

Autumn/Winter2022

MAIDA UNVEILED

www.W9W2.co.uk

Cover artwork by Tushar Sabale

Local events, restaurants,
architecture & films.
From the Paddington
Waterways and Maida
Vale Society.

Priceless

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this, the 8th edition of Maida Unveiled, your sideways glance at the delights of our area and one further example of how PW&MVS/W9W2, your local WCC mandated Amenity body, is working to enhance life in our area.

Street Safety is an important agenda item, especially as we come to the darker autumn/winter evenings. An area of focus has been how to enhance the walking routes between Paddington and W9, especially as the Elizabeth Line is increasing the footfall. At present the routes 'through' the Westway are all somewhat compromised by either poor lighting or sections that are relatively hidden from view. PWMVS are working with the WCC Paddington Places initiative, to see how more radical ways of altering existing routes/ opening new routes can improve the sense of 'safe passage'. Please do let us know your views via our contact email below.

Similarly, we are working to 'green' the area. Discussions are underway to introduce more trees, EV charging and bike hanger space to Elgin Avenue. In addition, we are looking for ways to focus the waste/recycling provision at Warwick Avenue, and also rationalising the service roads, so that more of this open space, at the heart of our area and the point of arrival for many visitors, is welcoming and can be appropriately enjoyed.

On the planning front, we continue to work to ensure that the unique and harmonious streetscapes of Maida Vale are preserved, whilst not wishing to stall the beneficial redevelopment of 'brownfield' sites, as this part of our area becomes increasingly popular for residential and leisure activities.



Painting by Rosie Woods @rosiewoodsdraws



We also remain engaged with the 3 major developments around Paddington that are currently under consideration. First, having successfully objected to the previous overly large proposal for the Travis Perkins site, we are awaiting a revised proposal that is more sympathetic to the existing canal-side homes and leisure facilities. For 5 Kingdom Street, we have had exciting and constructive discussions with respect of possible revised proposals, that may both address concerns with the current scheme and also introduce a hub for green transport in the area. Finally, the Paddington Green Police Station site proposals are now being consulted on and we are engaged to ensure that whilst new homes and facilities are provided for this part of the area, this is done in a way that enhances the green space of Paddington Green/ Church Yard and the setting of St Mary's church.

In terms of community activities, we have been working to support the North Paddington Youth Club, now installed in its new home at the Lanark Road Community Centre. The Club does invaluable work and we are keen to provide more visibility and support for the service they provide to the community.

Which brings me to 2 dates for your diary. On Tuesday November 15th, we will have our 2022 Community Meeting/ AGM, to be held at the Lanark Road Community Centre, when Geoff Barraclough, one of our MV Ward Councillors and now WCC Cabinet member for Planning & Economic Development, will share his vision.

Then on Tuesday December 13th, we have our annual multi-faith Christmas Concert supported by the choirs of local schools. Details of both events are elsewhere in the magazine.

So it only remains for me to wish you an enjoyable Festive Season and to ask you to be in touch on the topics discussed here, or anything else of concern - contactw9w2@gmail.com



John Zealley,

October 2022

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"The Views expressed in Maida Unveiled are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily of PWMVS"

*If you are a local business and would like to be included in our next issue, please contact our editorial office
(alice.sinclair@w9w2.co.uk)*

KAREN BUCK

Our local MP

As the old quote goes,

'There are decades when nothing happens, and there are weeks when decades happen'.

We've had quite a few of those weeks recently! We celebrated the Platinum Jubilee, but not long after, mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth II, who had been a symbol of continuity in the lives of the large majority of people now alive, and whose calm presence took us from the aftermath of World War II to the age of social media. Of course Westminster was on the front-line of the commemorations in a number of ways, and I, like many local people joined millions across the country, was honoured to pay my respects to a remarkable woman.

Meanwhile we have also changed Prime Minister again- the fourth in the 12 years of the post 2010 Conservative governments. And though I won't dwell here on national political and economic events, not least because they are so fast changing any comments will quickly be out of date, we are clearly in an exceptionally turbulent period with profound implications for the country. What is unlikely to change over the winter, however, is the impact of the energy costs and of inflation generally, which are causing real hardship for so many people. I know from my own in-box how much people are struggling already, before winter has even started, and so it is incredibly important that we share information on where people may be able to go for advice and help, and do so as early as possible.

There is a very comprehensive 'cost of living' hub produced by the Mayor of London here:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/help-cost-living>;

Westminster Council's help page here:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support>;



Above: Karen Buck and Jubilee Celebrations

Since last writing for 'Maida Unveiled', Westminster Council changed hands for the first time in history, so it is exciting to work alongside the new administration and not be on the opposite side politically as I have been for my entire time in Parliament. This hasn't meant we have not been able to work constructively on local issues in the past but there is a difference, nonetheless.

With local government having had more than a third of its funding removed in the last decade, and with money incredibly tight for other services, such as policing and health, resources remain a big issue. Even so, there are some great opportunities in such areas as improving energy efficiency (to cut bills as well to help the fight against climate change), supporting families and children, provide more genuinely affordable homes and strengthen our community and voluntary sectors. I'm delighted to be playing a part in this as Chair of the Fairness and Equality Commission set up by the new Council this summer and now under way.

