

23rd April - 4th June 2024

Edition No.22

EYE ON LONDON

THIS MONTH

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City of London welcomes reopening of iconic Fleet Street pub

The Tipperary pub on Fleet Street has reopened to the public after three years of closure, following repairs and preservation works to the building. It will be the first of several new and restored pubs coming into operation over the next few years, as the City of London Corporation continues its plan to entice workers and visitors into the Square Mile.

The Tipperary first opened in 1605 as The Boar's Head and was renamed after it was bought by Irish pub group JG Mooney and Co. in the 1800s.

With its iconic green paint and Guinness signage, there have been claims that The Tipperary is London's oldest Irish pub. The wood-panelled building is Grade II-listed and was bought by Greene King in the 1980s. It was then under private ownership for around a decade, before closing during the pandemic.

Property developer Dominus, which specialises in driving urban renewal, has led on delivering the restorative works. The ground floor now welcomes patrons to a quintessential Irish pub experience, starting with the original glass sign as you walk over the threshold. Alongside the original wooden panelling and heritage pub mirrors, The Tipperary now boasts a heritage-styled Guinness tap and offers an array of authentic real ales.

The first floor will soon play host to an Irish whiskey bar, showcasing a diverse selection of premium whiskeys. Furthermore, the courtyard space at street level has been reactivated, ensuring accessibility and welcoming the Fleet Street community and passers-by. Re-imagining existing pubs within development schemes is a key part of the City Corporation's initiative to turn the Square Mile into a seven-day-a-week visitor destination. Part of this includes negotiating with developers to provide new pubs in more prominent locations, with more trading floorspace, external areas, improved accessibility and striking architectural statements to catch the eye.

Shepherds Bush music venue hits crowdfunding goal to stay open

Local independent music venue Bush Hall has raised over £40,000 to keep the doors open and the music playing. Local independent music venue Bush Hall has hit its crowdfunding target to keep the venue running.

The former Edwardian dance hall, situated at 310 Uxbridge Road, launched their campaign in March, with organisers saying that they were "approximately four months away from making a hideous decision whether to cease live music".

After a landslide of support, they reached their £42,000 goal.

"I want to say a huge thank you to all those who donated to the Bush Hall crowdfunder," said co-founder and director Charlie Raworth. "We've kept music alive at Bush Hall. And now we can look forward to a long term, sustainable program. It's amazing for us, but it's also highlighted the importance of music in the grassroots sector."

He stressed the importance of people visiting local venues, to help them get through tough financial times. "Please keep supporting our venues. And please keep going to gigs. But I want to say it one more time: a huge thank you from all of us at Bush Hall."

Other big name acts that have graced the stage at Bush Hall include Nick Cave, Alicia Keys and Paul Weller.

RBKC offers £100 to help with cost-of-living

As Council Tax bills land, people in Kensington and Chelsea are reminded to check if they are entitled to extra financial support. The Council is offering a £100 payment to help 16,500 low-income households in receipt of certain benefits with ongoing cost-of-living pressures.

The one off £100 payment is funded through the Councils cost of Living Reserve fund. The £100 support payment is available to any resident in Kensington and Chelsea or anyone placed in a household outside the borough by the Council's housing department, who is in receipt of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction or Universal Credit Housing Allowance. If you receive Universal Credit Housing Allowance, you will need to apply for the payment on the Council's website. Eligible residents who receive Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction do not need to apply as they will be paid automatically in May 2024.

Alongside Council Tax bills, residents are receiving information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is available to help those on a low income with their Council Tax bills. Residents who make a claim for Council Tax reduction and become eligible by the 15 April 2024 will also receive the £100 payment. Find out what other support is available by visiting the Council's cost-of-living webpage.

The Exchange announce summer programme

The Exchange Twickenham has launched its summer 2024 programme featuring a packed line-up of family shows, talks, comedy and theatre events.

The following events will be held at The Exchange on 75 London Road in Twickenham TW1 1BE.

A multi award-winning family show, Extraordinary Time Travelling Adventures of Baron Munchausen, will be hosted on Tuesday, 28th May, at 2pm.

Jude Kelly: Shakespeare's Women will be on Saturday, 1st June, at 7.30pm. The founder of WOW Global will discuss how we can shape the future of gender equality by learning from the past.

Anne Gildea: How To Get The Menopause & Enjoy It will be performed on Friday, 17th May, and Saturday, 18th May, at 8pm.

Using her comedic skills, Anne will dissect the inevitable and often misunderstood phase of lady life.

Meet the Cast of TV's Only Fools & Horses. This evening show by the original cast members from TV's Only Fools and Horses will be hosted on Friday, 14th June, at 7pm.

The UK's leading live music tribute to George Harrison will be hosted on Thursday, 16th May, at 7.30pm, performing his best-loved hits from The Beatles, his solo career and The Travelling Wilburys.

Exchange artist in residence, Janette Mason, is teaming up with David McAlmont for Wall-to-Wall Bowie on Friday, 7th June, and Saturday, 8th June, at 7.30pm.

For more information, contact The Exchange, Twickenham on 020 8240 2399 or exchangetwickenham@stmarys.ac.uk

Wandsworth Heritage Festival 2024

The annual Wandsworth Heritage Festival is organised by the Wandsworth Heritage Service to celebrate Wandsworth's rich past, with the support of contributors from local groups and societies who share their enthusiasm, knowledge, and time. It is one of a series of events that will celebrate and highlight Wandsworth's unique culture and heritage as Wandsworth prepares to become London Borough of Culture 2025.

The event will run from 18th May to 9th June. Highlights include encounters with the dead in cemetery walks, finding folklore in the borough's flora and fauna, a heritage day of walks, talks and book sales at the recently restored Woodfield Pavilion, talks and archive tours exploring the overlap between educational training and health, tutored beer tastings in Ram Street, a chance to trace your black ancestry, a deep dive into the history of Tooting market, the untold histories of local hospitals and a chance to beat the bounds of Tooting Graveney parish.

St Anne's Church in Wandsworth will celebrate its bicentenary with open days and there will be commemorative plaques unveiled celebrating Dr Levinson and the Furzedown Project, Deaconess Isabella Gilmore and Charlotte Despard.

Activities for children include library storytimes and a craft and archaeology workshop.

Westminster to take part in No Mow May

Following on from last year's success, Westminster is once again taking part in PlantLife's campaign 'No Mow May' to support biodiversity in the borough.

During the month of May, some parks, greenspaces and housing estates will not be mowed for an entire month, providing a space for nature to thrive in Spring. A healthy lawn with some long grass and wildflowers benefits wildlife. The wildflowers provide a vital food source for bees and butterflies. With their numbers in decline, they need all the help they can get.

Since the 1930s the UK has lost more than 97 percent of its wildflower meadows which are vital for food pollinators like butterflies and bees.

By not mowing grass on housing estates and a selection of parks during May, the council will allow plant life to grow during this crucial period to feed pollinators throughout the summer months.

Despite Westminster's location at the heart of London, the city boasts diverse wildlife and a wealth of open spaces. Around 25 percent of Westminster is made up of parks and green spaces and the city has 33 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). There are over 600 different kinds of flora and fauna recorded in Westminster.

St John's Wood Church Gardens even has a formal designation as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.



The Cumbrian Mountain Express

Saturday 11th May, 22nd June, 3rd August and 7th October

This trip provides a wonderful opportunity to get out and about with the added bonus of steam haulage over the Northern Fells, including the spectacular Settle & Carlisle Railway. We have a high speed journey down the West Coast Main Line to Carnforth, hauled by a blue class 86 electric locomotive. We then enjoy a circular steam tour outwards via Shap to Carlisle and back via the Settle and Carlisle line.

Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston to visit Carlisle.

- There are three classes available:**
- Premier Dining** includes a full English breakfast and a four course dinner served at your seat.
 - First Class** includes morning tea or coffee with a bacon/breakfast roll and a muffin and an afternoon service of tea or coffee with a savoury of the day followed by a scone with butter and jam.
 - Standard Class** includes a reserved seat usually at a table for four.

Fares	Adult	Junior	Family	Refreshments available to purchase on board. Tables for two can be guaranteed in First/ Premier for a £30pp supplement subject to availability. Organised by The Railway Touring Company. The Railway Touring Company's standard conditions of booking and travel apply – see website for details.
Premier	£295	£205	£898	
First	£195	£135	£593	
Standard	£115	£85	£358	

The Railway Touring Company Summer Season Steam Rail Day Trips 2024

The Cumbrian Coast Express
Saturday 1st June and 21st September
Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston to visit Carlisle.

The Tynesider
Saturday 8th June
Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, Peterborough and York to visit Newcastle or Morpeth.

The Swanage Belle
Wednesday 26th June and 11th September
Join us from London Kings Cross, Staines, Woking and Basingstoke to visit Swanage.

The North Wales Coast Express
Saturday 6th July
Join us from London Euston, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe to visit Llandudno.

The End of Southern Steam
Tuesday 9th July
Join us from London Victoria, Woking and Basingstoke to visit Weymouth.

The White Rose
Saturday 13th July
Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough to visit York.

The West Somerset Steam Express
Saturday 20th July, 10th August and 14th September
Join us from London Paddington, Slough, Reading and Newbury to visit Minehead.

The Dorset Coast Express
Wednesday 24th, 31st July and Thursday 15th August
Join us from London Victoria, Staines, Woking, Basingstoke and Bournemouth to visit Weymouth.

The Kentish Belle
Wednesday 7th August and 4th September
Join us from London Victoria, Bromley South to visit Canterbury West, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Herne Bay or Faversham.



For more information please visit railwaytouring.net or phone 01553 661 500
The Railway Touring Company – The Old Stables, Estuary Road, King’s Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2HL

N News

Most pupils get a preferred school place

98 percent of children due to start primary school in London this September have been offered a place at one of their preferred schools. Overall, 83,796 London children due to start primary school this September received an offer of a school place at one of their preferred schools - 98 percent of the total number of applicants, according to figures published on National Primary Offer Day 2024 by the Pan London Admissions Board, the body with overall responsibility for coordinating school admissions in the capital.

89 percent of the total number of London applicants - or 76,064 children - secured a place at their first preference school. This is an increase of 0.6 percent from last year's

figures. 97 percent of the total number of London applicants - 82,960 children - were offered a place at one of their top three preferred schools, also showing an increase of 0.1 percent from 2023 figures.

London primary schools received 85,336 applications in total this year, a 2.2 percent decrease compared to last year. Application numbers vary across boroughs and are affected by a number of reasons, including the falling birth rate across London. Other important factors impacting application numbers include migration, such as families moving due to changes in their circumstances and working patterns, along with the localised effect of the UK leaving the EU in some areas.



London Fire Brigade supports efforts to deliver firefighting equipment to Ukraine

A convoy of 30 fire and rescue vehicles, two mechanics' vehicles, and an Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) carrying over 2,800 items of surplus equipment has set off for the Polish-Ukrainian border.

27 Brigade staff, together with firefighters and Fire Aid staff from across the UK have volunteered to drive the vehicles as part of the convoy, delivering the vital fire and rescue kit and equipment.

As part of a coordinated effort led by Fire Aid and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Brigade has donated Command Support Units, a fire engine and hose branches (used to direct the flow

of water at the end of a fire hose). London firefighters are the largest contingent of fire service staff with 25 drivers, one ISAR (International Search and Rescue) team member and an ISAR medic.

The UK ISAR team is made up of teams from fire and rescue services across Britain, who can be deployed to disasters around the globe, on behalf of the UK government. These firefighters and staff volunteer themselves to be part of ISAR and are specially trained to work overseas providing support in major incidents, such as earthquakes and large forest fires.



Superloop network of express bus services now circles the entire capital

Transport for London (TfL), the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and bus operators Arriva and Stagecoach have launched three new services in the capital's game-changing network of express bus services, the Superloop.

The launch of the SL2, SL3 and SL5 this year means that the Superloop network now circles the entire capital, connecting communities across outer London and giving Londoners even better access to affordable and sustainable travel. The bus network plays a vital role in the capital and Superloop is part of the Mayor's commitment to improving it for everyone.

The 138 km loop now connects town

centres, hospitals, schools and transport hubs and other key locations across outer London, from Arnos Grove in the north to Woolwich in the east, Croydon in the south and Hayes in the west.

Services have been designed to offer quicker journey times between key outer London destinations. Route SL5 has reduced the journey time between East Croydon and Bromley South by around 35 percent (during weekday off-peak hours). Distinctive branding has been added to buses and to stops on the new network to ensure that the services are easily recognisable for Londoners.



Nature recovery on the Lizard is working from the ground up

Down on the Lizard, deep within Cornwall, is a landscape-scale coastal project to help recover rare species and is starting from the ground up. Funded by Natural England's Species Recovery Programme the National Trust is honing in on the important conservation of the vital micro habitats found on cliffs and bare rocks, in ditches, pools and trackways. In these often overlooked places, tiny lichens, liverworts and the smallest plants are key to the ongoing success and survival of the whole landscape.

The Lizard is one of the most biodiverse places in the UK, with many unique species finding refuge on semi-natural heathlands and grasslands and along the coastline. But, worryingly many species that make the Lizard such a special place for nature seem to be in decline, and even facing extinction.

Much of the Lizard is in the care of the National Trust, Natural England and Cornwall Wildlife Trust – the three partners in the Lizard National Nature Reserve (NNR). The National Trust and Natural

England are working closely together on this project, with the overall aim of recovering species across the entire 2,400 hectare NNR.

