

# EC1 ECHO

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023 • N° 23 FREE



EC1Echo.co.uk



EC1Echo@  
peelinstitute.org.uk

## NEWS

Islington Boat Club  
reopens after  
year-long hiatus

P.5

## FEATURES

The story of EC1's  
rogueish radical  
John Wilkes

P.10-11

## COMMUNITY

Come to a bank  
holiday weekend  
bash in Clerkenwell

P.12



@EC1Echo



@ec1echo

The London Museum at Smithfield Credit Secchi Smith



New London Museum interior by Stanton Williams Credit Will Scott



Marx Memorial Library Credit Rossitza Atanassova



Sun Rain Room by Tonkin Liu Credit Alex James



## Inside out

● BY ROSSITZA ATANASSOVA ●

I've lived in Clerkenwell for 21 years, and I'm still learning about its rich social history and architecture. It's a lively and varied neighbourhood, evidenced by a mix of historic buildings, modern architecture and commercial spaces – and home to a thriving and welcoming community including local residents, workers and students.

One way I have been finding out more about my adopted neighbourhood is

through the annual community-led Open House festival that celebrates London's architecture, buildings and neighbourhoods. Now in its 31st year, the festival takes place over two weekends in 6-17 September when people open up their homes and buildings for visitors to explore and learn from. Last year the Festival attracted 167,500 visits with several hundred sites made open and accessible to all.

Clerkenwell has regularly featured in Open House festivals and thus provides a

rare opportunity for everyone to connect with local communities. It is through Open House that I discovered many of Clerkenwell's sites, such as the London Metropolitan Archives, the Museum of the Order of St John and its grounds, plus innovative architecture designs, such as 15 Clerkenwell Close (the RIBA London and National Award 2018) and the modern office space of Bloom Clerkenwell by Farrington Station. I've particularly enjoyed visiting private homes in the neighbourhood, such as

the Paxton Locher House in Clerkenwell Green with its modern atrium and another personal highlight being the guided tour of Marx Memorial Library led by a library volunteer – indeed, it was a great surprise for me to see, on display in the library, a coat that once belonged to a prominent 20th-century politician from Bulgaria where I was born.

Clerkenwell's contributions to this year's Festival include hidden gems, such as the Sun Rain Rooms at 5

Continued on Page-4



N°23

AUG/SEPT

1<sup>st</sup> Aug

Full Moon

100%/O.55

30<sup>th</sup> Sep

Waning Gibbous

98%/O.54

EC1 Echo is the area’s free community newspaper. We publish 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

Project Manager

Penny Dampier

Contributors

Rossitza Atanassova, Julia Gregory, Penny Dampier, Jan Darling, Tim Norman, Adva Shimshy, Andrew Paul, Nicola Baird, Kimi Gill, The Gentle Author, Mark Aston, Paul Marko, Jackie Casey, Paddy Radcliffe, Olu Alake, Anne Stansfield, Michael Collins, John Broaders, David Rossi

CONTACT

EC1Echo@peelinstitute.org.uk

7-11 Coppermill Lane, E17 7HA

ADVERTISING

07732 000430 Klaudia Kiss

klaudia@socialspider.com

ipso

Regulated

EC1 Echo is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). For more information on the EC1’s complaints policy and how to make a complaint visit: ec1echo.co.uk/complaints/

NEWS



Charles Simmons House

Council aim to increase housing stock

BY JULIA GREGORY, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

One hundred former council properties could come back in-house and give care leavers, people sleeping rough in Islington and refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine a roof over their heads. Council leaders are set to agree to buy the ex-council homes tenants purchased under the right-to buy scheme as Islington becomes the first council to win funding from the Greater London Authority towards buying the homes with a £20m grant. The council will also need to borrow £26.3m from its housing revenue account for its share of the cost. It will buy 40 one bedroom, 20 two bedrooms, 20 three bedroom homes and another 20 four bedroom homes. The scheme will also include £1.2m funding from the Housing First project to give former homeless people intensive support to settle into their home. Islington council is on a mission to increase its housing stock to help cut its lengthy waiting list. It currently has 1,058 homeless households in temporary accommodation and has housed 200 people over the last year who have lived on the borough’s streets.

It said homeless families have to stay in housing association properties for longer because of a lack of available council and housing association homes and a 20 per cent increase in the numbers over the past year which it blames on the cost of living crisis and Brexit. A shortage of homes also means young care leavers spend longer in temporary and supported accommodation, according to a town hall report. Executive member for housing Una O’Halloran said: “The

estimated 21 homes, plus another 12, to match the value of its debt for the one bedroom homes. The report also said if the demand for temporary homes declines and the service is no longer needed the council could sell the homes and repay the proportion of grant and debt. It could also convert the larger homes into smaller temporary flats.

Charles Simmons House on Farringdon Road, EC1 is set to be opened later this year after a long delay. The project, which is part of Islington Council’s flagship council home-building programme, is set to have 25 flats and a community centre. Work was due to be finished in summer 2022, but was delayed because the original contractor went into administration. The council then appointed a new contractor to complete the homes, which are due to be finished this autumn. Councillor Diarmaid Ward, executive member for Finance, Planning and Performance at Islington Council said: “We appointed a new contractor after the original contractor unfortunately went into administration.” “The work at Charles Simmons House will create 25 homes for genuinely affordable council rent, a new community space and a new play space.”

2

EDITOR'S LETTER

Future proof

Dear reader, this will be the last *EC1 Echo* in the current bi-monthly format. Regretfully, we have struggled in recent months to make the paper copy of the newspaper pay its way, and so we have made the reluctant decision to pause print publication for the time being, giving the team the opportunity to take a step back and review options for the future.

There are a combination of reasons for this, including the rising costs of raw materials as well as an advertising downturn. Readers will no doubt already be aware of the difficult circumstances facing local newspaper publishing, and pausing publication of the print edition is by no means exclusive to the *EC1 Echo*.

It has been a highly rewarding four years producing the *EC1 Echo*. In that time we have covered many matters of local interest, from the effects of the Covid pandemic to the cost-of-living crisis, as well as interviews with local people, news of openings and closings big and small, and pieces delving into Clerkenwell’s rich history. We’ve done this against a backdrop of change in the area, which is becoming one of central London’s busiest districts, gaining a new role as a destination.

Not all is lost. The *EC1 Echo* is to continue the website, so that we will be able to update you with the latest news from EC1 and Islington South. We are committed to keeping local news accessible for free, from the community for the community, and we are actively looking at the possibility of publishing the *EC1 Echo* in a print format in the future, so keep your eyes on news from The Peel.

Meanwhile, we sincerely hope you have enjoyed the paper. If you have anything you’d like to say about the *EC1 Echo*, we welcome your feedback. Please email us at [ec1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:ec1echo@peelinstitute.org.uk).

Also, please sign up to our weekly newsletter to keep up-to-date with the latest local stories and listings. See [bit.ly/EC1newsletter](mailto:bit.ly/EC1newsletter) or scan the QR code. We are also on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook – look for *@ec1echo* and keep in touch there.

Thank you very much for your interest in the last four years. We’ve enjoyed it, and hope that you have too.



NEWS

3

This just in

City Uni teaches kids the news

The Department of Journalism’s TV studio at City, University of London in St John Street is training young journalists from Islington schools. Dozens of pupils from schools including St Luke’s C of E Primary School in Radnor Street, EC1 have participated in the scheme, called The News Clubs.

The clubs were formed as part of City’s outreach programme which aims at widening participation to higher education. They have been led by City’s Emeritus Professor Lis Howell, a journalist who has worked for the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky News and who was Head of Broadcasting at the university. They began in 2019 but were scaled up this year, following the pandemic and see the schoolchildren sourcing news stories from their localities, including teacher strikes, school

than going and talking about a career theoretically.”

City also works with schools to deliver primary tutoring and other outreach work and Copsey is working with Hugh Myddelton School. “It’s a key part of our primary school outreach and includes a visit to our campus to show them what university has to offer, as well as offering science support and English and maths tutoring.”

“The idea is to help pupils start their journey towards higher education and work with young people who might not otherwise think about university

and who are underrepresented in higher education: particularly those receiving free school meals, young carers, young people with experience of local authority care and refugee and asylum seekers and those with high levels of child poverty.”

“This year we’ve trialled a girls’ confidence programme at Hugh Myddelton where we were talking about strength, resilience about self-image and self-confidence and boosting those skills in the transition to secondary school.”

City, University of London has long been a business-oriented university and this continues. “We are a university of business, business practice and the professions,” says Copsey. “So we exist to enable people from whatever background or walk of life to access business and we’re here for the local community as well as students who come here from around the world. We have a duty of care towards our Islington community and we often say, ‘If you don’t see it, you struggle to be it’. Widening participation is a goal – and bringing schoolchildren into the TV studio is one way to offer them the opportunity to imagine where their life journey might take them.”



The new pocket park Credit Penny Dampier

Park is in the pocket

A POCKET PARK HAS OPENED ON Clerkenwell Close. Opened as part of an event for the London Festival of Architecture it has been created by Central District Alliance in partnership with Islington Council’s Greening the Public Realm Programme and YesMake – and in collaboration with locally based architects SimpsonHaugh, WilkinsonEyre, Zaha Hadid Foundation and Quarterre. The timber comes from trees felled locally in Southwark, and rainwater catchment has also been built into the planters, which occupy an old motorcycle bay at the foot of a flight of steps. There are now plans for further pocket parks.