AI continue to work closely with the providers of services across a wide range of issues- from flood insurance to Ukrainian refugees, from the Passport Office and DVLA problems to the policing response to local crime and anti-social behaviour and the threat to our bus services.

And in Parliament I work on my role in the Shadow DWP team amongst much else. I always welcome your thoughts and naturally will always try and help with constituent's problems as much as I can, so do get in touch via bukk@parliamentt.uk



Karen Buck,

October 2022

AN UPDATE FROM OUR LITTLE VENICE COUNCILLORS

Every time we sit down to write an article for Maida Unveiled, we seem to always report that a lot has happened since our last article and again this is true since we last reported back to you in May. of this year. The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a time of great sadness for our community and one which will take a long time for all of us to comprehend. The scenes that we saw around Westminster have shown the huge affection and admiration for our late Queen and we are all so grateful for her extraordinary 70 years of service. She will be deeply missed.

We continue to take up Little Venice residents' casework on all issues from planning to parking and as always pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable residents.

Housing Association Properties

We are experiencing an increasing workload from the housing issues faced by residents who live in housing association properties and are actively engaged in helping dozens of residents who receive a very poor service from their housing association landlords. We have helped and will continue to help these residents to take their cases to the housing ombudsman where this is sadly required.

Policing of Little Venice Ward

At the time of writing there are significant issues with the new intake of students at the City of Westminster College. We would like to see more police resources for the ward.

Our excellent neighbourhood team do all they can, but too much of their time is being taken up in the southern part of the ward dealing with these issues which results in less focus on equally important issues in the rest of the ward.

Saving the second waste collection in Little Venice Ward

The new administration is introducing a food waste collection service to the ward which will be a challenge given the nature of many of the properties in the area. They proposed that many households would have one of their waste collections replaced with a food waste collection. We successfully argued that due to the lack of storage space for many households this would not work and we are pleased to report that this proposal has been dropped and the food waste collection will be an additional collection and each household will continue to have at least two black bag waste collections per week.

Planning - Paddington Police Station Site

We continue to oppose the 32-storey tower at Paddington Green Police Station which will now be decided by the Mayor of London and we await the next version of the scheme which sadly is rumoured to be even higher than the one which Conservative Westminster Council rejected.

Thames Water and Flooding

We continue to support a large number of residents that were affected by the flooding on July 12th last year. There were two major outbreaks of rain in August this year that showed that there were certain areas of the ward that required more frequent cleaning of drain gully's. The false Autumn that has seen leaves fall 3 or 4 weeks earlier has necessitated the need for more effort to be put in earlier this year to clear the significant number of leaves that we can see on the streets or blocking drains. On both the days this occurred, we were out checking the worst areas and have reported them all for attention.

The main affected roads we reported were Clifton Gardens, Formosa Street, Maida Avenue, Park Place Villas, Sutherland Avenue, Warrington Crescent and Warwick Avenue. We will be monitoring how the new Labour administration responds to our requests for more planned gulley maintenance as we cannot risk another flooding episode of the likes that we saw in July 2021.

Thames Water have issued their final reports on the causes of the flooding, but they now need to accelerate the introduction of flood alleviation measures to protect at risk properties. These are promised, but still not delivered. We will also be pushing Thames Water to invest in more sewer capacity to deal with the increasing rainfall that we are seeing on a more regular basis.

Improvements on our Housing Estates

We are pleased to report that the project at John Aird Court to resurface the pitch and replace the goalposts has been completed. The lines have also been redrawn for the use of either basketball or football on this pitch.

Ward Budget

We have continued with the 156 hanging baskets across the ward over the summer and for this autumn have added an additional 8 in Hall Place and St Mary's Square.

Keeping in touch

If you wish to contact any of us, you can phone the Little Venice Conservative councillors' hotline on 0207 289 9929 or email us at littlevenice@westminsterconservatives.com. You can also write to us at 2 Lanark Mews, London W9 1RY.



**Cllr Melvyn Caplan,
Cllr Lorraine Dean,**

**Little Venice Ward
Conservative Councillors**

October 2022

AN UPDATE FROM OUR LITTLE VENICE COUNCILLORS (continued)

It's been a whirlwind five months since becoming a ward councillor in Little Venice last May and I have loved every single second of it! Little Venice is an idyllic oasis of peace in a hectic city, with its white stucco buildings and a vibrant history. I couldn't be prouder of the place and residents that I now represent. As a strong advocate of green and environmental policies, one of my earliest policy wins was the roll out of food waste recycling collections programme and communal food recycling bins. This was something that had previously been absent in Little Venice. My focus has also been on pushing for cleaner streets and increasing measures to stop fly tipping.

I've opened up discussions over the health of our canals and rivers and was sad to hear the recent news that avian flu has begun affecting our nearby waterfowl population. I have also been advocating for the development of new green spaces and greening projects in Little Venice. I look forward to the new proposals that are starting to emerge for a quaint piazza in Little Venice. I'm also exploring possibilities for small accessible children's park with a splash area in Paddington Green. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated to us all just how valuable our parks and outside spaces are, and I am committed to making sure this is an important focus.