Many so-called 'Lizard specialities' are to be found nowhere else in the UK, and 15 of these key species are central to the success of this new project – from very rare, crusty lichens and rosettes of black crystalwort to wild asparagus, dainty yellow centaury and pygmy rush. Using a diverse approach of different land management practices, including using multiple species to help manage the land – this unique project aims to restore and revitalise not only the Lizard rarities but also the unique wider landscape.

Detailed surveys by the University of Bristol and local botanists, dating back to the 1970s set an unparalleled baseline against which to assess change. Unfortunately the results from four years ago, indicated the habitats and species were struggling.



First ever jab against skin cancer to be tested on UK patients

The first ever personalised mRNA cancer jab for melanoma will be tested on British patients. The "gamechanger" is said to also have the potential to stop other types of cancer, including bladder, lung, and kidney cancer.

It will be custom built for each individual patient, telling the body to track cancer cells and stop the disease from returning. A trial found that it had reduced the risk of cancer returning in melanoma patients and a final trial is now being launched, led by University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH).

The jab is an individualised neoantigen therapy (INT) which triggers the immune system to fight back against a patient's

own specific type of cancer. To create the personalised therapy, a tumour sample needs to be removed. Its DNA is sequenced. Artificial intelligence also plays a role in this innovative new treatment.

The goal is to eventually cure the cancer, eradicating rogue cells that may not be revealed through scans. The phase-two trial found that those with high-risk melanoma who were given the jab, along with immunotherapy drug Keytruda, were just half as likely to either have their cancer return after three years or to die, compared with those who were only given Keytruda.

This represents an important milestone in the ongoing fight against cancer, having the potential to save countless lives.

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London Home Football Traffic Watch	
Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha	
Women's	May 15, Tottenham v Chelsea, 19:15
May 5, Chelsea v Bristol City, 18:45	May 18, Arsenal v Brighton, 15:00
May 12, Tottenham v Man Utd, 14:30	May 18, Tottenham v West Ham, 15:00
Men's	May 11, Tottenham v Burnley, 15:00
May 2, Chelsea v Tottenham, 19:30	May 14, Tottenham v Man City, 20:00
May 4, Arsenal v Bournemouth, 12:30	May 19, Arsenal v Everton, 16:00
May 5, Chelsea v West Ham, 14:00	May 19, Chelsea v Bournemouth, 14:00
May 11, Fulham v Man City, 12:30	May 22, Tottenham v Newcastle, 09:45

ENVIRONMENT & SCIENCE

As the Chelsea Flower Show approaches, it's time to celebrate the profound impact of gardening beyond mere aesthetics. In today's world, where environmental consciousness is more crucial than ever, gardening emerges as a powerful tool to make a positive impact on our planet. From mitigating climate change to preserving biodiversity, gardening offers countless avenues to contribute positively to our planet. Whether you have a sprawling backyard or just a few pots on a windowsill, think of the space as a canvas for creativity and a stage for nurturing life in all its forms. Here's how gardening contributes to a greener world.

Plants are nature's carbon capture and storage system. Through photosynthesis, they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it into oxygen, releasing it back into the air. This process helps lessen the effects of climate change by reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. By growing a variety of plants, from trees to vegetables, gardeners

can significantly contribute to carbon sequestration.

Gardens serve as vital habitats for a wide range of species, including insects, birds, and small mammals. By cultivating native plants and providing shelter and food sources, gardeners can create biodiverse ecosystems that support local wildlife populations. Biodiversity is essential for ecosystem resilience and stability, as diverse ecosystems are better equipped to withstand environmental changes and threats such as pests and diseases.

Healthy soil is the foundation of a thriving garden ecosystem. Through organic gardening practices such as composting, mulching, and avoiding chemical fertilisers and pesticides, gardeners can promote soil health and fertility. Healthy soil is better able to retain moisture, resist erosion, and support plant growth, reducing the need for synthetic inputs and minimising environmental pollution.

In many regions, water is a precious resource that must be used wisely. By

employing water-saving techniques such as drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and mulching, gardeners can reduce their water consumption and minimise runoff and soil erosion. Additionally, choosing drought-tolerant plants and practising proper watering techniques can help conserve water while maintaining a beautiful and productive garden.

Gardening can play a crucial role in restoring degraded landscapes and habitats. Through initiatives such as community gardens, urban greening projects, and native plant restoration efforts, gardeners can contribute to the rehabilitation of ecosystems and the preservation of threatened species. By reestablishing native plants and creating green corridors, gardens can help reconnect fragmented habitats and promote ecological resilience.

Growing your own food is not only rewarding but also environmentally sustainable. By cultivating organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs in your garden, you can reduce your carbon footprint by minimising the

transportation and packaging associated with store-bought produce. Additionally, homegrown food is fresher, healthier, and free from harmful pesticides and preservatives, promoting both personal and environmental well-being.

By engaging in gardening activities, individuals of all ages can develop a deeper understanding of the natural world and gain practical skills for sustainable living. Gardening provides a hands-on opportunity to learn about ecology, botany, and environmental science. Furthermore, gardens serve as powerful educational tools for raising awareness about environmental issues and inspiring others to take action in their communities.

Nurturing plants, conserving resources, and creating biodiverse habitats, gardeners can make a meaningful contribution to the health and well-being of our planet. Every effort made, from the seasoned gardener through to the burgeoning horticulturist, counts in the collective endeavour to cultivate a greener, more sustainable future.

EyeOnLondon's Guide to the Environmental Benefits of Gardening





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OF TICKETS' VOGUE

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Photography by Dan Kennedy

DENTAL IMPLANTS SAVED MY LIFE

Giovanni, once gripped by severe depression due to deteriorating oral health, has found salvation through dental implants. His story echoes the silent struggles of many grappling with dental issues that go beyond physical discomfort, reaching deep into the realms of mental health and social isolation.

For Giovanni, the decline in his oral health became a source of insecurity, casting a shadow over his daily interactions. The fear of judgment loomed large, deterring him from socialising and leaving him trapped in a cycle of self-doubt. Even his marriage bore the brunt of his silent suffering as his confidence lessened. Desperate for a solution, Giovanni sought help through the

NHS, only to be met with limited options that offered little relief.

The prospect of wearing uncomfortable dentures, left him disheartened and disillusioned. "I tried the NHS but they were

testament to the transformative power of dental implants. "I'm going out to eat now more than ever and I always treat myself to a nice juicy steak. I really missed not being able to eat them before," he exclaims.



"I considered going abroad because prices looked a lot more attractive but I had seen a lot of horror stories and when I contacted some clinics I didn't feel comfortable. Also many dentists here in the UK said they wouldn't treat me afterwards or if anything went wrong."

only able to offer me a denture which I had in the past and it was extremely uncomfortable," Giovanni recalls. His quest for a lasting treatment led him down a winding path, navigating through the maze of dental professionals in search of expertise and understanding.

Faced with the daunting prospect of seeking treatment abroad, Giovanni hesitated, wary of the risks and uncertainties that lurked beyond familiar shores.

Giovanni finally found a Dental practice he had confidence in and based on feedback from a free consultation decided to have dental implants. "Since I've had my implants fitted I feel so much happier and more confident," he shared. "Dental By Design have saved my life. I was utterly miserable before my treatment."

The transformation was profound, restoring his lost confidence. No longer bound by the limitations of his condition, Giovanni embraced newfound freedom, savoring the simple joys of life with he had previously been unable to. With each bite of a juicy steak, once off-limits, Giovanni savors the taste of liberation, a

His relationship blossoms as he and his wife embark on regular date nights, basking in the warmth of shared moments that were once overshadowed by embarrassment.

"I used to be miserable most of the time, we hardly ever went out and I used to get frustrated when I was constantly asked," Giovanni reflects.

Today Giovanni advocates for dental implants as more than a mere investment in oral health - they are a lifeline, a beacon of hope for those grappling with similar struggles. Giovanni would recommend implants to anyone who has missing teeth. Although they seem pricey Giovanni says you really can't put a price on the quality of life he has now compared to how miserable he felt before.

In Giovanni's heartwarming story, we find not only a testament to the resilience of the human spirit but also a reminder of the transformative power of modern dentistry. Through his journey from despair to newfound joy, he stands as a beacon of hope for all who dare to dream of a brighter tomorrow, one smile at a time.



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4.9/5

THE BOTTOM LINE *by Doug Shanks*

The fact that the Post Office scandal is so very much in the news is reason enough to refer to it in our business column. We can hardly be accused of getting on a bandwagon. We covered Nick Wallis' excellent expose "The Great Post Office Scandal" long before the docudrama's tipping point.

My firm's client has no reason to believe that his hardworking god-fearing Irish mother was anything other than honest. When her accounts system showed that IR£10,000 was missing, she was persuaded to sack her own son. This story goes back into the early 90s, "lost in the mists" to quote David Smith. The system she was forced to use was Riposte by Escher, through acquisition of a predecessor of Horizon. All his mother's worries would have been familiar to the hundreds of people prosecuted. His mother avoided prosecution by paying over the IR£10,000, an inconceivable amount of money for a sub-postmaster in Stillorgan, South Dublin. In the client's own words:

"The Irish PO was going through a modernisation process at that time. She had been running a smaller although still quite busy PO in a different suburb but this was a step up. The PO put

in sleek new counters etc. (which she had to pay for) and the all-singing all-dancing new-fangled computer system was part of the process. Her previous office was still an old school paper-based ledger system. It could well be that the Irish PO used her office as the sole guinea pig for the subsequent national rollout."

It's rarely the loss of the money. It's the effect on the individuals and their lives thereafter. The ones who went to jail suffered dreadfully and at least five people took their own lives in the shadow of the Great Post Office Scandal.

The reverberations are publicly terrible but reflect reality for any small business starting out on its own. The devastating effect of bankruptcy or when other things go wrong. The collateral damage throughout families, of HMRC and the Official Receiver tearing lives apart, seemingly endorsed by the courts as appears to be the case here.

What is the answer? A higher level of integrity in public office surely. Some humanity? It might be argued that if there were faults in the original software that were not disclosed to Fujitsu, rather like The Sun claiming to be a victim of the police's cover-up in Hillsborough Disaster, perhaps Fujitsu is a victim. A stretch, but as we watch the executives being humiliated and Bates being lauded (quite rightly), one cannot help questioning the system and whether

individuals are solely responsible.

The King's Counsels make great plays of the Post Office acting as judge, jury and executioner. Surely the judges in these cases were aware of the conflict inherent in the Post Office's prosecution system, more so than the chairman and chief executive. Senior managers had inherited a system that appears to have gone back centuries. To hold them responsible for the conflict in the system strikes me as hypocritical. The judiciary's job is to defend the common people and it failed. Spectacularly.

Robin Hammond took part in a 1998 pilot of Horizon and has been quoted widely as saying that the Post Office are "liars if they say they were not aware of the problems". One accountant colleague has asked the very sensible question, "if so much money was diverted internally, where was the balancing suspense account?" How did they sign off the books?

The publicity has thrown light on select committees (and similar) including Darren Jones on YouTube "terrorising Royal Mail bosses" and "Labour MP corners Post Office bosses over dodgy bonus culture" with Jones highlighting the irony of false accounting generating bonuses for bosses and prosecution for innocent sub-postmasters. It is a seductive theatre, but perhaps too easy to lay into bosses trying to turn round a failing publicly-owned organisation, which turns over around £13 billion and approaches 250,000 employees and (conveniently under employment legislation) self-employed subcontractors.

They compete on an increasingly unlevel playing field with the likes of Amazon.

Borrowing Twain, "if you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything," integrity is management's secret weapon. Given the hostile nature of the questioning, part of the problem seems to be that it's hard to fall back on the truth when relying on weasel words and blame shifting. Integrity is a core value, not out of a Christian or other spiritual mission, but as an efficient buttress to corporate communication. I can't remember who first said, "branding is an internal message" (I think it was Sorrell). If you tell the truth, it's harder for them to make you wriggle. Or worse.

Where did corporate integrity break down? All roads seem to be leading to Paula Vennells with a few staging posts and twists on the journey. What did the ministers think they were doing when Alan Bates wrote to them complaining about being stonewalled by the Post Office, asking the Post Office to draft the replies? What are MPs for except to hold the state properly to account? Is there a moral to this immoral story?

All state institutions are inherently evil. They pervert their own officers with the carrot of honours and index-linked pensions. We need more Alan Bateses, however cussed and difficult to manage they might be.

The prosecution is having its day but the soap opera awaits the defence with interest.



POST OFFICE HORIZON ORIGINS IN IRELAND?

PROPERTY

For anyone wanting the biggest return on a property investment, it helps to know where in the country returns the highest rental yields for anyone planning on purchasing a buy-to-let property. Gross rental yield is the annual rental income expressed as a percentage of the property price. Net rental yields meanwhile also factor in the cost of maintenance and renting out the rental property. Both figures can help you decide if a property is a good investment.

The average gross yield in the UK is 5.60% based on an average buy-to-let property cost of £261,897 and the average rent in the country being £1,223 according to the latest data. Gross yields have improved across all regions in the last year as house prices have begun to fall or remained the same with rent prices rising.

Tenant demand and the potential for house price growth are among the factors that should be considered with any property investment.

