

CAPITAL

London by Londoners: Stories That Make The City





for the
weekenders.



Welcome to the inaugural edition of Capital, the magazine that shows you the real London, as told by Londoners.

We want to give readers an inside look into the city. Who are the people of London? What stories do they have to tell? We speak to some of the people who make London what it is today; from an international model who has found a home in the city, to an NHS nurse working long shifts in a busy hospital, and even a Ukrainian refugee who has fled war in her own country.

We felt the need to look beyond the hustle and bustle and tell the stories of the people who make up this sprawling, diverse, incredible city. We're not going to dress things up – we know that life in London can be hard at times, but it's important to recognise that the city is also a place of creativity, sanctuary, and opportunity.

It has been a privilege to have been welcomed into the lives of our interviewees and it is something we will always be grateful for. We all have our own story to tell and its these tales of ordinary people's struggles against adversity and triumph against the odds that make London the greatest city in the world... at least to us! - *Emily and Tom*

Meet the Team

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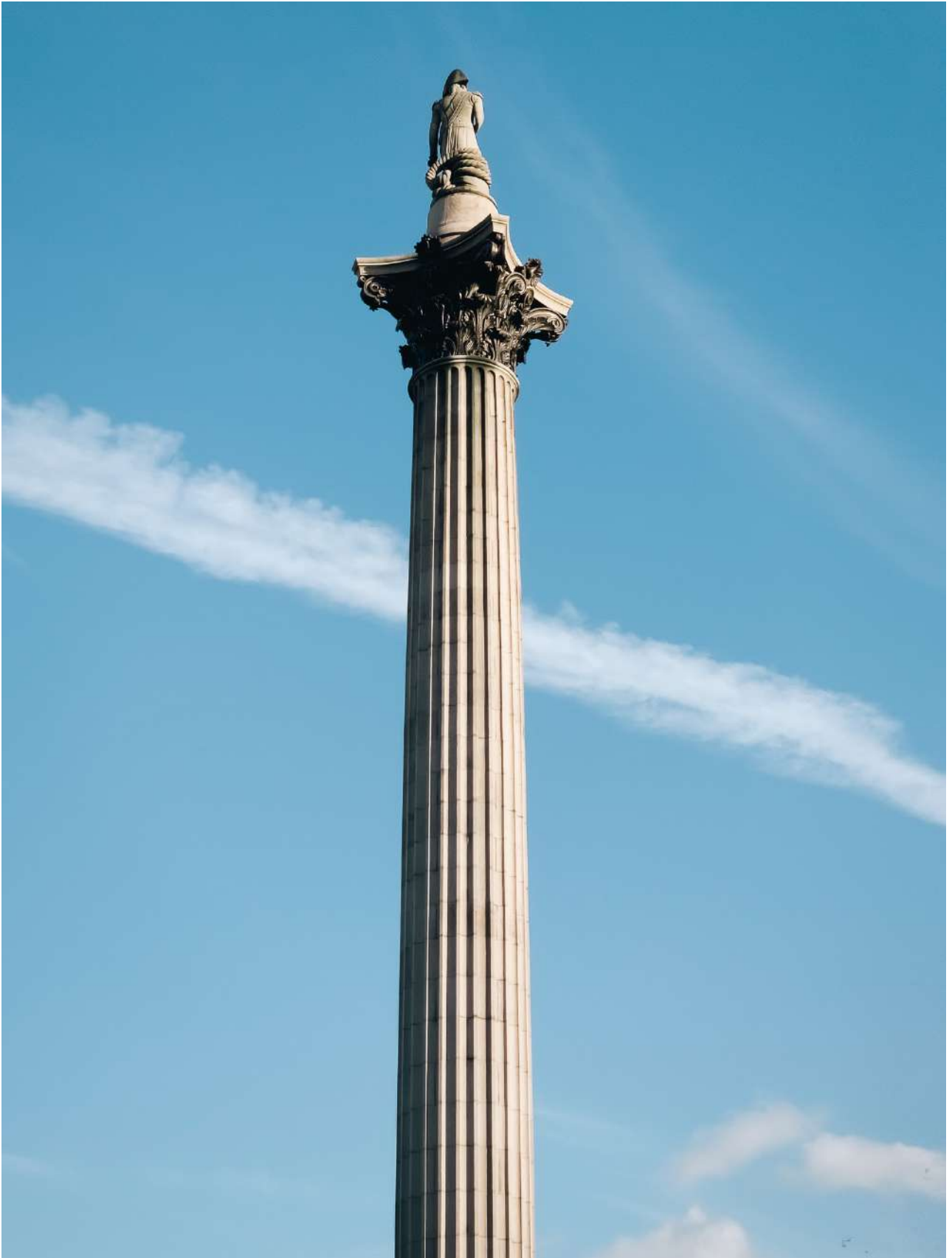
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From the Emerald Isle to the Big Smoke

How a Nurse from Northern Ireland ended up in one of the city's busiest hospitals

By Tom Chambers

With it being the world's seventh biggest employer (lagging behind the Indian ministry of defence in first place), everyone in the UK knows someone who works in the NHS. It's one of the reasons why so many hold the NHS so close to their hearts and are outspoken in their opposition to the notion of privatised healthcare.

Former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, famously described the NHS as "the closest thing the English people have to a religion" in 1992.

However, that faith is being tested in the present day as public spending cuts, initially introduced following the 2008 financial crisis and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, continue to bite. Wealth inequali-

ty has centralised employment opportunities in the big cities, leaving even organisations as large as the NHS struggling to offer adequate job prospects in more remote areas.

It's something that Matt Robinson, now an anaesthetic nurse in South London, experienced when he graduated from university in Northern Ireland. "I was born in Lurgan, just outside Belfast, in 1990 during the Troubles, I guess in sort of the latter third. I went to school there, grew up there and when I left uni I had no intentions of going anywhere else," he says.

"But it was really difficult to get a job back home. I think one of the first interviews I went with was 60 people for three posts, so it was very unlikely

I was getting a job there. So, while I was trying to get a job, I went on job seekers for six months."

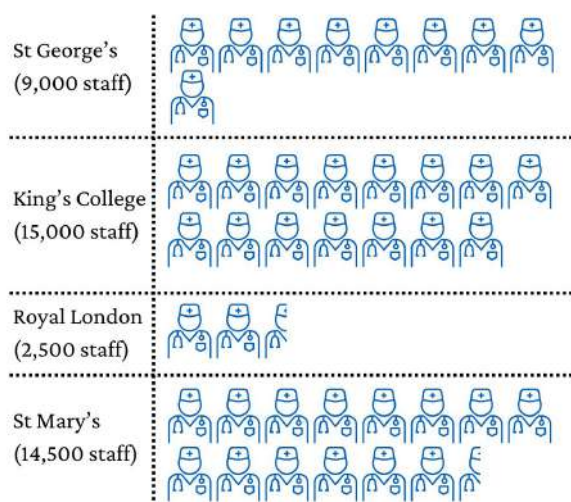
"I applied everywhere, and it just wasn't happening, it was just a bit stressful. So, one of my mates was like: 'there's interviews going for a job in London, do you want to go?' I was like: 'yeah, it might not be a bad idea just for a couple of

months and still keep looking back here.' So, I applied and obviously got the job on the day I interviewed. It was really swift, so I thought: 'oh Christ, there must be a lot of jobs there!'"

