back

P.2

## HISTORY

The story of EC1's  
pre-war gangster  
Darby Sabini

P.8-9

## ENVIRONMENT

Watch out for  
wildlife in the city  
this summer

P.11



@EC1Echo



/EC1Echo

Nick Higham, whose new book 'The Mercenary River' is about the New River



## A river runs through it

London wouldn't be the metropolis it is without water. In his new book *The Mercenary River*, Nick Higham, details EC1's aquatic past

• BY OLIVER BENNETT •

Clerkenwell is London's aquatic gateway. Once dotted with spas, and with plenty of subterranean water, the area around Rosebery Avenue is full of reminders of its riparian nature in the New River Head – the former Metropolitan Water Board offices – the modernist curve of the Laboratory Building, and the group of historic buildings soon to be turned into the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration. But the sheer scale of this watery hub

has been understated, and for Nick Higham it's time to redress this historic imbalance. "Water made London liveable," says Nick. "Without it, London's expansion would have been held back." Hence the importance of the New River Company, which bought fresh water into Clerkenwell, then to be distributed elsewhere in London.

Nick, once a reporter with the BBC, lives in Stoke Newington not far from where the New River flows in Clissold Park, and was inspired by that sylvan reach as well as Petherton Road in Canonbury. "It's bizarrely wide and

I thought, why is that? As it turned out, it's because of the New River." Later on, Nick found himself chairing a conference in the Institution of Civil Engineers in Westminster and became enthused by the great engineers of the past including Hugh Myddelton, of Clerkenwell's eponymous school and square. "I found that he was not an engineer but a goldsmith and entrepreneur – the man who made the New River happen," says Nick. "There were books about the history of London's water supply, but written for engineers, not for the general reader. As a journalist, I became interested and began writing."

The New River was dug in 1604-13 to and the Company created in the 1690s. Its boardroom was on the same site in Rosebery Avenue until 1904, when the company was finally abolished, the building knocked down and replaced by the equally grand HQ of the Metropolitan Water Board. As Nick was to find out, the New River Company was an incredible success. "It is, I understand, the single-most profitable company in British history," says Nick. "The New River Company was founded in 1690. If you'd been one of the original

Continued on Page-5



N°17

AUG / SEPT 2022

1<sup>st</sup> Aug

30<sup>th</sup> Sept

Waxing Crescent

17%/O.53

Waxing Crescent

23%/O.54

EC1 Echo is the area's free community newspaper. We publish bi-monthly and distribute 7,500 free copies of each issue. Now more than ever we believe that the media should be responsive and accountable to the community it serves.

Publisher

David Floyd

Editor

Oliver Bennett

Designer

Jonathan Duncan

Head of Advertising

Klaudia Kiss

Engagement Manager

Penny Dampier

Sales Representative

Maia Wolf

Contributors

Nick Higham, Julia Gregory, Chris Walker, David Wilcox, David Hyams, Mary-Ann Tarver, Amelia Braddick, Lola Rose Wood, Peadar Sionoid, Ben Mackmurdie, Cedric D'Amico, David Rossi

CONTACT

EC1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk

7-11 Coppermill Lane, E17 7HA

ADVERTISING

020 8521 7956  
Klaudia Kiss

klaudia@socialspider.com

TRUST IN JOURNALISM IMPRESS

EC1 Echo is a member of IMPRESS: The Independent Monitor of The Press. For more information on the EC1 Echo's complaints policy and how to make a complaint visit: [ec1echo.co.uk/complaints](https://www.ec1echo.co.uk/complaints)

NEWS

Money to help people use parks

JULIA GREGORY, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Camden and Islington councils are keen to encourage use of green spaces as part of their new ‘parks for health’ strategy.

The strategy aims to get people using their open spaces to boost their health and enjoy activities such as sport and gardening groups growing food.

The two councils – which both have significant areas covered by the EC1 postcode – used more than £667,000 of funding awarded in 2019 with money from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and GLA to draw up plans to use green spaces as a way of making people healthier.

It saw them join forces with 36 friends and park users groups, 53 voluntary organisations and nine GP practices who prescribe green and well-being activities to boost patient health.

Camden’s head of green spaces Oliver Jones said: “The pandemic’s really changed our way of thinking and changed our way to accept ideas from outside.”

The councils have also worked with community groups to ensure everyone knows the parks are free and open to all such as letting people know there are dog-free parks if they prefer.

Anna Wright, the councillor in charge of health and well-being in Camden said two in five residents do not have access to private outdoor space – the third highest in the country.

“Our parks therefore act as shared gardens for those who do not have one and provide a space both to relax, be sociable and keep active, indeed research has shown that regular use, of at least once a week, of a green space is associated with a 43% lower risk of poor general health.”

She said the collaboration with Islington Council, GPs and users groups was invaluable. “The care the users groups give to their parks is inspiring. Their love of open spaces really inspires them.”

The daily exercise allowed during lockdown had really opened up spaces and “gave people a sense of ownership.”

The project has seen an increase in GP referrals to activities such as walking groups,

gardening and growing food.

Cerdic Hall, primary care nurse consultant and recovery lead at Camden and Islington mental health trust explained the value of getting outdoors.

“We are really dealing with the Covid shellshock and people are being left with a sense of isolation and the inequalities have been writ large.”

He said: “Green spaces are a way for us to gather ourselves and tune into ourselves and what our needs are.”

He said this can be “a great healer for trauma,” adding, “The only way you can manage resource limitations is to work together.”

Donna Turnbull, Voluntary Action Camden’s community development manager helps signpost people to social prescribing. They might be encouraged to try out a heritage or exercise group, grow food or try a green gym and people can arrange to meet them for their first visit.

She said: “People can self refer or GPs and all sorts of clinicians do. It’s been very important for long covid, part of the rehabilitation is getting outside, walking in parks is part of the long Covid referral.”

2

Clerkenwell Chess Club by Cedric D'Amico, St John's Square

Light unleashed

Following the success of last year's Clerkenwell Photography Competition, Chris Walker aims to surpass it with the 2022 edition

After the success of last year’s inaugural photography competition – which surpassed all our expectations – I’m delighted to report that the number of entries has been even higher in its second year. The judges currently have the difficult task of selecting the winning shots, and the judges are currently working through the excellent entries following the closing date at the end of July.

As you might know if you’ve seen our advertising and social media, this year’s theme is “My Clerkenwell” and includes a new category for the Under 11s. We wanted to make the competition accessible to the youngest and oldest photographers in the community, so we have five age categories, to give all age groups a chance.

So far, the creative photographic themes have included nature, leisure and our emergence from lockdown, and once again, the project has been run in partnership with The Peel, with this year’s special Peel Prize is for the best shot representing “My Clerkenwell Community”. There’s another special prize provided by the lead sponsor, Central District Alliance, for the best shot showing “My Clerkenwell at Work”.

The Chair of Judges, Helen Healy, head of pictures at the *Financial Times*, says: “Last year we were blown away by the variety and quality of the shots we received, and this year the standard is just as high. It gives us judges a tricky task.”

The awards evening and exhibition is planned to take place in September at the same venue as last year, SoapBox Youth Centre on the corner of Old Street and Central Street. There will also be an exhibition in Hatton Garden. The details will be up shortly at the Clerkenwell Photography Competition’s website at [clerkenwellphotography.com](https://clerkenwellphotography.com) and we’ll also be bringing news at the *EC1 Echo*’s website [ec1echo.co.uk](https://ec1echo.co.uk).