Sunderland, Aberdeen, and Burnley topped the list for the highest rental yields in the UK with average gross yields of over 8%. The top cities are all in the North of England and Scotland. In

contrast, southern cities tended to have higher house prices, bringing the gross yield down for buy-to-let properties.

With an average cost of £695, rents in the North-East are the cheapest in the country and so are buy-to-let properties, costing an average of £109,072. This gives it the highest average yield of 7.65%. Scotland follows with 7.48% and the North-West at 6.66%. Wales with 6.43% and Yorkshire and the Humber at 6.38% round off the top five. Gross yields in these regions have risen over the past three months as rentals have risen faster than house prices.

On the other hand, London has the lowest gross yields in the UK with just 4.93%, just 0.1 percentage point higher than three months ago. Thanks to higher mortgage rates, new regulations, and low house price growth in recent years, rents appear to have reached an affordability ceiling and tenant demand is beginning to moderate.

The East of England and South-East also have lower gross yields of 5.28% and 5.34% respectively. However, their yields have improved over last year as these were the two regions where house prices had fallen the most.



North and Scotland best for property investment, data reveals



Electric car owners have a year to apply for grants

Landlords, flat owners, renters, households who park on the street, and businesses have less than a year left to claim hundreds of pounds. The grants are available for each charge point installed. Most of the financial incentives available from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) will close on 31st March, 2025.

The scheme was designed to increase adoption of electric vehicles now that the purchase grants for electric cars have gone. The plug-in Van and Truck Grant will also run until the 31st March, 2025, with purchase discounts for individuals and organisations including businesses looking to go green.

"There is just one year left to access these OZEV grants, which are crucial in making EV charging infrastructure more accessible and its installation more affordable," Daniel Forsberg, marketing manager EVSE at chargepoint manufacturer CTEK, said.

"CTEK's EV charging solutions, especially the robust CC3 chargepoint which is built to last and future proofed with the latest communication and security standards, complement OZEV's grants by providing easily installed, reliable and efficient charging, ensuring employers, renters, flat owners and landlords can confidently invest in EV charging.

"Applying for these grants involves partnering with OZEV-approved installers, and in some cases directly with OZEV, to ensure adherence to program standards and streamlining applications for individuals and businesses alike.

"Our UK team of experts are on hand to help installers and their customers with technical and operational advice and information.

"Whether you are a business aiming to green your operations or a homeowner or landlord eager to contribute to environmental sustainability, OZEV grants and CTEK's technology offer a solid foundation towards achieving your environmental goals."

The grants with a year left are as follows; Chargepoint and infrastructure grants for landlords of up to £350 per socket for up to 200 each year for residential properties and 100 commercial properties; infrastructure grants for the work that would be needed to install multiple charge points at a site; £500 per parking space for charge points installed or planned in the future; for renters or flat owners, up to £300 is available to install a charge point at a dedicated off-street parking space.

Households with on-street parking can claim up to £350 to install a cross-pavement solution, enabling them to use a home charge point for an electric car parked outside their home. The Workplace Charging Scheme meanwhile offers businesses, charities, and public sector workers up to £350 per charging socket for up to 40 in total across a site or sites.

State-funded education institutions can claim up to 75% off the cost to buy and install charge points up to a maximum of £2,500 per socket and 40 across all sites. Finally, infrastructure grants up to £350 per socket installed for staff and fleets for wider building work to install multiple sockets now and in the future and £500 per parking space up to a maximum of £15,000.

Enquiring Minds

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

Adult Education Courses

Language

Introduction to Latin Birkbeck University

This Introduction to Latin I short course is ideal for complete beginners. It offers you expert, tailored guidance in understanding the basic principles of Classical Latin. This short course will provide you with a firm basis in the grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary of the language. Teaching is varied and interactive, including grammar guidance and practice in reading Latin in each class. The focus will be on enabling you to understand the inner workings of the language and providing you with the necessary tools to read and translate simple passages. There will be new grammar points to be learned every week, as well as translation practice and simple English into Latin composition.

bbk.ac.uk

[See website to book a class](#)

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Maths

Learn CPR in 15 minutes for free with RevivR

British Heart Foundation

RevivR is the British Heart Foundation's free, interactive, online CPR training course. In just 15 minutes, you can learn how to save a life and receive your very own CPR certificate. It couldn't be simpler – you just need your mobile phone or tablet and a cushion to practise on. Start the training now, or save it for later and get it sent straight to your inbox, ready when you are. CPR is an emergency lifesaving procedure, performed when the heart stops beating. Each year over 30,000 people have an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the UK, with less than one in ten surviving - giving CPR and using a defibrillator can more than double someone's chance of survival. All you need to start learning CPR with RevivR is a cushion handy and your mobile phone. It is recommended to complete the training somewhere you feel comfortable.

bhf.org.uk

[Any time you want](#)

Sport & Fitness

London Self Defence Academy

Build your skills and develop confidence and power in these self defence courses in London. Explore physical and non-physical techniques for self defence. Learn visual communication, confidence and additional skills that will help you to succeed in combat. From sensible human body work to situation analysis. Work with instructors on a variety of techniques, mindfulness including dealing with fear and aggression to enhance your expertise. Knife awareness and knife defence techniques are also included. Knowing how to protect yourself is a major skill, self defence is also about prevention.

londonselfdefenceacademy.com

[See website to book](#)

Arts

Unguided Free Flow Painting Workshop Class Bento

Paint and make new friends or share some laughter with old friends at this relaxed unguided painting class in London. You will be using acrylic paints on canvas. Don't worry if you've never tried these painting techniques before! No experience is needed and is perfect for anyone who just wants to get creative. Just pick up some paints and a canvas, put on your apron and you're ready to go! Whether you come along with friends or fly solo, everyone is welcome to come and get creative. Plus, you will have tea and coffee for sale as well as some snacks.

classbento.co.uk

[See website to book](#)

Business & Law

Becoming a Project Leader UCL

This online short course will help you develop your project leadership skills. You'll learn about the project leadership model, which outlines key competencies for leading projects and teams. The model is based on longitudinal research into project leadership. This research involved conversations with chief executives and senior managers. During the course, you'll assess your project leadership skills in relation to the introduced model, identifying areas where you can improve. This course draws on real-life case studies and research by the Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction but is relevant to any sector.

ucl.ac.uk

[Multiple dates, see website for more information](#)

Culinary

Caribbean Cookery Class Experience in London

Don your apron and learn how to create authentic Caribbean dishes with a professional chef. During this two hour hands on cookery class learn the secrets to creating great tasting Jerk Chicken, traditional Caribbean Lamb Curry and Glazed Pineapple with Cinnamon Crème. The professional chef will guide you throughout to get the best from the authentic and great quality ingredients. Enjoy this festival of flavours whilst learning great recipes and techniques. Throughout the class you will enjoy sampling your creations, revelling in a medley of exotic spices and flavours.

notonthehighstreet.com

[See website to book a class](#)

Events

DANCE & OPERA

Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company Sadler's Wells

What can be created when young flamenco dancers and the expertise of older artists come together? That is exactly what world-renowned flamenco guitarist Paco Peña will show you in Solera. Enter their rehearsal room as they explore the genre together and then take to the stage with a unique performance that is both quiet and celebratory, soulful and full of life. Flamenco is not a written tradition but one handed down from one generation to the next. The best performances incorporate part of what has been created before by the great practitioners of the past as well as the vibrancy and innovation of young dancers.

Rosebery Avenue EC1R 4TN

sadlerswells.com

April 17-20

EXHIBITIONS

A Scot in St Ives: works by Wilhelmina Barns-Graham

British Museum

Explore the work of a leading member of the 'St Ives School' of artists, who blazed a trail in British art from the 1940s-60s. In June 1985, the painter Wilhelmina Barns-Graham (1912-2004) wrote to the British Museum to express her 'delight' at the acceptance of two of her drawings to its collection. Almost 30 years later, the trust she set up in her name has now presented the Museum with 12 of her works on paper. They cover her entire artistic career from the 1940s to 2000, when, then in her late 80s, she was still energetically producing works.

Great Russell Street WC1B 3DG

britishmuseum.org

Until May 12

What, When, Where

April - June

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Ceramic Art

Kensington Olympia

Embrace the captivating beauty of contemporary art. Whether you're a seasoned collector or artist, or perhaps you're a keen first-time buyer, let your passion for ceramics flourish in the grandest showcase at Ceramic Art London. Bringing together Europe's contemporary collections for over two decades, there is no better destination for avid art connoisseurs to discover and purchase the most exquisite pieces. With everything from installations and live making to masterclasses from top-level makers, this is an invaluable resource to perfect your craft.

12 Blythe Road W14 8UX

olympia.london

April 19-21

Disney100: The Exhibition

Excel

Dive into the world of The Walt Disney Company and experience 100 years of magic like never before! Disney100: The Exhibition is a once-in-a-lifetime event celebrating the iconic characters and stories that have captured the hearts of audiences around the globe. Disney has curated special behind-the-scenes glimpses into the creation of the most popular characters, films, shows, and attractions – from Disneyland to Walt Disney World and beyond. The ten magnificent and imaginatively

DANCE & OPERA

Carmen

Royal Opera House

Carmen declares that any man she loves should beware. However, even she is unprepared for what will happen when she decides to seduce Don José, an army corporal who initially appears uninterested in her charms. Don José soon abandons his sweetheart Micaëla and his army job for Carmen, and joins her and her smuggler friends in the mountains. However, Carmen becomes weary of Don José's possessiveness. When she turns her attention to the dashing Toreador Escamillo, Don José's jealousy erupts into violence.

Bow Street WC2E 9DD

roh.org.uk

Until May 31



themed galleries, with moving stories, unique interactive installations, and exciting background information, will take visitors on a journey through 100 years of The Walt Disney Company, celebrating the classics, as well as the latest members of the Disney family.

Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway

E16 1XL

disney100exhibit.com/london

Until April 30

FAMILY & CHILDREN

Crystal Palace Dinosaurs

The dinosaurs are one of the park's most famous attractions, unveiled in 1854 and continuing to delight children and adults over 150 years later. They are amongst approximately 30 statues, including amphibians, reptiles, and mammals, located on islands within the lakes at the Penge side of the park. They are free to visit. Although by modern standards the models don't quite represent the dinosaurs that walked our planet accurately, they reveal what pioneering scientists in the Victorian era knew about these prehistoric creatures. Alongside the largest and most well-known lizard-like sculptures, there are many more creatures to be discovered as you wander through the specially designed landscape. Because of their location and Grade I listing, the Dinosaurs are viewed from a short distance across the lakes. The Dinosaur Court, as it was known, is located within an area that includes artificial cliffs and geological displays.

Thicket Road SE19 2GA

crystalpalaceparktrust.org

Ongoing

Behind the Scenes: Making The Secret Life of Reptiles and Amphibians

London Zoo

The nights may be drawing in, but work isn't slowing down on London Zoo's main lawn. If you've visited recently, you may have noticed the building work going on next to the Diana monkeys and mangabeys. By spring next year the Terrace Restaurant, Zoo Shop and Giants of the Galápagos will share Barclay Court with London Zoo's newest major exhibit: The Secret Life of Reptiles and Amphibians. The new exhibit will house 26 species and use the latest technology to bring to life eight different habitats – from the steamy forests of South America to the mountain jungles of Asia. For now though, the building is a jungle of wires, step ladders and spotlights, populated by hard-hatted builders, zookeepers and horticulturalists intent on building the perfect home for some of the world's most threatened reptiles and amphibians.

Outer Circle NW1 4RY

londonzoo.org

Until April 30

FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY

Earth From Space

Royal Observatory

Each day, over 1,000 satellites constantly image and analyse Earth. The data collected, encompassing observations of everything from volcanic eruptions to traffic jams, is shaping our modern world. From space, Earth's fragile beauty is most obvious. Its changing climate is unmistakable, as habitats retreat and oceans warm. But the data gathered is also helping to turn things around. Earth from Space

TALKS, TOURS & WALKS



Depot Family Tours

London Transport Museum

Exclusively for family groups, join us at our London Transport Museum Depot in Acton, west London to uncover the stories of some of the very special vehicles in our collection. From the tons of poo that accompanied the first Horse Buses, to why trains have bogies, this highlights tour of our bus and train shed may surprise you! One of our knowledgeable and engaging

learning facilitators will take you around part of the Depot to discover some of our favourite vehicles and the stories of the people behind them. Family tours are aimed at family groups with children aged 5-9 years old. All visitors under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

London WC2E 7BB

ltmuseum.co.uk

See website for dates

Image: WikiMedia User:Clithering

Where?