LSO St Luke’s

Tangram x Mantawoman YANG QUEEN

An audiovisual extravaganza featuring Chinese yangqin, electronics and original hypnopop songs.

31 August @- 1 September 7pm

Free Friday Lunchtime Concerts

45-minute informal concerts with London Symphony Orchestra and Guildhall musicians.

Starts 15 September 12.30pm

Chamber Recitals with BBC Radio 3

Lunchtime concerts based on a theme or style, with world-class soloists, duos and ensembles.

Starts 21 September 1pm

LSO St Luke’s

161 Old Street, EC1V 9NG

lso.co.uk/lstolukes

LSO





NEWS

New group hopes to save EC1’s green spaces

Group has been set up to stop the degradation of the Clerkenwell parks



The stricken grass at Spa Fields (top) and St James’ Churchyard (below right) Credits: Tim Norman/Adva Shimshy



Friends of ECIR Parks Group – including St James Church Garden and Spa Fields Group – has been set up to stop the degradation of the Clerkenwell parks used by Clerkenwell Design Week each May. The group has been convened to express anger that the Clerkenwell Design Week (CDW) occupies both Spa Fields and St James Churchyard, both in Clerkenwell’s EC1R postcode area. Founder member Adva Shimshy began a petition against the use of the parks by CDW earlier this year, gaining over 300 signatures. It has since been presented to Islington

Council, which leases the use of the parks to CDW. It is estimated that Islington benefits to a net £100,000 per year from the event, of which £26,500 is given for the use of the parks for two weeks. “The Friends are unhappy about the use of the parks,” says chair of the group and local Tim Norman. “We’re saying that CDW itself is fine – just not on the parks. It stops locals and others from using the parks at a critical time of year – many of whom are council-tax payers who have contributed to the park’s upkeep already.” Adds Norman: “There is also a general dissatisfaction with the

fact that the parks become severely degraded after CDW – and it is all the worse given that the council spent hundreds of thousands of points on the refurbishment of St James’ Churchyard, only for CDW to damage it. CDW maintains that it pays to patch up the damage, but the parks have never been fully restored to full pre-event conditions and over years the damage has got worse as parks find it harder to recover during the dry summer months.”

It is particularly unfair, says Norman, as Islington Council recently boasted of gaining 13 Green Flag awards for its park and green spaces elsewhere in the borough, with Duncan Terrace Gardens, Canonbury Square, and Grenville Road Gardens gaining the prestigious award for the first time. These awards celebrate the most beautiful and well-managed green spaces across the country and elsewhere in EC1, Kings Square Gardens and Fortune Street Park have retained their status.

Islington Council claims that “parks and green spaces have so much to contribute to Islington residents staying healthy and tackling health inequalities in the borough, and by boosting biodiversity and canopy cover, they also support the council’s efforts to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. “

It is to be hoped that Spa Fields and St James’ Churchyard will be afforded the opportunity to gain Green Flag status in the future.



“It stops locals from using the parks at a critical time of year”

4

The 12th-century crypt of the Priory Church – Museum of the Order of St John Credit: Michael Hall



The Paxton Locher House Credit: Peter Clark



Continued from Page-1

Wilmington Square (by Tonkin Liu architects) and the historic offices of Zada Hadid Foundation (featured in the previous issue of *EC1 Echo*). There will also be an architect-guided tour of the new site for the Museum of London in the market buildings of historic Smithfield – but be aware there will be a ballot for this visit as it is expected to be so popular. New additions to the programme are the Central Foundation Boys’ School’s walking tour showcasing

people in Clerkenwell. What makes this event special is the number of volunteers who provide support, putting together the programme and helping at the many sites during the Festival. As a volunteer myself, I have found it extremely rewarding to meet new people, learn more about the city and give back something to the community.

We want to encourage more contributions to the Open House Festival from Clerkenwell residents and businesses. So if you are able to open up your place to visitors or showcase existing

“It is through Open House that I discovered Clerkenwell”

its new architecture and facilities, and the heritage site of the New River Head, preparing to become the home of the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration.

The festival welcomes everyone and presents the perfect opportunity for a day out and for meeting new

projects and designs, you can still submit your proposal for the Festival programme. If you are interested in volunteering or simply want to plan your visit, take a look at the Festival website and we look forward to welcoming you to Open House 2023. See [programme.openhouse.org.uk](http://programme.openhouse.org.uk)

NEWS

We are sailing

Islington Boat Club – based in City Road Basin – has reopened after a hiatus. Jan Dorling, who works for the charity, has the story



Islington Boat Club has had a difficult past year. Until recently it had been closed for around a year following concerns about management and safety issues at the club, leading Islington Council to lose confidence and refuse to grant it permission to operate. But in recent weeks things

residents sessions on the water anew, including Youth Club, school groups and its All on Board inclusion programme. Islington Charity groups receive 25 per cent discount.

The Boat Club is also offering a new programme for adults, which is a way for people to both take part in activities and support the club’s youth work. It is offering kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding (with *EC1 Echo* contributor Nicola Baird) on Tuesdays and Friday nights from 6-8pm – and narrowboat trips to Camden in one direction and Hackney the other.

The boat club opened in 1970 courtesy of Crystal Hale, who rescued the site from being turned into car parking and is currently run by manager Sarah-Jane Elvin. “We hope to welcome a new cohort to the club this summer,” she says.

Advertisement



meditation yoga poetry art mystics

Please join us

The Meditatio Centre  
St Mark’s Myddelton Sq  
London EC1R 1XX  
[www.meditatiocentrelondon.org](http://www.meditatiocentrelondon.org)



WCCM  
THE MEDITATIO CENTRE

5

COLUMN

Raise your GP’s game

GP surgeries can do much more than you realise, says Andrew Paul from the Patients Participatory Group at the Amwell Group Practice

Who do I talk to if I want to improve the customer service at my GP, or if I have a problem with the doctors, or if I simply cannot make sense of what is going on with outpatient services? What if I’m struggling with the GP’s reception, and the person on the end of the phone is difficult to understand? Why do

I have to spend so much time getting updates on my medication? Why isn’t the service simpler? How do I find out what services are actually available? And by the way, there is too much information being sent out...

These are just a sample of some of the questions, queries and statements that patients raise with us about the service they receive at their local GP, which in my case is at Amwell Street Practice. Our job is to get answers and more importantly, to challenge the surgery to fix problems and improve.

We are your PPG – your Patients’ Participatory Group. We are not part of the NHS exactly – we are part of the community and we are the most effective way for you to fix any problems or issues you have with your GP. The NHS has mandated that every GP has a PPG, so we are officially part of the whole service without being employed by them. Our job as an interested third party is to hold them to account. Why? Because only with your input can we improve your service. Better service means better

confidence and better health. This is an important message: your GP surgery can do a great deal more than you realise when it comes to improving your health and well-being. Recent changes in the structuring and funding of services, means you need to be more engaged and expect more support via your GP. The current idea that GPs are becoming more remote and difficult to access is true for many in the UK, but there is a different and more positive story. Initiatives like ‘social prescribing’, where health professionals offer community referrals to increase their well-being, are changing the way GPs see patients as people, not just as statistics. And in turn, patients should feed back to GPs so that they can improve. In the PPG we are gatekeepers to a host of services. We need to hear more from you about what you need to change and what the GP can do to improve their service to you. By contacting your PPG with any complaints, observations or recommendations forward on your behalf, with real power to hold the doctors to account. Once we have a satisfactory outcome, we will update you as to what has been done and how the doctors’ responded. Remember, the only way we get the healthcare we deserve is by hearing from you when the service is not working or assessing how it could be tweaked to provide an excellent service. We all pay for this NHS service and it is your right. Most importantly, the doctors want to hear from you. It is the only way we can improve the service and promote better healthcare for all.



Andrew Paul



# NEWS FROM THE PEEL

The Peel is your local community centre, based in Clerkenwell since 1898. We offer classes, regular events and activities for all ages and assist people to set up projects which benefit the community – including *EC1 Echo*, the community newspaper



## Letter from Paddy



Paddy Radcliffe Credit Penny Dampier

First things first, I'd like to thank Olu, our previous CEO, for all his hard work over the last couple of years. He leaves The Peel in a stronger

position, and we wish him well as he heads off to his new role as CEO of The Africa Centre. We've also said goodbye and thank you to Arvinda Gohil, our Chair of Trustees for the last six years, including helping to see The Peel through the challenges of the pandemic. As I write, I'm into my sixth week as Interim CEO at The Peel. And the time has flown by. It's been a great few weeks, meeting people, getting up to speed and seeing The Peel in action. There seems to be a wonderful community energy around Clerkenwell with people working together to make a difference. That commitment and collaboration is a rare and precious thing and something that we should aim to nurture and build on. With an Interim CEO, and two new Trustees, there are a few changes at The Peel. All our regular activities and initiatives carry on as normal, but if you have any suggestions, thoughts or ideas please get in touch: [p.radcliffe@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:p.radcliffe@peelinstitute.org.uk). I'd love to hear from you.



Olu's leaving dinner Credit Penny Dampier

## Minds Matter Islington

Minds Matter Islington ran successful workshops on Social Media Self Care with the Peel's youth groups and with St Peter and St Paul year six, where young people especially appreciate the space to give their own views. We also had a lively Navigating the System workshop with the Brunswick Women's Group, where the participants shared their experiences, tips and fears. We look forward to doing more of these in the autumn. MMI published a second edition of our popular booklet in July, with an expanded list of resources and groups which support good mental health.