A woman takes part in a recent Mencap Islington walk

Credit Islington Council

NEWS

Woe as regular choir loses support

A long-standing choir at the LSO St Lukes in Old Street has lost its funding

The LSO Community Choir has lost its funding

Credit Oliver Bennett

community choir in the area that has been meeting on Monday evenings at the London Symphony Orchestra has lost its support.

The choir, which has been running for almost 20 years, used to have the television personality Gareth Malone as its choirmaster, up until 2009. Now many of its 120 or so members are distraught at the decision. “It’s a genuine community choir of well over 100 people and has people from all walks of life from the local council estate to the Barbican,” says member Tania Cohen. “Many members have been in the choir for 15-plus years.”

Ms Cohen says that LSO’s decision was taken without consultation, engagement or warning. “Some people are devastated as it is such a big part of their lives, especially those who are retired or live alone,” she says. “It is a big loss to the community.” During its lifespan, the choir has taken part in singing events at Whitecross Street, an opera at the Barbican and the BBC Proms in 2019, and was a boon during lockdown. “People have lost parents and partners and had the support of their friends,” says Ms Cohen. “They supported each other during lockdowns,

including Zoom meetings when we were unable to sing in person.”

The key reason given by LSO is funding. But choir member and Whitecross Street resident Tessa Sheridan says some choir members would “increase their subscriptions to keep it going.”

“We understand that LSO’s actual orchestra is always going to be a higher priority,” says Ms Sheridan. “But the regular community events are important and a lot of people are very upset and feeling discarded. They’ve said that it’s had a really big impact on their mental health.”

She added that it another reason is that the choir is not considered representative,

which choir members dispute. “There’s a 96-year-old who has been in the choir from the beginning, someone who comes to choir for her mental health and wellbeing and to relieve loneliness and a group of bass singers who joined the choir after being part of a Guildhall programme for people considered ‘tone deaf,’” says Cohen. It has also been of great importance to members such as Daphne Alexander, 80, who “found strength in the choir after having cancer”. As Sheridan puts it, “People are feeling quite hurt and want to do something to celebrate the choir and its achievements. It would be bad to end like this.”

A spokesman for the LSO said that the choir is “not being disbanded.

“There are changes to how the LSO will run its singing programmes, and the Community Choir moves from the current termly year-round operation to a project-by-project basis,” he said. “This means that the LSO can continue to engage the choir members with the Orchestra’s future artistic plans, and also means we can involve a greater number of people.”

It is also because of the difficulties of finding funds in the arts since the pandemic. “It’s no secret that the pandemic has had a profound effect on the finances of all performing arts organisations, and there is a need to look at savings across the LSO’s operations if we are to recover,” he says. “We hope that members of the choir will continue to be involved in future LSO singing projects, and plan to work with the membership to find a new business model to support the costs of running a year-round community choir independent of the LSO – and not financed by the organisation as is currently the case – if they so wish.”

“The LSO is aware that this evolution of our community singing programme will be disappointing for some, but in the long-term we hope that we can engage with even more local people with our new model, and continue running our wide-ranging engagement programmes for children, young people, adults with learning disabilities, and isolated older adults in our local community.”

FINE & COUNTRY

Local expertise, national presence, international audience

OFFORD ROAD, N1

A fantastic and modern two-bedroom duplex apartment in the Wallpaper Building in Barnsbury.  
£800,000

ADELINE PLACE, WC1B

A Charming 2 bedroom mansion flat located on the raised ground floor of a sought after Victorian red brick block on the borders of Bloomsbury  
£1,250,000

HILLDROP CRESCENT, N7

A lateral three double bedroom, two bathroom flat set within this imposing Victorian property.  
£900,000

Fine & Country Islington

Tel: +44 (0)207 2781710

Email: [islington@fineandcountry.com](mailto:islington@fineandcountry.com)

International offices

Offices in over 300 locations worldwide

F&C

[fineandcountry.com](https://fineandcountry.com)



FEATURE

Commerce or culture?

A heated row is brewing about what London Wall West – the site of the Museum of London – should become

BY DAVID WILCOX

There are two very different visions for the London Wall West site on the edge of the Barbican estate, due for development once the Museum of London closes in preparation for a move to East Smithfield. The City Corporation’s vision gives priority to commercial use, the traditional economic base for the City. It is currently consulting on plans for 780,000 square feet of an office-based development, and saying that revenue from the scheme will help fund the new Museum. Opposing the scheme, the Barbican Quarter Action campaign advocates more cultural and social uses, respecting local heritage, and providing a gateway to the City’s Culture District. They favour reuse of the Museum building, and the Bastion House office block, if possible. Initially the City also favoured cultural uses for the site, offering to contribute £6.8 million to a £288 million Centre for Music. However last year the Centre was scrapped,

and funds diverted to a major renewal of the nearby Barbican Arts Centre. When the Centre for Music was dropped, the City’s Property Investment Board chose to proceed with an office-based scheme. Other options were never discussed by the City’s ultimate decision-making body, the Court of Common Council. The City held an initial consultation on the scheme in December 2021, and is now consulting on revised plans, saying: “Through its development, the site provides an opportunity to create a world-class destination that attracts major businesses”. Local councillors, and the campaign, have called for for a full report on options to be debated by the Court. The City has itself recognised the need for a change in its economic strategy, and is investing £2.5 million a year in events and other attractions. Launching the Destination City campaign Policy Chairman Chris Hayward said: “We must seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine the City of London and enhance its leisure offer. This will



A computer-generated image of the plans for London Wall West

boost our attractiveness to existing audiences while also opening it up to new ones, just as the Elizabeth Line is set to connect more people to the City directly than ever before. “Destination City will be the latest reinvention in the Square Mile’s long history. It will drive our recovery from the pandemic and boost our attractiveness to talent by growing the City’s cultural offer, in turn revitalising our streets and reinvigorating our businesses”. The London Wall West consultation pack proposes new open spaces, a cultural events space, plus community and learning facilities. These are said to support Destination City. But the campaign says the cultural dimension is a very small part of the total and asks on its *London Starts Here* website: “Where is

the vision that built the Barbican Quarter in a time of post-war austerity? Why has the City lost its imagination and courage to do great things? At the Court of Common Council in late July Mr Hayward rejected calls from several members for a debate at Court on alternatives to the office scheme. He said that offices would provide the greatest financial return – essential in order to fund the move of the Museum of London. Discussion over the next few months may focus down on the future of one particular site, or may widen into a broader debate about the sort of development that the City, and London, needs in the changed circumstances brought by the pandemic.

Advertisement

LSO St Luke's

# MUSICAL ADVENTURES

AT LSO ST LUKE'S, OLD STREET

lso.co.uk/lso.stlukes

LSO

**Tangram: Our Silence is Your Silence**  
Silence, sounds and East Asian philosophies  
28 & 29 August 7.30pm

**Concerts with BBC Radio 3**  
Piano recitals and jazz fusions with star soloists  
15, 16 & 30 September 1pm

**Musical Lunchtimes**  
Free, informal concerts to feed your curiosity  
Starting 23 September 12.30pm

FEATURE

Continued from Page-1

shareholders and by some miracle survived right through until 1904, one historian estimated that you would have enjoyed a return on your initial investment – both in terms of dividends and the money you got the final buyout – of 267 percent per year. I don’t believe any other commercial enterprise has been as profitable.” Where’s there’s water, there’s brass – something that we know today as well, with Thames Water making a cool £488 million last year. Arguments about this have raged down the centuries – hence Nick’s subtitle for the book: “Private Greed, Public Good.”