May 2024

takes a closer look at our world through the satellite's lens, opening up a perspective that only a handful of humans have experienced themselves. Through astrophotography, video and interactive elements, the exhibition at the Royal Observatory Greenwich explores satellites' vital role in tackling climate change, and reveals a truly unique, living planet: our home in space.
Blackheath Avenue SE10 8XJ
rmg.co.uk
Ongoing

MUSIC

Spirited Away
London Coliseum
Studio Ghibli's Oscar-winning Spirited Away, created by legendary animator and director Hayao Miyazaki is re-imagined for the stage by Olivier and Tony award-winning director of Les Misérables, John Caird. The original Japanese cast perform this extraordinary production with wildly imaginative puppets, dazzling set and costume designs and a live orchestra playing the magnificent original film score by Joe Hisaishi. A masterpiece of storytelling and stunning visuals, Spirited Away tells the enchanting tale of Chihiro who while travelling to a new home with her family, stumbles into a world of fantastic

spirits ruled over by the sorceress Yubaba. When her parents are turned into pigs and she is put to work in a magical bathhouse, Chihiro must use her wits to survive in this strange new place, find a way to free her parents, and return to the normal world.
St Martin's Lane WC2N 4ES
londoncoliseum.org
From April 30

Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark™ Live in Concert
Royal Albert Hall
Part of the Films in Concert series, Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark™ in Concert will feature the London Symphony Orchestra performing John Williams' legendary score in full for the first time since they recorded the original soundtrack in 1981. Originally released in 1981 as a collaboration between George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, Raiders redefined the possibilities of adventure cinema and launched actor Harrison Ford to legendary status. Indiana Jones is the classic hero in this adventure set in the 1930s which follows the quick-witted and determined archaeologist as he hunts for the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Often facing insurmountable odds, Indy always manages to succeed in the nick of time, joined by endearing companions and opposed by notorious villains.
Kensington Gore,
South Kensington SW7 2AP
royalalberthall.com
May 25-26

TALKS, TOURS, & WALKS

Tomorrow's Warriors +1 feat. J.A.M. String Collective and Rosie Turton
Foyles
Celebrating the release of their 'JAM Remix' EP, J.A.M. String Collective will be joined by special guest Rosie Turton for this unique

one-off performance. Rosie re-worked the trio's track Golden Scenes (feat. Zoe Pascal) for this release, and tonight they expand on this material with live improvisation. Cited by The Guardian as 'One to Watch' and nominated for Jazz FM's 'Breakthrough Act of the Year', trombonist, composer and producer Rosie Turton continues her rise since releasing her debut 'Rosie's Sive', with Jazz Re:freshed. Rosie's music tells the tales of meditative soundscapes and improvisations, blurring the lines between the acoustic and electronic universes. 2021 saw the release of her latest EP 'Expansions and Transformations: Part I & II', exploring themes of impermanence, showcasing Rosie's growing voice as a producer and was championed on the radio by Gilles Peterson, Jamie Cullum, Iggy Pop & WWFM amongst others.
107 Charing Cross Road WC2H 0EB
foyles.co.uk
April 26

THEATRE

Austentatious
Arts Theatre
The award-winning smash-hit comedy, as heard on BBC Radio 4, opens at the Arts Theatre. The all-star Austentatious cast improvise a hilarious new Jane Austen novel every night! Inspired entirely by a title from the audience and performed in period costume with live musical accompaniment - it's a riotous, razor-sharp show where swooning is guaranteed. The revolving Austentatious

cast include numerous, award-winning TV and Radio starring performers, including Rachel Parris (The Mash Report, Live at the Apollo), Cariad Lloyd (QI, Inside No.9, Griefcast, The Witchfinder), Joseph Morpurgo (Radio 4, Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee), Andrew Hunter Murray (No Such Thing As A Fish) and more.
6-7 Great Newport Street WC2H 7JB
artstheatrewestend.co.uk
Ongoing

The Play that Goes Wrong
The Duchess Theatre
The longest running comedy in the West End and continues to tickle audiences after 9 smashing years at the Duchess Theatre. You all know the classic whodunit story, there has been a murder at a country manor and an inspector is set on the case to find who the culprit is. However, when this plot is given to the accident-prone thespians at The Cornley Drama Society, everything that can go wrong... does! The actors and crew battle against all odds to make it through to their final curtain call, with hilarious consequences! Do you ever find out who murdered Charles Haversham? You'll have to see for yourself! Experience total mayhem and enjoy the perfect slice of escapist comedy, guaranteed to leave you aching with laughter.
3-5 Catherine Street WC2B 5LA
theduchesstheatre.co.uk
Ongoing

Compiled & edited by Fahad Redha

EXHIBITIONS



Birds: Brilliant and Bizarre
Natural History Museum
Birds are the soundtrack to our mornings, they soar through our skies and swoop around our streets, but how well do we really know our feathered friends? A hoot for all the family, our new exhibition invites you into their world like never before! Swirl around with a murmuration, chirp along with the dawn chorus and see if you have the stomach to sniff a stinky seabird egg. From feeling their heartbeats

to seeing through their eyes, get to know our beaked buddies better. Meet the oldest modern bird in the world, the so-called 'wonderchicken,' find out what a pigeon has in common with a ferocious T. rex and discover how these winged wonders managed to survive the mass extinction that wiped out all the other dinosaurs.
Cromwell Rd, South Kensington SW7 5BD
nhm.ac.uk
Opens May 24



Antiques & Art by Anthony J. Lester, FRSA

lesterartcritic@eyeonlondon.online



The art critic John Ruskin was happy to pen in 1875: "I always said that no woman could paint", while Edgar Degas alleged "No woman painter knows what style is" and in 2013 the German artist George

Baselitz said: "Women don't paint very well. It's a fact." Diligently read the 688 pages of 'The Story of Art' (published in 1950) by Ernst Gombrich and you discover he mentions just one female artist, the German Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945). A few years ago, an evaluation of the top 5,000 paintings sold at auction globally revealed that for every £1 a male artist attains for his work, women artists archive just 10p.

Since its founding in 1768, 26 males have held the position of President at the Royal Academy, however, we had to wait

until 2019 for Rebecca Salter to become the first female to take the prestigious chair. The Royal Watercolour Society has had 35 Presidents since it was established in 1804 but it was 2017 before they had a woman President (Jill Leman) and since its inauguration in 1831, the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours also waited until 2017, to elect its first woman President (Rosa Sepple). One could go on!

However, the art world is waking up to the fact that women artists have as much talent as their male colleagues. Last year alone, many museums around the world mounted exhibitions devoted to female artists. From 'Making Her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400-1800', at the Baltimore Museum of Art to 'Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature' at the Victoria and Albert Museum – an increasing number of respected institutions are exploring the breadth of women's artistic aptitude.



Easter Fire, oil on linen, by Bridget Macdonald, Art First

The art world is waking up

Having always advocated that women artists should be entitled to the same opportunities as their male counterparts, I devote this month's reviews to female talent. The most anticipated of these events takes place from 16th May-13th October at **Tate Britain**, SW1P 4RG. With over 150 works, *Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520-1920*, elucidates how artists such as Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), Elizabeth Butler (1846-1933) and Laura Knight (1877-1970), championed equal access to art training and academy membership. Apart from the distinguished names, this ambitious display highlights others who are only now being rediscovered. Over at **Tate Modern**, SE1 9TG, *Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind* continues until 1st September. Opening on 25th May and running through to 6th October, **The Courtauld Gallery**, Somerset House, Strand, WC2R 0RN, present *Vanessa Bell: A Pioneer of Modern Art*. Widely acclaimed as a central figure of the Bloomsbury Group, Bell's (1879-1961) bold, abstract designs, produced for the Omega Workshops located at 33 Fitzroy Square, London, form part of the display. One of 36 founding Members of the **Royal Academy of Arts**, Swiss-born Angelica Kauffman, was one female artist

who did find success and until 30th June, the RA chronicles her intriguing story from child prodigy, to one of Europe's most sought-after portrait painters.

From the RA, let us cross over the road and admire the window displays of **Fortum & Mason**. Oh, temptation! So, why not make the day special and indulge in Afternoon Tea? Go to the Fourth Floor and enter the elegant Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon, which was opened by the late Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 2012. Expect exceptional teas, extraordinary cakes, still-warm scones served with Somerset clotted cream, and an array of freshly prepared sandwiches, such as Kames Bay smoked trout with paprika cream cheese. However, for the basic Afternoon Tea experience, you must forfeit £80 per person! And if you have a guest, impress them with a few facts about the iconic store such as when in 1738 Mr. Fortnum and his staff developed the astute idea of wrapping a hard-boiled egg in sausage meat and coating it in fried breadcrumbs – the Scotch Egg was born. Refreshed, amble down Duke Street and turn left into Mason's Yard. Here you will discover several notable galleries, the most conspicuous being the infamous, White Cube. Opened in 2006, this minimalist

gallery space was created on a plot previously occupied by an electricity sub-station. Brought up on Salt Spring Island in Canada but now based in Brooklyn, New York, Danica Lundy (b. 1991) brings her sensorial, figurative paintings to the **White Cube** from 15th May-22nd June. Evolving from detailed drawings into improvisational and gestural brushwork, Lundy describes her arresting, complex compositions as "visceral hyperreality that shows everything at once."

A short walk away at **David Messum Fine Art**, 12 Bury Street, St. James's, SW1Y 6AB, it is bold colour which embellish the walls until 3rd May. This comes via the interior scenes and still lifes of French artist, Nancy Delouis (b. 1941). Her work incorporates the exotic and the exquisite, interweaving patterns and textures, often incised into the surface with the point of her brush. Prices start at £6,850 going up to £17,850.

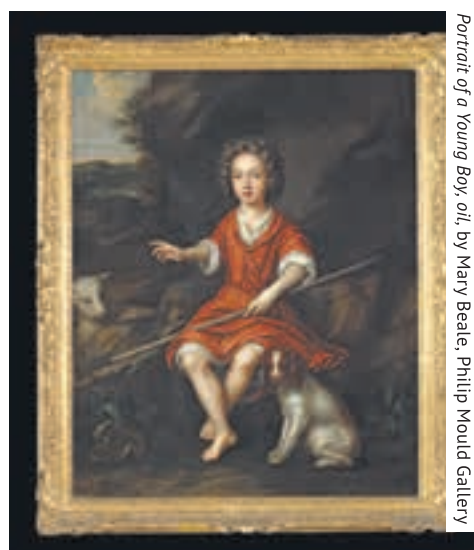
As I have already deliberated, it has never been easy for women artists to achieve the status that many of them deserve, so the portrait painter, Mary Beale (1633-1699) was quite an artistic trailblazer. The daughter of the Rev. John Craddock, rector of Barrow, Suffolk, she married Charles Beale (1632-1705) in 1652. Until 1655 the couple lived at Walton Manor in Buckinghamshire, then moved to London and, after periods in Covent Garden and Fleet Street, moved to Allbrook, Hampshire. In 1670 she returned to London and, from her studio in Pall Mall, quickly established herself as one of Britain's first professional women artists.

Now, fresh research has revealed that her studio and home was located on the very spot now occupied by the **Philip Mould Gallery**, 18-19 Pall Mall, SW1Y 5LU. How appropriate that, between 25th April and 19th July, her career is being celebrated at the gallery. Featuring twenty-five works from public and private collections, it spans her entire career and includes self-portraits, compositions of her family and friends and formal commissions.

Back in September, 2012, I vividly remember visiting Bridget Macdonald's (b. 1943) solo show at **Art First** when the gallery was based in Eastcastle Street, Westminster, and how I venerated her contemplative charcoal drawings of Arcadian landscapes. The gallery is now based at The Forge, 15 St. Mary's Walk, Lambeth, SE11 4UA, and until 17th May, Bridget Macdonald has a show of landscapes, many of which depict scenes around the Malvern Hills where she lives. A couple of my favourite oil paintings are *Perry Pear at Storridge* (£5,500) and *Easter Fire* (£2,250), inspired by a bonfire in a field, one cold and snowy Easter. There are also some impressive charcoal drawings.

Until 18th May, **Marlborough Gallery**, 6 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BY, hosts two enticing shows. American Nancy Haynes (b. 1947) presents her inaugural exhibition in the United Kingdom, featuring book-sized paintings from the series 'Library,' dedicated to a pantheon of writers important to the artist. The other presentation offers a selection of prints and drawings by Bridget Riley (b. 1931) and Japanese-born Shizuko Yoshikawa (1934-2019). It is fitting to combine the work of the two artists because after they met in Cologne and Zurich, Yoshikawa wrote to Riley to express her admiration of the British artist's work. This resulted in the two meeting in 1988 at Riley's London studio. With the growing attention of the expanding attention to women artists in the Abstract Avant-Garde movements, Yoshikawa's inventive work has recently received enhanced recognition.

Looking ahead, **London Art Week**, taking place between 28th June and 5th July, will showcase several exhibitions devoted to female artists. Events such as *British Women Artists, 1750-1950* at **Karen Taylor Fine Art** and *In the Classroom: Women Artists at the Academy, 1870-1910* at **Colnaghi Elliott** will be reviewed in a forthcoming *EyeOnLondon* edition.



