

thecourt



ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY NEWS FROM
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM AND EARL'S COURT

April / May 2022

THE SPRING ISSUE



SPRING IN YOUR STEP
Get ready for sunshine

MALCOLM SPALDING RIP
Farewell to a legend

GAY HEYDAYS
Making history



Keeping
Life Local

FREEDOM AT LAST

These past two years, nature and the world outside our own door has never been more important.

And here we are. Spring has arrived, and before us a glorious summer to come.

This issue we explore spring in all its guises. We look at new beginnings and ways to live in the now – exploring the joys of nature. We also take time to consider the importance of the simple things in life as we say goodbye to a dear friend and supporter of *The Court*, Councillor Malcolm Spalding.

So, whether you are setting seeds in pots on your balcony, or managing a garden square that you and your neighbours can enjoy, just remember - a little greenery can make a big difference.

Soul and spirit can be lifted by enjoying and nurturing nature, so consider bringing more life to your life, and make sure you get out and enjoy the green spaces around you.



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www.thecourt.london

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LOVE THE ROAD YOU'RE ON

By Chris Allan

What is it about springtime that infuses us with such hope for the future?

Spring often causes feelings of intense pleasure in the mind's eye, a time when it is fun to fantasize about the future. And while day dreaming, you get to fill in (albeit with fuzzy logic and bias) all the best or worst case scenarios. Decision making, however, can be agonising, and yet the two are somehow intricately linked.

As an old blue eyed friend once put it, "Regrets, I've had a few." So, when faced with a fork in the road should I take that job, stay to pursue a promotion, switch careers entirely, make a radical change or a new beginning? Inevitably, a number of options and potential pathways will need be sacrificed in the making of a decision, and with that comes the loss of a (potentially) great deal.

Seems obvious, doesn't it? But as I write I feel a certain sequence of events unfold and wonder what could be appearing on the screen now had I chosen to write about meditation for the 20th time this year.

I will say that my real life appears mediocre when measured against the



CHRIS ALLAN

Chris has been working in the healthcare field for over twenty years. He is a Nurse, Occupational Health Advisor, Mental Health First Aid trainer, Mindfulness practitioner and proponent of wellbeing in the work life dynamic. He is currently co-host of the Mind Games Podcast and Director of WeWorkWellbeing. Being a Mental Health First Aid trainer, he shares his skill and knowledge to reach a wide range of people in the private, public and third sector industries. Through his work, Chris is dedicated to helping individuals and organisations grow and support wellbeing and good mental health.

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grandiose imaginings of what could have been had I taken a different fork in the road.

And there is some respite in that. These self-defeating imagineering sessions tell us that we can stop agonising because, regardless of the choices we make, the infinite could-have-beens will always appear delicious in hindsight of a life lived.

This isn't to state that some minor course correction won't be necessary at certain times so as not to stifle opportunities. Nor is it an endorsement of an unexamined life.

If there is a liberating message amongst all this it's that regret is pointless. You probably wouldn't really have enjoyed options B, C, D, E or even F, since even the most practical and safe pathways necessitate severe losses when viewed through our retrospectoscopes.





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OUR RURAL PAST

Part of a monthly series by Neil McPherson, Artistic Director of the Finborough Theatre, on the rich history of our local area and community.

Our local area is – literally – built on horticulture. From Anglo-Saxon times until the mid-Victorian building boom, which created the area we know today, our locality was best known for its farms, nurseries and market gardens.

Earl's Court Station is built on the site of a farm, and the main rationale for extending the District Line to Earl's Court in 1870 was to make it easier to transport the area's agricultural produce, although in practice it simply sped up the process of urbanisation even faster.

Market gardens flourished in the west and south. In 1796, it was said that "In the parish of Fulham, the cultivation of gardens for the



market is carried on to a greater extent than in any other in the kingdom".

Local legend has it that asparagus can still be seen to sprout in Brompton Cemetery, a direct descendant of its market garden ancestors.

Our area was particularly known too for its nurseries, devoted to exotic flowers, shrubs and trees. From the 1880s to 1914, the Veitch dynasty became internationally famous for its local nursery. Sir Harry Veitch, the first horticulturist to be knighted, was instrumental in the birth of the Chelsea Flower Show.

However, the family is now best remembered for often dangerous expeditions across the world in search of new and exotic plants. It is said that there is scarcely a British garden which does not have at least one plant without some connection to the Veitch family.

Another plant collector was a local resident whose (illegal) expedition to China changed

the world. Robert Fortune (1812-1880), who lived at 9 Gilston Road, and lies buried in Brompton Cemetery, was employed by the East India Company for what has been called the "greatest single act of corporate espionage in history".

Disguising himself as a Chinese Mandarin gentleman, Fortune purloined tea plants, and, most crucially, skilled tea-makers from China, and introduced them into India.