Whatever one’s thoughts, the water was sorely needed. “The reason it was created in the 17th century was that London’s population quadrupled from 50,000 to 200,000. In the early part of the century water came out of wells or out of the river in buckets. The medieval water supply couldn’t keep up with demand. So the City of London authorities solved the problem by privatising their water supply and the New River Company simply became the biggest, most elaborate and important of the privatised water suppliers – and the one that lasted longest.” It was so profitable because the infrastructure was not itself expensive. “If you’re in the business of supplying water, most water companies have to pump water, which was costly,” says Nick. “So they built an aqueduct, originally 41 miles long, but 23 miles as the crow flies, from Hertfordshire to London – a hugely impressive piece of engineering. The water fell by gravity five and a half inches each mile and involved no pumping. After being built the New River itself had next to no cost. It was a licence to make money, and they made the most of it.” Indeed, no pumping

was required until the New River Company decided it wanted to serve the West End as well, which did involve pumping. By the time the New River was created Clerkenwell was already a watery place with springs and spas reflected in its place names: Spa Green, Sadler’s Wells and Bagnigge Wells - summer home of Nell Gwynne. “These places were mostly taken over by entrepreneurs for recreation, drink and dancing as they were all in walking distance of the city,” says Nick. Yet at the time, and throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, most water

medical establishment that cholera was in the water,” says Nick. “They didn’t understand that disease was passed through sewage which infected the water.” So clean water was urgently needed: a fact unhelped by some of the new water companies, including the East London Waterworks. “Evidence demonstrated conclusively within that their water was killing thousands and the company did nothing about it,” says Nick. A public inquiry established that the company had broken the rules, and there were organised protests about the price of London water, including one of the

first organised consumer movements. “But the authorities did nothing. If you were a private company in Victorian times, you were pretty fireproof.” As water provision became more professional, companies took an annual charge. “It was delivered to households in pipes made of hollowed-out wood which leaked terribly, often via a little lead pipe, and they charged customers every six months,” says Nick. Now we have water meters but otherwise, the system isn’t so different.

The New River still exists, but it is now huge reservoirs around London that supply the city. “They are enormous water pans,” says Nick. “Around London, there is more surface water than at any time in the past.” And from these giant tanks we have clean water, meaning that millions of people can drink uncontaminated water everyday without a second thought. That’s the legacy of the New River.

Nick Higham's 'The Mercenary River' is available to purchase now. He is leading a tour that inspired the book on Sunday 11 September, which starts at 10am and lasts for two hours, with a maximum of 15 available spaces, pre-booking is required. For more information: Visit [thameswater.co.uk/about-us/responsibility/days-out/heritage-sites](https://thameswater.co.uk/about-us/responsibility/days-out/heritage-sites) eventbrite.co.uk/e/history-of-the-new-river-guided-walk-tickets-347845434057



Nick and his new book

“Water simply made London liveable and its expansion possible”

tasted disgusting – even if it didn’t come directly out of the Thames. “Most people didn’t drink water except the poor,” says Nick. “Anyone with money drank beer, wine or later tea and coffee, because it disguised the taste. A key attractions of these spas was to offer spring water straight out of the ground, which tasted beautifully refreshing and not of sewage.” There was also an urgent public health need, and there were four cholera outbreaks in London, including the one in Soho identified by John Snow – one of the founding fathers of the science of epidemiology. “Interestingly, Snow wasn’t believed at the time and couldn’t persuade the

COLUMN

We need more community hubs

BY DAVID WILCOX

Community drop-in sessions at Barbican Library this year have highlighted the need for inclusive spaces to meet and chat, activities for different ages, mental health support, residents giving tours to make connections, ways of telling stories. These in-person activities could be supported by online communities, calendars and maps.

The Barbican Centre Communities and Neighbourhoods team, who ran the sessions, have now said that an information hub could be created in display space on the ground floor of the Centre, which you pass on the way to Barbican Kitchen.

What an opportunity. This offers people the chance to engage not just local residents and workers, but visitors from London and beyond. I shared some initial ideas – and was delighted to do some work for the Communities team building on my previous experience in the field, including consulting for The Peel, and have suggested that different panels might be used to show local walks, articles from the *EC1 Echo*, maps of the neighbourhood, and a calendar of activities.

In addition, we could create a “shop window” of printed and digital information cards in the hub and online. The printed cards could be about places, people, resources, and projects like those supported by Culture Mile’s Imagine Fund and QR codes could provide a link to more information online. While the display space isn’t good for meetings, it could provide a rendezvous point for people to connect and then have a chat in the Centre’s other spaces, bars and restaurants. It could even be made into a community learning project. Barbican Centre’s Open Lab programme supports artists

developing new projects. How about a Creative Communities Lab to help people contribute content to the hub – and-or to start their own hub space with a Hub Kit? Sometimes these ideas are bit theoretical, so I’ve asked whether there are any elements that could be practically useful, and whether it might realistic to develop a network of linked information hubs, in libraries, community centres and other public buildings.

One of the big challenges for communities is how they create or access opportunities to connect with each other,” said Olu Alake, chief executive at The Peel. “David and the Community Team at Barbican have rightly recognised that they have there a space

that could be used very interestingly to address this issue. I am particularly intrigued at the idea of an interactive information board, where people can find out what is going on in their localities.

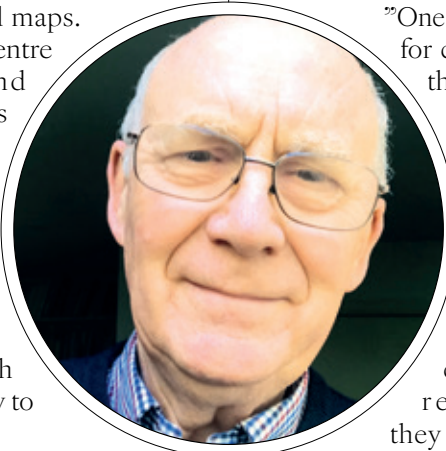
“This can be developed further using emerging AI technologies to place Barbican’s rich cultural offer within the local community in more accessible ways that resonate more tellingly with their own social and cultural backgrounds and areas of interest. This could be the start of something very special indeed.”

“A community information hub could be created on the ground floor of the Barbican”

There would be great benefit in an ideas session and development that combined the resources of the Barbican Centre, Library, and other City organisations with the inspiration and expertise of The Peel and other centres in south Islington. The hope is that it could lead to an EC1 network of hubs for Creative Communities.

You’ll see a rather ambitious vision for the hub on a new blog I’ve created to support and expand on this column. There’s a link at the end and do get in touch with any ideas.