"Oh christ, there must be a lot of jobs there!"

Matt was following a well-trodden path, walked by millions of people who have gravitated towards London all the way back to the industrial revolution in the 18th Century. He admits that he had limited prior knowledge of the place he would come to call home. "I'd never been to London before!", he exclaims. "It was literally just a bit of a whim. London's never been a place in my head that I've always wanted to be. I never seen it as mystical or the big city or anything like that. The things I knew about London, were what I'd seen on the tele."

"I didn't know where to live. I didn't know where the hospital was. It was a group that had come from a few London hospitals that came to Dublin to recruit nurses specifically and they talked you through it on the day and said they had hospital accommoda-



tion so, luckily, I didn't need to worry about that. They didn't even tell me what department I was joining. I was just told it was a ward. But after I'd been here for a good amount of time, I found a little community and met friends and I was having a good time."

Matt eventually secured a role in the anaesthetic department at St. George's Hospital where he plays an integral role in the emergency care of critically ill and injured patients in a variety of departments, including A&E, trauma, and obstetrics.

So how does the hospital's location affect Matt's work? "We certainly have a bigger demographic of all types of people", he says.

"Back home it would've been middle aged, white, Christian, Irish people. So just in those terms, demographics are different. You have to have different considerations about different faiths which is interesting. I like the

broad sort of spectrum of people in London. I really enjoy that and meeting new people and talking to them." St George's is one of four major trauma centres in the capital (along with King's College, St. Mary's

*"I think we have
a tendency to be a
bit wilder when we
go out"*

and the Royal London) where the most unwell and injured patients are taken by ambulance, and often by helicopter. The nature of the traumatic cases that Matt's team are often presented with can have the potential to shock and upset.

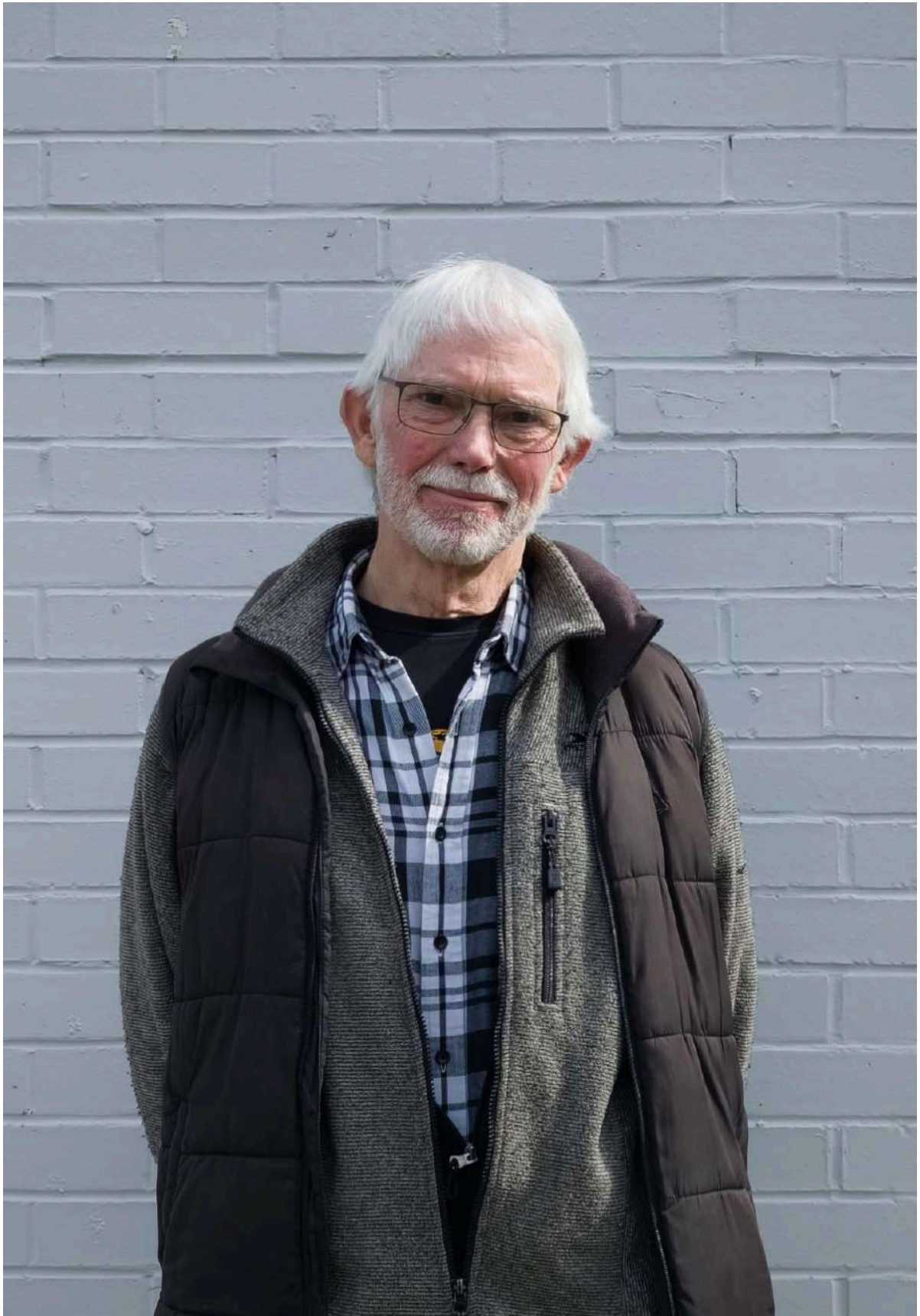
"One thing that sticks in my head all the time was just before Christmas about two years ago, there was

a house fire where four young boys died," Matt says. "All brothers, two sets of twins all under the age of six. It's hard to be involved in that at work, but you have this sort of mode at work that where it's just like, this is your job, this is what you do. And then to come home and try and relax and then put the tele on and the first story on the news is these four boys that just died and you're just like: 'shit'."

Understandably, Matt places great importance on taking the time to "switch off" from work and finding ways to de-stress in the city, often by heading to pubs and bars with colleagues. "Nurses and medical staff are known for that are they not?", Matt asks with a chuckle. "I think we have a tendency to be a bit wilder when we go out".

"We go out sometimes after work for a drink if it's been a rough day and it's a nice thing to do. The job has its ups and downs, but I'm used to it now and I do like the way of life here in London."





A FRIEND OF LIMEHOUSE

One man's mission to improve air quality in his community

By Aashish Buljhoo

For Geoff Sumnall, a need to repair and restore started with his bicycle. "I think I had an affinity for fixing things", he says. "I liked fixing my bike and I didn't want to take it to a bike shop. If something went wrong in the house, I didn't always get it right, but I quite enjoyed trying. I like the physical world."

A career in civil engineering duly followed, but it was the time he spent working in the Middle East in which he developed an interest in delivering on the knowledge he had gained to improve the natural environment, including community safety and air pollution (or as he puts it: "the sustainability stuff").