Minds Matter Islington at the Hugh Myddelton Primary School's Cost of Living Fair Credit Penny Dampier

We also chatted with parents at Hugh Myddelton school's Cost of Living fair – bills and lack of means to pay them really hangs heavy on people's minds.

## Community Programmes



Hugh Myddelton Primary School's Cost of Living Fair Credit Penny Dampier

Our team has been out in force engaging with local residents, schools, faith leaders, organisations, entrepreneurs, and local leaders. Keep an eye out for our pop-up stands throughout the community and please, come and have a conversation with us. We hosted our second Cost of Living workshop, this time in collaboration with Hugh Myddelton Primary School. This event was the first of its kind in the borough and was attended by over 68 families. Ten of Islington's top organisations participated, providing information on housing repairs,

health, debt, and free community activities. Additionally, we provided a free school uniform shop, offering parents in need the opportunity to acquire necessary uniforms. We really look forward to continuing this work for the community. The women's group was busy in June and July. We had trained therapists attend to provide facials and massages, talks by Minds Matter Islington and Islington GP Federation on women's health, and went on a lovely tour of Arsenal Stadium. We celebrated Pride Month at Dish 'n' Jam, our monthly community party. Attendees of all ages joined us, with the eldest being 93 and the youngest just four years old. We offered glitter tattoos and had the amazing Proud Mary perform live entertainment. One attendee said: "It was so heart-warming to see so many different age groups here celebrating Pride Month." It was the return of our Baby Item Swap event in July, this time at St. Luke's. Thank you to everyone who attended and the continued support. Our next event will be on Saturday, 14 October. If you would like to initiate a community project, please get in touch, and our community team can arrange a meeting. Contact [s.gregory@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:s.gregory@peelinstitute.org.uk).

## Adults' Activities at The Peel

June and July were really busy months for our adult members. We had a fantastic trip to the theatre to see 42nd Street which left everyone wanting to learn to tap dance. The last Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration workshop weekly session involved jazz dancing and a mini exhibition, then Sam hosted a successful quiz night where the PCSOs took the trophy. There were dizzy heights and spectacular views from the Sky Garden. Connaught Opera took us on a flamboyant trip down memory lane. Caritas Ambassadors from St Peter & St Paul Primary School visited The Peel's older members to have a chat, sing a song and enjoy some chocolate cake. We also enjoyed trips to Kenwood House, Southend-on-Sea, Charterhouse Open



42nd Street theatre trip Credit Kimberley Bottomley

Gardens, Soho Village Fete, Mayfield Lavender Farm and Kew Gardens. We took part in a creative clay model-making workshop at the Zaha Hadid Foundation, and had a successful fundraising event with a new or nearly-new table top sale. Adults of all ages are welcome at The Peel, and there is no restriction on where you live either.

## Youth Club



Cooking club learning how to make chocolate mousse Credit Penny Dampier

In June our youth club got to design and print their own t-shirts, and they came up with some great creations. Cooking Club enjoyed making chocolate mousse and sausage casserole among other dishes. Coding Club worked on

building platform games. Family Kitchen has been a real success with ten families attending and learning how to cook delicious recipes including Jollof rice, falafels and hummus. Recently The Peel received a generous donation of 'Our Place' cookware, some of which we have started giving out to our youth club families. On 4 July we had an Independence Day barbecue at the centre. Unfortunately it rained, but the kids really enjoyed it all the same. We started our summer playscheme on Monday 24 July and so far the youth club has been swimming, bowling and to the cinema. The playscheme continues into August with lots more exciting activities planned. We would also like to welcome Sara Macdonald-Cox to the youth services as our new youth support worker. Sara has moved over from her community organiser role at The Peel to take on this new venture.

## The Peel Spotlight: Carly Fitzpatrick



Carly Fitzpatrick Credit Penny Dampier

Each issue, we interview a member of staff, volunteer or local resident to give readers an insight into life at The Peel. Meet Carly Fitzpatrick, one of our community organisers.

**How would you describe your role at The Peel?** I am part of the community engagement team. We organise activities and events to get the locals together. We do a lot of outreach which is really just spreading the word about what's going on at The Peel and within the local community. We ask the locals what their needs are and try to fulfill them as much as possible. If it's something out of our reach we can signpost them to where they need to go.

**What's your favourite part of the role?** My favourite part of the role is being able to get out in the community and talk to people from all walks of life. Listening to people's backgrounds and stories is so interesting. I love spreading the word about what's going on at The

Peel and also spreading the word about other events that are happening at other community centres. People need to know that there's so much going on in Clerkenwell and the surrounding areas. There's something for everyone and nobody should ever feel alone or feel like they have no one to turn to because help is on the doorstep. One of my other favourite parts is seeing how much our youth club has grown. Knowing there's somewhere safe in Clerkenwell for the kids to go and seeing how much they enjoy it and relish the skills they've learnt has been invaluable. My daughter cooks better than me now thanks to our youth club worker!

**Any challenges?** I think the main challenges are getting people to leave their comfort zones and come to some of the events going on at The Peel and within the community. However, there's one thing I can be sure of, and that's knowing that when they do come along they love the place and the people they meet. For me that is pure satisfaction. One of my personal challenges is getting to the local shop and back without stopping and talking to every single person on the way. They are normally a Peel member or they live locally. My daughter actually refuses to come to the shop with me anymore because she says it takes too long and by the time we get back her ice-cream would have melted!

**Describe The Peel in three words?** Safe, fun and family.

**What do you like about Clerkenwell?** The list is endless, hence me living here for 36 years but I love being part of such a close-knit community. I love that it's lively and busy, but I also love the fact that you can always find a nice quiet spot 5–10 minutes walk away. I just love it!

## Please refer to our website and social media platforms for more details, and our Sept calendar

<b>TUE 1</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm Book club discussion, 11am YC: Playscheme – Swimming (Archway)	<b>WED 2</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Crazy Golf	<b>THU 3</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Team Games (Hampstead Heath)	<b>FRI 4</b> YC: Playscheme (Chessington Zoo)	<b>SAT 5</b>
<b>MON 7</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Table Games/Table Tennis Console/Arts & Crafts	<b>TUE 8</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Swimming (Archway)	<b>WED 9</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Go Ape	<b>THU 10</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme – Water Fun in Granary Square	<b>FRI 11</b> YC: Playscheme (Brighton)
<b>MON 14</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme (Avon Tyrrell Residential)	<b>TUE 15</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme (Avon Tyrrell Residential)	<b>WED 16</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme (Avon Tyrrell Residential)	<b>THU 17</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm YC: Playscheme (Avon Tyrrell Residential)	<b>FRI 18</b> YC: Playscheme (Avon Tyrrell Residential) Sam's Quiz Night, 5–7pm
<b>MON 21</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm	<b>TUE 22</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm	<b>WED 23</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm Trip to Kew Gardens	<b>THU 24</b> AP: 10am–2.30pm Theatre Trip, La Bamba	<b>SAT 19</b>
<b>MON 28</b> Centre closed	<b>TUE 29</b> Centre closed	<b>WED 30</b> Centre closed	<b>THU 31</b> Centre closed	<b>SAT 26</b>

# AUGUST AT THE PEEL

AP: Adults at The Peel | YC: Youth club



CLERKENWELL FOOD EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE



## HELP FEED CLERKENWELL

DID YOU KNOW?

That there are more than 1000 people in Clerkenwell that don't have access to a daily nutritional meal?  
There are over 50% of children from a local Clerkenwell primary school that are on free school meals.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Donate the following items or order from our Amazon wish list.

Non-perishable food  
Food shopping vouchers

Scan for Amazon wish list:



If you would like to volunteer on this project, please get in touch!

CONTACT US: [s.gregory@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:s.gregory@peelinstitute.org.uk)  
3 Corners Centre, Northampton Rd, EC1R 0HU

### Clerkenwell Alliance

The Clerkenwell Alliance is a collective of individuals from across public, private and voluntary sectors, all with the shared goal of pooling together resources to support the local community. The Alliance meets to focus on key local issues and implement positive change. There is an unprecedented need for food and other donations due to the cost of living emergency and its knock-on effects on vulnerable members of the community. The Alliance is seeking any local businesses or organisations that would like to be part of or contribute to our upcoming initiatives. If you would like to join the Alliance, email [p.radcliffe@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:p.radcliffe@peelinstitute.org.uk)

### Would you like to volunteer with us?

Are you a local business or organisation that would like to support one of our upcoming projects? If your organisation would like to explore how we can work together on community initiatives, please get in touch with us at [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk). We are so grateful for the support that we have been receiving from various local organisations. **Subscribe to our digital newsletter. Sign up from our website homepage.** Visit: [peelinstitute.org.uk](http://peelinstitute.org.uk) Email: [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk) Call: 020 7837 6082 Follow: @Peelinstitute



# HISTORY

## Taking a liberty

Braggart, dueller, womaniser and pioneer of freedom – historian Mark Aston assesses the incredible career of locally-born John Wilkes and asks if there are any historical parallels

In 2014 then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, added The Churchill Factor to his already considerable catalogue of biographies about Sir Winston Churchill. The book’s reception was mixed. While some critics labelled it a “crisp, punchy and accessible read”, others found it an unsubtle effort at drawing a self-serving parallel between himself and Britain’s renowned wartime leader. While certain similarities persist – such as indefatigable self-belief and a penchant for glory-hunting – the general consensus was that there is no tangible comparison.