Portrait of a Young Boy, oil, by Mary Beale, Philip Mould Gallery



Enfants au Jardin, oil pastel (£8,850), by Nancy Delouis, David Messum Fine Art



r1011 sequenzen no. 1, acrylic on plexiglass, by Shizuko Yoshikawa, Marlborough Gallery. Photo by Deniz Guzel

Frank Auerbach



Auerbach self-portrait, charcoal and chalk on paper, 1957



Portrait of Gerda Boehm, charcoal and chalk on paper, 1961



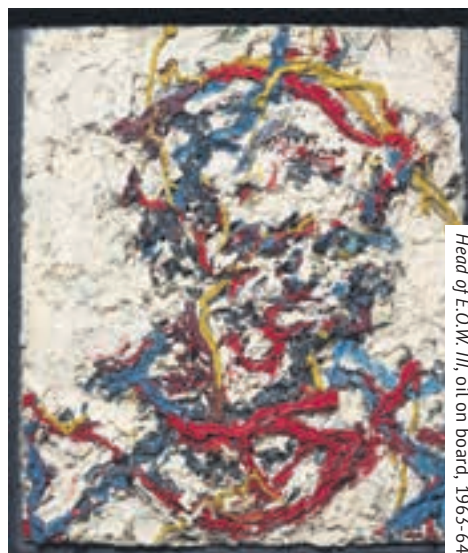
Head of Leon Kossoff, charcoal and chalk on paper, 1956-7



Head of Julia II, charcoal and chalk on paper, 1960



Head of E.O.W., charcoal and chalk on paper, 1960



Head of E.O.W. III, oil on board, 1963-64

Tearing out the individual

There's a drawing in this exhibition that's more like a collage, there are so many patches and overlays, tiny scraps glued over larger ones, paper edges forming new lines among the flourishes of chalk and charcoal. However, out of it comes a steady, strong and certain gaze, one of the few direct gazes in this exhibition, from an image the artist has graphically fought to bring from a mere likeness to a genuine portrait.

The signs of battle are in the tears and repairs where the artist's determined violence on the blameless paper has created a kind of bomb site, but out of which emerges a simple truth.

This is Frank Auerbach, maybe Britain's greatest living artist, aged 27 then and yet ageless. It might have been a time at which Auerbach, now 93 and still painting as assiduously as ever, was finding his way, and these large drawings in this Courtauld Gallery exhibition, being shown together for the first time, could be describing how he was finding the path to the style we are familiar with.

But this scratching down, removing and replacing, is the obverse of what we've come to expect from Auerbach. We are used to him building his pictures in masses of impasto over years, sometimes decades, as he strives for the exact portrayal he seeks, often so built up that their frames are more like vitrines. However, this is where the building work starts, on paper, and whether piling on or paring down the purpose was the same: in different media, to find the essence of his subject.

When Frank Auerbach first emerged - rather than burst - into public notice in the 1950s, he was noted as a 'British Expressionist' among the white-hot enthusiasm for the American abstract colorists that the critic Clement Greenberg was promoting around the world with spectacular success.

It was a gross misreading of his work. Auerbach was not concerned with conveying an emotional response but has spent his life examining his changing relationship with objects, people - especially people - and scenes to which he has returned repeatedly (he has occupied the same Mornington Crescent studio for 70 years). He is part of an extraordinary post-war flourish of British talent that was too often only seen in the context of the likes of Pollock, Rothko and Newman and, difficult though it can sometimes be to read, Auerbach's work is never abstract like theirs in the sense of internalised perception. His paintings are not mere expressions, they are evocations, and although the paint is applied very quickly and often in large amounts, sometimes scraped off again, the process can be prolix. Frequently they require long consideration by the viewer, a case in which patience is always rewarded as a form gradually becomes plain from a maelstrom of paint. That is Auerbach's inimitable magic.

These drawings are in the same idiom, one of peerless originality.

Auerbach's story is remarkable but not unusual for the mid-20th century. He came to England aged eight on the Kindertransport leaving behind the parents he was never to see again. Naturalised British in 1947 he studied at St Martin's and the Royal College of Art, but with his friend Leon Kossoff attended David Bomberg's famous evening classes at Borough Institute, which perhaps gave

him the confidence to be so different. His first solo show was at the Beaux-Arts in 1956, around the time these heads were drawn, and he was taken up by the critic David Sylvester.

His reputation gradually grew so that in 1978 the Arts Council gave him a Hayward Gallery retrospective when he was still in his forties. In 1981 he was a strong part of the Royal Academy's seminal exhibition *New Spirit in Painting*, curated by Christos Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Nicholas Serota, in which he took his place alongside not only his friends Francis Bacon, R B Kitaj and Lucian Freud but Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter and Pablo Picasso as representing the most inventive work of the 1970s.

Auerbach draws all the time, but the results are not mere preparations for a later oil painting, although his charcoal and chalk subjects also appear on canvas. Each piece is an opus in its own right.

In these dozen or so images he returns time and again to favourite subjects, such as his older cousin Gerda Boehm, who also fled Berlin to escape Nazi persecution in 1939 and was the one surviving link to his German life, whose melancholic introspection he extracts here in three drawings and an oil painting. Suddenly it dawns that he is not improving each time, he is making a new drawing influenced by a change in light, in ambience, in circumstance, in insight, in mood (which might be in the artist's or the model's) and bringing them together in this way shows the nuancing you need to see in order to get a proper sense of accomplishment. Each one is different, each one reworked until the paper itself gives out. Often after a lengthy sitting he would reduce the drawing to a blur and rebuild it at the next session, and it might take 50 attempts to get what he wants.

He is known for the torrent of colour that gushes from his oil paintings, but he clearly loves the honesty and uncompromising nature of black and white, so that another of his favourites, his friend and fellow painter Leon Kossoff, appears here in three drawings but also in a black and white oil painting in all of which you can sense not only the construction of the skull but also of the man.

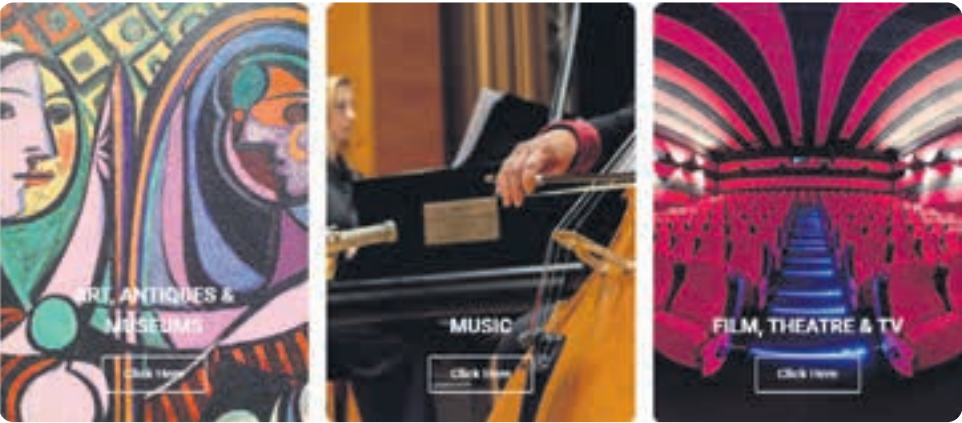
And there are several references to a person identified only as "E.O.W." in titles. This individual was Auerbach's mistress in the 1950s, Stella West, who would pose for him at her Earls Court home. She would sit on a bed while Auerbach knelt sketching on the floor in front of her. An oil painting of her head, also shown here, bears little resemblance to the drawing, except for the fact that she is looking down in both images, as most of his subjects are.

Later his wife, Julia Wolstenholme, whom he met at the RCA and married in 1958, became his muse for more than 40 years, and we see her here in 1960, her features formed in shafts and flashes of light as if she represents a sudden enlightenment.

"I feel there is no grander entity than the individual human being..." Auerbach said later. "I would like my work to stand for individual experience".

Frank Auerbach. *The Charcoal Heads*. The Courtauld Gallery, until 27th May.

The Charcoal Heads



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Cinema Club

by Henry Scott-Irvine

As the shift towards more comfortable, locally-owned independent cinemas gains traction across the capital, certain parts of London’s West End are witnessing the closure of cinemas from the 1980s that underwent inadequate conversions by the now-defunct Cannon Cinema chain. A recent example of this trend is the closure of The Empire in The Haymarket, which was previously subject to a substandard conversion by Cannon.

In light of this trend, welcome to Part Two of celebrating the excellence of the independent cinemas in London.

The Best
Cinema Complex
in the World

BFI Southbank,
Belvedere Rd SE1 8XT
4 Cinema Complex NFT1, NFT2, NFT3,
The BFI Studio with the nearby BFI
IMAX Projecting from 4K Digital,
4k DCP, 35mm & 70mm Film
whatson.bfi.org.uk

The BFI Cinema complex is situated on the Southside of the River Thames along from The Queen Elizabeth Hall and Hungerford Bridge. The National Film Theatre was originally known as The TeleCinema and situated in a tent as a part of the Festival of Britain on the Southbank in 1951. The NFT moved to its current location in 1957. An additional NFT 2 opened in 1970. 1988 saw the opening of The Museum of The Moving Image, which ran till 2000. In 2005 MOMI’s own former cinema became NFT 3 along with the additional 90 seater BFI Studio Cinema, utilising some of MOMI’s former space. In 2007 The National Film Theaters were renamed more simply as BFI Southbank. The BFI also hosts The LFF (London Film Festival) annually, in non-BFI cinemas across London. Now in its 68th year, it remains one of the largest and most well-attended festivals in the world.

The British Film Institute also has an in-house Library and the free-to-use Mediatheque. An audiovisual archival resource of hundreds of films; situated alongside three bars, two restaurants, and a cafe. The BFI curate ‘Themed Monthly Seasons’ as Retrospectives, alongside ‘Special Film Events’, ‘Talks’, ‘BFI Distributed Exclusives’, monthly ‘Big Screen Classics’, ‘Events for Seniors’, ‘Relaxed Screenings’, and much more besides. Each screening sees printed notes provided for every film shown. Nearby is the BFI IMAX situated in the Roundabout next to Waterloo Station. The BFI is run wholly as a registered charity. Cinema audiences are its very lifeblood. Open 7 days a week. 2022, however, saw afternoon screenings limited to just four days a week. This has led to full houses most nights. So advanced booking or prior box office purchases of tickets are now essential. Transport? There is easy access to buses and nearby Waterloo Station.

The Best
Repertory Cinema
in the World

The Prince Charles Cinema.
Leicester Place, Soho WC2 7BY.

2 Cinemas. Projecting in 4K, 35mm & 70mm
princecharlescinema.com

Originally built as a theatre, it became a cinema in 1965. In 1969, Star Cinemas acquired it, removed the stage, enlarged the stalls seating capacity, and added a balcony. In 1985, the Cannon Cinema chain took over the building until 1986, selling it to the Robbins Group, who, in 1991, turned it into what it is today - a repertory cinema. In 2008, the current owner, Carl Fisher & Associates, converted The Prince Charles into two cinemas. The original balcony projectors-to-downstairs were retained and then boxed off. Behind the original projection box is a huge new screen for Cinema 2, the old balcony, and new Cinema 2, which now has brand new 4k digital projectors. Alongside digital projection, the old projection box has retained both



its 35mm projectors and its 70mm film projectors, making The Prince Charles, along with BFI Southbank, one of the few theatres still able to screen films in 70mm. Something they curate with aplomb.

The Prince Charles’s range of films varies from film-projected epics to Indy ‘First Runs’ and ‘Second Runs’, which are intermingled daily with Cult Classics, Genre Classics, Rarities, International Art House Movies, Sing-along Musicals, Director Seasons, and Film Festivals. Discounted ticketing is available for all at bargain prices. Special deals for Students, Pensioners, Tourists, and Cineastes alike. There are no better price deals for films screening in London that we know of. The choices of films reflect a hybrid of The BFI Southbank and the defunct Scala Cinema formally in Kings Cross. In fact, The Prince Charles is most certainly today’s contemporary equivalent of The Scala. Meanwhile, the staff are helpful, enthusiastic, patient, and attentive. You can buy reasonably priced freshly made popcorn, inexpensive beers, and soft drinks. What’s not to like? Most importantly, they resisted changing their name to The King Charles Cinema! They even put up a sign saying so.

The Best Multiplex in London

Curzon Bloomsbury,
Brunswick Square WC1N 1AW.
6 Cinema Complex

curzon.com/venues/bloomsbury/

The Renoir, The Minema (formerly in Knightsbridge), The Lumiere (formerly in St Martin's Lane), The Phoenix, The Plaza, and The Bertha Dothouse

Opening in the Brunswick Square redevelopment of 1972, the cinema is situated close to Russell Square tube station. This was Curzon's second cinema, following on from their original Curzon in Mayfair (1934). Known variously over the years as Curzon's Bloomsbury Cinema (closed



and sold-on in 1974), ABC Bloomsbury, The EMI International Film Theatre, The Gate Bloomsbury, The Renoir Cinema, and The Curzon-Renoir. The current 6-screen subterranean complex partially reopened in December 2014 and was fully functioning as a new 6-screen operation by March 2015. The six screens, designed by architect Takero Shimazaki, are concrete marvels of architectural modernity. The cinemas all average between 20 and 30 seats each. They project onto large screens via 4K digital projectors. Big seats provide comfort and warmth. The Renoir retains its original screen from the days when it was a single cinema, but now has just under 150 seats. The 55-seater Bertha DocHouse is hired from Curzon independently. Uniquely, they theatrically screen the finest selection of new and archival documentaries to be anthologised anywhere.

Freshly made pizzas are served from a licensed bar at ground level. More basement bars reside below. The staff are friendly and efficient. The feature films are wide-ranging and international, with many distributed by Curzon's own distribution company. The cream of these are also available through Curzon Home Cinema, with some exclusives too. There are currently

17 Curzon Cinemas in the UK, making up some 55 screens. Curzon Cinema was acquired by Cohen Media Group in 2019. Does this mean that the Curzons are no longer independent?