Fortune's mission destroyed China's stranglehold on the world's tea trade, and within a few years, India surpassed China as the world's largest tea producer.

China's economy was wrecked for decades to come, but the British Empire would never go short of its favourite beverage - exporting it to the rest of the world in the process.

For more details go to:
www.earlscourtlocalhistory.co.uk

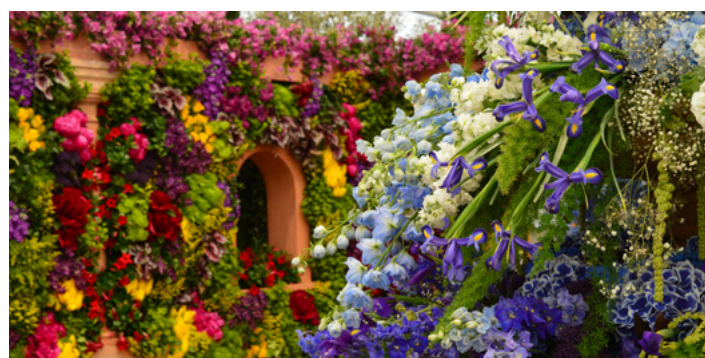


CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW & OPEN GARDENS – BLOOMING MARVELOUS!

See the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea transformed from 24th to 28th May with stunning horticultural displays for the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Royal Hospital Chelsea, Royal Hospital Road, London. SW3 4SR

Ticket prices range from £45, days and slot times depending. Visit <https://www2.theticketfactory.com/rhs/online/tickets/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/> for details and bookings.



Vee Evazz

Artisan Food Experiment!

Vahid is an Iranian-Danish filmmaker and theatre director with many years of experience in directing and producing innovative international projects, and when live performance became impossible, during the pandemic, he used his free time to pursue his other passion: food.

Vahid started a small business in August 2020, first baking bread and then gradually progressing to other products - jam, chutney and granola. He reached out to his network in the arts to market the products he made, and news spread quickly of the delights on offer.

“At times I had been sold out weeks in advance, and now I serve many regular and returning customers in Central London, delivering my goods to their homes. I have a special focus on the South Kensington and Earl’s Court,” Vahid explains. “Things are going well!”

Vee Evazz’s approach to food is simplicity, authenticity and curiosity. Everything is made with great care from scratch, and is mostly organic. Using a combination of innovative and old fashioned techniques, this is simple and healthy food made brilliantly. Vahid’s mastery in the kitchen is a delight. **To order, contact Vahid on 07788 798 079. Visit www.VeeEvazz.com / @VeeEvazz**



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WONDERFUL UNDERBELLY IS BACK!

World-class entertainment, street food and bars will be on offer again at the udderly brilliant Earls Court site.

Underbelly, one of the world's leading live entertainment, festival and event companies, has announced a dazzling programme for their upcoming Underbelly Festival.

The iconic Upside Down Purple Cow, Underbelly, is set to return to Earls Court this summer with jaw-dropping circus acts, comedy shows that will leave you crying with laughter, and entertainment for all the family. All of this, alongside beautiful outdoor bars and delicious street food.

Underbelly Festival's majestic Spiegeltent will be back and serving up another helping of superb cabaret, shows for comedy-lovers that include the biggest LOL-worthy names in the festival's favourite late night show London Comedy Allstars, and the most fabulous drag shows in town. The perfect spot for lunch al fresco or after work drinks in the city.

"Underbelly Festival is a sure sign that summer is approaching and we are so excited for what 2022 has in store. To be able to announce such a brilliant programme of live comedy, circus, cabaret and drag variety at its very best is such an honour, and we couldn't be more proud of the shows on the line up," explains Ed Bartlam and Charlie Wood, Underbelly co-directors. "Being back at Earls Court is the perfect fit, so do come along for top-quality live entertainment, amazing outdoor bars and premium street food. We



hope to see you there!"

"We're delighted to bring the Underbelly Festival back to Earls Court from May," Rob Heasman, CEO of The Earls Court Development Company comments. "Last year over 114,000 people were entertained on this

site that enjoys such a strong creative heritage, and with a star-studded line-up of shows, theatre and comedy, Earls Court is the place to be this summer. The return of Underbelly will once again create new jobs and training opportunities for local people. We have an exciting year ahead of us as we continue opening the site back up - and this is just the beginning as we work to bring the wonder back to Earls Court."

Underbelly is in the process of submitting planning applications for the Underbelly Festival. Everything outlined above will be subject to planning and licensing approval.

Underbelly Festival's local summer event is planned to run at Earls Court, on the former Earls Court 2 Exhibition Centre site from 5th May – 16th July.