In the coming weeks, there will be a number of Christmas events in Little Venice including the Westminster Council funded Christmas lights switch on. We will hopefully be welcoming the Lord Mayor of Westminster to Clifton Road for a small celebration. Drinks are to be provided by the local Winery.

As the cost-of-living and housing crisis starts to bite, I also find myself dealing with increasing case work from vulnerable residents in the ward. I am proud of the measures the new administration have put in place which include free meals, school uniforms and other financial support for those struggling. I now hold monthly surgeries (occasionally bi-monthly) for residents who need help with issues.

I have also been discussing safety and security in Little Venice with local police. I have engaged with Westminster College which has a campus in Ward by the Edgware Road after concerns were expressed about some of the students misbehaving and causing a nuisance. I have also enjoyed getting to know Westminster's Faith Exchange programme and look forward to becoming more involved. I believe we find true strength when communities come together especially in times of difficulty and uncertainty.

I thank all of those who have welcomed me with such warmth as their new councillor in Little Venice and I can't wait to hear from you and share with you some of our ideas in the months ahead.



**Cllr Sara Hassan,
Little Venice Labour Councillor**

October 2022

AN UPDATE FROM OUR MAIDA VALE COUNCILLORS

Food waste recycling

We're pleased that food waste recycling came to many homes in Maida Vale from 12 September. Our area is in the second wave of the roll-out and the service is already successfully working in Queen's Park, Harrow Road and parts of St John's Wood.

Please read the leaflets from the council which should have come through your letter box and let us know what you think. Alternatively, drop an email to

foodwaste@westminster.gov.uk.

Ward Budgets

Besides the flower baskets, the Maida Vale Ward budget has so far funded (together with neighbouring wards): an after-school club with self-defence classes; community events at Grand Junction including an exhibition, a language café to help people learn conversational English and an art party; family day outings; a tea party for the over 60s and a women's free head massage drop-in service.

Community groups can apply for ward budget funding.

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/apply-ward-budget>

Randolph Surgery

We have received some complaints from patients of Randolph Surgery. Our advice to patients who are unhappy with the service they receive from their GP surgery is to initially raise the complaint with the practice itself. We know that can feel awkward but usually GP practices will work with patients to resolve the issue. If a patient still isn't happy, we are happy to support them to take a complaint further. Also, patients can change GP practice by just registering with a new GP practice. You don't have to give any reason or inform your old practice.

Dockless Bikes

You are probably aware that we have been calling for tougher action on dockless bikes blocking streets and have continued to enforce against operators who allow it. We have been concerned that people have been leaving bikes in inappropriate locations that block footways, reduce access and cause obstructions to pedestrians, especially those who are visually impaired. After pressure, we are pleased to see operators are now working with the Council to develop a five-point plan for controlling the use of bikes in Westminster.

Lanark Road Youth and Community Centre

The North Paddington Youth Club has had a very busy summer supporting local children with activities. We are supporting the youth club with its application for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to improve the basketball facilities. It's really important that when the change over happens, we are providing spaces for as many young people as we can, and hosting a wider range of activities.

Planned Preventative Maintenance

We're pleased to continue to work with Paul Newman from Paddington Waterways to prioritise projects for Westminster's planned preventative maintenance programme.

Most recently, we're delighted to have the pavements replaced on Kilburn Park Road. Similarly in Paddington Recreation, residents will be happy that the paths are being repaired. These were turning into small lakes after rain.

Deep cleaning the streets

Residents often complain of the dirty stains and general poor condition of some of our streets. The new administration has extended Veolia's fleet of deep-cleansing vehicles which means we can increase the frequency of washing to four times a year for key locations. This will include Elgin Avenue Parade by Maida Vale station.

Mental Health

The 10th of October is world mental health day and this year's theme is mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority. There are a range of different ways that you can take time to reflect and talk to those around you to share experiences. Those who work from home should try to go for a walk as often as they can for a break from the screens, as well as watching some fantastic resources available to help. Mindful webinars on things such as emotional resilience are a great way to start talking about mental health, and there are a series of NHS films to help support our residents. To access some of these, please visit <https://thrivedn.co.uk/access-all-areas-schedule/>

Do you have any ideas for the local area?

Is there something you'd like to see more of? Is there anything we can help you with?

Please let your councillors know!

We hold councillor surgeries on the first Saturday from 10-11am, and the second Sunday from 11am-12pm of each month at the café in Paddington Rec. There is no need to make an appointment, please just walk in.

**Cllr Geoffrey Barraclough,
Cllr Nafsika Thalassis,
Cllr Iman Less**

Maida Vale Labour Councillors

May 2022



From left to right: Cllr Geoffrey Barraclough, Cllr Nafsika Thalassis, Cllr Iman Less

LONDON PLEIN AIR GROUP VISITS LITTLE VENICE

Sun, and bright colours reflected in water; what a treat for members of the London Plein Air Group when they descended en masse to paint around Browning's Pool one Sunday in October. Of the thirteen painting locations the group had visited since its formation in September last year, this had to be the most engaging and enjoyable. With so many viewpoints around such delightful views, the artists were spoilt for choice. Most were naturally drawn to the moored narrowboats, and to the water sent shimmering by the movement of craft, swans and geese. The session ended with a viewing of some forty paintings set out in Rembrandt Gardens, and then a trip to the Warwick Castle pub. It was a memorable day for everyone.