Footnote: The outdoor steps immediately accessible to the rear of the cinema's entrance were famously seen in Michaelangelo Antonioni's film "The Passenger" (1975). This had Jack Nicholson walk up to them to pass a seated Maria Schneider, formerly the co-star of Bernardo Bertolucci's "Last Tango in Paris." As Peter Sellars once mimicked Michael Caine on Parkinson, "Not a lot of people know that!"

The Best European Cinema in the UK

The Cine Lumiere French Institute of the United Kingdom 17 Queensberry Place, South Kensington SW7 2DW.

2 Cinemas

institut-francais.org.uk

Ciné Lumière offers daily screenings of new and exclusive releases, UK premieres, classics, documentaries, and family screenings, as well as series, retrospectives, and festivals. Two lines sum it up well. It is situated inside The French Institute of The UK near South Kensington Underground Station. This is the only place, aside from the BFI Southbank, to see European 'First Run' films and French Film Premieres in the UK. Their seating is comfortable, and the cinemas are warm. The nearest French cinema as a previous competitor was the Academy in Oxford Street, London, which closed its doors for good in the late 1980s.

The Best Triplex in London

Curzon Soho, 93-107 Shaftesbury Avenue, Soho W1D 5DY.

3 Cinemas

curzon.com/venues/soho/

This was originally built pre-World War 2 as The Shaftesbury Pavilion, a Gaumont NewsReel owned cinema. It was bombed during the war and destroyed. Rebuilt in 1959, it opened as The Columbia Pictures Cinema. In 1982, Classic Cinemas took it over but were absorbed into Cannon, who sold it in 1984. It became Curzon West End in 1985. In 1998, the cinema was converted into three screens. No expense was spared by the owners and the architectural firm of Panter Hudspith Architects. Screen 1 (249 seats) uses the original proscenium, Screen 2 is the smallest (120 seats), and Screen 3 with tables and drinks holders (133 seats) are both side-by-side in the rear of the former auditorium. It reopened as the Curzon Soho on 16th October, 1998. At street level, there is a cafe selling cakes and drinks. One floor down is a roomy bar area, a great meeting place. Like Curzon Bloomsbury, the staff are helpful and friendly. Many Film Festivals operate out of this venue. Special Director Q & A Nights also take place monthly. The choice of films is both diverse and exemplary, mainly 'First Run' American films and International 'Art House' specials interspersed with retrospectives. My only mild criticism, in these times of costly heating, is that the cinemas are often quite cold, just like the old days!

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Classical Music *by Simon Mundy*

Recommended Recordings

Simon Mundy (who has been reviewing recordings for nearly 50 years) will recommend a small selection of CDs released recently: no bad notices, just an interesting batch for the serious music lover.

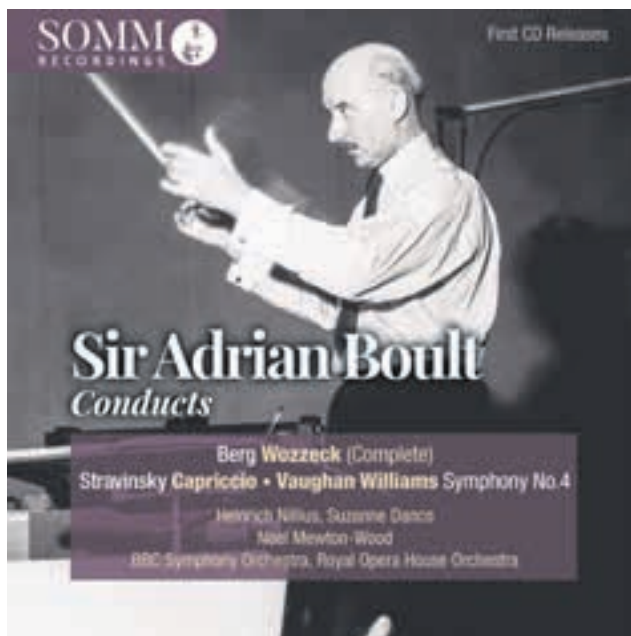


Benevoli: Mass Tu Es Petrus for Four Choirs
Works by **Graziani** and **Palestrina**
I Fagiolini and The City Musick
Robert Hollingworth (Director)
CORO 16201

Never heard of Orazio Benevoli (1605-72)? Don't worry, you will not be alone. He was born in Lorraine but moved to Rome, where he succeeded the great Allegri (of the famous Miserere) before spending time in Imperial service in Vienna, then returning to Rome as the Maestro of the Cappella Giulia at St. Peter's. He knew what he was doing. The music is very typical of its time but has a lovely flow and gentle grandeur. The main work here is his Mass designed to fill the vast spaces of the papal basilica, rather as Monteverdi and Gabrieli did at St. Mark's in Venice. I Fagiolini, founded by Robert Hollingworth 38 years ago, has become one of Europe's most consistent vocal ensembles. The recording was made in St. Augustine's Kilburn which has monumental acoustics of its own, often exploited by the BBC when it wants a good noise. This is a gorgeous disc of works never before recorded, Benevoli's music augmented by that of his exact contemporary, Bonifazio Graziani.

Berg: Wozzeck
Stravinsky: Capriccio
Vaughan Williams: Symphony 4
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Royal Opera House Orchestra
Sir Adrian Boult
SOMM Ariadne 5024-2 (2 CDs)

Sir Adrian Boult was not just a champion of British music, he was a dedicated advocate for new and 'difficult' music, as he discusses in the 1965 interview included here. I came to know him well in the decade before he died 40 years ago and he was exceptionally proud of having conducted the two first performances in Britain of Berg's chilling opera, Wozzeck: one in 1934 and one in 1948. This release is of the second of those, given in the Royal Albert Hall - not the perfect venue but the Queen's Hall had been destroyed in the Blitz and the Royal Festival Hall was still years away. The performance, though, is superb, partly because of Boult's 'sovereign direction', as Berg himself had written to him in 1934, partly because of the superb cast, led by Heinrich Nillius as Wozzeck and Suzanne Danco as Marie, with Otakar Kraus as the doctor. With London still in ruins after the war, for Boult to persuade the BBC to let him conduct this with several German singers was itself an act of courage. Boult was especially close to Ralph Vaughan



Williams and he premiered the 4th Symphony in 1935. It is the composer's most severe score and although VW stressed it was pure music, it does reflect its troubled time. This performance is from the Proms thirty years later and is remarkable because Boult is conducting the Royal Opera House Orchestra. Not only does that band very rarely play symphonies, Boult had been frozen out of Covent Garden by his fierce enemy, Thomas Beecham, who seemed to control its board even years after his death. Boult resented this deeply because he had wanted to conduct there ever since he was a teenager. In truth, Boult recorded better versions in the studio with the LPO but this is still fascinating. So too is the 1948 BBC studio recording of Stravinsky's Capriccio, almost a piano concerto, with the 26 year-old Australian soloist, Noel Mewton-Wood, who was to kill himself by drinking prussic acid only five years later. As an example of just how crucial Boult was to London's music life and reputation, this set is essential.

Schumann and Grieg Piano Concertos
Elisabeth Leonskaja (Piano)
Luzern Symphony Orchestra
Michael Sanderling (Conductor)
Warner Classics 50541 9783 7838

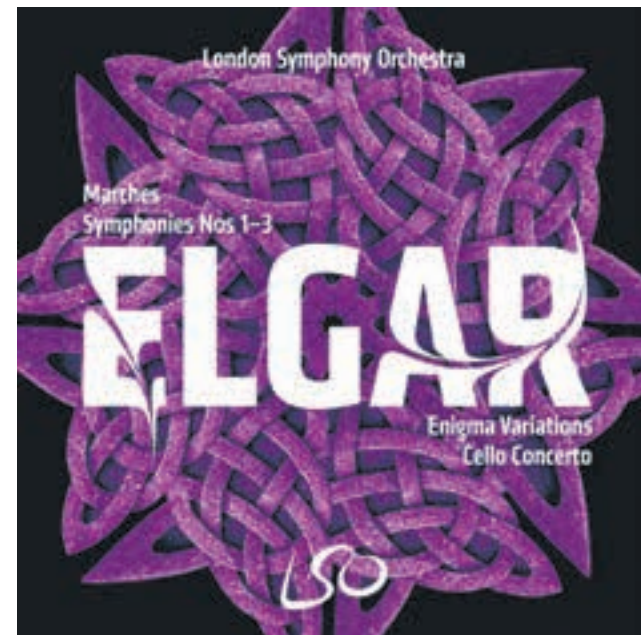
I was in Luzern for the release of this disc in January this



year and was captivated by Leonskaja's live performance of the Grieg. Now in her late 70s, her playing has an authority that is immensely persuasive. There is no nonsense, just complete command of the material. As a listener, one feels that the music is being presented in a way which a composer would truly appreciate. Leonskaja was one of Shostakovich's favourite pianists and it is plain why. Her own hero was Sviatoslav Richter and she does share his firm-fingered certainty. She also has his way of making the hard stuff sound problem free. The sound on this disc is magnificent too, if you like the piano to be very much in the foreground. There are moments when I feel my head's under the piano wires but it is compelling.

Elgar: Symphonies 1-3
Enigma Variations, Cello Concerto, Pomp and Circumstance Marches, Introduction and Allegro for Strings
London Symphony Orchestra
Sir Colin Davis, Barry Tuckwell, Raphael Fruhbeck de Burgos (Conductors)
LSO 0572 (4 CDs)

The LSO was Elgar's London orchestra. He was their second Principal Conductor, after the retirement of Hans Richter, and his Introduction and Allegro was, in 1905, their first commission - he wrote it to show off the quality of the new string section - and its leader, William Read, was Elgar's collaborator on shaping the solo part of the Violin Concerto. This set is a demonstration of the orchestra's commitment to his music this century (with the exception of the marches and Cello Concerto, which were recorded in 1988). The bulk of the works, the symphonies (including the late Anthony Payne's completion of the third) and Enigma Variations, are in interpretations by Sir Colin Davis. It is extraordinary how conductors' characters shape the music. These are Davis to the core: fastidious and lingering over detail, at times a fraction detached but always looking for a broad romantic sweep, not too bothered about received notions of tempo. Like Elgar he was a complex character, prickliness and warmth alternating, the intellectual masking the emotional. The Enigma recording is worth having for Andrew Marriner's gorgeous clarinet solos alone. Elgar's marches are entrusted to Barry Tuckwell, the Australian who was the LSO's ebullient Principal Horn from 1955 - 70 before turning to solo work and conducting. Great panache here, as one would expect. The outlier in the set is the Cello Concerto, interpreted by Felix Schmidt with Raphael Fruhbeck de Burgos, between them freeing the work from its English preconceptions: a beautifully judged reading with great generosity of tone, hugely romantic; an instant favourite.



Health & Wellbeing by Natalie Shanahan

Recently, the passing of my 98-year-old grandmother brought about a profound realisation. While she enjoyed a lengthy and robust life, her departure still came as a shock. Despite her advanced age, she remained mentally sharp and physically agile. However, a bout of winter illness just before Christmas marked the beginning of a decline in her health. Throughout her long and active life, she played an integral role in the lives of her grandchildren. From hosting us at her country home during school holidays to taking us on European city breaks in our early adulthood, she was a constant presence, imparting her invaluable wisdom and offering a unique perspective on life accumulated over nearly a century. Engaged in various activities, such as the Women's Institute and creative clubs, she maintained a wide social circle. Witnessing the growth of her five great-grandchildren, two of whom had reached their teens at the time of her passing. We were lucky to have this third parent, friend and advisor. Imagine a world where this connection with our elders would be the norm and not an exception?

From around 30 years old we start to lose up to 5% of our muscle mass each decade, this accelerates after peri-menopause in women and around 70 years of age in men. Muscle composition also changes, with type 2 fibres, which help us bear heavy loads for short spells, being replaced by type 1 fibres, which are more efficient over long periods but less able to carry weight. Muscles stop using protein as efficiently and so are less able to repair themselves. These age related changes have many causes including alteration in the levels of hormones such as testosterone, and a reorganisation of brain cells that control movement.

Resistance training can build new muscle and increase bone density, literally reversing the sarcopenic effects of ageing and preventing frailty. It can also cause neuroplasticity, the growth of new brain cells, helping prevent neurodegeneration. One study showed that lifting weights for less than an hour a week reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke by up to 70% independent of any aerobic training. Numerous studies have shown that strength training significantly lowered the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Functional training, such as the drills performed by footballers, gym classes or even dancing can increase and maintain balance and coordination. Stretching will keep the muscles supple and helps maintain or improve range of movement and mobility as well as actually reducing inflammation on the cellular level. Many gyms will offer classes specifically designed with the older adult in mind.

UK exercise guidelines state that all adults should perform muscle strengthening activities two days a week in addition to 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week. Lack of cardiorespiratory fitness is the most important risk factor for early death, according to a study of 50,000 men and women in 2009. This was more than the combined contributions of obesity, high cholesterol, and double the contribution of smoking!

Adding cardiovascular exercise can do wonders and this doesn't have to mean running or jumping. Just 15 mins a day of moderate exercise (fast walking) is enough to reduce the risk of death by 10% compared to sedentary people. This effect can also be gained by just 5 mins of vigorous exercise such as running. Swimming and



Move More to Increase Healthspan in Later Life

cycling are low impact options and are friendly on old worn-out joints.