"In one of the jobs in Bahrain, working in a new town, there was an area in which they had a school, playgrounds, and a main road between the two," he says. "At the time, those kids were going at any point across the main roads. I proposed we fence off both sides and have someone at peak periods to see them cross. They said: 'No!' I told them it's not safe, children will get knocked down. This is a main road. And they said: 'Well, if it's God's will.'"

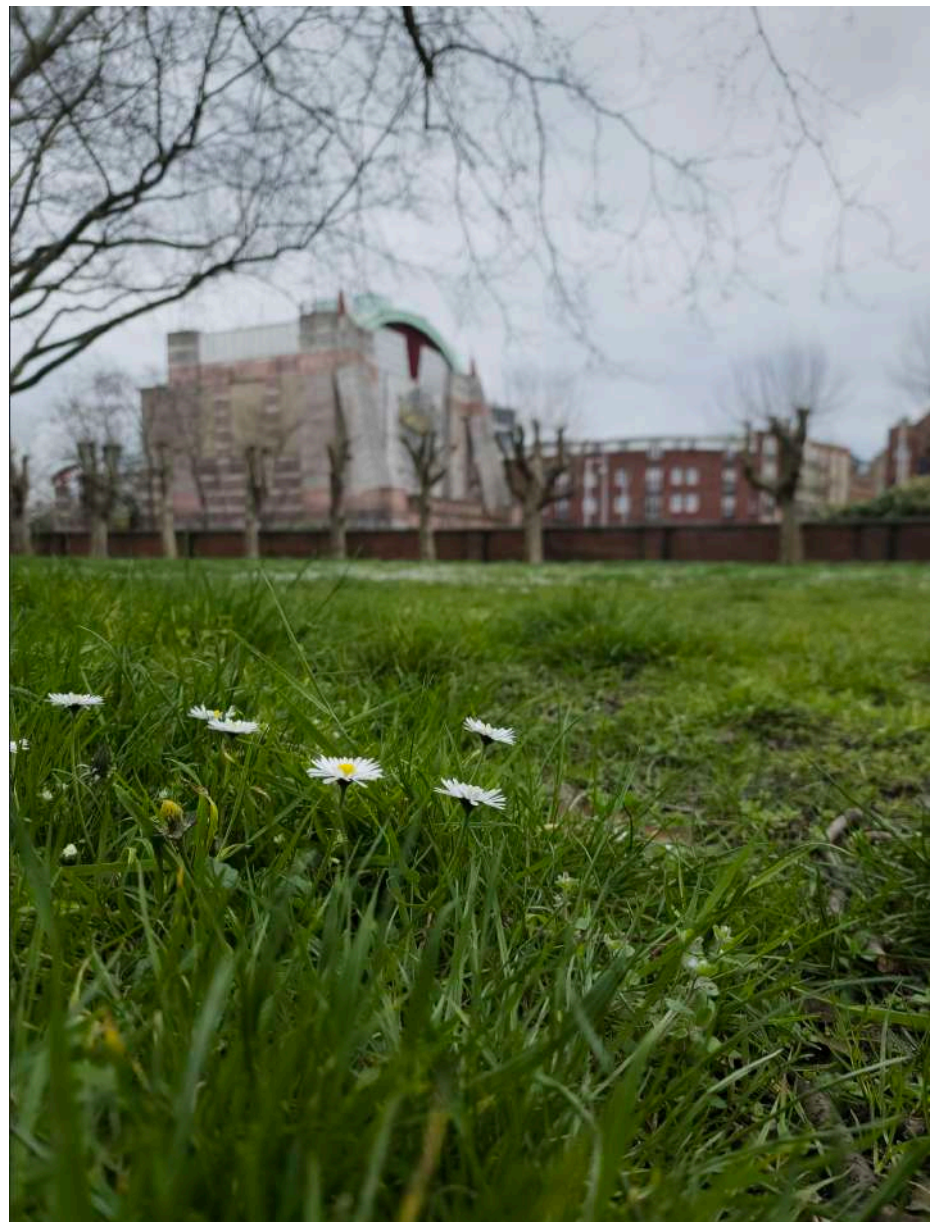
"I thought, I could say don't be so very stupid but no. these guys are devout Muslims and I respect that. This is not about fighting; it's about working together."

Upon his return to London, Geoff helped to start Friends of Limehouse, a non-profit organisation formed to

improve the natural environment and address the high air pollution which is particularly poor in parts of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

As the organisation point out from a UCL University study, Limehouse's

proximity to the Rotherhithe and Limehouse Link Tunnels means it harbours some of the worst levels of air pollution in London. In addition, with the high population density and need for more green and open spaces for exercise, community





cohesion and biodiversity, medical evidence shows both physical and mental health is well below average.

To address the problem, Friends of Limehouse have obtained proposals from world renowned consultants Arup for an Environmental Masterplan, which will also consider measures to accommodate climate change.

In November 2023, at the request of Friends of Limehouse, a sensor to measure air pollution was installed by the environmental re-

search group Breath London on Branch Road in Limehouse. The data recorded is to further confirm and extend the coverage of that obtained by the London Borough of

*“The community has
to come together”*

Tower Hamlets showing excessive levels of pollution in Limehouse. Geoff is understandably passionate

about the area in which he resides, but with his background of civil engineering, applied to sustainable development, and working with the local communities, he feels that what is being proposed in Limehouse can be used as an exemplar for similarly affected urban areas. “It’s fundamental that human beings live in more natural surroundings!” he exclaims.

“In 2007, the world changed from more people living in cities than in rural areas. As a result, there are so many illnesses.”



ings with people from those houses and had a landscape architect talk to them about this idea.”

Surprisingly, however, Geoff explains that allotments are not popular within the community as residents don’t want them placed outside their houses where their children play.

“Immediately what you get is a concept which is well thought out, well designed, but it has to be fine-tuned by the people who live there”, Geoff explains.

Friends of Limehouse has asked Tower Hamlets Council for support on their Environmental Masterplan but so far have been refused.

“We need people to help us!” Geoff implores. “We want them to be active, come along and meet with people, meet with the authorities. We must get this idea over to people so that when we approach the authorities, there will be a robust opinion of local people, which we don’t have at the moment. The community has to come together.”

High levels of air pollution have been found to contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes, lung cancer and many more.

One option for increasing the quantity of green spaces in urban areas are allotments. These small patches of land where people can grow flowers and vegetables which not only improve air quality, but also increases community cohesion. Parcels of land can also be set aside for a garden that can be enjoyed by all.