The London Plein Air Group was founded by **Tushar Sabale (our front cover artist)** and Carol Owen in September 2021. There is no formal membership, and anyone can paint out with the group at their once-monthly meetings.

Contact Tushar Sabale to be added to our WhatsApp group.

Tushar Sabale tushar.sabale@googlemail.com
@tusharsabale
Carol Owen carolowen2@me.com
@carolowenmbe
London Plein Air Group @londonpleinairgroup





Sarah Dickinson @sarahldickinson



Amy Jennings



OUR FRONT COVER ARTIST

Tushar Sabale

Tushar Sabale is an Indian born, British artist based in London.

He is an elected Candidate member of 'The Wapping Group of Artists' since February 2022. He has exhibited his works in Mall Galleries for the Federation of British Artists at The NEAC (New English Art Club) and RSMA (Royal Society of Marine Artists).

He is also the co-founder of ' The London Plein Air' group. Tushar mainly paints plein air in oil colours but occasionally enjoys painting objects and has transitioned from painting portraits to landscapes in recent years.

He places his work between Impressionism and Realism with some Luminist touches.



Above: Tushar Sabale. Source: <https://www.tusharsabale.com/about/>

Background

Tushar grew up in the Indian suburbs surrounded by lush green farms and vineyards. He was taught the basics of art under his guru and art professor, Girish Sahadeo, but also gained a lot of his knowledge through independent study and practice.

His artistic talent became evident in the very early years of his life. Annual summer vacations at his grandparent's countryside home were very inspiring to the young artist who spent most of his time drawing and sketching the scenery, always managing to capture the rustic allure of the Indian countryside.

At the age of just 12 years old, Tushar won first prize and a National Award in a Drawing Competition amongst 1 million students who participated that year across the whole of India. A year before that at the age of 11, he was amongst the top 2 winners in a similar national level painting competition and has continued to win many state, national and international awards for his paintings.

His passion in the field of art led him to choose Architecture at university. After completing his Bachelor's degree, he decided to further explore art in the field of Design and thereafter undertook a Master's Degree course wherein he studied Product Design, from one of the leading institutes in India, The Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi.

Tushar embarked on his professional career as a Creative Designer, designing watches for multinational brands like Timex and other such companies. His move to London in 2006 saw him working for a design patent company that helped aspiring designers to conceptualise their ideas into working products. His experience also includes designing pieces for Hollywood movies while as a designer for a high-end jewellery brand.

Even with his professional success as a designer, there was something Tushar had ignored which was his innate need to paint. After few years of sabbatical, he rekindled his love affair and went back to his canvases and paintbrushes and has not looked back since. After being a weekend painter for years Tushar now paints full time.

Source: <https://www.tusharsabale.com/about/>

HAMZA TAOUZZALE, LORD MAYOR OF WESTMINSTER

Sitting down for 60 seconds with our editor, Alice

Name: Hamza Taouzzale

Age: 23

Best thing about being Mayor? The best thing about being Lord Mayor is being able to inspire future generations into feeling that they could take on any career they want! Another great thing is meeting people from all walks of life when I attend events all over the city – from Royal events to local ones. Being able to attend the Queen’s Jubilee was particularly special to me!

When you were little what did you want to be when you grew up? That’s a good question! When I was younger, I wasn’t too sure what I wanted to do. I just knew I wanted to be someone who was able to make a change in my community.

I was also the sort of person that always wanted to know what was happening, to stay on top of all the latest news and information and be a point of contact for people that needed advice or help.

Being a local Councillor really is the perfect fit.

Who are your 5 dream dinner guests? My dream dinner guests would be people who have done something significant in history. Perhaps it would be our new King, a former PM or two as well as Mohammed Ali and the original Ronaldo.

Who would play you in a film? Not 100% sure lol! Maybe the Rock?

If you could steal credit for any piece of art, song, film, book etc which would you claim? Either the Godfather film, an art piece by Banksy or Van Gogh and perhaps the Lord of the Rings books too!

What would your last meal be? A generously seasoned and perfectly roasted chicken.

How would you describe your job to a 5-year-old? The best way to describe my job would be to say I’m the symbol of Westminster, representing the city in a similar way the King represents the United Kingdom.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently? The funniest things happened early on in my days as Lord Mayor when I wasn’t too sure what to do when military officers saluted me. I tried to salute back but it wasn’t too convincing which felt a little awkward for a while.



Above: Hamza Taouzzale, Lord Mayor of Westminster



"The best thing about being Lord Mayor is being able to inspire future generations into feeling that they could take on any career they want"

Hamza Taouzzale, Lord Mayor of Westminster

WILD BIRDS IN THE CANAL

Around a dozen dead swans and geese were discovered floating in the canals around Little Venice during the first week of October by tour operator Ben Perkins. Perkins told the BBC that while he would usually see dead birds once every few months, he was now seeing them *'all the time'*. Concerns have been raised that the cause of death could be avian flu.

