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Businesses in Victoria have voted overwhelmingly in favour of renewing the Victoria Business Improvement District for a third consecutive term.

The BID recorded a 93 per cent 'yes' vote in the ballot and led by chief executive Ruth Duston OBE OC (pictured), will work to deliver its Victoria 2020-2025 vision.

Approximately £12.75 million will be invested into the area over the BID's third term.





Bookworms rejoice! Popular bookseller Waterstones has opened a new branch at 88 Victoria Street.

Manager John Bax told *Victoria* magazine he has been "delighted" with the response to the new shop.

"It has been wonderfully busy from the first day, with many people who live and work locally very pleased to have a new bookshop in the area," he said.

"We have a team of 10 booksellers with a good mix of experience and areas of speciality who are seeking to create the best bookshop we can for our local community."

Conservative councillor Lady Rachael Robathan has been elected as leader of Westminster City Council.

She replaces
Nickie Aiken, who
led the council for
two years before
she was elected as
the new MP for Cities
of London and Westminster

Rachael is the council's former cabinet member for finance, property and regeneration and represents the Knightsbridge and Belgravia ward.

in December's general election.

Browse the books at
Waterstones' new shop,
visit a special exhibition
of spy memorabilia at
St Ermin's Hotel and bathe
at a new Russian banya in
Victoria this spring



Cold War and World War Two spy memorabilia takes centre stage at St Ermin's Hotel this spring with a special exhibition.

The hotel, which has a long and well-documented involvement with the secret services – serving as the HQ for the Special Operations Executive when it was established in 1940 – will showcase items devised for agents.

These include RAF uniform buttons with a hidden compass and flying boots that could be cut into a pair of brogues if the wearer was shot down over occupied territory.

The exhibition will open to guests and visitors from mid April at 2 Caxton Street

Residents, businesses and visitors can now report any issues on the streets of Westminster via the council's new Report It tool.

To flag issues from fly-tipping and faulty street lights to potholes, visit westminster.gov.uk/report-it and submit a report, which will be investigated by the relevant council department.



Taj Hotels is set to unveil α new private members' club at its five-star Westminster hotel, St James' Court.

The Chambers, which launched as India's first exclusive business club in Mumbai in 1975 and has since become a feature of its worldwide hotel portfolio, will arrive in London this spring.

An invitation-only club open to "a select few", members will benefit from exclusive events and experiences and can also apply for global membership.



A unique insight into the ritual, honour and artistry of Japanese culture takes pride of place at the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace this spring.

Japan: Courts and Culture tells the story of 300 years of diplomatic, artistic and cultural exchange between the British and Japanese royal and imperial families. The Royal Collection has some of the most significant examples of Japanese art and design in the western world, from James I's era to the present day, and this exhibition, which runs from June 12 for five months, brings them together for the first time.

Visit rct.uk

Springevents

There's plenty to enjoy in Victoria this spring, from an unmissable LGBT+ History Month exhibition to subversive sketches at Tate Britain

SUBLIME SOUNDS

The glorious surroundings of Westminster Abbey will ring out to the sounds of Benjamin Britten's *My Beloved is Mine*, in a special liturgical performance on May 3 at 6.30pm.

Composed in 1947, the piece uses a text by Francis Quarles, whose imagery speaks of the believer's joy in encountering the transformative love of Christ. Presented as part of the abbey's theology programme, it will be performed by tenor Mark Dobell with Matthew Jorysz on piano.

westminster-abbey.org

PEAKE PERFORMANCE

The life of one woman hangs in the balance at Curzon Victoria when *The Welkin* comes to the Victoria Street cinema on May 21.

Starring Maxine Peake, the National Theatre Live performance tells the story of a woman sentenced to hang for a heinous murder in 1759. When she claims to be pregnant, a jury of 12 women must decide if she's telling the truth or trying to escape the noose, while outside the public bays for blood.

The screening is at 7pm and tickets cost £23 from curzoncinemas.com



laxine Peake





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LOVE STORY WITH A TWIST

If you can imagine *Dear Evan Hansen* fed to the *Little Shop of Horrors* plant, you'll get some idea of what *Be More Chill* is all about, according to The Other Palace theatre, where the musical is running until May 3.

With a Tony-award nominated score and a relatable tale about how far we'll go for a little validation, *Be More Chill* is an atypical love story about a guy who just wants to fit in – and the supercomputer inside his head that wants to take over the world.

Tickets from £19.50, lwtheatres.co.uk/ theatres/the-other-palace

SHOCKING SKETCHES

With his explorations of the erotic, elegant and grotesque, artist Aubrey Beardsley shocked and delighted late-Victorian London, and a series of his drawings is now on show at the Tate Britain for present-day Londoners to enjoy.

In the largest exhibition of his work for 50 years, Beardsley's sinuous sketches are all the more poignant as his life was cut short by tuberculosis at 25. The 200-plus exhibits include his celebrated illustrations for *Le Morte d'Arthur* and Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. The exhibition runs until May 25 and entry costs £16.

Find out more at tate.org.uk

Aubrey Beardsley, Slippers of Cinderella

Eccleston Yards will bloom and glow this May when flowers with their own natural lighting go on show as part of this year's Belgravia in Bloom.

The extraordinary Floral Imaginarium is an interactive pavilion where visitors can see a world where flowers glow.

This naturally glowing display illustrates a possible future where flowers can be bio-engineered to provide eco-friendly lighting. The festival runs from May 18-23 and this year's theme is "the future of flowers".

Find out more at mayfairandbelgravia.com



Last year's Belgravia in Bloom in Eccleston Yards

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH

Pictures of Gay Pride marches in the 1970s, influential actor and singer Divine and London's first gay superclub, Bang, are among the rarely seen photographs at a new exhibition in Victoria.

The showcase, celebrating LGBT+ History Month in Westminster, is on display at Westminster City Council's offices on Victoria Street.

The council's LGBT+ staff network put the public exhibition together, drawing on material from the Bishopsgate Institute and the City of Westminster Archives Centre.

It features the images of Robert Workman, a photographer for *Gay News* who recorded the earliest Gay Pride rallies in 1972 until the 1980s, as well as other key moments including the opening of the Gay's the Word bookshop in 1972 and protests against a department store over the sacking of an LGBT employee in 1976.

Also featured are pictures of Denis Lemon, the former editor of *Gay News* who lost a high-profile blasphemy case at the Old Bailey, and the Porchester Hall Drag Ball, which ran from 1969 to the 1990s, as well as *Are You Proud?* – a documentary by Ashley Joiner celebrating the Pride movement and

ABOVE: Divine starring in Women Behind Bars, Whitehall Theatre, 1977

BELOW: Gay Pride march, Regent Street, August 1976

Images courtesy of the Robert Workman Archive, Bishopsgate Institute some of the landmark achievements of LGBT+ campaigners and activists.

Emerging from the first gay marches in London during the early 1970s, Pride in London is now one of the world's biggest LGBT+ parades, attracting more than 1.5 million visitors to Westminster in 2019.

Councillor Ian Adams, LGBT+ lead member for Westminster City Council, said: "Our LGBT+ network has put together a fascinating collection of pictures and records documenting a period of intense social change and activism that started in the UK in the aftermath of New York's Stonewall riots in 1969.

"The exhibition captures the diversity of our borough and the role that Westminster, and Old Compton Street in particular, has played as a focus point for many forms of LGBT+ entertainment, expression and activism over the years."

The exhibition is free and runs until April 26. It is open from 10am-4pm at Westminster City Council, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street





ABOVE AND BELOW: Nick Butter on his marathon mission



A chance
encounter led Nick
Butter to set himself a
record-breaking challenge –
to run a marathon in every
country in the world

BY JONATHAN WHILEY



avaged by wild dogs, mugged (twice), locked up in jail (once – for his own safety) and the small matter of being shot at – nobody said running the world would be easy.

The extraordinary feat, a Guinness World Record, was set by Nick Butter who completed a marathon in 196 countries in two years (up to three a week).

While the stats alone are astonishing – 455 flights, nearly 5,000 miles, 10 passports and 15 pairs of trainers – they only tell half the story.

For 30-year-old Nick, a journey that began in Canada in January 2018 and ended in Athens in November last year, was inspired by one man.