“On the eastern side of Limehouse, we could have urban allotments”, Geoff points out. “We’ve had meet-

Tips on how to stay safe from areas with poor air quality

Limit time spent outdoors to under 30 minutes - when the Air Quality Index (AQI) in your area is high

Consider wearing a mask when going outdoors - make sure to buy a mask with good filtration capabilities

Keep the air indoors clean - buying a HEPA air purifier can help to keep the rooms in your house clean

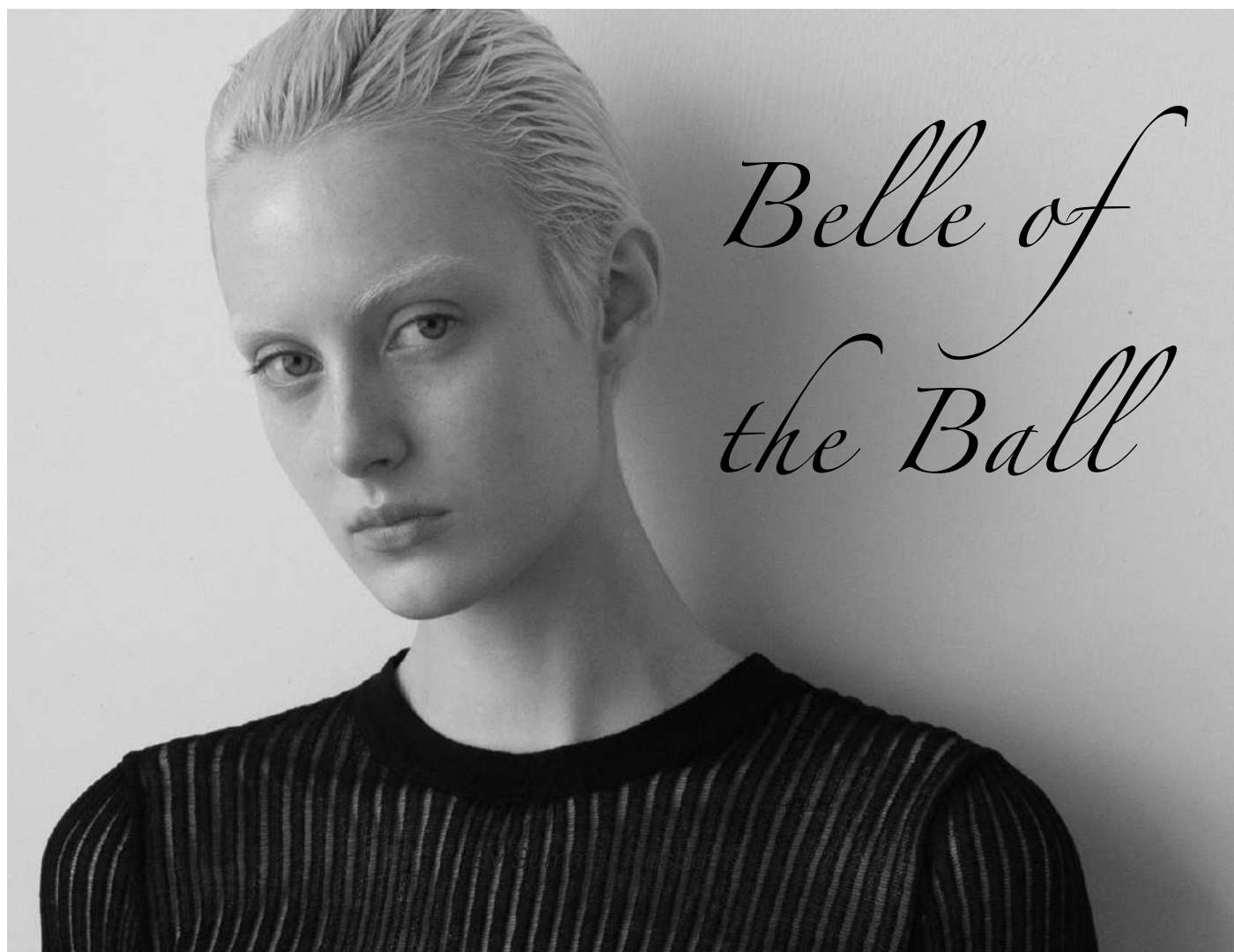
Avoid travelling through areas with a lot of traffic - divert onto back roads that are quieter and smaller

Keep car windows closed when you are driving through slow-moving traffic

Travel earlier in the day as air quality is usually better







From runway to hideaway: How an international fashion model has found a home in East London

By Summer Nesbeth

Canadian model Belle Vanderkley has been modelling since she was 18 years old. Dropping out of her first year of university she has taken the modelling world by storm, with editorials for Elle, campaigns for MAC and walking in shows such as Balmain. We sat down with her on a sunny March morning for a breakdown of her career and life in London.

It is a quiet Monday morning in Hackney, East London and Belle has just done some shopping for her niece's second birthday. She

passes through cute bakeries and delis as Belle, an avid cooker, goes through a selection of cheeses she needs for dinner tonight. Finally, she stops at a quiet coffee shop where she digs into a crumbling pastry.

"You never get mornings like this in Canada. Hackney Wick is very calming on a Monday morning", Belle says. She's recently flown into London from Paris, having posed for an Olympic Games campaign – her image is set to be draped over a plane to promote this summer's event.

Belle is no stranger to always travelling for work - last night was Paris and the week before that she was modelling in Los Angeles.

"Londoners get a bad reputation, but everyone was very welcoming."

"There is the common saying that models live out of their suitcases, and it is true you're in the air more than you're on the ground. I have been lucky enough to spend so much time

in so many different countries, but something clicked with London when I was on stay here for a few months.

“I can positively say London is my favourite city and I am proud to call it my home. The time I’ve spent here, everything I’ve been able to experience and everyone I have been lucky enough to meet and surround myself with. London in all aspects has my heart.”

Belle first came to London in 2021 to stay for three months. In the modelling industry this is called being on stay. Models go on stay to connect with photographers and build a rapport with clients. Being on stay usually lasts between three to six months so models do get a chance to really submerge themselves in a different culture.

But what is it like to have to make that transition from her home in Canada to living in a European city like London? “The transition was

somewhat easy since I did spend time in the city for quite a while and I have lived in many major cities for work before”, Belle admits. “I wasn’t too shocked about the culture, Londoners get a bad reputation but everyone was very welcoming. However, in my first year I did come to comprehend the culture a lot more and got to experience it for myself.

“The constant rain, Premier League football. Your English breakfast and Sunday roasts and lots and lots of pints. I even got to attend Royal Ascot (the annual horse racing meet) while wearing a fascinator so that made me feel like an almost true Brit. Although that is not my everyday life here, I do get to experience a lot more quintessential British things.”

The modelling industry on this side of the Atlantic can often be quite different to what many experience in North America, but that hasn’t been Belle’s experience.

would probably say the main difference is it’s much, much easier to get to Paris, which means I have more energy to do more jobs as instead of like over a day commute from America it’s two hours on the Eurostar.”

Belle shares her East London flat with her film producer boyfriend, who she met at New York Fashion Week two years prior and she credits her relationship with giving her a

“Modelling can be extremely isolating”

sense of calm amid her busy lifestyle.

“My boyfriend is here, so that makes things a lot easier,” she admits. “Modelling can be very draining, although, you get to see yourself in some crazy situations like for me being on the side of a plane, or rubbing shoulders with really talented, driven people.

“London and America are pretty similar when it comes to the type of work you do,” she says. “If we specifically zoom in on New York. They’re practically the same. I mean they’re both cities, they both have a very colourful creative stamp on the world. My agents in New York also fly between London so I would say for me it’s not that different due to that. I

“Modelling can also be extremely isolating in a new country every week. Your agent (can often be) expecting you to drop anything for the client, which you inevitably do because that’s your job. London has never felt that way for me, which is strange because even when I’m technically in my ‘real’ home of Canada it still feels like I’m there for work. London has never felt like that.”