*Tickets are now on sale from:
www.underbellyfestival.com
(+£1.50 booking fee)*

Bringing the wonder back to Earls Court

ECDC's ambition has always been to make the most of the development site. Last summer, the Underbelly partnership and London Wonderground event was a massive success - 114,000 people visited and enjoyed a series of events on the Earls Court site. ECDC remain committed to quality meanwhile use on the development site, and an incredibly exciting programme is in place for 2022.

ECDC is working with This is Projekt to convert the empty houses on Empress Place east into creative studios - Empress Studios (www.empress-studios.co.uk). To celebrate and support the arts and culture community of the local area, local residents are being offered priority options to lease these incredibly cost-effective, creative spaces.. ECDC will retain four studios for future collaborate projects.

In 2021, ECDC collaborated with Kensington and Chelsea Art Festival to create a temporary art installation opposite the Warwick Road entrance of the Earls Court Tube Station - the Warwick Road Apron. Subject to planning, the hope is that the space can be approved for longer term art installations, pop-up leisure and retail use. Local residents have submitted a number of ideas to ECDC for consideration. Watch this space!



DEVELOPER NEWS

CONSULTATION UPDATE

Showing early ideas about the vision for the Earls Court site

In the lead up to Christmas and the New Year, The Earls Court Development Company (ECDC) held a round of public consultations on plans for the Earls Court site. Over a series of four in-person exhibitions, four youth workshops and two webinars, the ECDC team met with 122 local people to listen to their aspirations for the site, explaining how they intend to 'bring the wonder back' to Earls Court.

Following that, in February of this year, ECDC began a series of collaborative design

workshops to help shape the emerging masterplan with local input. The first two rounds of workshops focused on the themes: 'What was the wonder?' and 'The emerging framework', and were well attended, including by ward councillors, community groups, local residents and businesses. These dynamic and interactive sessions will be held monthly.

Later this spring, ECDC will be launching the next phase of the consultation, which will explore the proposed masterplan

framework, looking more closely at public spaces. This will include community events, webinars, pop-up events in local Tube stations, markets and a dedicated shop near Earls Court station.

Full details of these consultation and community events will be advertised this spring, so do look out for news in due course. In the meantime, you can get in touch with The Earls Court Development Company by calling 0330 333 1510 or emailing info@earlscourtdevco.com.

Supporting Local Organisations

In October 2021, ECDC granted nineteen diverse local organisations working in Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea funding from the £180,000 Earls Court Community Fund. To learn how the funding has supported the organisations, ECDC invited the grant panel and grantees to the Project Rooms, Empress Place, for an Afternoon Tea at the end of March. It was fantastic to hear about the support and recognition so many brilliant groups received for the vital role they play in the community.

Looking ahead to this year and the next round of grants, the

second round of applications for the Earls Court Community Fund is now open and will close at 5pm on 30 May. The successful applicants will then be announced at the end of the Summer, after a detailed review by the grant panel.

If you are interested to apply for the second round of grants, please visit: www.earlscourtdevco.com/community/community-fund where you will find more information on eligibility requirements, or email info@earlscourtcommunityfund.com.



Earl's Court

PRIDE 2022

Earl's Court celebrated Pride 2022 in style at The Bolton Kensington pub in Earl's Court on Saturday 28th February. A series of superb drag acts from Aidan Orange, Jimmy Lavender, Miss Joelle and Mocha made many of those in the audience connect straight back to the 1970s and '80s, when the pub was at the centre of gay life in the area – in fact the whole of the UK.

Compere Karl Moffat kept the audience lively in between acts, as did Jason Richardson, AKA Vinyl Richie, on the record decks. But it wasn't all glam nostalgia – there was a more serious side too.

Earl's Court International Film Festival screened LGBTQ+ films – some of which were made in the area over the last few years. "It was lovely to be able to show a singular selection of films to an appreciative audience at the Heyday event," says Caroline Tod-Richardson, Co-Founder and Producer of the Earl's Court Film Festival and Film Earl's





Court. "They were really well received."

These included the now famous Earl's Shorts: Courted, Memoirs of a Geeza, Scenes From The Life Of A Priest, and Memories of Fr Bill – as well as Festival submissions Clothes and Blow, Spring in Autumn and The Scene.

Members of the Archives & Local Studies team at the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Archive were also on hand to take details and scan the photo-albums of those that lived through what were some of the most difficult times in British gay history. They are creating the borough's first LGBTQ+ archive project from the interviews and imagery gay people provide.

"If you have a story to tell of your time in the area, do drop the Archives & Local Studies team at Kensington Central Library a line at centrallocalenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk," says archivist Sophia Hall.

Sponsored and supported by: The Earls Court Development Company, Earl's Court Community Trust, Earl's Court Film Festival / Film Earl's Court, CloneZone Earl's Court, Notting Hill Genesis and The Bolton Kensington.