Kevin Webber was diagnosed with prostate cancer and given two years to live when he met Nick during the Marathon des Sables, a six-day ultramarathon, in 2014.

"There was this strange disconnect," recalls Nick. "He was saying he was dying and he was only going to live for two years, yet he was so happy and enthusiastic about life. I realised he was valuing what he had and when he said to me, 'Don't wait for a diagnosis' – meaning don't wait for something to happen to make a change – I thought, 'Right, let's do something'."

Nick quickly realised he needed to find a headline-grabbing challenge in order to raise a large amount for Prostate Cancer UK (so far he has raised £200,000 of his £250,000 target).

"As soon as I thought of it and realised it hadn't been done, it didn't leave my mind despite the cost and dangers," he says. "A lot of people have no idea how close we came to not completing the trip on many, many occasions. Five or six weeks before the end we were refused visas and there were people shot on the routes I was supposed to be travelling. It was touch and go for a long, long time."

The challenge took two years of planning alone, 90 per cent of which was taken up by those countries his team referred to as "dangerous and dodgy" – the likes of North Korea, Bhutan, Somalia, Iran, Yemen. But they discovered that even good preparation didn't make life any easier.

"It went out the window," Nick says. "Things change, like going into Syria from Beirut and those huge protests. That is where one of the drivers I was supposed to have was shot the day before. You just have to adjust and carry on; my dad was very pivotal as he had the responsibility of booking all my flights.

"He called me many times towards the end of the trip and said, 'You are not going to do this'. It really looked like it wasn't going to happen. To put it in perspective, we had 29 people who linked up in order to make the Yemen access possible, through friends of friends or people who had UN contacts and then they had contacts with the military and all sorts of stuff."

Despite unforeseen circumstances – among them a mugging in the centre of Lagos, Nigeria, running through 22 marathons with food poisoning and one with a kidney infection – Nick says the element that surprised him the most was "just how wrong his preconceived ideas of countries and cultures were".

"People talked about North Korea and how dangerous it was and all I remember was that it was really cold and it was really clean. In Mogadishu [Somalia], where there were car bombs and gunfire going off all night every night, after two or three nights I felt like I didn't want to leave because of the people I was with."

It's all a far cry from his previous life as a

banker. Sport, he says, has forever been in his blood – he started running very young and was in the under-19s junior British ski team – but he listened to his parents' advice to get a "real job".

"Although it put money in the bank, it degraded my soul somewhat," he says. "Eventually I took to running again as an escape. Then I became better at it, ran further, longer, faster and got some sponsors and opportunities to run in other places.

"Then I realised I was starting to turn stuff down to go to work in banking, which was ridiculous, so I decided to train harder and slowly leave work. I left and very soon after I met Kevin, which is when everything changed in a big way."

Nick says his world view has changed dramatically now. "I don't need a house or fancy things, I just want to live simply." He lives in a van and is planning to do so for the foreseeable future as he tours the country talking about his record-breaking challenge.

There is a book and documentary in the pipeline and he is already looking ahead to his next big challenge in north America. "I'm going to go for 1,000 days to set the world record for running a marathon in all of the national parks," he says. "It's starting in January 2021."

Mercifully and miraculously he is still alive and joined Nick to complete his last marathon in Athens. "Organising this trip, we thought he would be dead by the time I finished – as harsh as that sounds - so to cross the finishing line five years after his diagnosis and with three more years than he was anticipating, was amazing."

Nick will appear at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster on March 25 from 7pm. Visit nightofadventure. co.uk

To get in touch with Nick, visit his website at nickbutter.com or email nick@nickbutter.co.uk





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J MCCARTHY

11 Artillery Row

Following an infamous night in November 1940 when the Blitz destroyed the site of J McCarthy on Strutton Ground, where it had traded as a pawnbrokers for more than a century, the jeweller relocated to 11 Artillery Row.

Still trading from the very same shop today, it is one of the oldest antique, vintage and contemporary jewellers in London and prides itself on the knowledge and service it has possessed since it was founded in 1798.

The shop specialises in sourcing items for clients. Owner Robert McCarthy's aim is to "bring the shop back to its former glory from an aesthetic perspective, making sure to stay in keeping with [the] old-fashioned style people love about the experience of visiting us".

Its longevity and loyal following means there are endless stories about great-grandparents' engagement rings that younger customers tell to staff when they pick up a piece of jewellery for themselves.

We speak to four independent jewellers from Victoria who are bringing some extra sparkle to SW1

BY SOPHIA
CHARALAMBOUS

Local gems



JASMINE JEWELLER

73 Victoria Street

With more than 16 years' experience as a jewellery maker and seller, Jasmine Jeweller is a well-established figure in Victoria. The store offers the option to create your own jewellery, with customers invited to bring in a drawing or photograph to be used as the basis for a design. There is also a repair service, restoring precious pieces back to their original condition. On top of this, engraving items in store adds that bespoke touch to a gift or present to yourself.



VICKI SARGE

38 Elizabeth Street

Every piece of Vicki Sarge's costume jewellery is handmade in the basement of the Elizabeth Street shop. Using ethically sourced metals, each piece of jewellery is a truly unique design that is unmistakably Vicki Sarge. The designer has collaborated with a number of brands including a recent line for Rihanna's Fenty lingerie show.

Vicki says: "We moved to Elizabeth Street in 1992 and I also lived on Ebury Bridge Road for 27 years. My daughter went to St Peter's primary school and Grey Coat Hospital for secondary school, so we have been fully immersed in the

"Over the years, I have watched our dynamic customers raise their families and their children become boutique clients too. Having the shop in this area has kept us current and forever on top of the trends."



RAYMOND WEIL

The Freelancer Calibre automatic blue steel watch, £1,795, is a timeless classic, with an open dial revealing the regulating organ at six o'clock. Goldsmiths

90 Cathedral Walk

SWAROVSKI

The Stella watch, £259, embellished with clear crystal pavé, is as delicate as any bracelet can be. House of Fraser 101 Victoria Street

HUGO BOSS

The Gents Skymaster watch, £249, is made for the adventureseeker - with a matte sunray dial featuring three subdials. 78 Victoria Street





DE VROOMEN

59 Elizabeth Street

The ethos of De Vroomen is very much about the individual. Founder Leo De Vroomen says: "I approach this challenge as a couturier would, creating jewellery that suits the client's features, complexion and most importantly her lifestyle."

De Vroomen won the Diamond International Award in 1974 for a diamond eternity ring with a single row of diamonds, and again in 1986 for its hand-carved ebony bangles. The store remains today a place to find exceptional craftsmanship.





From concept to completion, we work with our clients on pop-ups, restaurant installations, parties and interiors.



Furniture - Interiors - Décor

Clarks

The Desert Trek, £100, first introduced in the 1970s is built to take you smoothly from winter to spring – made of tan leather, which is breathable, and attached to a comfortably shaped last.

149 VICTORIA STREET



Next

Boots are always going to be a staple of the spring wardrobe but you don't want anything too heavy and insulated, which is why a simple leather lace-up, £82, in a neutral tan is ideal.

111 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD

Step into spring

Don't let the changing weather make you lose your footing

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

Hobbs

The Emma slingback, £159, in a springtime green is just the kind of office shoe that people look for at this time of year. Worn with tights or not, it airs the foot without being too exposed.

101 VICTORIA STREET

Zara

These loafers, £69.99, are often worn during the transitional seasons of spring and autumn, when the weather is either cooling down or warming up - as they can be worn with or without socks.

82 VICTORIA STREET







ondon, you may have noticed, is not short of pizza places. But perhaps no other pizzaiolos in the city can claim to be as educated in the minutiae of a good slice as James and Thom Elliot, otherwise known as the Pizza Pilgrims. Raised by a gastropub-owner and a wine merchant, the brothers decided eight years ago to live out many an office worker's pub-chat pipe-dream and open a food truck. But before they did, they bought a beaten-up, three-wheeled Piaggio Ape and drove it from Calabria back to London – studying en-route at the various altars to crust, cheese, meat and sauce to distil the essence of the perfect pizza.

Since James's particular brand of office drudgery was in television, his last act before

quitting was to pitch a six-part series to the Food Network, and so it was that a six-strong television crew came along for the ride.