Visit [connections.commonslondon.org](https://connections.commonslondon.org)





# News from The Peel



Youth Club at ZSL London Zoo

**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 including the EC1 Echo**

**Letter from Olu**



CEO Olu Alake

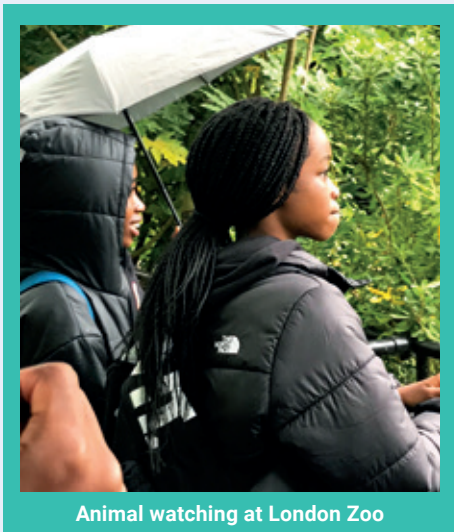
School is out and summer is on! For many children and their parents in Clerkenwell, however, this is a time of some concern as they have to worry about something so many of us are lucky to never even think about – how to feed their children over the next six weeks. With a higher proportion of children living in poverty compared to most of the UK, we see the real impact of holiday hunger, obviously made worse this year by the cost of living crisis.

Registration to our Youth Club summer programme increased by 100% when we made it clear that we would be providing free lunches for the children. This is another issue that we can tackle together as a community. Please get in touch with us to see how you or your organisation can help.

**Fun at the Zoo**

At The Peel we work hard to provide fun, positive experiences for our clubs. In May, the Youth Club went on a day trip to ZSL London Zoo, one of the biggest and most beloved zoos in England (which happens to be on our doorstep). It was

a wonderful opportunity for children, young people, parents and community organisers to get together, have fun and provide a memorable experience to all. With a quick stop for lunch, they managed to fit in visits to the penguins, tigers, lions and farmyard animals. Sign up to our newsletter to keep updated on future activities and trips.



Animal watching at London Zoo

**Windrush Day Celebrations**



Windrush Day at The Peel

In June, The Peel invited the local community to celebrate Windrush Day, an event which marks and celebrates the arrival of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Britain. We celebrated with live music from local artists, poetry, traditional Caribbean food and fun games with an aim to educate the intergenerational attendees about both the history of Windrush and present-day Britain.

“I had a lovely time, it was so much fun to try foods from different parts of the world” said one of our regular social club members. This event proved popular



among local residents and we look forward to celebrating again next year.

**Cooking at The Peel**



Activities coordinator, Jeana, helping our younger members

Our youth club consistently produces wonderful dishes each week in cookery class. Some recent dishes have included homemade pizza, cheese scones, cookies and strawberry mousse. In 2020, The Peel Youth Club produced The Peel Lockdown Cookbook, a list of recipes the young people worked on from home – keep an eye out for recipes on our social media @peelinstitute.

**Dish n’ Jam**



Dish n’ Jam fun

On 8th July, The Peel held our first Dish n’ Jam event: a new community event that merges food, music and culture. Members of the local community were invited to bring a dish that represents their culture to share, and perform a song or act of their choice. Keep an eye on our social media platforms to see when our next Dish n’ Jam event will take place!

**Art attack!**

Our Social Club members got crafty in July by taking part in a professionally-led

arts class. The session involved using traditional materials such as paint and charcoal to paint animals from figurines. If this sounds like an event you’d be interested in, get in contact with us via our email at [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk).



Social Club members painting

**Peel Fitness**



Our Parks pilates session

In July, we started our new afterwork community fitness sessions, in collaboration with Our Parks. The sessions are free, every Wednesday at 5pm in Spa Fields park. All classes are run by experienced coaches and accessible for all ranges of abilities. Sign up at [www.ourparks.org.uk](http://www.ourparks.org.uk) to book your free class.

**School Fair**



The Peel’s stall at Hugh Middleton School

Our community organisers visited Hugh Middleton’s School Fair in July. All ear groups came together for games, raffle, tombola, bbq, and bouncy castle to help raise money for the school. This was a great opportunity for children and young people to sign up for our summer activities, including The Peel Summer Programme.

**Young person Q+A**

At The Peel, we love to support our young people and provide them with enriching, memorable experiences. We sat down with three of our youth club members to see what they think of The Peel...

**How long have you been part of The Peel’s youth club?**

**Shyreecce:** Five or six years.  
**Racheb:** Since 2018 (I think!)  
**Yeabsera:** Five years

**What do you most enjoy about attending?**

**Shyreecce:** Learning new things and socialising with different people.  
**Racheb:** That I get to learn new things in a fun way.  
**Yeabsera:** The joy it gives me and the way I can learn new things as I go.

**What’s your favourite event or activity you’ve participated in during your time with us?**

**Shyreecce:** Camping!  
**Racheb:** Cooking is my personal favourite.  
**Yeabsera:** Cooking club

**If you had to sum up the youth club experience in 3 words, which would you choose?**

**Shyreecce:** Fun, different and accepting  
**Racheb:** Live, laugh, love (quite literally!)  
**Yeabsera:** Fun, friendly, happiness

**What’s your favourite Peel Lockdown Cookbook recipe?**

**Shyreecce:** Brown Stew Chicken  
**Racheb:** The chicken and vegetable fried rice.  
**Yeabsera:** I have quite a few!

**How would you say The Peel supports the local community?**

**Shyreecce:** [The Peel] is very caring and open  
**Racheb:** We always attempt to do things that help the community. For example, we don’t waste food during cooking lessons and we try to incorporate environmental issues in different activities such as coding class and weekly quizzes. But for the local community specifically, we hold events like the one on Christmas where children in the local community come together to have fun [and cook for Social Club].  
**Yeabsera:** The Peel puts a smile on the local’s faces and provides children and adults with activities to do.

**Clerkenwell Alliance Meeting**

For the past three years, The Peel has been convening The Clerkenwell Alliance, a collective of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors focused on social change in the local community. They meet to discuss key issues affecting the community and act to provide solutions to residents.

The Alliance met recently and two core issues emerged: the mental health of school children and food insecurity in the area.

Local schools have reported increased poor mental health among students since the return from lockdown. This has had knock-on effects on teachers’ mental health. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the accelerating cost of living crisis. Poverty demonstrably reduces children’s access to extracurricular activities and ability to experience life-enhancing opportunities. The Alliance is now looking to work with local schools to develop a programme of activities to address the mental and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

Similarly, food insecurity is a big issue in Clerkenwell. The Alliance is looking to develop a new initiative which would involve local businesses to identify, collect and distribute cooked meals for the food insecure.

Any local business or individual who would like to be a part of either initiative is invited to contact us as soon as possible: please contact [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk).

**Peel Regular Classes and Upcoming Events**

- Youth Club; coding and cooking for children and young people between the ages of 8–18
- Social Club; weekly exercise classes; fitness mornings at Brunswick Estate; men’s only afternoons
- Our Parks: free weekly fitness classes on Wednesdays at 5pm in Spa Fields
- Creative workshops and writing sessions

**Join The Peel Team**

Would you like to volunteer with us, or would you like to start a class or activity that benefits the local community? Are you a local business or organisation that would like to support one of our upcoming projects? If so, we’d love to hear from you. Drop us an email on [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk).

**Visit** [peelinstitute.org.uk](http://peelinstitute.org.uk)  
**Email** [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk)  
**Call** 020 7837 6082  
**Follow** @PeelInstitute



# The don of EC1

BY OLIVER BENNETT & DAVID HYAMS

The character of Darby Sabini in *Peaky Blinders* has revitalised interest in Clerkenwell’s infamous interwar gangster

**P***ea*ky *Blinders* has become one of the great showbiz franchises of our time. Since it began in 2013 it has snowballed, moving from television to the stage, and is currently working its way around the country as a dance production. As most of us know by now, Steven Knight’s creation is a pot-boiling mix of sharply-dressed retro toughs and romantic molls, and centres around WWI veteran

Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy) and his band of Birmingham gangsters. It’s fair to say that the period detail is improved upon – and that most of the characters are fictional.