A lot of work goes on in the background to make these events happen. Michael and I set up a Facebook page two years ago with the aim and objective of setting up an event that would be the launch pad for the creation of an archive to celebrate the decades of Earl's Court Gay Life. We wanted to ensure that the different strands came together to make this representative of our Gay Earl's Court community. The event would not have been possible without our kind sponsors, Jacek and Piotr (who were responsible for the decorations), Emily as admin, Steph from the Bishopsgate Institute, Paul and Victoria from Notting Hill Genesis, the RBKC Local History Archive, and the amazing Caroline Tod-Richardson and Eric Ziekschaap from The Bolton.

LINDA WADE



22nd & 23rd June
Barkston Gardens

24th & 25th June
Cornwall Gardens

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the West End

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local charity

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IN MEMORY



A tribute to Malcolm Spalding RIP (1950-2022)

Malcolm David Spalding died at home on Friday March 11th. He was 72. Malcolm lived in RBKC for more than 50 years and in that time gave enormous service to the communities of Kensington & Chelsea as a resident, teacher and councillor. Feared by some and admired by many, his acerbic intellect and political instinct was finely balanced with a quick a jovial wit that made him liked across the political spectrum and the communities he represented.

He first moved to London as a young man after serving in the Royal Navy before attending Chelsea College. He became a secondary school teacher, and his life-long interest in electronics led to a 30-year tenure as Principal at the London Electronics College at Penywern Road, giving further and higher education training in electronics engineering and information technology.

Malcolm sought public office first as an Independent in 1998 and later as a Conservative. He was elected in 2014 and quickly engrossed himself in the finer detail of Environment, Adult

Social Care and Health, Public Realm and Select Committees among many others. His dedication was recognised when in 2017 he was appointed Vice-Chairman of Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny Committee – a position he held for two years.

Outside of politics, Malcolm's support for business showed in his position as Vice President of the K&C Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile, he joined people from across politics and society to champion his beloved Earl's Court as Founder Member and Chairman of the Earl's Court Society. Here, he sought to protect, preserve and improve local amenities while supporting and encouraging Residents' Associations and community organisations. Malcolm was himself Vice Chairman of Philbeach Residents' Association.

Malcolm was a Chartered Engineer, a Member of the Institute of Directors, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is survived by a large family, to whom we offer heartfelt condolences.

LOCAL BUSINESS HEROES

NORTH END ROAD MARKET

Meet Noor Hussain

What's your name? Noor Hussain.

And the name of your shop? Al-Ghazal, at number 351 North End Road.

What do you like most about North End Road Market? Most of the people that come here are from different walks of life. There are poor people; rich people; people in the middle. It's nice.

Why should people come to the market?

Because the prices are so good, you can't get cheaper produce in other areas. The same produce you can buy here for one pound will cost one pound fifty, one seventy. It's the difference in price.

Which is your favourite shop or stall?

Jeffrey's. He's my favourite stall. He's friendly. I've known him a long time.

You have lots of food here that you can't get in Sainsbury's....

... You can, but not at these prices. I don't want to bring the same stuff as the stalls because we don't want to affect each other. It's not nice. I bring other things to be more diverse. To bring more people to the market and to the shop at the same time.

What would you like to be known for best?

You can buy produce from anywhere, but people come to you because they like you, because you introduce them to the shop



with a nice smile. If I come to you and I've got my money in my pocket. Why should I come to your shop? There are a lot of shops on the road. I'm not destined to come to you. It's about being flexible with your customers. Customers don't come for charity. Respect people, otherwise, nobody is going to come back to you.

How do you do that? You have to look after your business; look after fair prices; see the things that have not been selling. If it's not been selling. Reduce the price, particularly if it's near the expiry date. Some people don't

have that mentality. They'll throw it in the bin. Reduce the price and sell it instead. If it is one pound, sell it for fifty. Or give it for free. But don't throw it in the bin. A lot of people are hungry. We think about people in different countries. They don't have food to eat. They don't even have bread. Look after those people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan. Even here, there are a lot of homeless people. Give it to them for free. Why throw it in the bin? Shopkeepers, why don't we reduce the price and sell? Do this, keep your produce clean and customers are happy. Simple, right?

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Directed by Matthew Illiffe.
Designed by Natalie Johnson.
1 – 26 March 2022



The English premiere

THE STRAW CHAIR

by Sue Glover
Directed by Polly Creed.
Designed by Alex Marker.
19 April – 14 May 2022



The world premiere

BLISS

by Fraser Grace.
Based on *The River Potudan* by Andrey Platonov.
Directed and Designed by Paul Bourne.
17 May – 11 June 2022



Live stage readings

SERVICE

by Nina Millis
25 April 2022

DARKIE ARMO GIRL

Written and performed by Karine Bedrossian
9 May 2022



Useful Stuff

Your guide to Earl's Court

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area from restaurants to
schools and gyms

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for our calendar of
community events

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discover more via
the QR code