I met James and Thom at their 12th London branch in Victoria, which is designed to illustrate the pizza pilgrimage as customers move through it. On entering, guests find themselves in a cobbled Naples piazza. Then, a bar and upstairs dining area styled after an Amalfi lemon grove (try the house-made limoncello).

Downstairs is a corridor James refers to as the "glowing psychedelic parmesan library", representing Parma. And then, the Tuscan wine cellar, where I'm offered a punchy taster from Tuscany's oldest still-operating vineyard. Just before we met, they signed the deed on a new





Brothers James and Thom Elliot have just opened a new branch of Pizza Pilgrims in Victoria. They tell us about their Italian pilgrimage to create the perfect slice

BY ALEX BRIAND



Pizza Academy in Camden, where they will train the next generation. They've come a long way since their Soho street food stall opened in 2012.

HOW DID YOU PLAN THE ROUTE FOR YOUR PIZZA PILGRIMAGE?

James Elliot: I just Google Mapped Reggio di Calabria to London and it was 10 days, including breaks, and I thought, 'Great'. It took us six weeks. We got in the Ape on the first day and it was about 12 miles an hour, top speed.

DID YOU HAVE A HIT-LIST OF PIZZA SPOTS?

We planned the whole tour. We started in Calabria, the very toenail of Italy – beautiful weather, amazing tomatoes and great meat.

Then we arrived in Naples and had our first proper Neapolitan pizza.

Thom Elliot: We genuinely had that moment in Da Michele in Naples where there was before, and after. You taste that pizza and you're like, 'Jesus Christ, I've never had anything like this.'

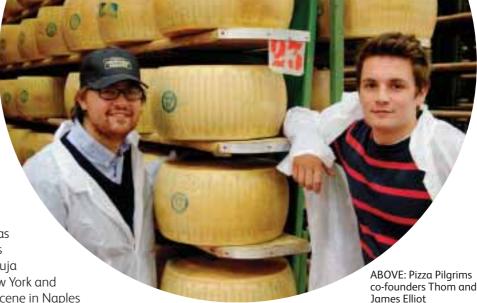
JE: Then we essentially came up the whole west coast. We did Rome, Florence, Pisa, Tuscany for the olive oil, up to Parma for Parma ham and parmesan, then across to Genoa for basil, up to Turin for chocolate and Campari, to Milan for aperitivo...

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE BREAKTHROUGHS FROM THAT TRIP?

TE: It was Calabria where we first tried 'nduja,

which became our signature pizza. They were spreading it on toast and we were like, 'This is incredible. This would work brilliantly on pizza.'

JE: And no one in the UK was saying the word 'nduja. It was complete accidental cool. 'Nduja has since become huge in New York and London. As a result the pizza scene in Naples has been affected, and it's everywhere there.



DID YOU LEARN HOW MUCH GOES INTO EACH ELEMENT?

TE: When you scratch the surface of how you make Parma ham, it's a 28-month process and every day is mapped out. They are not messing around. We also learnt that Italians are so, so protective of their way.

JE: What was also very helpful with the TV crew was that Italians love it when you put a camera in their face. They're like, "It's a family secret, can't tell you." And then the camera turns on and it's, "Come on in..."

WHEN YOU GOT BACK, HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT USING THOSE LESSONS TO MAKE THE PIZZA?

TE: The first thing we did was get three different types of dough, three types of mozzarella, three types of tomato, and we had a blogger evening. And we made some pizzas and they told us which ones they liked. This was back in a world where you could just email London's top 20 bloggers and invite them round on a Tuesday night.

EIGHT YEARS LATER, WHAT MAKES UP THE PIZZAS YOU'RE SERVING?

TE: It really is fundamentally rooted in Naples. The flour is made by Caputo, the oldest mill in Naples. We take the team twice a year to Naples, we always do a tour of the flour mill, and their passion for it is insane.

JE: All the cheese is made just outside in the hills above Naples, by a company called Latteria Sorrentina, another family-run company. All the tomatoes are grown just outside Naples as well. It's so Italian and romantic, they're grown in the fertile foothills of Mount Vesuvius. The thing that we get asked most is what's in our tomato sauce – it's really just good tomatoes and a bit of salt.

TE: Those three things that form the centre of all of our pizzas are all from Naples. Then – pepperoni, for example. People in Naples have no idea what pepperoni even is. We tried a British

cured pepperoni, and some stuff from Italy, but actually, it turns out that the country that lives and dies by the smoked, paprika-based sausage is Hungary. So, we get ours from Hungary.

SO YOU HAVE SOME FREEDOM WITH TRADITION?

JE: It's nice to be in a situation where we're not Italian, so we don't have to abide by the rules. We did a carbonara pizza last year with bucatini on it, which was absolutely knock-out, one of our top-selling pizzas. But for the traditional Italian scene it was a bit of a tough pill to swallow.

TE: It's a real thing to geek out about. It's cheese, dough and sauce, but you can spend a lifetime on the nuances.

32-34 Buckingham Palace Road

TWO MORE KNOCKOUT PIZZA SPOTS...

Hai Cenato

Jason Atherton's slick New York-Italian serves up sourdough pizzas with British milled flour. Try the confit lamb neck with spiced aubergine.

2 Sir Simon Milton Square

Tozi Victoria

A neighbourhood favourite, its wood-oven pizzette are hard to resist. Try the Spianata – four cheeses with potatoes and black truffle pesto. 8 Gillingham Street

Peace of Mind for London's luxury homeowners

Since it launched in 2012, Bold & Reeves has earned a reputation as London's premier provider of management, maintenance and monitoring services to London's finest properties

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WHY? At Bold & Reeves our mission is to protect the value and reduce the total cost of ownership of luxury homes in and around London.

It's common knowledge that prevention is better than cure, which is why people proactively manage their health – usually with the help of experts, via a service that is tailored to suit their lifestyle. No doubt you do the same for your car. Bold & Reeves offers a similar approach to managing their client's homes, meaning fewer potential problems go unnoticed and fewer things break down. This results in reduced running costs and increased peace of mind.

WHAT? Our approach to the asset management of luxury homes is centred around proactivity and continuity of knowledge.

At Bold & Reeves we take responsibility for the implementation and expenditure of all maintenance activities, working with our partners to oversee the details of every intervention, generating data supported savings as we do so. A service is only ever as good as the professionals that deliver it, and our trusted partners are best in class, having come via client recommendations and passed a rigorous screening and vetting process, before proving their capabilities again and again in practice.

WHO? Bold & Reeves clients are luxury homeowners, some of whom are permanently in residence and others who live overseas. Like many



high net worth people they are time-poor and costconscious, and vulnerable to exploitation from their supplier network.

Our team of experienced Property Managers helps to mitigate these risks, by working with our partner network to minimise our client's exposure, and consistently reduce the total cost of ownership as they do so. Your home should be a haven of calm, comfort and contentment – a place to spend quality time with family and friends, free from the problems of repair, management and maintenance. At Bold & Reeves we ensure it remains so, by shouldering responsibility for your home and solving these issues for you.

HOW? In the same way as a full service history improves the value and saleability of your car, the Bold & Reeves Logbook utilises technology to record the details of every intervention that is made on our client's behalf, supporting our people to identify and service all requirements with immediacy, while presenting this activity back to our clients in real time.

Over time not only does this demonstrate unparalleled levels of care and upkeep for our client's homes to potential buyers, but also uniquely consistent savings in ownership costs, as their properties are enhanced. They are left feeling supported, trusting, richer in time and money, and hassle-free.

> www.boldandreeves.co.uk +44 207 408 7590





Housed in a former power station, Wild by Tart is one of London's trendiest restaurants where the 'in crowd' can't get enough.

Trout crudo, Mr Cameron?

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

ood things, as they say, come to those who wait. For the hordes who have hot-footed it to Eccleston Yards since Wild By Tart welcomed its first diners last autumn, "good" doesn't quite cut the mustard. By all accounts, there is sheer ambrosia on offer here, all gutsy flavours and a great vibe in a unique space. You might say it's what Victoria has been crying out for since it first pinged on the capital's foodies' radar.

Which explains why a slew of celebrities and the fashion crowd have been spotted here, "chillaxing" a la Samantha Cameron and her spouse, former prime minister David. For the best friend duo behind it all, Lucy Carr-Ellison and Jemima Jones, however, this is the culinary culmination of years of shared dreams, and some tough times spent in ensuring it came to fruition.