After finishing up her pastries and heading back to her flat, Belle prepares to make some burgers and surprise her partner when he gets home. It’s her last free evening until she sets off again, this time on the inside of the plane, to shoot a new editorial. But Belle seems to already be itching to get back to ‘the big smoke’ and she hasn’t even left yet.



Plot Twist

By Emily Michie

Hear from the BBC Producer who made one of the “worst decisions in soap opera history”



We are all living through a societal shift. “I’ve always thought London is the greatest city in the world!”; books are being replaced by mobile phones, snappy tweets are being read over news articles, and traditional media is being subsumed by social media. These convulsions have rocked the entertainment industry and had a profound effect on the lives of the people working within it. Change is something that producer, writer and director Sean O’Connor has had to grow used to. “Our core popular audience has disappeared”, he says. “During football finals, when the Queen dies, we are all brought together, but it is not the same as it once was”.

Sean has lived and worked in London for decades, with projects including BBC productions *The Archers* and *EastEnders* under his belt. Moving to the capital was always the end goal for Sean, who grew up just outside of Liverpool, in the Wirral. “I was desperate to get out”, he says.

“The West End, all the film and TV work that went on in London, I was eager to be in that environment.” Sean joyfully recalls his first-time visiting Leicester Square and his disbelief at the heaving crowds: “It was a mass of humanity.”

From speaking to Sean, you wouldn’t know that he hailed from the North West as he sounds as if London has been his home his whole life. He admits that it was a partly conscious decision to drop his northern accent, recalling occasions when he would

sit with a friend and practice saying words such with open and flat vowels in an attempt to be easier to understand. From now on it was “bahth” not “bath” and “grahs” not grass”.

While studying for an English degree at University College London, Sean was heavily involved in the drama society creating plays and doing exchanges taking shows over to Germany. “The work I do now doesn’t come out of my degree but rather my interests and passions”, he says.

After University Sean successfully gained a place on ITV’s Regional Theatre Young Director’s Scheme, which allowed him to visit theatres up and down the country and get a taste for what the industry is really like.

Audience’s taste and behaviours are changing and that presents a challenge for media creatives. “People are distracted by social media,” Sean says, as

“People are still consumed by story”

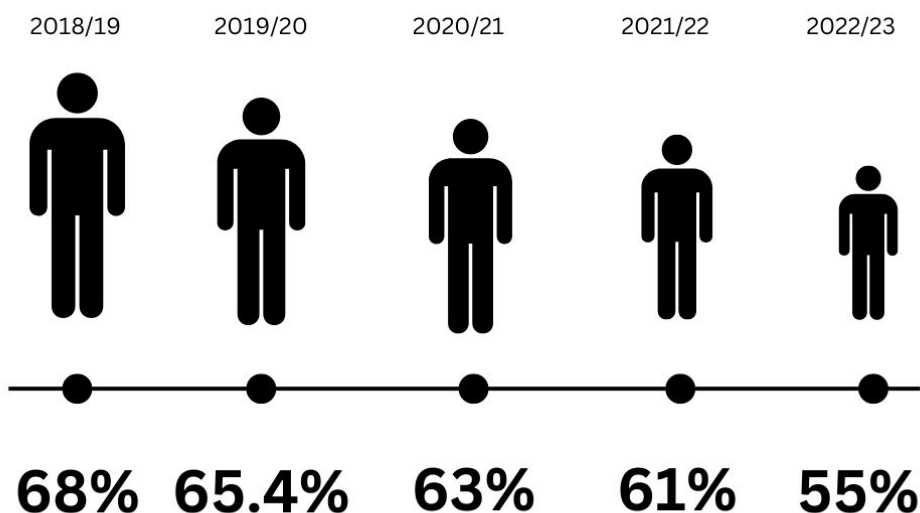
he points out that producing, writing, or directing stories is made “much harder” in the digital age. “Attention spans aren’t what they once were. Viewers are paying money to not have adverts. There are certainly more platforms to tell a story but less money and a harder audience to connect to.”

Changing viewer habits aren’t the only difficulty in the industry. Sean also laments having a lack of creative freedom on some of his projects. He references *The Archers*, a radio soap opera that is the world’s long-

est-running present-day drama, as a project in which he had complete control. He worked as producer on the radio show in the late 1990s and later returned as the editor in 2013.

“I had no interference from the BBC and was given complete creative freedom. It’s great when your employers believe in you. Alfred Hitchcock worked with David O. Selznick (the film producer and screen writer) and wasn’t allowed complete control of his films. Most people have to get used to the fact there will always be someone pulling your strings.”

Share of the population who watch BBC One each week in the UK



I was interested to know if there are projects that Sean regretted or would like to go back and do differently. After being appointed Executive Producer of *EastEnders* in 2016, Sean’s creative decisions whilst on the show were met with criticism from viewers, especially a storyline in which sisters Ronnie and Roxy Mitchell were killed off in a swimming pool accident in a plot twist branded as one of the “worst decisions in soap opera history” by some viewers. “I don’t regret anything”, Sean claims defiantly. “I’ve enjoyed most of the things I’ve done and always find positives out of the projects I’ve worked on.”

Finding safety by the sea

By Charice Wright

How a mother and her young daughter built a new life in the UK after fleeing the war in Ukraine



“Leaving your home is something no
one can prepare you for”

“Leaving your home is something no one can prepare you for. It breaks my heart to see my country going through such turmoil.” Joined by her seven-year-old daughter Alice, Julia left Ukraine to escape the war and arrived in the UK leaving her husband and parents behind, with no idea what her new life would look like.

“It was terrifying. And moving to the UK wasn’t my first plan, I wanted to go somewhere in Europe”, she says. The lack of job and housing opportunities elsewhere meant Julia was only able to find a safe home for her and her daughter in the UK.

Quite remarkably, Julia still manages to find some positives in her situation. “It was always a dream to come to the UK and visit London”, she says.

In the process of leaving Ukraine, Julia found a group on Facebook called ‘Homes for Ukrainians,’ which gave her the opportunity to find the right host family to live with. “I was so shocked by how open-hearted

people are!”, she says. Julia posted on the page and within only a few hours had over one-hundred responses.

Ukraine was too scary and dangerous of a place for Julia and her daughter to stay while her host family took care of the paperwork and she waited for her visa in Poland. “We lived in a refugee camp for about two weeks, that was a horrible experience!”, she recalls.

“We waited in a refugee camp for about two weeks”

“There was no private space at all, just beds everywhere. I didn’t want to stay in the camp so we would be there only during the night and in the mornings. During the day we travelled and went sightseeing. It wasn’t a nice place to stay.”

Julia and her daughter soon moved

in with their host family and found a lot of culture differences they had to adjust to. “The food is completely different. Even the vegetables, the same vegetables but they taste so different!”, she says. Luckily, Julia was able to find a Polish supermarket where there were similar products to those at home. “When I talk to my old friends in Ukraine, they are shocked that you have tea with milk. We drink just black tea with lemon and sometimes sugar!”, she says with a chuckle.

“I remember first visiting a supermarket here and they said: ‘Hello my love’ and I thought ‘Are you talking to me?’ I don’t know you; how can I be your love.’ The customer service is too friendly!”

“And at first everything here felt so far! Southend seemed so huge, but now it feels tiny. 20 minutes here, 20 minutes there and Southend ends, and you can get into London in an hour.”