Canal & River Trust informed us:

"Wild birds are an essential part of what makes life better by the waterways we look after, so we are concerned by recent reports of dead swans and geese in London."

"Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the authority responsible for investigating potential outbreaks of bird flu. We support their work by reporting dead birds to them and following their directions on removal."

"Members of the public should not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds they find, but instead immediately call the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77, giving as accurate a location as possible."

If you have any further queries please contact
Enquiries.londsoutheast@canalrivertrust.org.uk



THE MYSTERIOUS INVENTION OF Little Venice

Where did the name Little Venice come from? It is not all obvious. Romantic poets create a red herring. Lord Byron made an early remark that the canals of Venice would be no more beautiful than those of Paddington if the buildings around them had not been magnificent. And the poet Robert Browning, who lived overlooking the canal basin, found his name attached to it as Browning's Pool, but only after the council had demolished his house in 1960 and put up a commemorative mural, possibly out of a feeling of guilt. A Blue Plaque marking the site didn't arrive until 1993.

If you want to see where the name Little Venice really came from you need to walk around the corner from Browning's Pool and down to the bottom of Westbourne Terrace Road, just where the Westway cuts across it with all its roaring traffic. There you will find a Green Plaque to the crime fiction writer Margery Allingham. She lived here with her family from 1916 to 1926, from the age of 12 until 22. Her father Herbert was a journalist and editor, writing for everything from the *New London Journal* to what we would now call pulp fiction. He used a studio in Delamere Terrace, overlooking the canal, for his freelance work and writing and, later, Margery worked there as well. This was where the idea of Little Venice grew in her imagination. She started writing novels, her first was published at the age of 19. And gradually she started writing crime fiction. It was the start of what became known as the Golden Age of crime writers like Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Dorothy L Sayers and John Dickson Carr, and, of course, Allingham. And in 1934, with the publication of *Death of a Ghost*, her sixth novel, she was well into her career.

The story is a tale of love and jealousies and, of course, murder in a huge artist's salon overlooking the Little Venice canal basin. 'L-shaped', we learn, 'it took up the entire first floor of the old house on the canal'.



Above the balcony were five long windows, each about twelve feet high, through which was a magnificent view of the Regent's Canal'. The artist who had owned it had died several years earlier but had left a dozen unseen paintings which, his will stipulated, were to be revealed and shown one-by-one year-by-year in an annual exhibition. 'On a Sunday in March, 1930, therefore, the dusty windows of the yellow houses of Swallow Crescent reflected some of the glories of the past in the parade of automobiles parked against the plump stone balustrade of the canal. Little Venice ceased to look merely shabby and became interestingly Bohemian'.

It was a louche life amongst not only the artist community but also the residents by the canal. There is an old retainer, Fred Rennie. 'Even his service in the war had not uprooted him', it says. 'For female society he depended upon the canal boats, so that his attachments were necessarily of a transitory nature'. Meanwhile the fateful gallery opening draws near. This is how Chapter Three opens: 'The evening mist rising up from the canal had grown perceptibly thicker Campion noticed as he walked behind the Bishop down the asphalt path, and the studio lights were blazing. Lisa had drawn the curtains over the tall windows to shut out the melancholy yellow sky, and the grateful heat and the scented air of the crowded studio were comforting after the dankness of the garden'.

By the end of the chapter the lights have suddenly failed at the height of the party and a young man has been murdered. 'It was young Mr Dacre', she said. 'He's dead. And the scissors – oh Mr Campion, the scissors! The young man put his arm around her as she tottered towards him'. Before long the sleuth, Albert Campion, and his oppo, Inspector Stanislaus Oates from Scotland Yard, are hard at work unravelling the complications of the crime. By Chapter Eight things are sliding: 'The affair at Little Venice might have lingered on at this stage in its development until it became a tabooed subject at Scotland Yard and a worn-out scandal in Bayswater had it not been for the conversation which the grave-faced man from the Foreign Office held with his department'. The plot thickens. And thickens some more. By Chapter Nine: 'Mr Campion smiled politely, but his pale eyes behind his spectacles were thoughtful. On the face of it this new development in the affair at Little Venice was frankly bewildering'. And there we leave it. To find out whodunnit and whydunit you will have to, as I did, summon up a very inexpensive copy of the old Penguin edition on Abe Books and read it yourselves. Life and death, and ghosts, in the newly christened Little Venice are amazing.

Robert Bruce,

October 2022



EDWARD ARDIZZONE WISHES YOU ...

...a Happy Christmas Season

The artist Edward Ardizzone, known to everyone as Ted, lived at 130 Elgin Avenue for 52 years until 1972, and adored the neighbourhood of Maida Vale. He loved its people, the children all around, and the pubs. In his illustrations and drawings and his hugely popular children's books he portrayed people with joyful humour and warmth. He loved people and they loved him. So it is no surprise that for many years he produced an annual Christmas card for friends and family. This one is typical. He loved the fact that pubs, in those days, were full of people from all generations and, in particular, little old ladies.