But there are a few characters who are based in reality, the most notable being Darby Sabini, played on TV by Noah Taylor. Indeed, if anything Sabini’s importance in the demimonde of 20th century British mobsters has been underplayed. For the Anglo-Italian from ‘Little Italy’ – the stew of streets based around Saffron Hill and Clerkenwell Road – was one of the most successful gangsters in the UK and was even described in the title of his 1984 biography by crime writer Edward T Hart as *Britain’s Godfather*.

Charles (or in some testimonies) Ollovia or Ottavio Sabini was born to Italian immigrant Ottavio Sabini and Eliza Handley in either Saffron Hill or Warner Street in 1888 (Sabini

The Yorkshire Grey on Gray’s Inn Road, a Sabini hangout



A racecourse of the era Credit whatthat picture from Hanwell, London, Creative Commons

St Peter’s on Clerkenwell Road was and remains the heart of the Italian Community



*Sabini’s meal ticket came in the 1920s with lucrative protection rackets at racecourses*

history is a bit of a moveable feast). Even in childhood Darby seems to have created alibis, calling himself variously Charles or Fred. He left school in 1902 at 13, establishing himself as a boxer, bookmakers’ runner and tough door operator with promoter Dan Sullivan in Hoxton.

From there it was a shortish hop to run nightclubs and protection rackets, but Sabini’s real meal ticket came in the 1920s where the protection of book-makers and a supporting cast of bad debtors, bent clerks and ticktack men at racecourses made for a lucrative living, bringing back about £4,000–5,000 per meeting, about £200,000 today. If you’ve seen John Boulting’s 1948 film *Brighton Rock* based on Grahame

Greene’s 1938 book of the same name – Greene is said to have based the character Colleone on Sabini – then you’ve got the flavour. To enforce their authority, the growing Sabini clan used cutthroat razors with tape wrapped around them to expose the last, shiny inch.

Wherever the gang went, be it Brighton or Epsom, the Sabini base was in Clerkenwell. The gang convened at the Griffin, now a strip pub, and the Yorkshire Grey on Gray’s Inn Road as well as the Bull: all well-placed to be lookouts for invading gangs from other areas, including south London’s Elephant gang, Hoxton’s Titanics and the Camden Town mob.

Indeed, it was at the Griffin that one of Darby’s major tests came in 1920,



The Griffin was a key stronghold of the Sabini gang

when an Elephant gang “frightener” called Monkey Benneyworth came in to assert he and his gang’s dominance – and left in a bit of a beaten-up mess. Of course a feud ensued, but with about 300 enforcers Sabini was in a good position to hold his ground. His large coterie included other Sabini family members and names like Alfred Solomon – a Jewish gangster from Covent Garden depicted in *Peaky Blinders* by actor Tom Hardy.

As in the US, the 1920s was a roaring time for gangsterism in the UK. The end of WWI in 1918 initiated a heady, demob-happy atmosphere in which leisure activities such as dog and horseracing flourished, along with the betting that fuelled it. This meant that racecourses were awash with cash; catnip to the mobs. Protection rackets, blackmail, extortion and robbery became rife, and with racecourses spread across the country, London’s travelling gangs faced crews from Leeds and Birmingham – the latter the source of the actual *Peaky Blinders* – as well as London rivals such as south London’s Elephant Gang and Hoxton’s Titanics. The Sabinis would return down Clerkenwell Road in a triumphant phalanx of black sedans.

The fierce exploits of Darby Sabini’s gang led to their notoriety



With superior numbers and ruthlessness combined with cunning, Sabini and his gang rode high in the 1920s when they had stakes in all the southern racecourses and protection rights over half of London’s nightclubs. Sabini himself wasn’t just a tough guy. With diplomatic skills, he mostly managed to keep the police and judiciary at bay and his Clerkenwell firm is said to have including imported Sicilians, who worked in a sometimes uneasy mix with local gangsters.

In his own way Sabini clearly had managerial skills, inspiring loyalty and fear. He was both rich and judiciously generous, splashing fivers around when circumstances demanded, and tough enough in character to get out of scrapes without violence. During the 1930s Sabini was said to be a permanent inhabitant of Brighton’s Grand Hotel – the epitome of luxury. He married Annie Emma Potter, and they are said to have had three daughters and one son. The family approached what might be called an ordinary life, with Sabini going to church and tending his garden.

There were hiccups in his otherwise successful career. In 1926 he was declared bankrupt after a libel

action against a newspaper failed, and some gangland escapades ended badly. Challenges came from other quarters such as north London’s White family and East End gangster Jack ‘Spot’ Comer, who challenged the Sabinis’ dominance; not to mention the Birmingham Boys, who were an ever-present threat, once kidnapping a woman from the Sabini coterie and subjecting her to rape and violence.



Darby Sabini’s ‘hod’ bag – his bookmakers’ money bag – is in the collection of a kind local resident, who allowed EC1 Echo to use pictures of it Credit David Rossi



If there was ever a desire to glamorise the world of the Sabini’s and their counterparts – abetted by colourful names like Jimmy Sabatini, the “Cobblestone Fighter” and the “Trimmer” – then events like these put paid to such romantic notions.

The Second World War then came, when the internment of Italians began due to Italy being on Germany’s side. Sabini was arrested in 1940 at Hove’s Greyhound Stadium and interned as an enemy alien, then in 1943 doing a further three years in prison for receiving stolen goods. This left the field wide open and after the war, Sabini found his empire had been taken over by various others including the Whites. Sabini then seems to have drifted into a kind of semi-retirement, becoming a bookmaker. In 1951 he died in Hove.

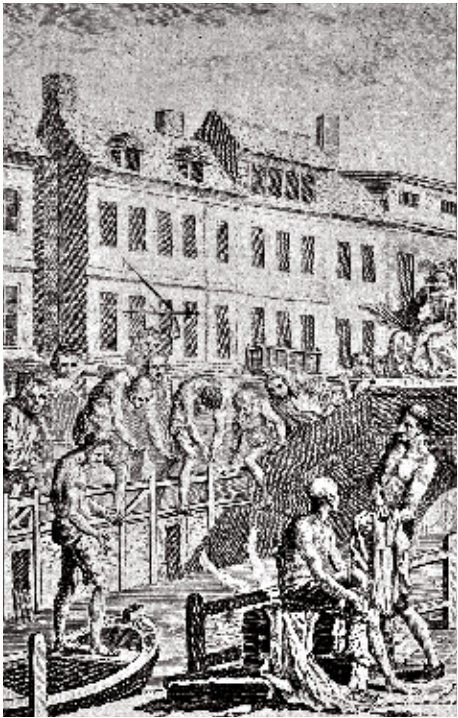
With the TV series, as you’d expect, a few liberties were taken. In *Peaky Blinders* Sabini is impeccably dressed, as you’d expect from an Italian, and brings all the arrogance of the role to bear. But as Hart says in *Britain’s Godfather*, Sabini preferred to dress in the clothes of an Italian peasant, with a trademark checked flat cap, and he acted humbly – the better for his formidable diplomatic skills. Knowing the importance of a low profile served Darby Sabini well – if not the historians, who have to piece together fragments from the life of the don of Clerkenwell.