Julia has started a bucket list of all the places she wants to see in the UK.



So far, she has travelled to Stonehenge, Cambridge, Salisbury, Bath, Leeds, Maidstone, and London.

“Our host family were so kind and accommodating. I’m so grateful for their help”, she says. Julia and her daughter have now moved out of the home and started renting. “I now feel I have less opportunities and less time. The easiest way to travel is to go to London because there is a lot of free stuff, free places to visit or deals”, she says.

London museums are one of Julia’s fa-

vourite ways to spend her time saying they are “always amazing”. She has managed to visit over 30 of the city’s famous landmarks and buildings including Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Kew Gardens and Westminster Abbey.

“I miss walks and camping. In Ukraine you don’t have to book camping places you can just go to the forest with your tent”, she says. Pine forests, lakes and rivers are easily accessible in Ukraine and were a big part of Julia’s everyday life, she would even go mushroom

hunting, scavenging to see what she can find amongst the wildlife.

Walking amongst the deer at Bushy Park, learning the history of The Tower of London and jumping on tubes across the city allows Julia to embrace her adventurous side, just as she would in the forests back at home. These experiences have allowed her to settle in and attempt to embrace her new home, despite missing Ukraine so desperately. Julia is finding a little bit of home in the UK.









Masterpiece

Metadel Chalie heads to Green Park to see the very best that the Royal Academy of Arts has to offer



Prepare to see the reflections showing the transformative power of light as it diffuses through the artists' meticulously crafted **sculptural installations**. An experience at the Royal Academy of Arts is made special through the warm and friendly sculptural installations to the inviting atmosphere throughout. Staying open to the public until next year and free of charge, it is certainly a part of London worth not missing out on.



More than 125 years after it was first shown, Frederic, Lord Leighton's masterpiece **Flaming June** is back on display at the Royal Academy. Visitors are invited on a journey where the warm orange colours will capture your attention. When faced with the beauty of the elegant "Flaming June" there is no choice but to stand still, mesmerised, rendered at peace by the artwork.



Another masterpiece display is the **Last Supper**, a 16th Century copy of the original mural. Much like its cultural resonance, this piece is huge. Every expression and detail can be seen when up close, making you feel like as if you are a part of the painting.

While Leonardo Da Vinci's original painting has deteriorated over the years, this copy - painted in around 1515, includes details that are no longer visible in the original in Milan.



The **Architecture window section** is a showcase of the next generation of architects, designers and creators. The beauty here lies in the stunning but understated forms and shapes, many of which we see in day-to-day life but often ignore. "Reuse and repurpose" is the motto used for the art, advocating for action against climate change.



Seven Floors of Heaven

There is nothing fictional about Piccadilly's seven-story high book shop, as Charice Wright found out when she explored the biggest Waterstones in Europe

With the biggest Waterstones in Europe right on our doorstep, there's only one place to go for tales of heroes, criminal masterminds and Gordon Ramsay's finest recipes.

With wall to ceiling ebony bookshelves and helpful employees ready to give recommendations, it is possible to find what you are

looking for amongst a sea of books. In the company of shelves multiple seating areas are placed to give the store a relaxed feel, almost as if an entire day could be spent there.

A coffee shop is located on the bottom floor of the store serving a variety of reasonably priced foods and beverages including a selection of wines. While their

lattes aren't comparable to the caffeine hit you would get from a Costa or Pret, the atmosphere more than makes up for that. The décor screams book lovers' paradise. Walls are filled with framed posters of novels such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Moby Dick*.

If you are fancying something a bit heartier than a coffee and croissant then you must head up to the top floor where the View Bar and Restaurant can be enjoyed. A meal with friends and family or a sip on one of their 2-for-1 cocktails is accompanied by a view of the London skyline.

A hidden sale section is the real gem of the store. On the Lower Ground floor, opposite Emerson's Café is a set of glass doors that take you into the clearance section. The books here aren't as meticulously categorised as the rest of the store and the shelves they sit on are pine rather than mahogany, but the selection of books is just as vast as on the higher levels, with the bonus of finding them for as little as £1.

"London is my home, and I am proud" is the message presented through decorative elements such as a wall dedicated to London themed literature. Tables are filled with stacks of books crowded around vases of white, red, and blue flowers. Elements like these present the store as a tourist attraction.

Window displays are incredibly visual, filled with false grass and daffodils to reflect the near presence of spring, whilst apples and tombstones are incorporated to reflect the contents of the books advertised.

A series of events are hosted at the store each month, including conversations with authors, games nights, book clubs, and even quizzes. These events reflect the overall feel when spending time in the biggest Waterstones in Europe, it is more than just a bookshop. Instead, it is a sense of community within the busy city, a home for book lovers to unite.



Bake it until you make it

By Metadel Chalie

Janet's journey towards becoming a professional pastry chef began when she stumbled across a recipe book at home. Her new-found passion has led her to where she is now, working in some of the city's best bakeries and even starting her own business.



Can you recall the moment you knew becoming a pastry chef was your calling?

“I’ve known from a young age! When I was probably around 16 I baked my first cake and I said to myself this is what I have to do! Making that cake was the very beginning. I began to learn how to decorate and around 2/3 years later I went to college in London to put my skills into practice.”



What do you enjoy most about being a pastry chef in London?

“There are so many different places you can work at! You have bakeries, bread, and desert places. This means you must have the best products to offer. London is so diverse. I can learn different flavour combinations from different places, which I like. Let’s say if I go to China town, I can find different Asian pastries but in other areas I come across African flavours. I like the diversity! I know outside of London there aren’t many places that do pastry courses, so I felt that being in London I had a couple more options I wouldn’t have if I wasn’t in the city.”

Do you have a signature bake? What is your favourite thing to make?

“My favourite thing to bake? that

is a hard question! I do love the process of a lot of cakes, so I love making those. My signature pastry would be white and raspberry chocolate. I make it often and it always goes down a treat!”

Which three kitchen tools can you just not do without?

When making chocolates I would say my scraper, my spatula, and my boxes.

Let’s talk about your business, how did you get started?

“I started my business in December 2023. I was thinking about doing something different as a lot of people do cakes and I found that chocolate was my in-



terest. So, I came up with ‘Callebaut Chocolate’, focussing on a combination, started using them as a guide. I began to learn how to decorate and around two or three years later I went to college in London to put my skills into practice.

Is your business online?

Yes, right now, my business is mainly online, and I take orders through Instagram ‘@sedi chocs’. People order on there and let me know if they have any allergies. I then send my choco-



lates through the post with first class shipping for them to enjoy.”