A vast, light-filled space, Wild By Tart is the pair's first restaurant – abutted by its sister deli, homeware store, photography studio and an event space to put the "wild" in.

Working behind and in front of the lens in the fashion industry, the pair met in their early 20s in New York and discovered they were kindred spirits, both equally passionate about food, photography and travel. Their combined talents soon saw them providing the food at shoots before going on to run their catering company, Tart London for clients including Stella McCartney, Louis Vuitton, Cara Delevingne and Kate Moss.

"That kind of happened by accident, being able to assist and provide the food for a few certain shoots with a few certain photographers, which felt very cool

at the time, when you were 24 or 25," laughs Jemima. "Then off the back of that snowballed this

company, which we loved doing at the time, but at the very start when Lucy and I met we spoke about a shared dream of ours and that was to have our own place that felt like a little taste of home, homemade food and comfort."

The menu includes dishes such as trout crudo with tiger's milk and mezcal, beef carpaccio with chilli and ponzu and pizzette from the wood-fired oven. Fragrant pudding flavours include cardamom, rose, miso and garam masala. Meat is sourced from their respective family farms, Lucy's in

Northumberland and Jemima's in Somerset.

Jemima Jones and

Lucy Carr-Ellison

A hugely ambitious undertaking, the pair took on the lease after being inspired by the vision

for the former power station and coal store. "We're so glad

that we're here. We were initially looking for more north London and closer to us, but we came across this space and we fell in love with it. It was more the space that brought us to the area, and now that we're here we are so glad we are here," says Lucy.

"We get to offer all of the produce that we love so much and want to shout about and celebrate, we're able to sell that in the deli and to have the little retail shop – which we never planned on doing, it just came about."

From the pair of them catering at shoots to now having a team of over 40 and a 90-cover restaurant, it's been quite a journey. Jemima, who has two young children with her financier husband Ben Goldsmith, admits that she is still, at this stage, struggling to leave work.

They are both thrilled with how their labour of love is already garnering a regular following: "We have people who come here in the morning specially for a coffee on their way to work – it feels as if it's already becoming part of the neighbourhood," says Lucy.

"It's been a learning curve and I feel we've learned so much. We're both passionate about it all. We're working with great people.

We just love it here."

3-4 Eccleston Yards

ASTER HAS LAUNCHED an extravagant brunch with a bottomless Bloody Mary station.

The Victoria restaurant, part of the Nova complex, runs the Sunday Feast offering from noon until 4pm every Sunday.

A vast seafood, meat, dessert and cheese bar is on offer for diners, while starter options include jumbo shrimp and Colchester rock oysters and mains include roast leg of salt marsh lamb and butterflied sea bass. £35 PER PERSON, 150 VICTORIA STREET





THE FLAVOURS OF LATIN AMERICA will arrive in Victoria in April, with the launch of Morena.

Run by two Colombian sisters, the brunch spot, coffee house and all-day dining restaurant will serve Latin American-inspired dishes with a contemporary twist, including their signature cassava waffles.

10-11 ECCLESTON YARDS



INDULGE MUM'S SWEET TOOTH this month with The Ivy Victoria's limited-edition Tulipa dessert.

Available for one day only, in celebration of Mother's Day on March 22, it features white chocolate mousse with raspberries, meringue, petals and a warm chocolate sauce, priced at £9.50.

66 VICTORIA STREET

Let's eat



M VICTORIA is running a pop-up dining experience in aid of Not For Sale, a global organisation to end human trafficking and exploitation.

The restaurant is inviting diners to enjoy a special five-course limited-edition menu, including Peruvian tacos and lamb with artichokes and wheatgrass, with 100 per cent of profits donated to helping fund self-sustaining social projects across the world.

The pop-up runs until March 12, priced £75 per person including a glass of champagne.

ZIG ZAG BUILDING,

74 VICTORIA STREET



MALCOLM HENDRY

THE RUBENS AT THE PALACE, 39 Buckingham Palace Road

Age: 49

Hobbies: Football coaching, eating out, early-morning walks
When many of us might still be hitting the snooze button, at 6am each morning Malcolm can be found walking alternative routes into work to discover new parts of the capital. "It's an incredible part of the day,

seeing London wake up," he says.

His career began in Aberdeen, where he grew up, before he moved to London 26 years ago. As his 19-year anniversary at the hotel fast approaches, he says his highlight so far has been hosting the Duke of Edinburgh at the 65th anniversary of the Victoria Cross and George Cross celebration, commemorating the end of World War Two.

Malcolm has overseen a number of marriage proposals; the most unusual of which included a guest asking to pop the question on the roof. Staff duly arranged a projection of "Will you marry me?" on the side of the building. At weekends, he coaches his son's under-eight football team.

Meet the GMs

OLIVIA BYRNE

ECCLESTON SQUARE HOTEL, 37 Eccleston Square

Age: 32

Hobbies: Tennis, snowboarding, yoga, learning German

A radiant presence, Olivia opened her own hotel in 2011, aged just 23. Her subtle Swiss twang alludes to her international upbringing; she lived in Paris until she was 11, then moved to the UK for four years before relocating to Switzerland. She went to the prestigious École hôtelière de Lausanne where she completed a hotel management course. Eccleston Square Hotel has paved the way for

technologically advanced hospitality – it was the first hotel to have 3D TVs and rooms come with Hästens beds imported from Sweden and iPads.

Away from the day job, Olivia enjoys yoga, pilates and snowboarding. She is most relaxed when she retreats to the Swiss mountains, soothed by the clangs of cow-bells and organic food. She's currently on a quest to learn German.



NATASHA LUDLOW

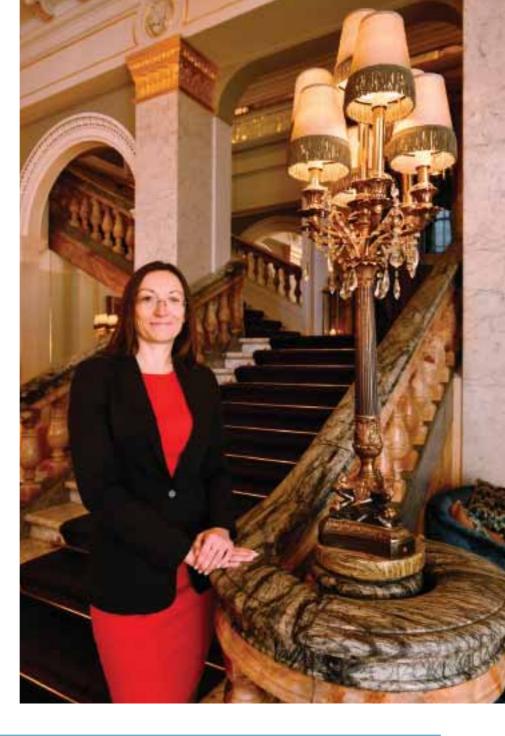
AMBA GROSVENOR HOTEL, 101 Buckingham Palace Road Age: 42

Hobbies: Going to the theatre, watching Chelsea FC

Warm and passionate, Natasha originally trained as a ballet dancer in Covent Garden, but retired at 20 years old and transitioned into a career within hospitality. She has worked for the hotel for 22 years, but has not always held such a customer-facing role.

Her proudest career achievement so far was a move from commercial revenue management (where she had been for 15 years) to a promotion to general manager. Customer requests she has had to contend with include furnishing a guest's suite with a six-foot, fully decorated Christmas tree.

When she isn't attending to the eclectic whims of customers, she is a keen football fan and season ticket holder at Chelsea FC with her brother and father. She also enjoys the theatre, particularly *Chicago*, which she has seen in the West End and on Broadway.





DIGVIJAY SINGH

ST JAMES' COURT, A Taj Hotel, 54 Buckingham Gate
Age: 53. Hobbies: Equestrian sports
A sharply dressed, softly spoken man who makes his presence known. From scouring London to acquire camel milk for his guests to hosting the prime minister of India and Elvis Presley's wife, Digvijay has enjoyed an eclectic career with the Taj group so far. This is his sixth general manager role.

Away from the hotel, he is a civvie support rider for the Queen's Household Cavalry regiment, the Blues and Royals; a passion which led him to watch Prince William and Prince Harry playing polo.