However, there exists a politician to whom Johnson can be potentially matched for both celebrity and notoriety: Clerkenwell-born John Wilkes (1725–1797), England’s first ‘celebrity politician’. Not to be confused with his distant relative John Wilkes Booth, assassin of US President Abraham Lincoln. Wilkes had many vocations. He was a radical activist, magistrate, soldier and duellist and, like Johnson, a journalist. Less endearingly, Wilkes was also a blasphemer and womaniser: as Petronella Wyatt in The Spectator observed, he was “catnip to women” despite being contemporaneously labelled the ugliest man in England – cross-eyed, with a squint and protruding jaw.

This did not hold him back. With a roguish charm, Wilkes was known for his wit and lively responses to slurs, and his flamboyant libertine tendencies gained him supporters and detractors in equal measure. Of Wilkes, broadcaster Jeremy Paxman said, “He was a wonderful and odious man – which is a rare combination... I like his ideas and principles.” Paxman is less complimentary about Johnson: a “charlatan”, who is “not as clever as he thinks he is”. Against this background, let’s take a look at Wilkes and consider, like Johnson, whether his “extramural reputation” defined him.

John Wilkes was born in 1725 or 1727 at his family home in St John’s Square, Clerkenwell. His father Israel, a malt distiller, also of Clerkenwell, married John’s mother Sarah Heaton of Hoxton Square, London in 1718. The Wilkes’ distilling business adjoined their large, three-storey dwelling-house in St John’s Square, the residence bordering St John’s Priory Church. John’s father lived like a “fine old English gentleman” and drove about the parish in a six-horse carriage – a lavish lifestyle that clearly left a marked effect upon the young John. At nine years old John was sent to school in Hertford and just five years later, had mastered Latin and Greek.



John Wilkes by William Hogarth, 1763

“*With a roguish charm, Wilkes was known for his flamboyant libertine tendencies*”

It was at Leiden University in the Netherlands that 19-year-old John broke free of any restraint, indulging in relentless womanising and drinking (a little like Johnson’s activities around the Bullingdon Club at Oxford University). While in Leiden, as a member of the EC1-based Honourable Artillery Company, Wilkes’s patriotism called him back to London in 1745 to defend the city from likely attack from the Jacobite rebellion. The uprising was quashed before it reached the capital and Wilkes returned to the Netherlands and Wilkes returned to the Netherlands to conclude his studies. Two years on, he returned to England to an arranged marriage in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire; their union ended

ten years later despite the arrival of a daughter. In Aylesbury he became a magistrate and, later, the county’s high sheriff.

### The Hellfire Club

Wilkes also enjoyed a carefree life in London, where he became a member of various clubs, including the Oddfellows and the Royal Society. Notoriously, he was a member of the (Wycombe) Hellfire Club, known for immoral activities, and which included many distinguished members. On one notorious occasion, Wilkes reportedly brought a live, phosphorous-painted mandrill, dressed in a cape and horns, into the rituals performed at the club.

# 8

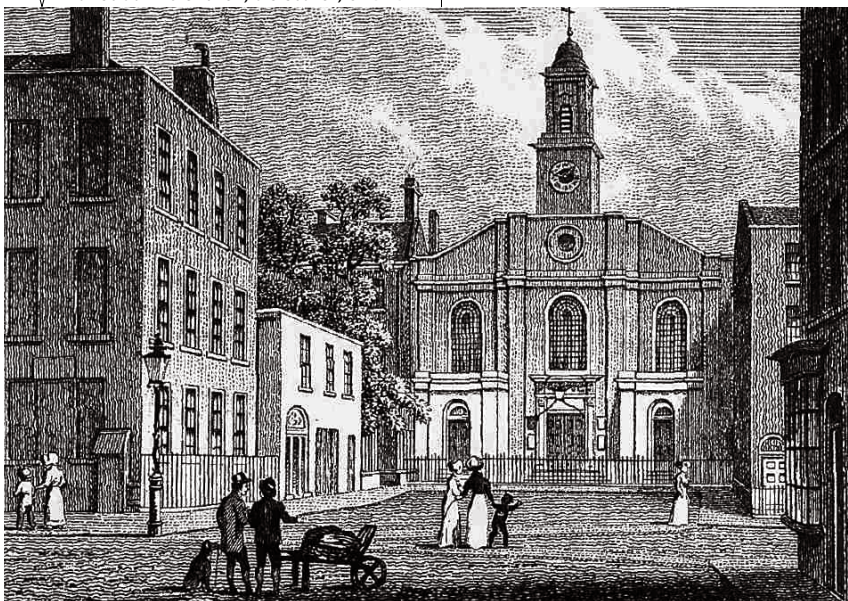
Monkey business aside, politics beckoned. Wilkes was elected to represent Aylesbury from 1757 until 1764. From then, his professional, journalistic and public life became a rollercoaster ride, cementing both his celebrity and notoriety – yes, modern parallels abound. In 1762, Wilkes started the newspaper The North Briton. After one damning article was published in 1763 severely attacking George III, the king and his ministers tried to prosecute Wilkes for seditious libel. An incensed devotee of George III even fought Wilkes in a duel in which Wilkes was shot in the belly, an injury that further enhanced his reputation. Wilkes had also attacked William Hogarth in one edition of the newspaper. In response, the artist created an engraving depicting Wilkes as a fiendish-looking character (see left).

However, his supporters adopted the call “Wilkes and Liberty” as their radical battle cry. At his libel trial, Lord Chief Justice Lord Mansfield ruled that, as an MP, Wilkes was protected by parliamentary privilege so he was released without conviction.

Emboldened, Wilkes published further material considered offensive or libellous to the Crown. The final straw came when the House of Lords declared one of his pornographic poems to be obscene and blasphemous, and members moved to expel Wilkes from the House of Commons. He fled to Paris before this could take place and while in exile, was found guilty of obscene and seditious libel and declared an outlaw in January 1764. Four years later, Wilkes returned from France and, stood on an anti-government ticket in an election between March and May 1768.

As an elected MP, Wilkes had not been arrested upon his return as the government didn’t wish to further intensify his popular support.

The Wilkes family home was to the left of St John’s Church, J S Storer, c.1828



# 9

However midway during the voting, Wilkes surrendered to the King’s Bench and was sentenced to a year each for his two 1764 convictions. Soon after sentencing, though, demonstrators gathered outside his prison in Southwark to protest against Wilkes’s imprisonment. This led to the ‘Massacre of St George’s Fields’, when soldiers opened fire on the crowds that resulted in several fatalities. Local support for Wilkes also led to rioting in Clerkenwell.

**Elected in prison**

In January 1769 Wilkes became an alderman of the City of London – while still imprisoned – for the ward of Farringdon Without. The following month, he was expelled from the House of Commons due to being an outlaw at the time of his parliamentary election. In the ensuing by-election, while he remained incarcerated, he stood as a candidate. Despite the fact that Wilkes was re-elected in three consecutive and separate ballots, each time the House of Commons overturned the result, due to his technical ineligibility, until an alternative candidate was elected. This political debacle became known as the ‘Middlesex Election Dispute’. Eventually Wilkes was elected unopposed for Middlesex in 1774 and separately elected as Lord Mayor of the City of London. He continued to champion liberty and freedom of speech and represented his parliamentary seat until 1790.

After his prison release in early 1770, Wilkes had been appointed a sheriff in the City of London. Wilkes’s activities created substantial interest

in parliamentary proceedings when the reporting of debates was forbidden. He was able to use his influence in the City to force the government to relax the restrictions and allow freedom of the press to report business and end parliament’s ability to punish reporting of debates.

Today, the media enjoys complete coverage of political and parliamentary activity thanks to Wilkes’s efforts. But by 1780, at the height of the American War of Independence, his popularity was in decline as he was perceived as less radical. His liberal thinking became more conservative and was despised by hardline followers. Although Wilkes opposed the war with the American colonies, and was a supporter of the rebel forces, it was during the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots that his ‘man of the people’ reputation really failed. Wilkes was in charge of troops defending the Bank of England from the unruly mob and under his orders, soldiers fired into the crowds of rioters. His followers criticised him as a hypocrite and his middle-class support was scared off by the military intervention.

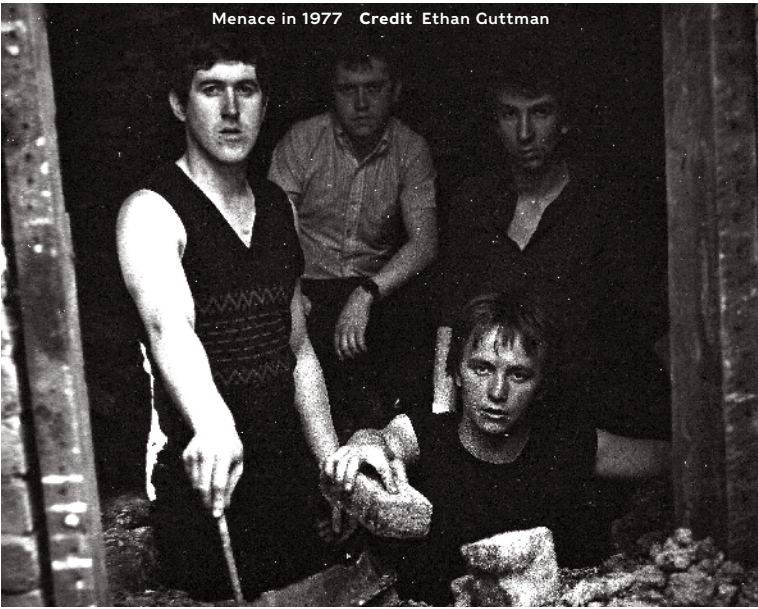
Wilkes worked his final years as Chamberlain of the City of London and as a magistrate. Although his City duties would have brought him close to Clerkenwell, Wilkes never returned to live in the parish of his birth. He died at his home in Grosvenor Square, Westminster on 26 December 1797, having reached 70-plus years.