His old friend Edward Booth-Clibborn wrote that the cards have a constant theme of 'the friendly interiors of Ted's local pubs' as well as 'the intimacy and enjoyment of family life'.

The cards show gentle scenes even if, as in this one, the ladies are spooked by the shadow of a reindeer. Even the ever-present dog is startled. The amiable scene is, momentarily, disrupted by the fantasy of Christmas reindeer and, possibly, Father Christmas on the threshold. There is quiet humour and joy in the potentially startling theme. As Booth-Clibborn concluded: 'Ardizzone's unselfconscious and spontaneous approach make of these cards an unusual and touching record of Maida Vale and of a London now forever changed by the advance of time'. Time to head down to your nearest Maida Vale pub and celebrate the season and, perhaps, the arrival of the reindeer.

Robert Bruce,
October 2022



A PAINTING EXPEDITION TO THE ARDIZZONE PUBS OF MAIDA VALE

During the hottest days of this last summer I had the most enjoyable assignment imaginable. I accompanied one of this country's finest artists and illustrators around the loveliest of Maida Vale's pubs. It was a delightful project.

The Chris Beetles Gallery, the leading gallery dealing in illustration and English art, had commissioned Cox to produce a series of paintings using the same pubs and the same viewpoints that Edward Ardizzone had done when he worked on the books *'The Local'* and *'Back To The Local'* just before and just after the Second World War. Ardizzone was the quintessential Maida Vale artist. He loved the area, its pubs and its people. And when he had produced the books, in conjunction with Maurice Gorham, an old school-chum, the two of them noted that they had been 'assiduous' in their research in the pubs. So there was no hesitation on my part, nor on Paul Cox's part, to visit and revisit some of the finest pubs in the land. And we realised that, amazingly, many of the pubs that Ardizzone loved are pretty much, all these years on, the same in character and appearance now as then.

He lived in Maida Vale from 1920 until 1972 and the house, 130 Elgin Avenue, where he did his finest work and where he and his extended family lived for so long, now has a Blue Plaque on its wall to commemorate and celebrate him. He was a disciplined artist and liked to be at his desk in the bow window on the first floor at an early hour. Then at lunchtime he would pop out for a swift pint of beer at one of the Maida Vale pubs before heading home for bread and cheese and then more work through the afternoon. And in that time given over to the lunchtime pint he would be sketching and drawing the people and the pub around him, making small notes on a beer mat or a napkin, that back at his desk he could work up into a finished sketch or drawing. He loved the great curves of etched glass that swathe the Prince Alfred and the many different bars with elaborate woodwork inside.

This year, and Ardizzone would be amazed and delighted, it was given Grade II* protection to maintain and protect its extraordinary intricacy and grandeur. And if you look at one of Paul Cox's paintings of the interior of the Prince Alfred you will see the artist's own pint of stout tantalisingly within reach.

Ardizzone loved the huge circular bar in the Warrington with its grand staircase where, in his day, 'the girls' would drape themselves in a raffish way.

He loved what is now the Hero of Maida, and was then The Shirland, with its delicate staircase curling upstairs. He would often depict stout ladies of a certain age sitting beneath its curve and nursing glasses of, appropriately enough, stout. The Shirland had an advantage too. It was the closest pub to his house.

And he also loved the Warwick Castle up near the canal at Little Venice with its peaceful street outside where the gents he loved to draw are animatedly discussing the issues of the day, or the beer.

This was the world of Maida Vale that Paul Cox and I criss-crossed on those days of summer. And which he has drawn and painted for the exhibition which opens this November. Over eighty years since Ardizzone illustrated them for the books the same pubs now spring into colourful life again, refreshed, much as we were in our travels. For those of us who live in Maida Vale it is a time for celebration. We should declare the streets of Maida Vale and the pubs that enliven them to be an area of outstanding natural beauty, and joy, and beer.

Paul Cox's paintings of the Ardizzone pubs of Maida Vale will be on show in a special section of the annual The Illustrators exhibition at Chris Beetles Gallery from 22 November. The gallery is at 8 & 10 Ryder Street, St James's, SW1Y 6QB. Details at: www.chrisbeetles.com

Robert Bruce,
October 2022



The Bridge House Westbourne Terrace

The Bridge House Westbourne Terrace, by Paul Cox

THE DAYS WHEN A YOUTHFUL JAMES BOND COULD BE FOUND IN A FORMOSA STREET BASEMENT

If you had turned up, membership card in hand, at the basement of 42 Formosa Street on Sunday March the 2nd 1957, you could have gained entrance to a really memorable theatrical evening. Sean Connery, James Bond himself, in Eugene O'Neill's 'The Long Voyage Home', together with Bernard Bresslaw, stalwart of many a 'Carry On' film.

Connery of course was then only 26, and his big break as James Bond in the film of Doctor No wouldn't come for another five years. But for the artistically-inclined of Maida Vale it would have been an early preview of the rugged Scot's prowess. You would have been in The Gaberbocchus Common Room, named, somewhat playfully, after a Latin translation of the word Jabberwocky, the title of Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem.