The launch of Taj's Jiva Spa (the first of its kind in Europe, which fuses Indian wellness philosophy and British innovation) and the hotel's restaurant, Quilon, winning a Michelin star for the 12th year are two highlights from his longstanding career.

Next up, he is launching an all-day brasserie and private members' club, The Chambers.

SIMON EVANS

ST ERMIN'S HOTEL 2 Caxton Street

Age: 47

Hobbies: Triathlons

As a successful triathlete, Simon has represented Great Britain three times at the world championships and competed in races from sprint triathlons to Iron Man contests. His dedication is inspirational and his passion tangible.

His dream to manage a hotel began when, as a young boy, he accompanied his mother to the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh where she was presented with a prestigious award. "I was bewildered and besotted by the luxury," he recalls.

Simon, who is bilingual, studied in Paris for a year before briefly working as a bodyguard for a royal figure.

It would prove good preparation with Jill Biden, wife of President Obama's vice-president Joe, paying a visit to sample St Ermin's honey-themed afternoon tea, after discovering they keep their own beehives in the hotel's roof garden.

This summer, Simon is competing in SwimRun, where he will be tied to a partner for the entire race.





BEVERLY PAYNE

CONRAD LONDON ST JAMES 22-28 Broadway

Age: 61

Hobbies: Running, ballet, growing orchids

Beverly began her career within the hospitality industry in 1976 at the Hotel School in Huddersfield. After graduating she started working in the luxury sector, securing a role at the renowned Capital Hotel in Knightsbridge. The highlight of her career so far is her current role at Conrad London St James, which she joined in September 2016.

Driven by her own career as a hotelier, her main focus has been helping young people develop in the industry. She also prioritises community involvement and works closely with Victoria's local charities and associations. Working within the world of luxury, she has received a number of unusual requests, including having to buy a guest a Mini Cooper and shipping it to the USA.

Outside of work, she enjoys running, mentoring, ballet dancing and eating out. Rather more unusually she has a secret talent for growing orchids.

From Sicily to Sydney

Local actor Sir John Standing shares his travel memories, from bad behaviour with Peter O'Toole to filming with Cary Grant

BY ALEX BRIAND



The first time I travelled I was 12 – I went to Rome because my mother and stepfather were making a movie there. It was called *Call of the Blood*, and it was a disaster. It was half-written by my stepfather. They accidentally set fire to a field because they had a firework display in the film, and the mayor of Taormina said, "That's it – you can't come to the casino for a week." And that was their punishment. That's movie making.

My brother and I went by train with an old aunt, and stayed in the San Domenico hotel. Taormina's beautiful, I remember the Greek theatre there and Mount Etna spewing.

I remember the train with enormous clarity, going through Domodossola. I had my first plate of spaghetti at a restaurant called the 57, where a man called Delpelo played the guitar. I found it incredibly exciting.

When did you first travel by air?

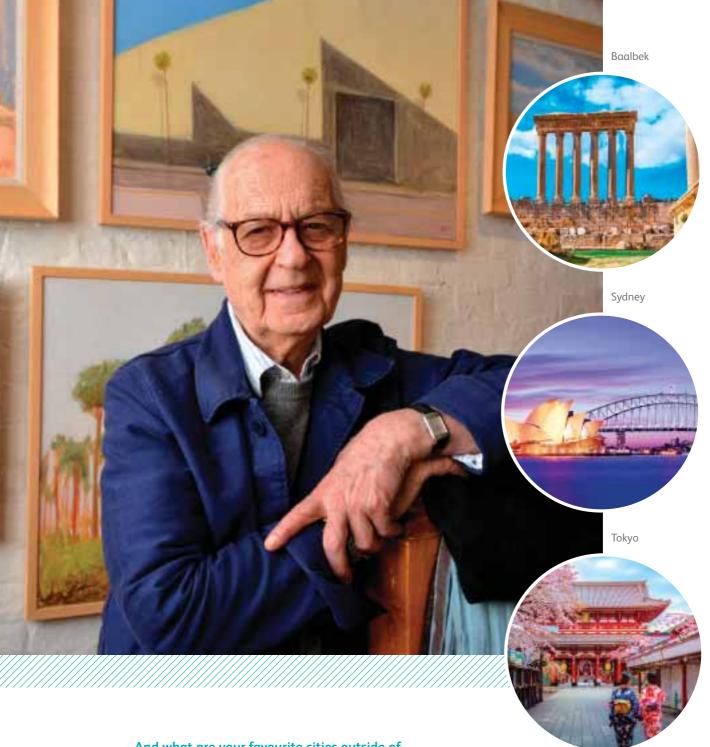
I didn't get in an aeroplane until I went to do *Romeo and Juliet* in the Roman temples in Baalbek, Lebanon, with the Bristol Old Vic. I remember the pilot saying, "Do you want to see the Acropolis?" And everybody saying, "Well, why not?" So we took a detour to fly round the Acropolis.



When we got to Baalbek I remember going in to check the dressing rooms in one of the temples, and there on one of the stone tables was a cobra waiting for us. It was terribly funny; I thought, "F**k me, this is a good start to the season!"

What are your favourite destinations?

Australia is very outgoing, and very friendly. I loved it. The only problem is that it's too far away. Peter O'Toole and I went to co-star in a play together, where we behaved astonishingly badly and had the most wonderful time. We went shark fishing and played endless cricket. We did a phenomenally bad play called *Dead Eyed Dicks*, he was playing Sherlock Holmes and I was playing Dr Watson. The two of us were travelling across from England to Sydney, smoking godknows-what on the plane.



And what are your favourite cities outside of London?

New York has a tremendous energy; it's immensely positive. And it's all just there on your doorstep – being that it's only five miles long and a mile across, you can walk everywhere. Whereas London is a mass of wonderful villages but miles and miles apart. In London you have to make much more of an effort. Still, I personally think the effort's worth making.

Where have you experienced the biggest culture shock?

I've done two films in Tokyo. When I first went in 1963 for a film with Cary Grant, the tallest building in Tokyo was eight storeys high, which was the Hilton. Women used to wander around the streets in kimonos, it was absolutely extraordinary and wonderful, and so Japanese.

Working with Cary Grant was quite fantastic, he was the most generous, brilliantly clever man and comedy actor. He was top dog, he really was.

The last time I went was in 1997 to play the lead in a Peter Greenaway film, called 8½ Women, and Tokyo had changed massively. The Park Hotel and all the real towering skyscrapers had shot up.

What is one of your most prized travel memories?

I went down the Nile, because I'm fascinated by that kind of architecture and all the temples, from Luxor and Karnak and the pyramids – all the temples right the way down to Aswan. If you've never done that, that is as wonderful as you can get.



hiefly known as "the TfL building", 55 Broadway is an art deco jewel in the capital's crown. Commissioned by Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL) general manager Frank Pick, the building was designed by Charles Holden and built between 1927 and 1929, with UERL, the forerunner to TfL, making the site its headquarters.

Now, TfL is moving out. It has been announced that Integrity International Group acquired the property for £120 million, and has plans to sensitively transform it into a high-end hotel and meeting place for the local community.

"I think we're very fortunate, because this building – being grade-I listed – doesn't need much other than to be restored and loved," says Tony Matharu, Integrity International's founder and chairman. "In its form and structure, with the fenestration and outside Portland stone, you couldn't want to do anything more with it." The building's facade features sculptural reliefs by avant-garde artists of the day, including Jacob Epstein, Eric Gill and Henry Moore.

"The building, structure and central core are rightly going to be maintained and refurbished; but the creative element has already been designed in," explains Tony. "Pick and Holden were very forward-looking in their design. They future-proofed certain things so that the custodians of this building — as I am now — will be able to reuse it. We are simply breathing new life into what was already a fantastic building."

55 Broadway was built as an expression of modernity and to reflect the democratic nature of UERL's work, providing travel for millions of people. "One of the original facets of the building was the permeability throughout the ground floor. I want to reinstate that. It has been closed off, as many of these institutional and office buildings are. I want to make the building democratic and accessible, so the public can enjoy and use this building and the services and facilities it has been deprived of. I want this to be a place where people can meet.