Today, Wilkes is not forgotten. A statue of him can be seen in London’s Fetter Lane, just 1km from his birthplace, with the inscription, “A champion of English freedom”. Wilkes Street in Spitalfields is named after him, as are a number of locations in the US, and a plaque marks his home on the Isle of Wight.

As to Boris Johnson’s similarity to John Wilkes, I will leave it for reader’s to decide. There are superficial behavioural traits that can be considered comparable, but posterity will determine Johnson’s contribution to British society. After Wilkes, politics in Britain was changed forever. His reputation as a champion of freedom not just preceded him but defined him, and the battle cry of ‘Wilkes and Liberty’ will continue to echo across EC1 – and way beyond.

# Live and dangerous

EC1 Echo talks to Paul Marko, author of a new book about Clerkenwell punk band Menace



Menace in 1977 Credit Ethan Guttman

South Islington has enjoyed several moments in musical history, and now its role as the crucible of punk band Menace is about to be celebrated. This August a new book about the band is published. Called *Menace*, its subtitle ‘Prog, Punk, Skinheads and Serendipity’ charts the band’s journey through beer-soaked mosh pits to skinhead scraps, three-chord thrashes to punk nostalgia festivals.

“I never intended to write a book on Menace,” says author Paul Marko, who also looks after punk history website Punk77. “But the more I dug into it and the characters, I realised that here was a great human story.”

Menace had four members – Noel Martin, Steve Tannett, Charlie Casey, Morgan Webster – two of whom had settled with their families from Ireland in the area. With another Islington friend and a Canadian, the quartet began as a progressive rock act called Stonehenge, and their spiritual home became the Hope and Anchor pub in Upper Street, then one of London’s most famous rock venues. The music moved on, and Menace was born. “Menace found their voice as a punk band that also appealed to skinheads,” says Marko, who added the “serendipity” part of the subtitle “because a lot of things that happened to them by being in the right place at the right time.”

In 1976–7, the Hope and Anchor was a destination attracting local punks including those from Clerkenwell. Susie Luke, who now lives in Bunhill Row, then lived in Farringdon Road and was involved with a punk band called (trigger warning)

the Rotten Klitz. “It was the Luke’s house, within walking or staggering distance back from the Hope and Anchor, that Menace and others would hang out, including Suggs of Madness,” says Marko. “It became the party central of Clerkenwell.” As Susie Luke says, “Our house always had band members in it as my mum was an Irish immigrant who welcomed everyone. You’d never know who’d be in the house. I remember we had to collect egg boxes for years as my brother thought he’d soundproof the shed with them.”

With hundreds of bands around, Menace might have fallen into total obscurity. But they had a stroke of luck, and were signed up with Miles Copeland, the flamboyant manager of The Police and owner of Illegal Records, whose father had been head of the CIA. “Miles was a fascinating guy who took risks,” says Marko. “He said, if you’ve got an idea, let’s run with it. And if that doesn’t work, let’s have another idea.”

The story has it that Copeland had a recording session booked for a band but they couldn’t make it. So he went to the Roxy Club [the punk venue in Covent Garden], saw Menace and asked them if they wanted the coveted session. “Menace thought he was taking the piss,” says Marko. But it came to pass and Menace put out Screwed Up, the first of several recordings, and began to gain plaudits from punk’s influencers, including the fanzine Sniffin’ Glue, whose Mark P dubbed them “the best punk band in England today”. Early followers included Suggs from Madness and the band reflected their roots with lyrics like: “If we’re the working class/Why ain’t we got jobs?”

Alongside other Clerkenwell bands The Suspects, The Effect, The Dark – and yes, The Rotten Klitz, whose unique proposition was that no one could play – Menace appealed to fans of bands like UK Subs, the Cockney Rejects and Sham 69.

Menace were not the fey, fashion-oriented end of the punk spectrum but a working class, streetwise group. One of their most celebrated sing-alongs was the single ‘GLC’ (chorus: “GLC GLC, You’re full of s\*\*t”), released at a time when the GLC under Sir Horace Cutler was trying to ban punk. “At the time the authorities were genuinely scared,” says Marko. “Even the name Menace put the wind up people.” They weren’t able to give up their day jobs and two of the members worked at Gordon’s Gin factory in Clerkenwell – all part of Menace’s punk authenticity.

With a big punk-skinhead crossover happening, and the lure of guitar thrash and football terrace choruses, Menace began to appeal to a somewhat volatile crowd. “To be honest, the gigs grew a bit out of control,” says Marko, citing a particularly riotous concert in Sheppey, Kent. “The whole thing started to cross the line.”

Menace went into a hiatus until 1999. But they survived and to this day play punk gigs as Menace. “The line-up is different now,” says Marko. “But while some of Menace are moving towards 70 years old they play 60 gigs a year.” They remain embedded in the spirit of punk and the idea that, as Marko puts it, “You never know what opportunity is waiting around the corner.”

The cover of Paul’s book



Menace: Prog, Punk, Skinheads and Serendipity is out this month. £19.99 from punk77.company.site



# Pomp and circumstance

Between 2011 until he retired in November 2020 the Royal’s representative Deputy Lieutenant of Islington was Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes. Nicola Baird of Islington Faces meets him

Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes was representative Deputy Lieutenant (DL) of the London Borough of Islington from 2011–2020. He stepped down at the age of 75, and in July, the Council hosted a celebration of his service to the borough at the Honourable Artillery Company near Old Street. “It was a chance to say goodbye,” said Charles. The honorific DL role is both high- and low-profile. The DL represents the Monarch in the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant, so in Charles’ time he acted as Queen Elizabeth I’s “eyes and ears” and met many Islingtonians at awards and ceremonies. His duties included fostering relations with charities, voluntary groups and reserve forces, as well as nominations for individual, voluntary and corporate honours – and the meticulous organisation of Royal family visits, the majority in the south of Islington.

A qualified physician, barrister and retired soldier who saw action in the first Gulf War, Charles was Conservative MP for Wimbledon from 1987–1997. But he’s always loved Islington. “Whenever I presided over citizenship ceremonies in the Town Hall, I pointed out that those about to receive citizenship had chosen an extremely good place,” he says. “I’d say, ‘I should know because I was born in Islington, was a medical student here, bought a house here, worked here as a consulting physician in Pentonville Road and brought a charity, the London Playing Fields Foundation, to King’s Cross.’” In 1979, he stood against the odds as Conservative candidate for Islington Central – a ward that has since disappeared. Islington Council is of course a long-term Labour hold, but that hasn’t left Charles out on a limb or changed his love of the borough.

“Just before that election I bought a derelict Georgian house at Theberton Street. By pure chance its garden backed on to my birthplace – the City of London Maternity Hospital in Liverpool Road.” It was a happy coincidence although as Charles says, “I was meant to be born in Bart’s Hospital, as my father was a consultant paediatrician at Bart’s. But my mother fell out with the obstetrician and went to the City of London instead.”

As Islington’s DL Charles represented the Queen in the borough when the Lord Lieutenant was not available. “As there are 32 London boroughs the Queen didn’t get



Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes at home  
Credit Kim Gill for Islington Faces

to Islington that often” although he hosted her at Sadler’s Wells for the Golden Jubilee. Nonetheless he “met every member of the Royal family in Islington, including the Princess of Wales when she and Prince William came to Islington together. I haven’t met Prince Harry – he did have an appointment, but he cancelled it at the last moment. Princess Anne has been the most frequent visitor, an amazingly hard worker who talks without notes and who I’ve met at least half a dozen times.

“Charles [then Prince of Wales] was delightfully relaxed. Once I received him and Prince Albert of Monaco for an environmental conference at King’s Place, and later got a telephone call from Buckingham Palace saying that both had gone down with Covid so I’d better get checked.”

To track visits over his decade as DL, Charles put stickers on a map of the borough: red dots for Royal visits; green dots for official visits. The chart shows that the south of the borough got more than its fair share of Royal visits, and Charles also took part in many non-royal events, including at the HAC, on City Road and the Remembrance parades. “Every year in my time in Islington, on Remembrance Sunday and Armed Forces Day, the number of people attending increased with turnouts at three locations: the Royal Northern Hospital, Islington Green and Spa Fields.”

There’s a special place in his heart for Arsenal football club. “After 1977 when I bought a house in Islington, I was a season-ticket holder at Highbury for many years. I saw Arsenal win the cup. I have a great affection for the old ground and saw Liam

Brady, Dennis Bergkamp, Alan Hudson, Robert Pirès, Thierry Henry and John Hollins playing.” He’s enjoyed football since school days. “I love football,” says Charles. “I went to a football school, Charterhouse (in Surrey). I know nothing about rugby.” Interestingly, Charterhouse in EC1 is believed to be where the offside rule was devised so that students could play football in the cloisters. It was

also “one of the members of the consortium called the Ring [after Far-ring-don] I set up to promote cross-fertilisation between heritage sites on each side of the Islington and City borders including the Charterhouse, the Priory of St John and Goldsmiths’ Centre as well as Bart’s the Great, Bart’s Hospital Museum and Bart’s Hospital itself.” The initiative got a long way, based on the projected opening of the Elizabeth Line but lost momentum. “I’m about to re-activate the Ring, perhaps linked to Culture Mile, as it was widely welcomed and supported by Goldsmiths’, the Corporation of London and Islington Council.”