The club was a rather eccentric, artistic, but intensely social place run by two Polish emigres, Franciszka and Stefan Themerson, as an offshoot to their publishing business. They had arrived from Poland in 1944 and had set up the Gaberbocchus Press in 1948. This, as Stefan's Times obituary was eventually to report, 'set out to produce beautiful, if obscure, volumes: Themerson's own work: Jarry's 'Ubu Roi'; Haussman and Schwitters 'The Pin'; Christian-Dietrich Grabbe's Comedy, Satire, Irony, and Meaning', and the work of many young English writers'. And it also produced all manner of colourful graphic art and design, and films. This work first operated out of Warrington Crescent but then moved to Formosa Street. There was talk of dry rot and a collapsed staircase back in Warrington Crescent. All these details are laid out in three majestic volumes of the Themerson archive* published in the midst of lock-down. But it is the Formosa Street club that fascinates the most. It is a snapshot of artistic endeavour in those years when young people were trying to lift themselves out of post-war torpor. The Common Room was active between 1957 and 1959 and hosted some 77 events before it closed for the summer in July 1959 and never re-opened.

Monday to Friday the club was open for members 'to read a wide selection of international journals, to write, drink coffee and play chess'. 'There are weekly meetings addressed by writers, actors, scientists, musicians, artists, film makers, philosophers etc.,' the details said. 'The central objective is a congenial forum for those concerned with the philosophies of art and science and to diffuse obsolete barriers between them'. So what did it look like? This is how the club was described: 'There is an entrance through the shop the Themersons hope to turn into a bookshop. From here a wooden staircase leads into a long basement. The shop is painted white. The bookshelves are black. Downstairs the walls are white and there are round tables painted red and black. There are benches and folding metal chairs with orange canvas seats. Round the walls are narrow shelves for magazines. The area under the shop contains a platform with an old black leather chaise longue'. Meanwhile: 'Members and their guests could order omelettes, spaghetti bolognese, coffee, wine, bread and cheese etc. Most of the cooking was done by Barbara Wright and Tony Richards'.

On the 4th of February 1958 members could have heard Stevie Smith reading her poems. On 11th June 1959 the poet Michael Horovitz could be found providing the words while a young Dudley Moore was at the piano. These were the days when Moore was primarily a jazz pianist working with John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, before his 'Beyond The Fringe' Fame, his work with Peter Cook and before his long Hollywood career. Again, Maida Vale was getting in on the ground floor, or to be more accurate, the basement.

*The Themerson Archive Catalogue, edited by Jasia Reichardt and Nick Wadley. Published by MIT.

Robert Bruce

October 2022

PROTECTING THE HIGH STREET

I've worked in retail my entire life and the past few years have been some of the toughest I can remember. Yet strangely, despite all the change and upheaval and a world which has pivoted so monumentally online, there are a few things that have stayed the same. Such as the power of old fashioned customer service to turn new customers into lifelong fans. When so much of all our lives is now lived digitally, an authentic hello in a shop or a random act of kindness from a complete stranger really can make someone's day.

I've also lived in Maida Vale for over 15 years and there is very little that makes me happier than a walk down Clifton Road or Formosa Street, nodding to the people I meet and being recognised in the shops and cafes I visit. Don't get me wrong, there are shopkeepers round here who barely look up when they hand you your change, but I like to think they are in the minority. Great shopkeepers know that making the effort to remember a customer and welcome them back is just about one of the simplest and cheapest ways to grow their business and build long term advocates.

You see, the reason I'm passionate about local independent retail and thriving communities is because I believe they make a far greater contribution to our collective well being than we possibly give them credit for.

For many of us, the pandemic of the past two years was a shock to the system in more ways than one. Whether you caught the virus or not, the rhythms of our lives have changed, with so many anchors gone or irreversibly altered. Working, socialising, shopping, travelling, exercising – we had to make changes, and now for many of us, in many parts of our lives, there's no going back.

And it's not as if we are emerging into halcyon days. Quite the opposite. Our world is in the midst of a horrific war, there's an all too tangible cost of living crisis, and the realities of Brexit are starting to bite.

We have a daily sense that some of life's certainties are at risk. And while for some this is liberating, for most of us, we are, possibly for the first time, deeply worried about our futures.

This is where family, friends and communities come in, our protective shield against everything the world throws at us. Who doesn't have a newfound appreciation of that basic human need to be with other people, talking, caring, laughing and just not being alone?

Part of this is a rediscovery of our love of local. When the big picture is this scary, the easy buzz of the place we call home is a balm. The familiar people, places and practices bring a soothing sense of belonging and collective purpose, helping us feel it will all be ok.

Admittedly, the retail sector at large has a bit of catching up to do to ensure all physical shops are there to meet this new very human need.

Everything starts with a change of mindset. A store isn't just a place for people to buy things. It's a hub where staff come to work, shoppers come to shop, meet and mingle, and communities are served in ways that some retailers are still imagining.

We've also got to learn the lessons of the past. So many "cookie cutter" high streets ultimately failed because they offered exactly the same shops as the next town. Ensuring consumers put down their phones and laptops and venture out, means ensuring our high streets offer diversity, authenticity and experience.