"Even the shops and retail elements of it, which we are going to retain and increase, we want them to be outward-facing rather than inward-looking, which they are currently. In terms of the food and beverage offering, hairdressers, spas, gyms, coffee shops, dry cleaners and other services that our residential, business and visitor community might want, we want to make them more available. That's part of our ambition."

Tony has experience in revivifying forgotten spaces, with projects including Grange Hotels, which he founded and operated alongside his brothers Harpal and Raj and was worth £1 billion when sold. He says that this repurposing of unique spaces has been the most pleasing aspect to his career so far. "It has been satisfying identifying sites that were unloved, and seeing some potential in them that no one else did," says Tony, who has a measured, serious demeanour.

"Hotels require character; trying to impose personality on nondescript buildings is difficult. So identifying buildings that are coming to the end of their useful lives in a different form is important. In this case, 55 Broadway was designed and built specifically as a headquarters for what is now TfL; but this truly iconic building has now come to the end of its life in that form. When you

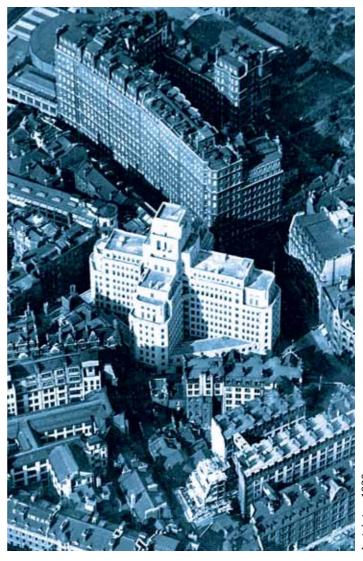


breathe new life into these buildings, provide employment and benefit in the public realm, create careers and generate vibrancy in an area that perhaps didn't have it before – I think that's all helpful."

Tony believes that the 55 Broadway project will provide numerous benefits for the local community, with employment and services being priorities. "Employment is going to be very significant," he says. "The very nature of hotels is that they're open 24 hours a day, and staff typically work 7am to 3pm, or 3pm until 11pm, or 11pm until 7am. That means staff have to get here for 7am and leave after 11 at night. They have to be relatively local to do this, so it will certainly provide employment to a lot of local people – 400 to 500 people will work here full-time.

"Another element is the services we can provide to the local community – businesses, residents and visitors. All of these I imagine are looking for this iconic building to be repurposed to give them some services and facilities they don't currently have."

Tony is working closely with Victoria's Business Improvement District, as he has done since 2000. "I'm currently the director of another BID, so I understand the various stakeholder communities that are involved and the enhancement and benefit it can bring to an area and I'm delighted to assist. I've been able to see positive outcomes before, and I'm certain that will happen here."



al view 1929





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MEET THE DENTIST

NICOLA MULHAIRE GDC - 76088 BDS NUIrel DRDP (UCL Distinction)

Nicola is a friendly, experienced and enthusiastic dentist who enjoys all aspects of general practice, especially Invisalign and aesthetic dentistry.

In addition to providing the best possible care to her adult patients, she enjoys treating younger patients, ensuring that the all-important first visit to the dentist is a relaxed experience. Nicola has also appeared on television, on *This Morning* giving dental advice to the nation.

Sustainable scents

Sana Jardin is the world's first ethical luxury fragrance house that uses the power of perfume for social good. Founder Amy Christiansen explains her vision

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS



ana Jardin founder Amy Christiansen and I are sniffing, patting and wafting our hands and wrists in a corner of Chez Antoinette in Victoria.

Each vial of perfume emits a transportive odour to somewhere magical and wondrous, from Berber Blonde loaded with heady orange blossom, to Jaipur Chant erupting with majestic Indian tuberose or the sensual amber notes in Tiger By Her Side.

Amy isn't the typical perfumer; she doesn't conjure up mystical worlds for the scents or regale me with nostalgic stories. Then she starts talking about social change and her passion ignites.

Sana Jardin is the world's first socially conscious luxury fragrance house. Amy explains: "I wanted to create an alternative business model. Of course through charity we can give donations but I wanted to change the system and create a framework where we were able to empower women economically and have it be embedded into the process rather than being an afterthought."

Amy was inspired to set up the company by her former role — "I was a social worker and I worked in the non-profit sector for 20 years" — and a longheld passion for perfume.

"I grew up travelling around north Africa and the Middle East because my grandmother's foundation worked to support women in developing countries," she explains.

"I thought, 'Nothing has been done in perfume and fragrance to make the supply chain more

ethical, like is being done in fashion', so I thought, 'Why don't I start my own line and empower the women who work for the fragrance line.'"

Sana Jardin successfully launched in Harrods in 2017 and is now in 100 stores around the world.

The office, based in Victoria, is a small team, but the raw materials are harvested by women in Tiddas and Maaziz in Morocco, which Amy tells me is the last little quarter in the entire world that has jasmine, orange blossom and rose all growing within a few feet of each other.

Each perfume is designed by the legendary nose Carlos Benaim, who also hails from Morocco, where Amy, along with non-profit Nest and Les Aromes du Maroc, has set up the women's cooperative — where they receive 100 per cent of the proceeds.

Amy adds: "Sustainable means to me having a minimal impact on the environment and fair trade practices but I wanted to do more, I wanted to create a system where the women can flourish and not just maintain.

"The women live in rural villages and they are illiterate and they don't have any professional skill-sets so their only access to work is during the harvest season, which is a few times a year.

"So now we're giving [them] the tools to sell the product throughout the year – that's what we call Beyond Sustainability."

Amy now has plans for expansion – setting up cooperatives in India and Haiti.

"I think it's a global consciousness – we all make these leaps together and awareness raises together."

SUSTAINABLE FRAGRANCES



ANIMA VINCI

Designed to inspire love and happiness, Rose Prana is made with Centifolia roses, which only bloom for three weeks in May each year. Les Senteurs, 71 Elizabeth Street, £150 for 100ml



DIPTYQUE

Using ethically sourced sustainable vetiver from Haiti, this fresh unisex scent evokes the raw beauty of a rich rainforest.

Space NK, 4 Cardinal Place, £120 for 75ml



CLEAN RESERVE

Warm Cotton has the soothing effect of crisp, clean clothes with notes of benzoin, vetiver and watery ozonic.

Space NK, 4 Cardinal Place, £20 for 10ml

Recipe for success

Sophia Charalambous spends
time with trainees at Hotel
School, the Victoria-based charity
teaching hospitality skills to
homeless and vulnerable people



I find Samia Adam tucked away in the pastry corner of The Goring hotel's kitchen, measuring sugar, butter and flour into bowls.

Introducing myself is almost futile as she is focused on perfecting a recipe for what looks like a giant banana cake.

Sudanese refugee Samia arrived in the UK three years ago following the civil war that continues to take place back home.

She is one of the latest students of the Hotel School's 10-week training programme, teaching hospitality skills to homeless and vulnerable people. A joint venture between The Passage and The Goring, it is supported by over 50 local businesses.

Before arriving at the school, Samia was living in Nottingham, where she had looked for bakery work but couldn't find anything.

After moving to London in search of more opportunities, she reached out to the Red Cross who directed her to The Passage, where she heard about the Hotel School course. Now, four months later, she is completing her course, which



comes with a nationally recognised certificate. "I'm so proud to be here and everyone's been supporting me," she says. Samia and her family are from Darfur. "I had to leave because of many reasons," she says. "It is quite difficult, everybody knows about Sudan from the news. Someone asked me, 'How is it going in Sudan' and I said, 'I want to bake, don't ask me about Sudan!' It's quite difficult to speak about these things." Samia is not going to let any opportunity pass her by, and won't stop until she's achieved her dream of owning her own bakery — and meeting the queen. "London is good for me. I like a busy life, I don't like sleeping. In London everybody runs and I'm like, 'Oh, I love this life'."

MARKET CHALLENGE

It's early on a Monday and some of the latest Hotel School recruits are in high spirits.

Sitting round a kitchen table at the Westminster Adult Education Service, the six students are outlining how to cook a recipe from their own culture and on a budget with chef Michael

This is the group's eighth session and they're recapping about the benefits and barriers to cooking, along with the downsides of fast food. One student is getting animated over sugar. "Sugar is a drug, let's be fair," she says. "You're starving yourself and you don't even know. But companies, they advertise so heavily, you can't blame people... they don't advertise peas!"