There’s another project, along with an unlikely collaboration. “Jeremy Corbyn and I were in the House of Commons together and we have always got on on a personal footing.” The pair have collaborated on the Royal Northern Hospital Memorial, at Manor Gardens near the Sobell Centre. “It’s in dire need of attention and the one remaining war memorial in the country deemed to be at severe risk. The question is how to restore it and I’ve worked with Jeremy Corbyn to try and get this done with the War Memorials Trust, English Heritage and the developers, Bellway Homes. It is very sad it’s dragging on because it is a very important memory of those in who fell in two World Wars protecting our freedom.”

Since March 2022 Islington’s DL has been Paul Herbage, MBE a lifelong volunteer with St John’s Ambulance. But although he’s no longer DL Charles remains busy. His great passion is how to help people suffering from PTSD – and there’s also that war memorial in N7 and The Ring in EC1. Here’s wishing him a very happy retirement.

Advertisement

Thursday 14 September, Doors open 18:30  
MUSO: Discovering Museums through Music

No script. No score. No safety net.

Back by popular demand, Impropera the world’s first improvising opera company, will create an entirely new opera inspired by the history of St John’s Gate.

Witness an original performance that has never been seen before, and will never be seen again! What could possibly go wrong..?!



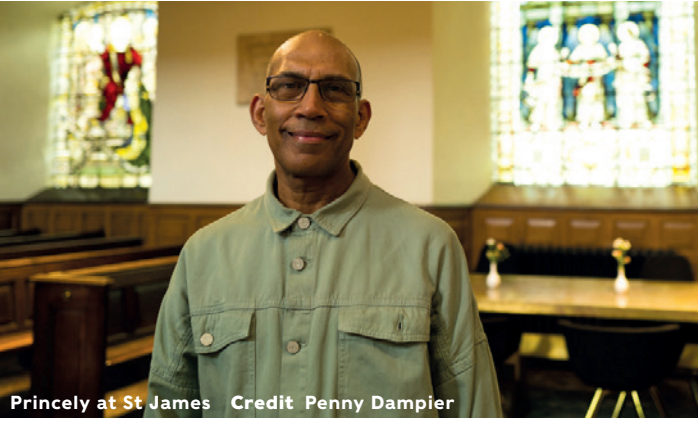
Scan to book your tickets



Museum of THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

# Meet the community

Princely recently started as Workplace Minister at St James, Clerkenwell. He tells the EC1 Echo about working in the area



Princely at St James Credit Penny Dampier

I work as a workplace minister, and my task is to build up networks and relationships with the people who work around here. I’m hoping to share God’s love and the gospel, and also to be part and parcel of the community.

I don’t live here so I’m still in a learning process. An important time is Wednesday lunch when we have something called Clerkenwell Talks at the church, which are free to attend.

The area I see a bit like a compact disc with a bit of everything. There’s a quiet life here and a busy life, res-

idential areas and cafes. My main responsibility is to reach out to people at work, but it doesn’t limit me to particular kinds of people or workplaces. If I meet people and talk to them, like families, or children or anyone, I’m basically sharing the gospel message and trying to engage with them. From architects and designers to construction and community workers, and local people, although my responsibility is for the workplace.

It’s about listening to people’s stories and engaging them as a peacemaker, or someone who

can help them relax. Sometimes, if I see people come out for a smoke, I befriend them and ask if they would like to come to a talk. There’s a free lunch too. Donations are welcome but not compulsory. But the main thing is we offer a talk on a theme – today’s, for example, was about doubt, asking: what does it mean to have doubts? In what way we can overcome doubts? Why do we get doubts? It fits into a lunch hour from work and we get up to about 20 people. Come and join us. See [inspirelondon.org/fait-and-work](https://inspirelondon.org/fait-and-work)

# Farringdon focus

A group of designers from sustainable design and engineering firm Stantec have created a new map of Farringdon and South Clerkenwell. The map is for sale, with proceeds going to AKT, a charity working to help LGBTQ+ youth facing homelessness or living in hostile environments.

Created with local people and workers in mind, the hand-drawn map is an overview of historic people, places and landmarks in the area. “The more you look, the more you see and learn about Farringdon,” says Adrian Babb, Stantec’s digital design lead. “Our designers loved creating this map which you can lose yourself in, and with

our office being close to the station, we wanted to create something that would give back to the area, while also providing a unique piece of art that adds fun and history to any space.

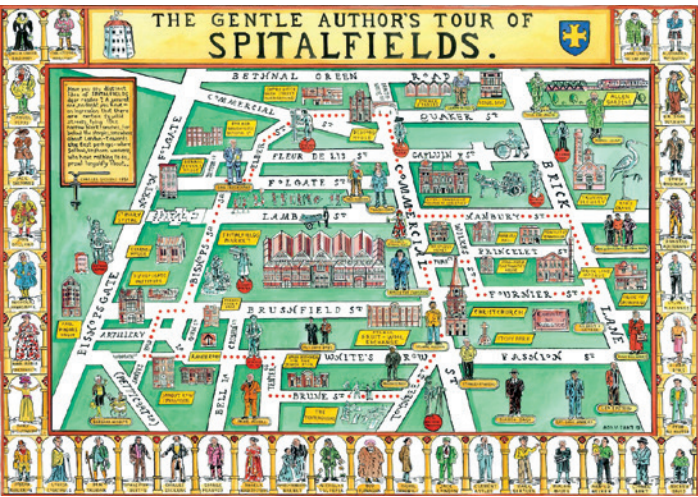
“We’ve created similar maps for our offices in other areas, such as Manchester and Birmingham. Hotels and businesses have loved featuring them on walls in their lobby areas. Hopefully, we can get the same kind of reception in Farringdon and raise some money for a good cause at the same time.”

The maps can be printed in a range of sizes and can be installed directly onto walls. For further information about how you can purchase and display the new maps, email Adrian Babb at [adrian.babb@stantec.com](mailto:adrian.babb@stantec.com). [www.akt.org.uk](http://www.akt.org.uk)



# About time

The Gentle Author of the Spitalfields Life blog has created a gore-free East End tour



Some may know the blog Spitalfields Life, written by the Gentle Author. Now 12 years old, it is a glorious insight into the area he has inhabited for many years and has spawned several books.

Now the Gentle Author (he prefers to be known by that name) has a new tour of Spitalfields, drawn from 2,000 years of history in what he calls “London’s first suburb”. The tour runs through the lives and locations of genuine people, some still alive, and concludes with tea served in a 300-year-old house overlooking Christ Church, accompanied by cakes from a recipe of 1720.

The tour is a growing concern. But part of the Gentle Author’s motivation is to

reclaim the area from the Jack the Ripper tours that have bedevilled the area for so long. “I am taking these stories onto the street to create tours

that are engaging, entertaining, fun and surprising – and that do not trade from violence against women,” says the Gentle Author. “I’m appalled that educational institutions send classes of students and schoolchildren on these exploitative serial killer tours which even display autopsy photographs of women in the street – indulging in ghoulish humour at the expense of these victims.”

Instead of such exploitation, the Gentle Author offers visitors

the chance to listen to stories of the area’s transformation through its inhabitants, and also to meet people from the local community en route. He

is currently raising funds to create a booking website, train local tour guides, print maps and help tourists plan visits, in order to “create local employment, draw attention to Spitalfields and reclaim the true stories of our living community”.

For the Gentle Author’s Tour of Spitalfields, see [www.thegentleauthortours.com](http://www.thegentleauthortours.com). The Gentle Author is giving an illustrated talk on The Cries of London at Bartholomew the Great Church, West Smithfield EC1 at on 15 Sept as part of the revived Bartholomew Fair. See [www.thecityofldn.com/bartholomew-fair](http://www.thecityofldn.com/bartholomew-fair)



# Field day

EC1 Echo speaks to Jackie Casey, organiser of August Bank Holiday Weekend’s Clerkenwell Festival

The Clerkenwell Festival is an annual knees-up that attracts hundreds of people to a day of revelry on Spa Fields. Jackie Casey, who started the festival and has run it for nine years, says that it fills a hole in Clerkenwell’s calendar.

“I lived in Somers Town in Euston, then moved back to Clerkenwell in 2010 and noticed that there were no more festivals in the area,” says Jackie. “There used to be one here on Spa Fields, plus there was a festival on Exmouth Market, but they both disappeared. I thought this was a shame, so I decided to start the Clerkenwell Festival anew and now it’s almost a decade old.

“Spa Fields lends itself very well to a festival. It’s small enough to be containable but big enough to host acts and quite a lot of people. It’s a great little spot, with space for a stage and DJ area, kids’ area, a rock n’ roll jumble sale and a dog show, which is a piece of fun. It has a very interesting history as the site of the Spa Fields riots in 1816. So it’s the perfect place for a festival.