Weight training can offer a way to combine all these aspects of fitness. Lifting relatively light weights can reduce the pressure on sensitive joints and slowing down the movement, increasing the time the muscle is under tension, will stimulate the same amount of muscle development as a heavier weight. Moving to full range while lifting and feeling a stretch at the end point will help maintain mobility. Exercising one body part directly after another without rest will be a good cardio workout in itself.

Our bones start to degrade as we age, losing mass and making us more prone to fractures. They are in a constant flux of being broken down by cells called osteoclasts and being built up again by cells called osteoblasts. Strength training places stress on the bones, triggering

the activity of osteoblasts and inhibiting osteoclasts, helping to maintain, and even build, denser bones. This significantly lowers the risk of osteoporosis.

A couple of years ago my Grandmother fell and broke her hip. She was dedicated to rehab and I even gave her some more advanced strengthening exercises, such as squats, that sped up her recovery further. Within a few months she was walking again! I have trained several people over 70 and it is never too late to start exercising and reaping the benefits. Work with a personal trainer or exercise professional experienced in training older adults so that safe and effective modifications can be made where needed.

What we consume also plays a huge role in how well we age. Smoking, drinking and drugs are well known substances that cause premature ageing. Eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables will provide vital

phytonutrients and antioxidants that help fight the ravages of ageing as well as feeding our microbiome with different types of fibre. Ensuring adequate protein to maintain muscle structure and function, along with good hydration will reduce decrepitude. Sleep and stress reduction will also play a huge role in keeping you younger for longer.

There are several areas on Earth where there are a higher than average number of centenarians. These are known as the Blue Zones. All these people have several things in common. Along with an active lifestyle they all seem to have a positive outlook on life and a wide social circle. They rarely eat ultra processed foods, get good sleep and spend time in nature. When I think about my Grandmother's life, she encompassed all of these healthy habits. This can give us all hope that if we embrace this lifestyle we too can enjoy a long, pain free and active life.



Travel by Baryn Jacobsen

Malta:

the Pride of the Mediterranean

Nestled in the heart of the Mediterranean, with more than 300 days of sun, the archipelago of Malta blends a rich and diverse history with an overflow of culture amassed from the local communities and expatriates from across the world. For the LGBTQ+ communities, Malta holds an attraction as an inclusive destination where love, in all its shapes and sizes and colours, is celebrated.

In times gone by, Malta has been under the control of the Phoenicians, Arabs, Normans, Romans, French and British. After gaining their freedom as a republic in 1979, Malta blossomed into a crossroads of traditions steeped in pride.

An inherent pride reminiscent of the global Pride celebrations, honouring every facet of the LGBTQ+ community, every year.

In recent years, Malta has jettisoned to the top of queer travel lists. All thanks to strides towards equality and acceptance the Maltese government has made in advancing LGBTQ+ rights, including the legislation of same-sex marriage.

In 2023, Malta claimed its eighth year at Number One on the Rainbow Europe Map (ILGA-Europe's annual ranking of European countries against their legal policies and

practices for the LGBTQ+ communities).

One of the highlights of the calendar is Malta's annual Pride celebrations that span across the whole island (and beyond, with Gozo - Malta's sister island, only a short ferry ride away - hosting its own procession).

2023 also played host to EuroPride Valletta, a city-wide gathering of queer communities across Europe that concluded in a free-to-attend concert that saw headline act and gay icon, Christina Aguilera, take to the stage of Floriana's Granaries to round out a week of events from drag-shows to pool parties, for night owls and day walkers alike. Malta Pride is a genuine celebration of inclusion, diversity and unity that should be celebrated at least once.

Beyond Pride festivities, Malta and its surrounding islands are bustling with friendly destinations for all visitors to explore. For those seeking a picturesque fishing village to backdrop their Spritz, look no further than Marsaxlokk, with its vibrant 'Luzzu' boats and charming cafes. Meanwhile, Mdina, affectionately known as 'the Silent

City', offers a journey back in time to medieval Malta, perfect for those seeking out the island's historical roots.

While St Julian's offers the typical island nightlife, Malta's true party scene unfolds in its 'nightlife villages' like Uno Malta and Gianpula. Located centrally on the island, these venues provide a quaint setting for letting loose on the dance floor and a place to party to the perfect summer soundtracks and leave all your worries behind. Look out for NERVE and LOLLIPOP's name on the posters if you're ready to dance the night away!

Foodies definitely won't fall short of eateries to sink their teeth into. With every nationality that you come across in Malta, you will find an ample supply of cuisines that satisfy any craving. As an island, seafood is in an abundance on many menus. With Sicily only a short flight away, there is pizza everywhere. The island also has some pretty decent burger joints and juice bars, as well as a whole host of artisanal eateries. However, there are also niche, just-waiting-to-be-found bars, restaurants and cafes, tucked away in the many quiet street corners and sea-facing promenades. Stumbling upon a lively cafe, or 'kazzin' as locals call it, nestled in a shaded alley feels like uncovering a secret level in a video game.

With an almost oversaturation of restaurants and cafes, Malta undoubtedly has something for everyone - fussy or famished. And they've even got a few home comforts, with a remarkable cast of pubs and just as many places for anyone with specific dietary requirements.

When it comes to accommodation, you are spoilt for choice. Despite being a relatively small island with a total area of 316 square kilometres, everything is conveniently accessible. However, public transport can be a bother during peak times, especially in metropolitan areas like Sliema, Msida, and St. Paul's Bay. Fortunately, if you find yourself in need of transportation, taxis are readily available and affordable, typically costing no more than €10 for short distances. You can also easily book rides through popular apps like Bolt, Uber, or eCabs, and you'll be good to go.

Travelling aside, Malta provides many choices of places to stay. There are hotels with any number of stars to suit your own needs, as well as numerous guesthouses, B&Bs, hostels, or short-term rental apartments, waiting to be filled. All with their own inclusive policies and welcoming staff.

The sense of community and acceptance that pervades the island, through its people and its places, in its blood and bones, can be a phenomenal source of inspiration.

From the lively lights of Paceville's nightlife to the tranquil shores of Xaghra, in Gozo, there's something magical about Malta that captivates the soul.

Whether you're sipping a Negroni as the sun sets over the sea or wandering through any of Malta's ancient, UNESCO World Heritage Site ruins, every day in Malta can become your own personal adventure.



image: Jason Leung, Unsplash



image: Karim Manjra, Unsplash



image: Christian Seebeck, Unsplash



image: Christian Seebeck, Unsplash



Travel by Natalie Shanahan

In today's busy world, there is an increasing need for restful holidays. Rather than dealing with delayed flights, crowded airports, and long lists of tourist attractions, people are increasingly opting for Slow Travel. This concept arose in Italy when people protested against McDonald's opening in Rome, shouting for "slow food" not fast food, in the hope of maintaining Rome's authentic food culture. When applied to travel, this ethos allows visitors to leisurely absorb our beautiful environment, eat local foods made and served by businesses that have served the area for generations. This not only boosts local economies but has a huge impact on reducing the average carbon footprint of a holiday. The benefits do not just end with the environment; this type of break is a fantastic tonic for body and mind. Spending time in nature, breathing fresh air, and gazing into the horizon are fantastic ways to calm the nervous system and reduce stress. Travelling off-season is encouraged and ticks both boxes - supporting local businesses and reducing travel stress.

nesses function ethically, reducing waste, lowering CO2 emissions where they can, and recycling.

River Cottage

The first stop on the route is Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage. At first glance, this is reminiscent of a quaint farmhouse. Inside is a cosy cafe with a gorgeous terrace overlooking rolling hills. Next-door are two organic farms that supply some of their produce. At the River Cottage Kitchen and Store, you can get lunch for under £20 and buy one of Hugh's many amazing cookbooks. A short walk down the hill takes you to the River Cottage teaching kitchen, where you can book a range of fascinating courses from butchery and bread making to nutrition and beekeeping.

The Masons Arms

Stop two on Route 660 takes you to The Masons Arms, a quaint thatched country pub with rooms. Think comfort food with flavour. I opted for the Sri Lankan lamb shank. The meat fell off the bone, the delicately spiced sauce was thick and unctuous.



Darts Farm

Darts Farm is another family-run business on the route with a focus on sustainability and quality. The farm shop is massive and stocks their organic grass-fed meat and

Morning coffee with a view is the best way to start the day. If you fancy something more active, there is a small gym on site, and a morning run along the waterfront can do wonders for your mood. A short

Take it Easy with South West 660

South West 660: A Sustainable Driving Route

Inspired by the Scottish road trip North Coast 500, Ruud Jansen-Venneboer, Mark Godfrey, and Chris Jackson wanted to create something similar for the South West. In 2022, South West 660 was born. This 660-mile driving route covers 12 unique sections, each around 50 miles long, from Poole in Dorset to Watchet in Somerset. Each route takes you off the beaten track, and off from the main path. You will get to experience breathtaking countryside, visit local attractions, and some of the best places to eat and stay in the UK. The routes are listed on their website, but to get a detailed map with step-by-step directions and numerous discounts at hotels, restaurants, and attractions along the path, you can sign up for a yearly membership for just £20. Future plans include developing an app to make this process even more efficient.

Sustainable and Ethical Businesses

A huge part of the SW660 spirit is about sustainable travel. All partnered busi-

The richness was perfectly complemented by the sharpness of the yoghurt and the freshness of red onion and coriander. The Masons Arms stocked a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks to satisfy those wanting a healthier, more refreshing holiday. Being owned by St Austell Brewery, this pub offers an impressive selection of locally-brewed beers, fine wines, and top-shelf spirits to complement your stay. Rooms are traditionally designed, and the external characteristics are sensitive to the look and feel of the environment. The mattresses and bedding are exceptionally comfortable, making for a truly restful night's sleep.

Lily Farm Vineyard

Next on the route is Lily Farm. This local family-run vineyard produces award-winning world-class still and sparkling wines made only with the grapes that they grow and pick by hand.

freshly harvested seasonal produce. There is an extensive deli offering a range of cheeses, charcuterie, and delicious salads and 3 cafes to cater to your fancy. It would be easy to spend several hours just looking around the shop and deli!

The Dart Marina Hotel

Next, head across the River Dart to The Dart Marina Hotel. This stylish hotel exudes calm with a modern decor, open spaces, and spectacular views of the marina. Inside, find the Zephyr Bistro, which manages to combine classic style with a modern twist. Chill House music plays in the background, giving serious holiday vibes without being too intrusive.

Menus showcase Devon's finest in-season native ingredients, with a strong focus on local produce. Begin with half a dozen oysters, try the local mussels, share the soft-shell crab tempura and crispy calamari. The day's catch is seared a la plancha, service is seamless. Meats include chargrilled rib eye steaks, braised lamb shanks, and gourmet cheeseburgers, all organic and local. If you are embracing a regenerative retreat, you will not be disappointed. There are plenty of nutrient-dense options on the menu, with vegans and vegetarians well catered for. I had the fillet of wild sea bass with seafood & tomato ragout, butter & parsley crushed Cornish new potatoes & broccoli, which only cost £26. The portion size was generous, and the meal was nutritionally balanced. It is incredibly rare to get a decent portion of vegetables with a meal and not as a side dish. A three-course meal with a cocktail and a glass of wine will set you back around £75.

The luxury bedrooms come with Nespresso machines, and several of them have balconies overlooking the Marina.

walk down the road brings you to Sea Kayak Devon, where you can hire a single or double kayak and view the coast from the water with an expert guide.

The Seahorse and Rockfish

Stroll along the water to The Seahorse and Rockfish, owned by chef Mitch Tonks. Mitch is not only a restaurateur but also a food writer, CEO, and ambassador for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), a global non-profit group. The aim is to spread awareness of the value of sustainable fishing methods and promote the use of sustainable seafood both in the restaurants and at home. In 2020, Mitch co-founded the Devon Environment Foundation, and in that short time, over £200,000 has been raised and funded grassroots social enterprises. He has funded and championed a "Brixham Litter-free Sea project," an innovative program pioneering sea booms and large-scale sea bin sculptures in Brixham to remove plastics under the stewardship of Rockfish employees. His determination to heal our environment is equaled by his passion for quality food. Expect to find freshly caught and beautifully prepared fish served with equally tasty seasonal vegetables.

There is so much to see and do in the South West of England. An off-season trip to this part of the world will allow you to lower your carbon footprint without sacrificing luxury, all while improving your well-being and boosting the UK's economy! The best part is that South West 660 has done the hard work and collated the itinerary for you. They can even put you in touch with travel experts who can book everything you need.

southwest660.com



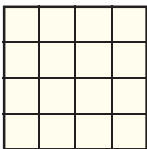
13	5	4	4	7	9	6	23		12	5	9	7
24		14		1		24		8		13		20
8	15	26	22	22	7	4		24	8	5	25	7
19		20		7		23		18		24		14
	11	7	25	8	15		4	7	22	6	26	23
7				25	26	2	7	6		6		26
20	7	25	26		22	7	24		15	23	18	9
21		26		4	7	16	25	13				7
4	21	13	8	26	13		15	7	6	6	26	
7		13		17		11		8		26		10
9	26	21	13	7		24	3	5	21	20	7	14
8		9		9		21		14		7		24
7	4	10	7		11	14	21	7	9	4	6	23

1	2	3	4 D	5	6 L	7 E	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

NIP TO SLEEP CLINIC

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.