# Fleet foxes

*There was once ‘wild’ swimming in Farringdon*

A part from a few swimming pools – including a vertiginous private pool atop Sessions House in Clerkenwell Green – the EC1 district isn’t blessed with swimming holes, let alone any form of ‘wild’ swimming. But to prove that wasn’t always the case, this engraving [below] from 1751 shows a group of bathers swimming in the River Fleet on Farringdon Street. As the Fleet was full of sewage, this would have been hazardous. In 1710 Swift wrote of the Fleet’s baggage: “Sweepings from butchers’ stalls, dung, guts, and blood, Drown’d puppies, stinking sprats, all drench’d in mud, Dead cats, and turnip-tops, come tumbling down the flood.” By the mid-19th century it was culverted for hygiene reasons. Nonetheless, in the picture some of the sheer summery joy of splashing around in water comes across. Indeed, there were other swimming opportunities in the area. Peerless Pond, at Baldwin Street was used for fishing as well as swimming, as seen in these two prints, from 1798 and 1810 [top, far right]. So feted was Peerless, that in a handbill of 1846 it was advertised as “The Pleasure Bath of Peerless Pool” and “the largest in England... situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the heart of the City... open to the air, although entirely screened from



”  
*The summery joy of splashing around in water comes across*  
“



observation, and most ample in its dimensions.” It grew from a spring-fed pond aptly called the ‘Perilous Pond’ for its drownings and was launched by jeweller and entrepreneur William Kemp who made it safe, appointed it with marble steps and charged one shilling entrance – quite a lot of money in those days, making it an attraction for the gentry. The Peerless Pond worked for about 100 years and worked its passage as an ice

rink in winter. It’s now said to have been London’s first outdoor public swimming pool – which makes the fact that it was drained and overbuilt in the 19th century dismaying. Baldwin Street now stands on the site.

Of course the Thames has always been nearby and long used for swimming by those willing to risk its perilous tides and currents (NB: it is not recommended). At least this view [above, left] showing swimmers in the

Thames near London Bridge, by artist T Bellamy, has a purpose: to advertise a life preserver design by FC Daniels.

These prints 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. Visit londonpicturearchive.org.uk

‘Green City’ – A Visual History of London’s Parks and Open Spaces

This exhibition of photographs and prints celebrates the ways that Londoners have enjoyed the great outdoors since the 16th century, including festivals, gardening and promenading; playgrounds to allotments, Sunday football to grazing flocks of sheep. This free outdoor exhibition will tour the City and London’s open spaces this summer.

For more information: Visit cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

# ENVIRONMENT 11



Black Locust, Spa fields Credit Mary-Ann Tarver



Maple tree in leaf, Spa Fields

## The hood for the trees



Foxglove tree, Spa Fields



Foxglove tree in Spring, Spa Fields

*Clerkenwell resident Mary-Ann Tarver has found pleasure in the arboreal splendours of Spa Fields*

planted with Chusan Palms and mysteriously named Cabbage Palms. Before crossing over Rosoman Street into the other part of Spa Fields, look for a Caucasian	Walnut Wingnut in summer overhanging the pavement with its dangly seed strings. Over in the Fields, a former burial ground, the three grand Foxglove Trees
---	--

## Watch out for wildlife in the city this summer

BY AMELIA BRADDICK

One of my earliest memories of the Barbican is of a primary school trip to place frogspawn in the ponds. I hadn’t thought about our excursion until one of the lockdowns, when I visited the Barbican Wildlife garden, and I felt as if I’d gone full circle seeing wildlife in an urban setting once again.

With a pond, meadow and compost heap, here you’ll find over 300 species, including cucumber spiders, sedgesitter hoverflies and stag beetles. The garden is maintained by Barbican residents and has won awards: in 2018, 2019 and 2020 it was crowned “Outstanding” by London in Bloom.

Other local public gardening clubs are also available to join. St Luke’s Community Centre welcomes volunteers to assist

with their three green spaces. The Edible Yard consists of a large greenhouse with a wildlife patch; the Community Terrace hosts a bug hotel and small pond; and St Luke’s Woodland Courtyard has dense trees which enhance biodiversity. An After School Gardening Club and Gardening for Over 55s are both held weekly. There are other ways to spot wildlife in EC1, by looking out of your window. Squirrels scutter by, urban foxes go digging in bins and bats soar over gardens.


You can also see various birds, yet some of them are in trouble. According to the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan (2021 to 2026), the house

sparrow population has been rapidly declining and has been categorised as a ‘red status’ species, meaning urgent action is needed. Between 1994 to 2001, 70 per cent of Greater London house sparrows were lost although the report states that there’s a colony living in Fortune Street Park. To encourage repopulation the City Corporation is to provide nest boxes, protein-rich food and areas of shrub cover, and it aims to launch citizen science initiatives to understand sparrow behaviour.

The black redstart also features on the red list. They began to inhabit UK urban environments in the 1920s as the post-war

bombsites replicated the rocky cliffs they were accustomed to. Now, they’re found in the Square Mile due to the increase in green-roofed buildings in the City and the City Corporation plans to provide developers and builders with recommendations on how to use roofs to help it thrive.

The City of London Biodiversity Action Plan promises to develop specific open spaces for endangered species, improve the quality of existing ponds and create new ones for wildlife such as invertebrates, amphibians, dragonflies and bats. Education and community engagement are vital for this plan to work: voluntary groups provide data reports and promote biodiversity. Over the next few years, wildlife in the City and EC1 will have the opportunity to flourish given support from both local residents and public bodies.



The Barbican Wildlife Garden Credit Amelia Braddick



FEATURES



Anything Goes: It’s a party, and you’re invited

**BY LOLA ROSE WOOD**

If a play sinks or swims on audience reaction alone, it’s fair to say the S.S. American of *Anything Goes* sailed across a sea of smiling faces with ease.

Back by popular demand, it’s hard not to love this razzle-dazzle revival of Cole Porter’s 1934 musical. With all the glitz of a Vegas casino, this sea-faring musical is worth watching for the set alone: an ocean liner with more tiers than a wedding cake. A hilarious tangle of mistaken identity and missed romantic connections on board a cruise bound from London to New York, this madcap musical is a welcome gust of fresh air.

With hits like *I get a Kick out of You*, *You’re The Top* and *Friendship* the songs are just as delightful, delicious and de-lovely as they were 100 years ago, and the whirlwind story has as many subplots as a Shakespearean comedy, with young stockbroker-turned-stow-away Billy Crocker at its core, on his quest to win the heart of darling debutante Hope Harcourt – already engaged to an English Earl. If you think the plot sounds like something straight out of a PG Wodehouse novel,

that’s because it is. While the toe-tapping musical score is all Cole Porter, the onboard antics are based on a book written by a rag-tag bunch of collaborators, including Wodehouse.

Much like choosing your cabin on a cruise, choosing a seat at the Barbican theatre is important – there are over a thousand. Due to a ticket mix-up on my part, I ended up catching the first half of the show from the front row of the gallery: seats that are the theatrical equivalent of being in the ship’s hold. And yet, with neck craning to see the crowns of the actor’s heads, it was thrilling to feel like a bystander at the docks, waving off a ship on its maiden voyage. At just £10 a ticket for Young Barbican Members, these cheap seats are cheap, and the musical numbers are just as jaw-dropping from above as below, like synchronised swimming performances. Act One ended with a toe-tapping finale and the raucous refrain that ‘the world has gone mad today, and good’s bad today, but now, by god, anything goes.’