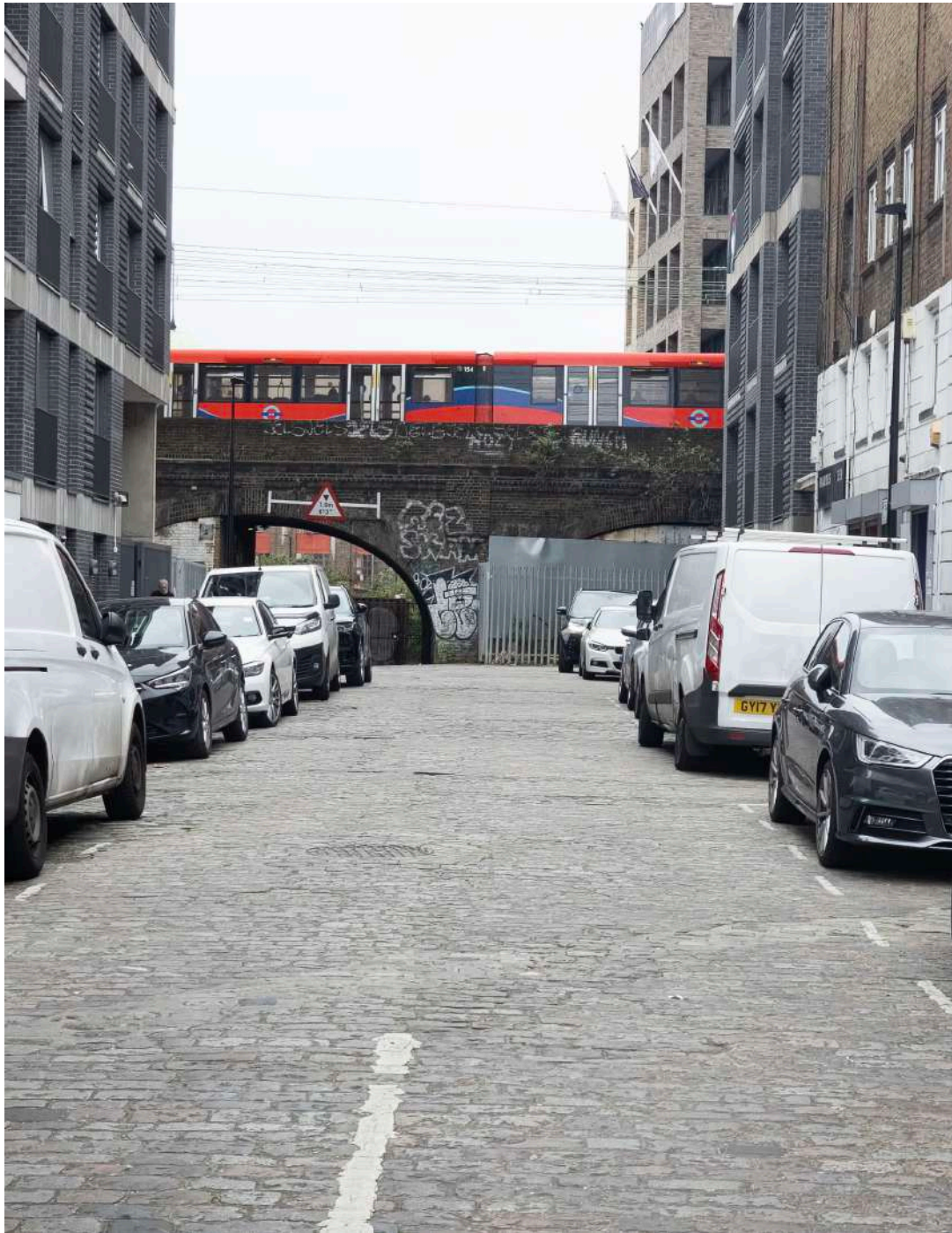
How is your small business going so far?

“Very well! I have received a lot of positive feedback from customers who tell me they really enjoyed their chocolates. I did Christmas and Valentines Day specials that people gave out as gifts which were my biggest orders so far.”



Having had a taste of success, what advice would you give to beginners in the industry?

“Keep your passion alive! Even though the journey is tiring, make sure to keep experimenting on your own to find your niche. You can do it!”





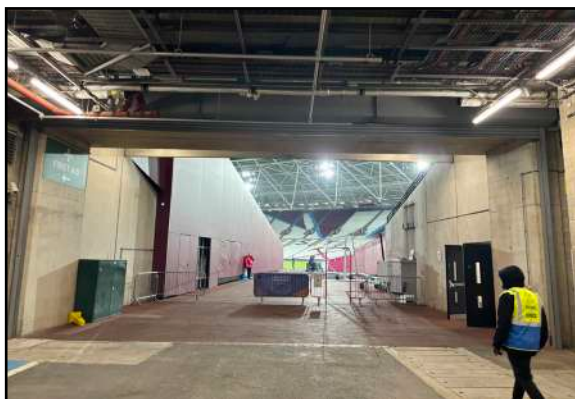


Access All Areas

Each issue our team of writers takes you behind the curtain to show you something that most visitors to the 'big smoke' never get to see. In this edition, our co-editor Tom takes you along to cover a Premier League football match at one of the city's newest landmarks, the London Stadium.

Arrival

Having successfully applied for your matchday accreditation it's time to pick up your press pass from the media entrance and your all-important free food voucher.



Inside the stadium

A part of the London Stadium that fans never get to see: the view of the pitch from inside the bowels of the stadium. West Ham's ground is cavernous. It is underneath the stands where everyone from stewards and caterers to media and even players arrive and make their way around the venue.

Press box

Look at that view! Unlike many other Premier League grounds, West Ham's press box isn't behind the substitutes' bench but much higher in the upper tier. You do get a good vantage point from up here though and the personal TV screen makes it easy to see the replays and VAR decisions.



Press conference

This is where both sets of managers come to face the media's questions after the match. On this occasion, West Ham head coach David Moyes was in a good mood as he'd seen his side beat Brentford 4-2!

Shopping for vinyl: Setting the record straight

By Hamish MacKenzie

You've almost certainly heard the story by now; 'Vinyl records have become the best-selling physical format again' and whilst this trend shows no signs of stopping, all the collectors have had some type of first-hand experience of the damage this hobby can do to someone's wallet!

So, if you want to expand your record collection and browse the best vinyl that the city has to offer, this guide is a must for you.



Rough Trade East (Brick Lane)

Rough Trade East is the only shop here that specialises in new music. Meaning, new music by new artists is accessible to you, but at a cost.

The shop is too spacious. Whilst they have a good amount of stock on the shop floor, the various sections aren't large enough to be notable, so it leads to there being big spaces of floor with nothing there.

On the topic of stock, the range is quite solid with a healthy dose of rock, pop, alternative, hip hop/rap, jazz and new wave/punk. These intermingle classic releases and more contemporary artists in each section.



Rollin Records (Beckenham)

Quality wise, Rollin Records comes the closest to feeling like you are buying something new, despite the fact it has been loved for ages. There is little, if any, wear and tear on the albums even when they are pushing 50 years old.

This comes with the caveat that it is a bit pricier compared to TenPin, but makes up for it with a much larger range with more interesting/rare records to boot.

The shop's layout is quite nice too, with clear sections dedicated to 60's and 70's rock/pop, jazz, blues and punk/new wave. This goes alongside a collection of discounted records they typically have for sale outside of the store.



Tenpin Records (Purley)

Whilst Tenpin Records is small and has the feeling of being a record department inside of a larger shopping centre, it is fantastic and has quickly become a popular place to buy records. The wooden interior helps to give the shop a warm atmosphere and a nice slick feel.

The range is small but strong, as if it were a place to find essential albums and some other notable releases rather than a general record store with many albums.