Chef Michael is full of words of wisdom: "There is that famous Julia Child quote, 'Nobody is born a great cook. One learns by doing.' Each time I make an omelette it's like a mindfulness session."

The main purpose of the day is to cook and share dishes that are inspired by their cultures. Sara is making sweet and savoury borek – an Algerian pastry roll; Precious already brought in her dish – a Ghanaian soup with spinach, tomato and smoked haddock, eaten with

ground cassava; Aku is going for yam, stew, plantain and coleslaw; Daniel has chosen cornmeal porridge, plantain and festivals; and Samia is making a Sudanese potato dish with vegetables and mince meat.

Heading to the market to find ingredients, they return to cook the dishes in two hours.

Then comes the best part of the day – sharing the food that is a little taste of home.

Programme manager Zoe Minihan says: "Our students are some of the most hardworking and resilient people who overcome significant barriers to complete the course and gain employment.

"It's been exciting to see people who have not worked for a long time or first-time employees now celebrating promotions and work anniversaries.

"We have been lucky to work within an industry that is willing to give people a chance. It can be life changing for people and break the cycle of long-term unemployment and homelessness."

She adds: "We love the sense of community that has been created which is so important if you are isolated, as so many homeless people can be."





Putting people first



arliament Square, Victoria Street, Cathedral Piazza and beyond will be completely transformed in new proposals presented by the Victoria and Victoria Westminster Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Enhancing Victoria's status as an increasingly vibrant public area, the BIDs' "People Wanted" strategy will see people prioritised over traffic to create green spaces and improve air quality.

The strategy proposes the removal of throughtraffic from the eastern and southern sides of Parliament Square, enabling the pedestrianisation of the route to the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey. Victoria Street could also be transformed with a linear park created by reclaiming some space from traffic to connect Victoria Station and Parliament Square with a green corridor.

Cathedral Piazza would come to life as the dramatic setting for Westminster Cathedral, with planting and water features. The proposal also includes new ideas for a Railway Garden, a new Victoria Station Square and a transformation of Petty France, Tothill Street and Broadway into a pedestrianised thoroughfare named The Arc, leading





Prominent sites around Victoria Street are set to be reimagined as welcoming, pedestrian-friendly spaces in a newly unveiled bold and greener vision for the area

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

from Whitehall to Victoria as an alternative route to Victoria Street.

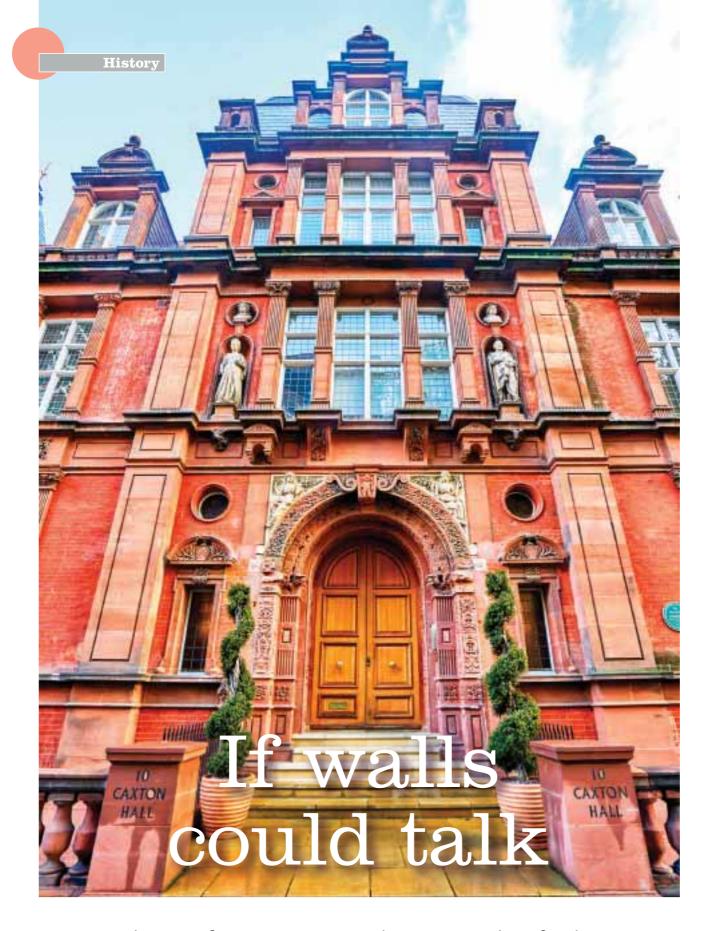
With 15 individual concept ideas outlined, the proposal highlights and identifies various areas in and around Victoria that could benefit from change. A Passport to Pimlico focuses on supporting connections between Victoria and Pimlico, while another project identifies the need to enhance connections to Birdcage Walk and St James's Park from St James's Station, Tothill Street and Petty France. In addition, there are considerations such as creating a more suitable environment for pedestrians and cyclists on important streets such as Buckingham Palace Road and pedestrian access to the river.

Developed for the BIDs by architects and engineers BDP and architects and transport planning consultants Urban Flow, the document proposes an ambitious approach to evolving public spaces across Victoria. It focuses on enhancing Victoria as a place where people want to spend time either living, working or visiting, and is underpinned by the belief that the "bits in between" Victoria and Westminster's world heritage sites, historic buildings and amenities are deserving of greater consideration.

"We are thrilled to be revealing our new public realm and placemaking vision for Victoria," said Ruth Duston, chief executive of the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs. "We believe that public spaces play a vital role in strengthening our societies and should be designed to function with people at their very heart.

"We know our vision is ambitious but we think it's achievable and we've already set a precedent – the transformation of Christchurch Gardens was included in previous vision documents produced by the BID and works are now underway to create a public park for everyone to enjoy. With its unique role and mandate, the BID is able to pull the right people together from across the public and private sectors to get these bold projects moving."

Developed alongside Westminster City Council and other stakeholders, the vision document – part of the council-led Victoria's future Place Plan – is subject to further discussion, consultation, permissions and funding. It aims to provide a framework for stakeholders to work together towards a bold and ambitious future for placemaking and public space in Victoria.



The site of an assassination, the meeting place for the suffragettes and a favourite for the A-list to tie the knot, we take a look at the varied history of Caxton Hall



onfetti-covered celebrities, impassioned suffragettes, rousing political discourse and an assassination enacted in ice-cold revenge for an atrocity 21 years earlier: Caxton Hall's history is underpinned by the gamut of emotions.

Designed in 1878, the building originally served as Westminster Town Hall from 1883. It took its name from Caxton Street, which had itself been recently renamed from Little Chapel Street to honour the 500th anniversary of William Caxton's first printing press that was sited nearby.

The redbrick design featured two public halls, the Great Hall and York Hall, built at a time when attending wide-ranging political meetings and cultural events regularly was the norm. From 1933 Caxton Hall was also used as a register office for weddings, forming a backdrop to celebrity and society nuptials on newsreels and in the press.

In 1979, just over a century since its inception, the last confetti shower was

thrown. The building then stood empty, but was grade-II listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest in 1984. By the mid 1990s, however, Historic England placed it on the "at risk" register. By 2006, amid the nascent property boom, it was converted, with the register office and front of the building developed into 13 flats, while the halls at the back made way for offices.

Caxton Hall's listing status was in recognition of its role as a base for the suffragette movement. It was where the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), led by Emmeline Pankhurst, held a "Women's Parliament" (the first on February 13, 1907) before each new parliamentary session at Westminster. They would then set forth to deliver their petition in person to the prime minister, marching across Parliament Square to press their demands. It was from Caxton Hall that they marched to be confronted by police brutality and "unexampled violence" on what became

LEFT: Caxton Hall
Photo: Alamy

TOP: A meeting at Caxton Hall prior to the Rush the House of Commons demonstration, 1908 Photo: Alamy History





ABOVE: poster for a British Empire Union meeting

TOP: Peter Sellers marries Miranda Quarry at Caxton Hall, 1970 Photo: Alamy

OPPOSITE: Roger Moore marries Luisa Mattioli at Caxton Hall, 1969 Photo: Rex known as Black Friday, November 18, 1910, when Sylvia Pankhurst reported that 115 women were arrested and two women later died. When the suffragettes' Fellowship Memorial outside Caxton Hall was unveiled in 1970, it was attended by a few surviving suffragettes, including Lilian Lenton, whose near-death after violent force-feeding in prison triggered public outrage and led to the introduction of the so-called Cat and Mouse act.