“This year we have Chris Difford of Squeeze playing – he already played our Somers Town sister festival – and we’re getting some contemporary bands and an instrumental Bowie tribute band as well. Last year we had an all-female Slade tribute band called Slady. “We get some Council finding and otherwise

“We want to make it as inclusive, multicultural and inter-generational as possible”



Last year’s festival  
Credit Jeff Pitcher



make the rest ourselves – the bar helps. Everything has gone up this year. But we want to keep it going and expand it and make it as inclusive, multicultural and inter-generational as possible, with the kind of community spaces where people can come together, with stuff for kids including inflatables. There’s going to be a walk in the area starting at the Festival this year as well, by Islington History and Archaeological Society – and The Peel is potentially going to get more involved.

“The something-for-everyone factor is important as Clerkenwell is an economically diverse area with people living in big townhouses and estates. It’s important to have that mix as some of my neighbours in Michael Cliffe House feel excluded from Exmouth Market as the bars and restaurants are financially prohibitive, while the festival is a great melting pot where all are invited. So come down. We want to grow the Clerkenwell Festival – not to lose it.”



# School’s innovative Arts Week a success

The recent Arts Week festival at Hugh Myddelton School came up with a bumper crop of artistic talent. Courtesy of head Sarah Gill and art teacher Alison Forde, pupils at the primary school in Myddelton Street produced a great exhibition as part of the Arts Week festival in the summer term – see pictures (right).

The school has been pushing forward with its innovative arts programme and worked with clothing brand Muji on a competition. The winners got two bag designs



Art teacher Alison Forde with some of the pupils’ work

commissioned, seen in the exhibition, which raised £1,000 for the festival. “With that money we were able to take the children to see local galleries within travelling distance,” says Alison. “To create a special partnership we chose the October Gallery because they had a diverse collection of artists including Guyanese artist Aubrey Williams and to tie in Arts Week with Windrush Day in June the children created studies influenced by the late artist’s abstract work.”

As well as the gallery visits the school has had an inspiring selection of visitors including working with artists and illustrators from Central Saint Martins art school, based in King’s Cross. It has also worked with a portrait artist, an illustrator and a musician. “For our children, it’s just a great opportunity to see that art is a whole range of activities,” says Alison, who is hoping to secure another visit from Hugh Myddelton’s most revered alumnus – the singer Cat Stevens.



# Eula Harrison – a tribute

The outgoing CEO of The Peel, Olu Alake and others offer personal tributes to Eula Harrison, a regular at The Peel and a remarkable poet who has just died at the age of 98

A few weeks into my tenure as CEO of The Peel, one of the members of our Over-55 Social Club popped her head around the door in the office with tears in her eyes. I was fearing the worst but then she said “There’s a lady out there who has just read us the most beautiful poem, you really need to hear it.” Intrigued, I asked who the poet was and was pointed towards a diminutive, dynamic, bright smile. “Hi, I’m Olu. I heard you have been making my customers cry?”

And she let out that beautiful sound of her laugh, a sound so vivacious, even now it makes me glow inside.

“I write a few things,” she said. “This was written during the pandemic. Would you like to hear it?” And then, without referring to her notes, this then 96-year old phenomenon, recited a piece she had written about domestic violence during the pandemic (see right for another of Eula’s poignant poems about lockdown). This left me hungry for so much more and she proceeded to then and there give me a command performance of some of her work. Her poetry had humour, insight, reminiscence of her childhood days in the Caribbean (born in Cuba, grew up in Jamaica), her early years in the UK in the 1950s, her work as a machinist making clothes and her passion for literature and gardening and her family – Eula had three children. Her keen sense of social justice was fuelled by her



own experience of prejudice and discrimination, and her compassion for the less fortunate, while her affinity for community and her love of people, born of her appreciation for kind strangers who had been slivers of light for her in times of darkness, made her very special. I was amazed and blessed.

Over time, the lines between Eula’s poetry and her very self became blurred to me – she was a living poem herself. Until the week before her sudden passing, she would come to The Peel Centre once or twice a week for her exercise and dance classes and from there go on to another arts group run by All Change Arts that she had been attending for over 20 years. When you were in her presence, you felt her calm demeanour as a soothing balm, and with that smile, she would tell you how the secret to her longevity was being grateful each morning to see

another day and promising herself to make the most of it. I was sad that I was not able to get her book of poetry published while she was here, but I am pleased that she gained a wider following through her interviews and articles with *EC1 Echo* (see issue 20) and other local papers. It was especially touching to see her perform at our Black History Month event last year, where one of our guests, Omar Okai, theatre producer and writer and founder of the Black British Theatre Awards, was brought to tears as she recited her tribute piece to her ancestors. That Eula passed in the month that we commemorated Windrush’s 75th anniversary is apt in a way. She was the embodiment of the spirit of the age and she was an incredible inspiration to everyone she met. And now she is an ancestor too. Sleep well, Miss Eula, I will miss you.

**Playwright Lane Shipsey writes:** “In 2005-6 I had the pleasure of meeting Eula when she was among those who took part in a year long writing workshop which led to the publication of an anthology of new writing. We would meet at the RedZone, a community space located under the stands of the old Arsenal Stadium. Eula was a regular attendee and a great inspiration to other members in the group. She had a lovely way of both taking her work seriously but also being ready to chat and laugh with people, in between giving readings.

“Eula was always smartly turned out and well coiffed. She could have a strong gaze and sometimes ask questions that would take you by surprise. Eula shared personal information in her writing and she had a directness and truthfulness to her manner that comes across in what she wrote and published. Recently we had got back in contact and planned to meet up in Islington, but before that could happen Eula was taken into hospital for an operation on her leg. I went instead to see her in a ward at University College Hospital.

“Eula was surrounded by family visitors when she passed. She was a remarkable person who will be remembered by many: by her family of course, her three sons and their wives, children and grandchildren, but also by those who met this wonderful woman as a poet, or a dancer, or a neighbour. Eula’s words, as well as her family, will survive her.”

**Dr Anthony Joseph, Lecturer in Creative Writing, King’s College London, writes:** “I remember Eula coming to read at an event I co-hosted called La Langoustine est Morte at the Poetry Cafe in London. It was many years ago but I remember Eula being very elegant, warm and generous. At that time we were seeking out underrepresented writers and we were honoured to have her, and a bit surprised that she was not more well known.”

**Eula Harrison, poet**  
28 March 1925 – 19 June 2023

**Not Lonely Or Bored**  
Often I am asked if I get bored  
Being isolated on my own  
My answer is a definite no  
I don't identify with that word;  
  
There are hundreds of others  
around all undergoing the same lockdown  
I have made no special plans  
But I will do the best I can;  
  
I will focus on things that are real,  
try not to get lost in daydreams  
Or lose sight of what's reality  
For if I do I will pay a heavy penalty.  
  
I will give a wave to those on balconies,  
a small comfort to someone, maybe  
Not connecting with their neighbours,  
now feeling the pain of isolation  
Maybe they have no friends or relations;  
  
In the garden there are things I can do  
Say hello to neighbours across the fence  
Potter a bit, Do a stretch to keep fit  
Remembering to keep at arm's length  
Discussing the news and virus is a taboo  
among the flowers.

# Singalong at home

Since 2005 the church hall at the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Exmouth Market has seen Mrs H and the Singalong Band attract a growing crowd of children and parents. Now the London-based musical collective – which includes members from top bands Red Snapper, Beth Orton, The Leisure Society and Emily Barker & The Red Clay Halo – has brought out its first album of musical nursery rhymes, called *A Feast of Rhyme*, delivered



£10 from [www.singalongsongs.co.uk](http://www.singalongsongs.co.uk)

Email [info@singalongsongs.co.uk](mailto:info@singalongsongs.co.uk)  
Visit [singalongsongs.co.uk](http://singalongsongs.co.uk)

See Mrs H and the Sing-along Band for free on 20th August at All Points East community festival, Victoria Park.

Advertisement

ELECTRICIAN

- NICEIC Certificates
- 24/7 Fault Repairs
- Fire Alarm
- WiFi & Wired Internet Cabling
- Telephone Repair & Installation
- CCTV & Ring Door Bells

07544 800166



# FEATURES

## Rich tapestry

This tapestry, called *Band Sampler for the 21st Century*, was made by artist Anne Stansfield from material bought from a stall outside Waitrose on Whitecross Street. Anne, who is based in the Golden Lane estate, then started stitching it together during lockdown and finished it earlier this year. “The cloth was bought about 15 years ago, then for whatever reason, during lockdown, I put a few threads on it then finished it in spring this year.” Spotted by photographer Michael Collins, who took this image, it is a piece for our times.



## Clerkenwell Bake-off with John Broaders

### Irish soda bread scones

I’m a self-taught cook and baker living in Clerkenwell – Irish-born but in the UK for 44 of my 63 years. My experience includes running a cake stall on Whitecross Street market for 14 years – where I was also chair of the Whitecross Street Traders’ Association – a food stall on Columbia Road for three years, and twice being a contender on Masterchef. I love cooking at home and enjoy eating food as much as making it. I have a recipe here that

would suit all tastes and diets except (sorry) the wheat intolerant. It is simple, economical and I encourage you to try it. As so many of us have air fryers I made these in mine but it works just as well in a conventional oven. I use strong wholemeal flour and in this recipe, the dough needs kneading, unlike regular soda bread.

i. Take 200g of strong wholemeal flour, two heaped teaspoons of baking powder,

80g of softened butter (use a vegan substitute if required), 1 egg 2/3 of a pint-32Oml of milk with a squeeze of lemon juice or buttermilk if available (again almond milk can be substituted). Add a pinch of salt. I like the scones unsweetened but 50g of sugar can be added if you prefer.

ii. Rub the butter into the dry ingredients, and add the egg and some of the milk – it may not all be needed. The dough should not be wet but come together into a ball.

iii. Tip onto a floured surface and knead for seven minutes. This is necessary to activate the gluten in the flour.

iv. Roll out 1.5ins (4cm) thick and cut using a scone cutter. Just push straight down, do not twist.

v. Place on a greased baking tray or line the air fryer with greased parchment. If using a regular oven brush the tops with milk, and bake for 15 minutes in a gas 7/electric 200C. Cool on a rack, and cover them with a damp tea towel. In the Air fryer bake at 180 for 10 minutes turning each halfway through. Best eaten warm with butter.