Pricewise, the shop is quite friendly to the wallet, with the average price of an album being around £10. The only exception here is the small selection of metal, as those are priced closer to £15 a pop (sorry to the metal heads).



SOUNDS OF THE CITY

A guide to the best new music released by London artists this month

By Hamish Mackenzie

Nia Archives - Silence is Loud

After working as a jungle producer and issuing a series of EPs, Nia Archives is finally releasing her first full length album 'Silence Is Loud' on April 12th.

The Jungle record has a brief runtime of 35 minutes and includes a blend of fast drum and bass patterns with atmospheric keyboard parts and synth noises. The Hackney based producer, DJ and singer/songwriter has said she was highly influenced by Burial, an electronic musician from South London.

Nia has said the album is "more song-focused" and will showcase her ability to "put interesting sounds on jungle."



Sega Bodega - Dennis

Music producer and singer Sega Bodega is releasing his third album 'Dennis' on April 26th.

Easily the most 'out there' album of this collection, it is an experimental electronic album where rather than using keyboards and samples to create a catchy beat, it's more focussed on messing with these instruments and producing uncanny effects.

Sega told the music blog Dancewax that the intention behind the album was to "create a feeling of being as disorientated as I was for the past couple of years."

With tracks such as Deer Teeth, Adulter8 and Humiliation doesn't leave a mark, Sega Bodega's genre-bending sounds will undoubtedly prove popular among his East London neighbours.



The Rifles - Love Your Neighbour

East London's The Rifles' new album 'Love Your Neighbour' marks their 20th anniversary as a band and their return after a seven-year hiatus.

Released on April 26th, the indie album sounds like a crossover between Madness' ode to suburban life and throwbacks to the mid 60's UK pop scene (particularly the sounds of The Beatles and The Kinks).

"'Love Your Neighbour is saying we're all in this big old mess together and it would be good to get along a bit more and enjoy it", vocalist and guitarist Joel Stoker says.

"Talk to people more, help each other out when you can, say good morning and maybe take your head away from your phone for 5 minutes and appreciate the people standing next to you.

"I'd like to think that the record captures life's daily situations that we all come across, all wrapped up in three minute bundles that you can sing along to."



Bob Vylan - Humble as the Sun

Bob Vylan, a London based music duo, released their new album 'Humble as the Sun' on April 5th. Their style merges elements of grime, punk rock and hip hop.

Following in the footsteps of their previous release 'the Price of Life', there is a mix of hard-hitting club bangers and rock music. The album is outrageously British, from the vocal performances right down to the Top Gear reference in single 'He's A Man'.

Frontman Bobby explained that the album is one "for the underdogs." Lyrics don't shy away from serious topics with descriptions of how people struggle to pay for food in the cost of living crisis. The songs are a fun, semi-stream of consciousness rambles that don't feel they are preaching to listeners.

Bob Vylan's record company, Blood Records, say: "From masculinity to myths about the G Spot, the themes and topics explored on Humble As The Sun make for an often humorously empowering celebration of the peoples ability to endure, overcome and bring about change."



MY FAVOURITE... PUB

Each issue we ask Londoners their favourite spot in the city.

This month we hear about the most important destination of all... the pub!

Favourite pub? The Mayflower in Bermondsey!

Why? My friends took me there when I first moved, and it's got a great antique feel. Everyone there is pretty friendly and it's just a nice place to muck about with your friends!

Favourite drink? Tequila soda gets you ready for the summer and feels nice and light!

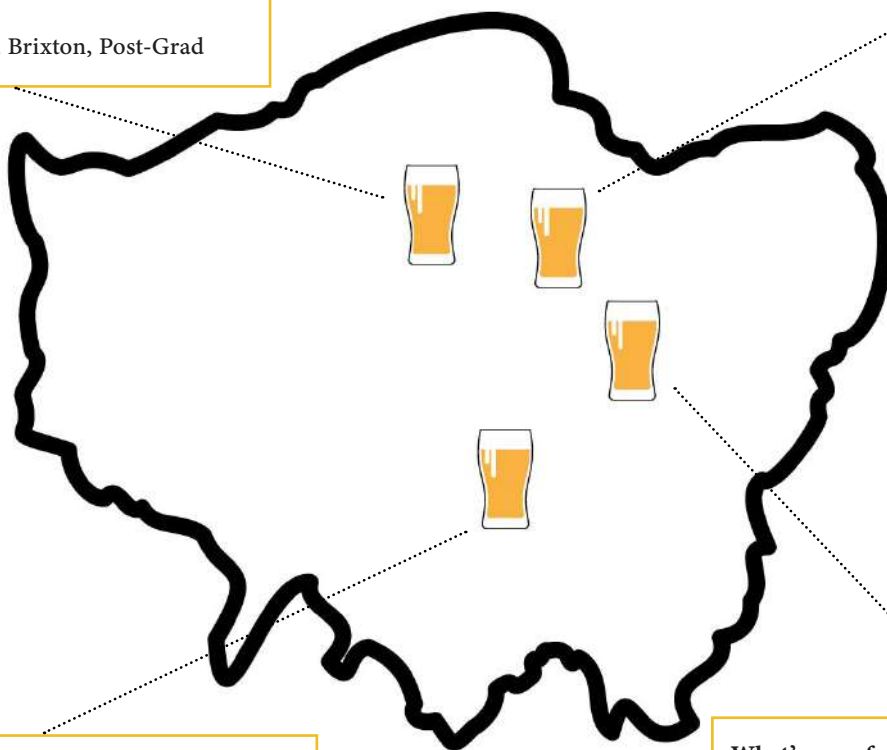
-Holly Singh, 23, Brixton, Post-Grad

Favourite pub? The Shakespeare in Stoke Newington.

Why? It's a super laid-back pub. A very relaxed vibe which helps me personally feel at ease from the hustle and bustle of London.

Favourite drink? The BeaverTown Non-alcoholic beer.

- Sebastian Kapfhammer, 29, Manor House, Photographer



Favourite pub? The Adam and Eve in Homerton

Why? It's super close to my house so I'm in there pretty regularly. The cozy vibes and the large outside area means it is great for the warmer months when you want to catch up with friends.

Favourite drink? Aperol spritz

-Anna Jobartah, 28, Homerton, Actress

What's your favourite pub? The Camel, Bethnal Green

Why? It's got great pies, it's pretty small so it's a great place to feel nice and toasty when it gets cold. It also has camels everywhere around the pub, which I think is cute. Plus, the woman that owns the place is just an angel!

Favourite drink? A Guinness with a shot of blackcurrant. Don't judge it till you have tried it!

-Asche Chen, 24, Stepney Green, Graphic Designer



JENKI

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RUN AT 8AM

A close-up photograph of the back of a person wearing blue denim jeans. A white tube of MALIN+GOETZ lip moisturizer is tucked into the back pocket. The tube has blue text that reads: (MALIN+GOETZ) lip moisturizer. HYDRATING TREATMENT FOR LIPS. 0.3fl.oz. e 10ml. A brown, textured leather patch is visible on the waistband of the jeans. The person's leg is visible on the right side of the frame.

(MALIN+GOETZ)
lip moisturizer.
HYDRATING TREATMENT FOR LIPS
0.3fl.oz. e 10ml

for the
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