As sparkly and insubstantial as a glass of champagne, the Barbican’s light choice of programming felt almost itself like a statement. The chorus of tight-trousered

sailors could’ve been queered – they weren’t. The old US stockbroker’s obsessive Yale pride could have spoken to our current political leader’s ancestry – it didn’t. The ship captain’s anxiety about not having enough on a cruise, choosing a seat at the Barbican theatre is important – there are over a thousand. Due to a ticket mix-up on my part, I ended up catching the first half of the show from the front row of the gallery: seats that are the theatrical equivalent of being in the ship’s hold. And yet, with neck craning to see the crowns of the actor’s heads, it was thrilling to feel like a bystander at the docks, waving off a ship on its maiden voyage. At just £10 a ticket for Young Barbican Members, these cheap seats are cheap, and the musical numbers are just as jaw-dropping from above as below, like synchronised swimming performances. Act One ended with a toe-tapping finale and the raucous refrain that ‘the world has gone mad today, and good’s bad today, but now, by god, anything goes.’

As sparkly and insubstantial as a glass of champagne, the Barbican’s light choice of programming felt almost itself like a statement. The chorus of tight-trousered

12

Mid-century modish

*The Brunswick Estate is shortly to be 65 years old – and is ageing very well*

We’re now accustomed to London being a city of tall buildings. But when Brunswick Estate was designed in 1958, its three 14-storey blocks made them the tallest social housing buildings in the country.

Next year the estate will celebrate its 65th birthday, and since 2010 – when it had a big refurbishment – other improvements have been made, including table football and chess tables in fashionable concrete, and a public brick barbecue. There’s a season of summer events to come in its perfectly tended grounds.

The estate has a fascinating history as part of London’s post-war reconstruction. As the area was flattened during WW2, the land was earmarked for social housing by the GLC and the estate was designed: first by architect Joseph Emberton; then by Carl Ludwig Philipp Franck, part of the architectural practice Emberton, Franck and Tardew. It was finally completed in 1962 and pioneered the social housing style that was

to become fashionable in much of the world: tall blocks that enabled extensive open areas in between. In London, this style overturned the terraces of the past – and since then arguments have raged about the benefits or otherwise of this urban design model. But the Brunswick is one of the better high-rise estates, which a visit with Grace Udoh, Manager of the Brunswick Close Estate TMO proves.

The towers have been added to over the years and each one has its own personality, proclaimed at the foot with themed tiling murals. The estate’s earlier upgrade saw its gardens gain big yellow flowerpots and public sculpture, and the whole development has a strong sense of pride. It’s more modest than the Barbican and Golden Lane Estates, which have become beloved of architectural aficionados, but the Brunswick is a superb set-piece and one can see the thought that went into it, with the blocks staggered to achieve the optimum light and so on.

Now, the estate is gearing up for its 65th birthday – almost pension age – and has become more attractive as it becomes historic. “There are lots of people who actually specify that they want to live here rather than other estates,” says Grace. “As we come up to its birthday it’s a big vote of confidence.”



FEATURES

13



Happy returns

**BY PEADAR SIONOID**

The Amwell Society, which serves the area surrounding Amwell Street, is 50 years old and over the weekend of 17–19 June, members and neighbours marked its birthday by celebrating the area’s long history and some of its wonderful buildings.

The weekend kicked off with a Prosecco party in the St Mary Magdalene 6th Form Campus in Amwell Street. The building has

been an educational establishment since 1830, saw Charles Dickens give public reading of his works and boasts the Amwell Fig, a magnificent specimen, planted in 1828 and one of the 61 Great Trees of London. The party was opened by Emily Thornberry MP and attended by the Mayor of Islington Marian Spall, our local councillors, members and guests of the society.

Saturday morning started with a tour of Sadler’s Wells Theatre then a visit to Lubetkin’s masterpiece, Bevin Court. Initially called

Beer in a china shop

*The Exmouth Market bar that is also a ceramics gallery*

The bar Cafe Kick is well-known along Exmouth Market as a rumbustious sort of place, full of football tables and with the raffish air of a Portuguese beach bar. It wouldn’t necessarily be the kind of place where you’d expect to find studio ceramics, but two doors away, co-owner Mirja Hartwig has opened a shop called La Matiere devoted to her ceramics, which she debuted in the bar itself. And they’re gaining fans all the time.

Mirja studied communication design in Germany, then illustration at the Royal College of Arts. She met Garath, the other proprietor of Cafe Kick, and they opened the cafe. About a decade ago the ceramics muse landed when Mirja started making ceramics with her daughter at the 1A Centre on Rosebery Avenue.

“I then found I just wanted to do more and have a little bit more



became available.” Now she both makes ceramics and works in the kitchen at Cafe Kick and although La Matiere only opens a few days a week, Mirja will open it up if you pop into Cafe Kick.

Within La Matiere there are tiles, plates, mugs, saucers and plates with decorative glazes, running from £19 upwards. Mirja finds that people buy them as gifts and for special occasions and although she admits that she puts hers in the dishwasher, they are more to be considered as studio pieces, for display rather than daily use.

“They take a lot of time and you’re sitting there with clay and moulding them into shape,” she says. For her, the bar and the ceramics are one project and soon she says she’ll be running workshops for anybody interested in making their own handbuilt pottery.

La Matiere is at 47 Exmouth Market EC1R 4QL  
Visit mirjahartwig.co.uk  
Instagram @lamatiereLondon

COLUMN

A more balanced mix

**BY BEN MACKMURDIE, CLERKENWELL COUNCILLOR**

Last month I was at the Whitecross Street Festival on councillor duties and we went out afterwards in Exmouth Market. That Sunday dinner for a family of four came to over £120.

That’s expensive. We know hospitality businesses are struggling, that the pandemic has been hard and that rents and rates are huge. But these prices increasingly mean that it is only affluent people who can afford to come to eat in places like Exmouth Market, and the area shouldn’t all be about going out or expensive coffee. It’s also about popping down to the shops in your community and bumping into people you know. I believe that there should be a better balance between day-time shopping and the night-time economy, and that we should look for more provision of shops and perhaps, a greater range of venues. Many moons ago, I did look at trying to create a working mens’ club – perhaps I’ll revisit that idea.

There are positive moves afoot. The Peel, among others, has worked tirelessly to engage the community. We’re now also going to get a public and community space in Clerkenwell Green in the old 19th century toilet. Local artists and people will be able to use it, and we’re seeking to do this over the next five years along with an upgrade of the Green.

But I’m also thinking of how businesses can help. Perhaps restaurants might consider doing local family days, maybe once a month, where the price of a Sunday dinner and a children’s menu would be set at 50%, perhaps between a certain hour or so? It would certainly engage the wider community. There’s a huge history to build on here and initiatives like this would help us to move forward in a more inclusive spirit.





LISTINGS

14

TALK

**The Charterhouse from Restoration to Revolution: recorded lecture**  
Available now, Online

Dr. Cathy Ross’s talk explores the ups and downs of Sutton’s Hospital and its governors during this remarkable and turbulent period.

**Free (donations welcome)**  
**Visit** thecharterhouse.digitickets.co.uk

WRITING

**BLN-WRITE Black Women’s Writers Group**  
Wed 10 Aug, 7pm  
Theatre Delicatessen,  
2 Finsbury Avenue EC2M 2PF

Black Lives Matter is launching its BLN-WRITE programme. Whether you are a beginner or a weathered veteran writer. Talk, listen, write, learn to give your voice and creations a space to be read and heard.