Quiz Challenge

1. Which dramatist wrote the 1895 play *The Importance of Being Earnest*?
2. The original Wembley Stadium was built in 1924 for which event?
3. A midwife is a type of which European amphibian?
4. What is the name of Rio de Janeiro's famous beach?
5. In the 2014 psychological thriller *Gone Girl*, who played actress Rosamund Pike's husband?
6. How many stars comprise the constellation of the Plough, also known as the Big Dipper?
7. The BBC TV drama series *The A Word* deals with what subject matter?
8. Which brand of corned beef took its name from a South American seaport?
9. Which country is nearest to the North Pole?
10. Hanna Glawari is the main character in which famous operetta?

O	E	S
A	B	T
T	I	N

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
26 Good; 31 Very Good;
36 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

BG	IA	SV	ET	RE
EA		IE		EN
ML	AI	NG	GH	TE
OU		OM		KR
WT	EI	MA	RE	YS

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
11					12		13					
	14	15										
16												17
18										20		
21					22	23						
24					25							

1. Skirts attempt made by government department (8)
5. Only a crust for the strikebreaker (4)
8. One who keeps a family servant (8)
9. Not far from Finchley (4)
11. Had accepted pound hesitantly for an axe-like weapon (7)
13. Crowd of journalists (5)
14. & 25. Regain self-control after cracking up? (4,7,8)
18. One is returning having year in the country (5)
19. Revolutionary means of transferring power (7)
21. Graduate alongside very young child (4)
22. Taking trouble to point out (8)
24. Title that Gladys holds (4)
25. See 14 Across

1. Girl may damage new hat (6)
2. Nathaniel and Alan found in South Africa (5)
3. Convenience food coming from coalfields (6,4)
4. Doctor leaves laundry machine in Sussex (3)
6. Keep secrets of state once inside (7)
7. He is in the finest order (6)
10. Sign of omission (10)
12. Food for party produced by Hazel? (5)
15. Removed a French garment on day one (7)
16. I cry in front of the Spanish girl (6)
17. One who is inclined to be slimmer? (6)
20. Endless anger over his recipe for this stew (5)
23. Pair do go round the bend (3)

Easy Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box. **Hard**

1	5	6						
					1		6	
		2	9				4	
4				8	5			9
	9			3				1
	1	3		7			8	
	3		8		6			2
9		4	2	5		3		8
2				1			9	6

3					9		2	
					1			
	7		8	4	3	5		
					4	8	1	
	5	7						
	6							2
		5		2		3		
					7	4		
6		3						1

	6		7	
2	○	6	○	3
	3		1	
8	○	2	○	5
	2		3	

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

This puzzle page is supplied by
Sirius Media Services Ltd.

To try our new puzzle,
Zygolex, go to
www.zygolex.com

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1		2		3		4		5		6		7
					8							
9							10					
11	12				13	14						
				15	16							
17		18				19	20				21	
					22	23						
24				25			26			27		28
29					30							
				31								
32						33						

1. Stiffened fabric (7)
5. Bodily secretion (5)
8. Beer (3)
9. Vexation (7)
10. Speak slowly (5)
11. Famous (5)
13. Historical document (7)
15. Formerly (4)
17. Glorify (6)
19. Liveliness (6)
22. Weaving yarn (4)
24. Deficiency

26. Insurgent (5)
29. Think out loud (5)
30. Amaze (7)
31. Opening (3)
32. Cash (5)
33. As a group (2,5)

DOWN

1. Cured pork (5)
2. Intone (5)
3. Altar screen (7)
4. Person running amok (6)
5. Doctor (5)
6. Early piano (7)

1. Cured pork (5)
2. Intone (5)
3. Altar screen (7)
4. Person running amok (6)
5. Doctor (5)
6. Early piano (7)

12. Belonging to us (3)
14. Coral ridge (4)
16. Small amphibian (4)
17. Act (7)
18. Public sale (7)
20. Rock layer (7)
21. Frozen water (3)
23. Elude (6)
25. Lament (5)
27. Musical style (5)
28. Soup spoon (5)

SOLUTIONS

4 Copacabana; 5 Ben Attieck; 6 Seven; 7 Austim; 8 Tray
 (1) Across – Baste; Light; Weary.
 Down – Below; Signa; Entry.
 (2) Across – Giver; Mänge; Times.
 Down – Gamut; Venom; Reeks.
NONGRAM:
 about; absent; bait; bare; base; basin;
 basinet; bast; baste; bastion; bate;
 batiste; baton; batt; batten; bear;
 beano; beat; beat; bent; best; beta;
 bitten; boast; boat; bloat; bison; bite;
 bloat; bloat; bloat; bloat; bloat;
 botaist; bottle; boon; obeseast; opt;
 OBSTINATE; obtain; sabot; snob; snob;
 soba; stab; stop; stob; tabes; tabl;

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
X	W	Q	D	U	L	E	C	N	G	F	J	S	H	R	B	Z	M	K	V	I	P	A	T	O					
CROSS CODE																													
EASY SUDOKU															HARD SUDOKU														
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
5	4	D	U	L	E	C	N	G	F	J	S	H	R	B	Z	M	K	V	I	P	A	T	O						
MAGIC SQUARE																													
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19													

Bentos; 9 Greenland; 10 The Merry Widow.



As the parameters regarding the youngest players ever to win against chess Grandmasters are widened, exemplified by the recent success of Leonid Ivanovic, the first player under the age of 9 years to defeat a Grandmaster in Classical chess, so too does our technological age spread its wings with advances in mind kinesics and its integration into systems beyond itself.

On Wednesday, 20th March, Elon Musk’s Neuralink brain implant company, founded in 2016 by Musk, transmitted a video of a paralysed patient using their latest technology to play a game of chess on a computer. The success they achieved is the result of work conducted over time to create an implant that will connect mind and machine. The success of their results was demonstrated by Noland Arbaugh, 29, who lost movement in both legs and arms 8 years ago in a diving accident. The implant has given Noland the ability to move a cursor across a laptop screen using only his mind. He could switch things off and on, such as the music from the laptop. He said, “... it was like using the force on the cursor”, referencing Star Wars. He went on to say that the implant had already changed his life. The surgery required to implant the brain chip was completed in just one day in the hospital. Elon Musk, whose other companies include the electric car maker Tesla and the Rocketry company SpaceX, says he has ambitious plans for Neuralink, which, although currently focused on disabled patients, aims to market brain chips for the mass market. He believes that human performance can be vastly improved with the aid of technology. Arbaugh’s implant works through a chip, the size of ‘a large coin,’ implanted into a small cavity ‘hollowed out of the skull’. AI is used to read the brain’s electrical activity and translates it into moving a foreign object. Over the past two decades, brain chips have advanced significantly with American scientists demonstrating how monkeys could control robotic limbs with their thoughts after being implanted with neural interfaces. A number of companies developing brain implants are Paradromics in Texas, Precision NeuroScience in New York, and Synchron in Brooklyn and Melbourne, founded in 2012. The latter, for example, has technologically upgraded an Australian patient with motor neuron disease to communicate using text messages. Synchron uses less invasive technology that threads a stent-like device through a subject’s veins. Although it is still early stages, it would be remarkable for all those disabled persons around the world to be brought online via

The parable of the large size lollipops and the electrical pliers

such devices and games, with chess in particular being opened up to individuals previously unable to participate in such joyous activities.

A professor of neural interfaces at Newcastle University, Andrew Jackson, has praised these new technological advances, noting that “the implant was wireless with no physical connection protruding through the skin!” This update in human interaction and the latest technological advances in their immersion into a unified symbiotic state reminds me of Garry Kasparov’s nightmare in May 1997, when Deep Blue, a chess computer developed by IBM, crushed the world champion. It was the first time a computer had defeated a world champion in a match under tournament conditions, and “it sent shockwaves throughout the world” With distance and time from that monumental disaster that the human rational minds around the world suffered, Kasparov became a supporter for “the combination of human ingenuity coupled with the computational power of a computer.” Although the number-crunching approach of computers is markedly different from the self-learning abilities of present-day software systems using AI, these present-day advances add, of course, to the safeguarding measures required in tournaments protecting players from cheating. A new level of detecting electronic devices and implants is being introduced by FIDE and other governing bodies of the sport. So, if going into your next tournament, your opponent has a wire protruding from their head, or if confronted by a player with wires sprouting from every orifice, go prepared! It probably will be de rigueur for future tournament chess players to have electrical pliers and large lollipops at hand. When confronted by the above situation, where your opponent has a wire sticking out of their head, use your electrical pliers to cut it off! And when you sit down to face your opponent, and only their head is visible above the board, and you glean that they are only 8 years of age and already have an international grade, and you’re feeling the horrors of horrors, “what if they beat me?” Then is the time to distract them with your extra-large lollipop!

At the time of writing this column, the FIDE Candidates Tournament, the two most important FIDE events to decide who will challenge the reigning World Champions, has begun in Toronto, Canada. By the time you read this chess column, barring any world interference, the two challengers will have been decided.

The men’s event started on 4th April with perhaps a groan or two, as opposed to a hiccup, when all four games ended in a draw. I say a groan or two because FIDE has a history when it comes to major tournament events where in the past it would ‘seem’ that players had agreed draws before the games had started! A plethora of complaints over constant draws being agreed by players pre-playing led to some hefty

rules and fines, and the ‘drawing disease’ eventually disappeared. I’m pleased to say the 2nd round of the men’s championship has led to decisive results in all four matches! Gujrathi, Gukesh, Caruana, and Nepo are all on 1.5 pts after 2 rounds, and Nakamura, Abasov, Firouzja, and the third Indian player contesting this event, Praggnanandhaa, all on 0.5 pts.

Whoever wins has the right to challenge GM Ding Liren in the 2024 World Chess Championship and a share of the €500,000 prize fund. In the Candidates tournament, the winner collects €48,000, 2nd place receives €36,000, and 3rd place gets €24,000. There is an added bonus too, where €3,500 are awarded for every half point each player scores, which should be enough incentive for players not to agree to draws unless the game is, indeed, a draw.

The Women’s FIDE World Candidates tournament receives less prize money in relation to the men’s competition. I must confess I am at a quandary to know why this should be so in this day and age? I thought this attitude of disproportionate amounts in prize money between men’s and women’s competitions was a thing of the past? The players themselves haven’t, to my knowledge, questioned the difference, and probably cannot anyway without causing prejudice against themselves? Their prize money is as follows: 1st place receives €24,000, 2nd place €18,000, 3rd place €12,000, and extras are €1,750 for every 0.5 pts. every player scores.

The winner of the Women’s Candidates has the right to challenge the current Woman’s World Champion GM Ju Wenjun.

In Round 1 of the Women’s tournament, there was just one decisive game with GM Tingjie losing to GM Tan Zhongyi. Round 2 had two decisive games where Zhongyi won her second game of the competition, and GM Goryachkina won against GM Anna Muzychuk representing Ukraine. After the 2nd round, GM Zhongyi leads the field with 2 pts., Goryachkina has 1.5 pts., GMs Lagno, Koneru, and IM Salonica have 1 pt. each, and GMs Muzychuk and Tingjie, along with IM Vaishali, have 0.5 pts. each.

The Challenge

I have taken for this month’s puzzle the concluding moves in the 2nd round of the FIDE Women’s Candidates Tournament, 2024, between GM Aleksandra Goryachkina 2553 v GM Anna Muzychuk 2520. Black has just played her Rook on h8 to d8, doubling up on the d file and protecting her Rook on d7. Although both players have 4 pieces in play, Black’s pieces have adopted a more defensive role, whilst White’s pieces are actively trending towards attacking her opponent’s positions. What was the follow-on to her attitude with her next move that simplified the position?

The solution is opposite

The Solution

27...Rh8-d8. 28. Nxe7! Bc4. Instead of taking the Kt. With Rook or King Black saw that White’s Bishop on e3 was waiting to pounce with Bg5, forking either Rook or King on e7, and if the latter taking the Rook on d8! However the ‘safety’ route Black takes leaves her a piece down with little compensation. 29. Rxd7, Rxd7. 30. Nc8, Bxa2. 31. Nd6+, Kxg6. 31. Ra1, 32. Ra1, 1-0.



Celebrating Cadogan Hall's 20th Anniversary



The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra presents three very special concerts to mark 20 years as Resident Orchestra at Cadogan Hall. Set in the heart of Chelsea, Cadogan Hall offers luxurious surroundings, an excellent acoustic and an intimacy that gives performers and audience members a unique connection, making it the perfect venue to enjoy orchestral music and star performances.

Wed 26 Jun 2024, 7.30pm

Beethoven, Grieg and Nielsen

Nielsen
Maskarade: Overture
Beethoven
Piano Concerto No.4
Grieg
Peer Gynt (excerpts),
with narration
Adam Hickox Conductor
Lise de la Salle Piano
Tama Matheson Actor

Thu 27 Jun 2024, 7.30pm

Literary Chelsea – A Celebration through Words and Music

Chelsea’s most famous authors and composers serve as the inspiration for an evening of words and music, rooted in the creative neighbourhood around Cadogan Hall.
Jamie Phillips Conductor
Helena Bonham Carter Presenter
Additional special guest to be announced

Sat 29 Jun 2024, 7.30pm

Mendelssohn, Sibelius and Vardianu

Oana Vardianu
Genesis (UK premiere)
Mendelssohn
Violin Concerto
Sibelius
Symphony No.5
Cristian Măcelaru Conductor
Bomsori Kim Violin



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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

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