With Diabolist Aleister Crowley giving lectures on the occult in 1910 at the same time as suffragettes were working to empower women, and the British Empire Union meeting there in 1917, Caxton Hall hosted a broad range of political and cultural movements.

Where once the suffragettes marched purposefully down its steps en route to parliament, it was blushing brides who kept Caxton Hall in the press from the 1930s, often to the thrill of a crowd of well-wishers.

Scores of celebrities married here, including Joan Collins, Mick Jagger, Ringo Starr, Diana Dors, Roger Moore, George Harrison, Peter Sellers and Elizabeth Taylor.

Politics and matrimony joined forces too, when politicians such as future prime minister Anthony Eden married then prime minister Winston Churchill's niece, Clarissa Spencer-Churchill, in 1952. Caxton Hall offered regular opportunities for celebrity-

spotting into the 1970s, and crowds grew. When actor Bob Grant of *On the Buses* sitcom fame married his third wife Kim, they had to abandon the Rolls-Royce and the double-decker bus intended for guests to walk.

In January 1953 American drummer Louie Bellson, considered the greatest musician in the world by Duke Ellington, and his bride, Broadway star Pearl Bailey, chose to marry in London, convinced that, as an interracial marriage, they would receive a friendlier reception at Caxton Hall than in New York. It proved true. They were feted by the press and Bellson went on to record *Caxton Hall Swing* later that year.

Beatle George Harrison married his first wife Patti Boyd at Caxton Hall, and it was also where, in 1967, Patti became intrigued after attending a lecture on meditation, given by spiritual leader Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, which led to a pivotal influence and change in direction for The Beatles.

During the Second World War, Churchill delivered and recorded speeches at Caxton Hall and it was regularly used as a meeting place by politicians. It was at one such meeting in 1940 that Indian Nationalist Udham Singh shot dead 75-year-old Sir

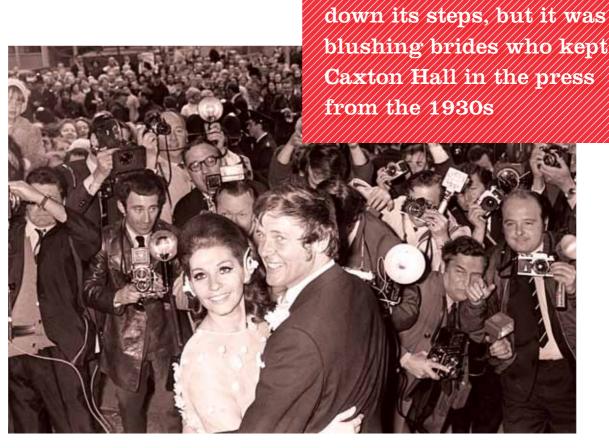
Michael O'Dwyer, a former lieutenant governor of Punjab, in revenge for his involvement in overseeing the Amritsar massacre in 1920, when hundreds of innocent Indians, including babies, children and families were shot by British troops.

Udham Singh, as a child, was shot but survived. Vowing revenge, he travelled the world to find the men responsible before reaching London. Walking calmly into a meeting at Caxton Hall on March 13, he pressed his gun into the fabric of Sir Michael's jacket and shot him twice through the heart.

When sentenced to be hanged, he said: "What greater honour could be bestowed on me than death for the sake of the motherland?"

Referred to as "the patient assassin", he was hanged and buried at Pentonville prison. In 1973 his exhumed bones were given a state funeral in a free India, where he is still honoured in films, songs and street names.

Suffragettes once marched





Westminster Cathedral



MATTHEW MORTON-SMITH Head of Savills Westminster

What local restaurant would vou recommend?

The Cinnamon Club on Great Smith Street; fantastic food with a brilliant atmosphere.

Best place to grab a coffee?

Chez Antoinette at Buckingham Green - a traditional Frenchstyle "home kitchen" cafe with amazing breakfast pastries, particularly the praline brioche!

Tell us about a hidden local gem

The Tower Viewing Gallery at Westminster Cathedral. It's 210 feet above the hustle and bustle of street level and there is an extraordinary view across London from within the landmark building. It's so easy to walk past and miss.

In the know

Four estate agents share their local knowledge of Victoria in this insiders' guide to the area By Kate White

ALINA ALEXA Lettings manager at **Chestertons Westminster**

Favourite local restaurant? Goya, the Spanish restaurant on Moreton Triangle for tapas; Kazan, the Turkish on Wilton Road; Sri Suwoon on Hugh Street for Thai food; and the newly opened Ivy on Victoria Street.

Best place to grab a coffee? I go to Pimlico Fresh for α nice cup of coffee.

Favourite place to chill out? St George's Square for a picnic lunch. Also St James's Park.

Tell us about a hidden local gem Tachbrook Street Market with its variety of shops and cuisines. The beautiful streets of the Pimlico grid and Thomas Cubitt's statue on Denbigh Street.

Best thing about Victoria? The location and community

feel. It combines the amazing location for transport with the buzz around the station and Cardinal Place and the quiet village feel that Pimlico offers.



Cardinal Place



St James's Park

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Smith Square LEFT: Iris & June

ABOVE: St John's

SUSANNAH ODGERS Associate, Knight Frank Belgravia & Westminster

Favourite local restaurant?

Osteria Dell' Angolo on Marsham Street. It's a fabulous Italian that looks pretty unassuming from the outside but is well worth a visit as the food and the wine list are excellent.

Best place to grab a coffee?

Iris & June on Howick Place. It's a great independent coffee place and the perfect spot to catch up on emails in peace or have a chat with a client face-to-face.

Favourite place to chill out?

Victoria Tower Gardens for greenery and river views, a stroll down Queen Anne's Gate and Old Queen Street and then into St James's Park, or the Curzon cinema on Victoria Street.

Tell us about a hidden local gem St John's Smith Square is an established music venue, but the Footstool restaurant underneath

it is often overlooked and is great for a coffee or quick lunch.

Best thing about Victoria?

The mixture of everything within one area – hidden streets of period Georgian houses and lovely grand mansion blocks, alongside glossy new developments and then the fantastic restaurants, coffee shops and more and more shops appearing, all within easy reach of the rest of London and the countryside.



The Goring hotel's garden



EDNA HUNTER Director of Hunter Estates

What local restaurant would you recommend?

We have an excellent Italian restaurant next door to our office on Rochester Row called 2 Amici, which is much-loved by residents. Another favourite is The Other Naughty Piglet at The Other Palace theatre.

Best place to grab a coffee?

Iris & June is a fantastic spot. It's modern and airy, the coffee is great and it's not too loud.

Favourite place to chill out?

The Goring hotel garden, a haven just behind Buckingham Palace Road yet a short walk from the station. It's a great place to enjoy cocktails and even a game of croquet in the summer.

Tell us about a hidden local gem Redwood & Feller, the bespoke tailors on Rochester Row. They're

a gentlemen's tailors who will also do alterations – they did a wonderful job on a delicate evening dress.



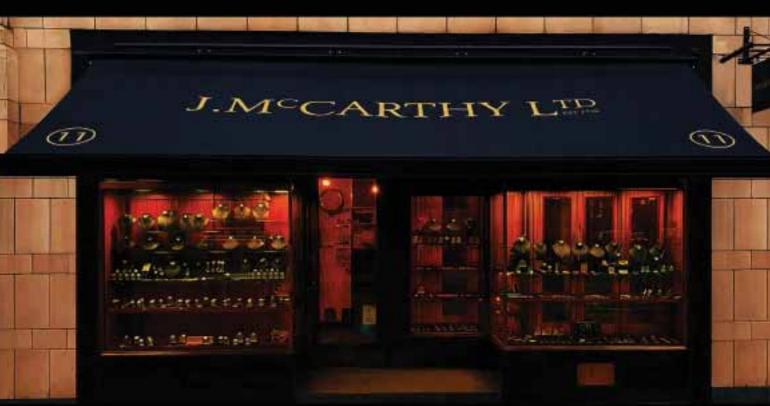
The Other Naughty Piglet



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