# 14

**Family activities**  
Mondays 4–6pm,  
including 7, 14, 21 Aug  
At St Luke’s Community  
Centre, 90 Central Street EC1

Family fun in the school holidays with table tennis, music, arts & crafts, play area and food and drink. Membership for people in the area.

**Visit** [slpt.org.uk/Event/family-summer-mondays-4-6pm](https://slpt.org.uk/Event/family-summer-mondays-4-6pm)

**Summerversity**  
Various locations and times

A wide variety of courses over the summer holidays for 13-plus young people who go to school or college in Islington.

**For more information:**  
**Visit** [summerversity.co.uk](https://summerversity.co.uk)

**Free family drop-in events**  
All three activities below at Museum of the Order of St John, St John’s Gate EC1

**Painting Plants led by Toya Walker**  
11am–3.30pm  
Wednesday, 16 August

**Paint Naturally with Storytelling**  
Wed 23rd Aug  
11am–3.30pm

**Animal Keyrings with Storytelling**  
Wed 30th Aug  
1.30–2.30pm

**Visit** [museumstjohn.org.uk](https://museumstjohn.org.uk)

**Free talk on Christopher Wren**  
Tue 8 Aug  
Barbican Library,  
Silk St, Barbican EC2

Tom Furber of London Metropolitan Archives talks about the 300th anniversary of the death of Sir Christopher Wren and how his work has defined the London skyline.

**Free**  
**Visit** [shorturl.at/cfhBZ](https://shorturl.at/cfhBZ)

**Cultural Clerkenwell walking tour**  
Fri 11 Aug

Led by Nigel Smith from Guided Walking Tours  
**£15**  
**Visit** [shorturl.at/gEMSY](https://shorturl.at/gEMSY)



**Wood Walkers**  
**Denise de Cordova & Tom Hammick**  
6 September – 15 October  
Eagle Gallery,  
159 Farringdon Road EC1

Ceramics and sculpture by Denise de Cordova with paintings and woodcuts by Tom Hammick.

**£15**  
**Call** 020 7833 2674  
**Visit** [emmahilleagle.com](https://emmahilleagle.com)

## Quiz by David Rossi

1. Which is the oldest – the Ottoman Empire, the Aztecs, Oxford University or Eton College?

2. Which is the fastest – a baseball pitch, a tennis serve, shuttlecock serve, or a bowled cricket ball?

3. Which gas are crisp packets usually filled with to preserve the contents – oxygen, nitrogen, helium or radon

4. How many bones are there in the human head – 11, 22, 33 or 44?

5. In which decade were postcodes, introduced in the UK – the 1950s, 60s or 70s?

6. The conga dance was popularised in which country – Argentina, Brazil, Cuba or Mexico?

7. What is the most popular pub name in the UK – the Red Lion, the Crown, the Royal Oak, or the White Hart?

8. Which of these cities is on the same latitude as New York – Berlin, Paris or Madrid?

9. What does ‘Amen’ mean – the end, thank you Lord, my prayer, or so be it?

10. In which month is the earth closest to the sun – January, March, July or September?

11. Who was the youngest actor to play James Bond – Sean Connery, George Lazenby, Timothy Dalton or Pierce Brosnan?

12. Which is the world’s largest sea – the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the South China Sea or the Bering Sea?

**Answers** 1. Oxford University / 2. Shuttlecock serve / 3. Nitrogen / 4. 22 / 5. a. 1950s (1959), Norwich / b. a. 1950s (1959), Norwich / 6. Cuba / 7. The Red Lion / 8. Madrid / 9. So be it / 10. January / 11. George Lazenby / 12. Mediterranean Sea

# WE NEED YOUR HELP

## WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE IN EC1 WHO CAN HELP SUPPORT US TO PRODUCE MORE HIGH-QUALITY LOCAL JOURNALISM IN EC1 ECHO

- We have NO shareholders
- We have NO wealthy backers
- We are run by a small but dedicated team as part of a not-for-profit community interest company
- We hold authority to account, expose scandals, highlight inequality, promote good causes, and provide a platform for local people

- Every penny of income from EC1 Echo helps us deliver more journalism in EC1
- The cost of producing and distributing the EC1 Echo significantly exceeds our bi-monthly income
- We currently have 28 supporters who contribute around 15% of our income, but we need more!

Can you help us? Our membership scheme has many different options, starting from £3 per month, depending on your ability to contribute. Rewards include having a copy of the paper posted to you every month. Local businesses and charities can also sign up and, from as little as £10 per month, access discounts on advertising.

## Find out more at: [ec1echo.co.uk/join](https://ec1echo.co.uk/join)

# OUR CURRENT MEMBERS

David Wilcox, Daniel Winn, Laurence Colchester, Diana Alsobrook, Sarah Falconer, Tania Cohen, Brian Jones, Mirela Popoveniuc, Sarah Wood, Stephanie Pietraszkiewicz, Daron Pike, Sam Harris, David Plume, Hugh Fell, Emma Booty, Tom Wales, George Stiles, Han-Rui Chiew, Team Incredible Ltd, Roger Gillett, Victor Wei Chung Hsu, Vic Offredi, Shannon O’Neill, Juan Jose Castro Varon, Stephen Chestnut, George Allan, Katrina Fialko, Simon Jones.



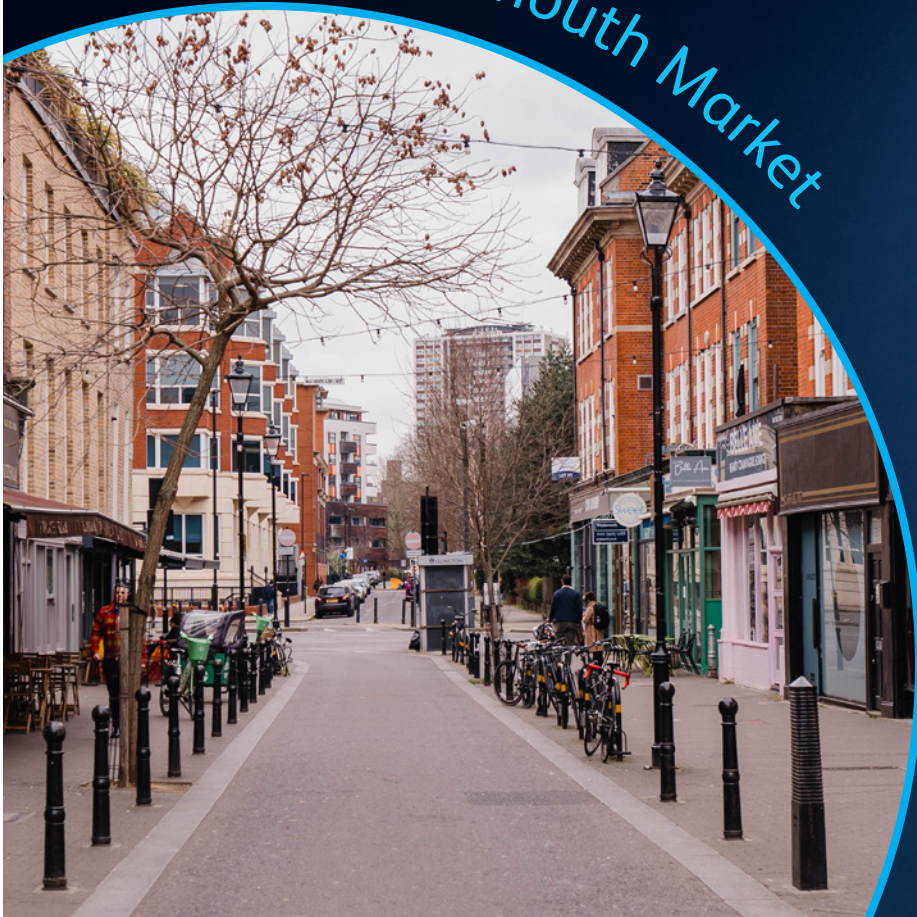
# Are you looking to let your property?

Choose **Winkworth Clerkenwell & City**, the team with experience and local market expertise on their side.

- **Proven Track Record:** 25 years letting & managing properties in Clerkenwell & City
- **Experienced Professionals:** Our team has 65 years' experience in the property industry
- **Local Market Knowledge:** Over 90% of deals agreed are at the asking price or above in 2023\*

\*Source: Winkworth Clerkenwell & City transaction book

Find us on Exmouth Market



**Adam Stone**  
Lettings Manager



66 Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell, London, EX1R 4QP  
020 7405 1288 (SALES) | 020 7405 1266 (LETTINGS)  
[winkworth.co.uk/clerkenwell](http://winkworth.co.uk/clerkenwell)

**Winkworth**

**Clerkenwell & City**