**Free**  
**Visit** blackhistorymonth.org.uk

THEATRE

**Anything Goes**  
Sat 25 Jun – Sat 3 Sep  
Barbican Theatre EC2Y 8DS

The sold-out musical sensation, ‘Anything Goes’ returns by popular demand.

**From £29.50**  
**Visit** barbican.org.uk

**The Importance of Being Earnest**  
Mon 1 Sep, 7pm–9pm  
The Charterhouse EC1M 6AH

Slapstick Picnic presents a fantastically wild(e) new production. This is an outdoor theatre production in Charterhouse Square, so bring a picnic, your own chair or blanket to sit on and celebrate silliness.

**£11–£18**  
**Visit** thecharterhouse.org/visit-us/whats-on

EXHIBITS

**Our Time on Earth**  
Until Mon 29 Aug  
Barbican Centre,  
The Curve EC2Y 8DS

Join us on an immersive exploration of radical ideas for the way we live. Where technology brings us closer to nature, and indigenous insight reconnects us to our roots. Enter the story of our future, with perspectives spanning art, science, activism – and more.

**£18**  
**Visit** barbican.org.uk

**Great Big Art Exhibition**  
From Fri 16 Sep – Fri 21 Oct  
St Luke’s Community  
Centre EC1V 8AJ

St Luke’s Community Centre will host its first ever Great Big Art Exhibition. Centre users and residents are invited to get involved by creating their own work of art on a postcard. The theme is ‘Feeling Good’ and everyone’s miniature masterpieces will be exhibited at St Luke’s.

**Free**  
**Visit** slpt.org.uk

MUSIC

**Young Artists’ Platform: Philharmonia**  
Thurs 4 Aug, 1pm  
The Foundling Museum,  
40 Brunswick Square WC1N 1AZ

The Foundling Museum has partnered with the Philharmonia Orchestra’s MMSF Instrumental Fellowship Programme for a series of performances in their historic Picture Gallery. For this event, enjoy music from Guylaine Eckersley (bassoon), accompanied by Edward Leung (piano).

**Concert included with museum admission**  
**Visit** foundlingmuseum.org.uk

**Dykes on Mics**  
19th Aug & 16th Sept, 7:30pm  
The Apple Tree, 30  
Clerkenwell Green EC1R 0DU

Inspired by Boston’s legendary dive-bar Queeraoke, this night offers singing, dancing and good times. An inclusive event which celebrates queer culture and welcomes people of all genders.

**From £5**  
**Visit** theapplefreelondon.com

**Clerkenwell Festival**  
Sun 28 Aug, 1pm  
Spa Fields Park EC1R 0WX

Enjoy a day filled with bands and DJs (with an after-show party), a jumble sale, a dog show, an area for children, a history walk, food stalls, a bar and much more.

**Free**  
**Facebook** @Clerkenwellfestival

**Compiled by Amelia Braddick**

IN MEMORIUM

**Mick May**  
29.09.1958 – 7.03.2022



Mick May (far left) at The Peel

Mick May OBE has died aged 63. The chair of The Peel from 2014 until 2018, Mick was a larger than life character with a deep interest in the voluntary sector.

Mick was born in Aldershot to an army background. He went to the public school Eton, and then to St Andrews University. When he graduated, Mick moved to London, took up a City career and met Jill, his wife. They married in 1988.

Mick spent 20 years in financial services but realised his greater calling in the voluntary sector, and co-founded charity Blue Sky in 2005, devoted to employing ex-offenders. Later to become part of The Forward Trust, Blue Sky drew plaudits from many, including ex-Prime Minister David Cameron.

The Ministry of Justice’s Data Lab found that its employment model reduced re-offending by 23 per cent and in 2016, Mick was awarded an OBE for his work. Meanwhile, he had six children with Jill and continued his hobbies of angling and reading history books.

Mick’s life changed in 2013, when he was diagnosed with mesotheli-

oma. Although the normal prognosis is measured in months, Mick lived for another nine years, self-described as the best years of his life. During this time he worked with The Peel and other organisations, including, between 2015–21, as Chair of Governors of the Kensington Aldridge Academy at the foot of Grenfell Tower. Amazingly, he found the time to write a memoir called *Cancer and Pisces*, published in 2020. Written with grace and positivity, it told of his cancer as well as his deep love of fishing.

Staff at The Peel remember Mick well. “Such a great, compassionate unassuming and funny man,” said Kimberley. “One of the best, so down to earth and honest,” said Jeana, who recalls Mick turning up on his first day as Chair in designer gear, asking to be given tasks at the Youth Club. Rajib recalls “a very nice and funny person”, while Milad added: “He was an amazing person and so humble. He had time for everyone. May his soul rest in peace.”

The Peel sends condolences to Mick’s family.

Support independent local 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 borough 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 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 our website: [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

Members

David Wilcox, Daniel Winn, Laurence Colchester, Diana Alsobrook, Sarah Falconer, Tania Cohen, Brian Jones, Veran Patel, Katrina Fialko, Mirela Popoveniuc, Sarah Wood, Stephanie Pietraszkiwicz, Daron Pike, Sam Harris, David Plume, Conor Harris, Keith Baker, Jennifer Worrall, Hugh Fell, Emma Booty, Tom Wales, George Stiles, Han-Rui Chiew, Team Incredible Ltd and Roger Gillett

Advertisement

Public Webinar

The Barbican Podium Project Team invite you to attend an online webinar so that we can update you on our proposed scheme.



Wednesday  
17 August 2022  
7pm-8pm



Please register by scanning this QR code or by visiting our website.

Following consultation with all stakeholders, we would like to share with you the latest design proposals which will be submitted for Planning and Listed Building Consent in September.

Our design consultant will present the final masterplan for the Phase 2 area, followed by a Q&A session with the project team, including the City of London.

Contact us

- info@barbicanprojects.co.uk
- 0800 772 0475 (no charge)
- Freepost COMM COMM UK

[www.barbicanprojects.co.uk](http://www.barbicanprojects.co.uk)

Join our team!

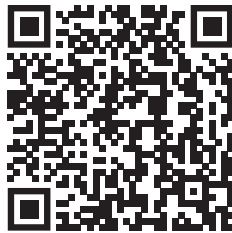
Are you a good communicator? Are you organised? Do you know Clerkenwell by heart? Is your community important to you?

Social Spider CIC is looking for a part-time project manager for EC1 Echo, the community newspaper for the EC1 area

Project Manager  
Social Spider Community News

**Application deadline:** 6pm on Friday August 19th.

See the full job description here:  
[bit.ly/3zU8YqU](http://bit.ly/3zU8YqU)



Please send a CV and cover letter to David:  
[david@socialspider.com](mailto:david@socialspider.com)



*winkworth.co.uk/clerkenwell*

**Winkworth**

for every step...

# When you want a different Perspective on Local lettings...

## We're here.

---

### We have a clearer view of the rental market.

At Winkworth we understand the fast nature of the lettings business and we pride ourselves on letting homes quickly, at the best possible price, to good tenants.

Call us today for your free market appraisal to find out the true value of your rental property.

#### **Winkworth Clerkenwell & City**

66 Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 4QP

**020 7405 1288 (SALES) | 020 7405 1266 (LETTINGS)**

[clerkenwell@winkworth.co.uk](mailto:clerkenwell@winkworth.co.uk)

---