Which means a mix of businesses both national and independent. So losing one independent cafe on Clifton Road and replacing it with a cafe from a national chain(however lovely the people in there are), might not have been such a clever move for example. And with one on Elgin Avenue and another by the canal, do we really need another Gails in the old Baker & Spice unit (if the village rumours are to be believed)? Just my view, but we've been here before.

So much has been said about the future of our high streets, but for me, the rise of communities is a more relevant way to frame the debate. It may have been borne out of necessity and the restrictions of Covid, but it now presents a huge opportunity for retailers to redefine themselves in a positive and dynamic way and consumers to reconnect with the place they call home at a time when the world feels a bit shaky.

So my message to shopkeepers - Customers will invest a bit more and linger a little longer in stores when they don't feel like a number and the local story is well told and expertly executed. They'll love your brand a little bit more if it plays an active part in their community but be aware that as life gets tougher, they will expect you to acknowledge that in whatever way your business can sustain. And my message to consumers - support your local businesses, I promise it will pay you back in ways you've not even imagined.

Next time you see me walking towards you along those skinny pavements on Blomfield Road or pretending I'm in Paris along the sprawling boulevard which is Elgin Avenue or coming into your shop or business, throw me your best smile and I'll try to do the same. It's the million moments like these that knit together to make Maida vale the community we're all proud to call our own.

A few of my favourite local haunts:

- Clifton Greens - 16 Clifton Road - Well, obviously
- Marys Living & Giving shop for Save the children - 11 Clifton Road - So much more than a charity shop
- Provenance Village Butcher - 5 Clifton Road - Thank God for the return of the butcher
- Boots - 33 Clifton Road - Please never ever close
- Clifton Nurseries - 5A Clifton Villas - London's best nursery by a country mile

- The Warwick Castle - 6 Warwick Place - Might just be the friendliest little pub in town
- La Piccola Deli - 6 Lauderdale Place - The best chicken escalopes always served with a smile
- The Prince Alfred - 5A Formosa street - Grab a little stool and watch the world go by

Peter Cross,

October 2022



Peter Cross is a consumer expert, retail consultant, change maker, communicator and speaker with an unrivalled depth of experience. After 8 years in charge of customer experience at John Lewis and Waitrose and more than 10 years as Mary Portas' business partner, he's passionate about the future of the sector and its pivotal role in shaping our communities. He has lived in Maida Vale for over 15 years.



The Elgin Elgin Avenue

Paul Cox '12

The Elgin Elgin Avenue, by Paul Cox

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THE ART OF FOOD

JOHANNA WIKSTEDT

SWEDISH FOOD SENSATIONALIST

JOHANNA WIKSTEDT

We picked the brains of local Swedish food sensationalist and artist Jo.

How long have you lived in the area and what do you love about it?

I have now lived in W9 for about 15 years. When I first came to London I moved straight into Blomfield road, right on the canal overlooking the beautiful blue bridges. Then had the pleasure of moving up to Delaware Road opposite the BBC Studios. From one Studio to another, I'm now living off of the very famous Abbey Road in St Johns Wood. I love the Village feel and its location. I've always felt rather greedy knowing I have "both". Both the greenery and the city. I can walk along a canal, jewelled in cherry-blossom and magnolia, and the next, a ten min taxi ride away I can be walking down Mount Street, window shopping (focus on window(!)).

Your knowledge and cooking skills exude passion and creativity - what drives this?

I was always very fortunate to be surrounded by family that loved cooking. Their lives were shaped (at a young age) in not being able to afford the quantity nor luxuries of today, but knew very well how to make the most of it. That's not actually a fair remark; they always, knew how to make food taste exceptional. How to make a little, go a long way.

We're very blessed in Sweden where I come from, to have exceptionally fresh produce right on our doorstep. Seafood, fresh fish, farmers growing every possible root and vegetable in the field behind your house.

So my passion, is all down to them. A combination of the grandparents and my parents' love of being together, gathering around a table - but also of feeding friends and family. We're the kind of family, that at breakfast, we talk about lunch. And at lunch we're talking about what's for dinner.

Some people might say that "that's not very mindful or in the moment", but see, to us it is. What we cook or eat, many times become nostalgic. It sparks new topics of conversation in almost every aspect of our lives. Work, travel, memories, family, sad moments, happy moments - and this pushes us, to when we sit there at that breakfast, lunch or dinner, to imagine what else we could do to evolve that recipe, coming full circle to the whole question of passion.

Taste, is key. If something looks incredible but tastes like an old jockstrap, then what's the point of it being beautiful?. But when you manage to get both taste and art, onto a plate - then you've got magic. Like my grandmother used to say, "we eat with our eyes first". And I think this applies to many aspects of our lives. Good and bad. If something is presented well, we're more open to trying/listen/approach something that we perhaps otherwise wouldn't have. As a Senior Sales, the sales aspect of alluring someone into tasting something they normally wouldn't have, by making it look delectable, hasn't gone amiss on me. So that's where the creativity gets to roam free.

I spend about 12 hours a day in front of six computer screens - I talk numbers and financial strategy until I can't see straight. Therefore the cooking and its creativity, became a way to keep sane. To meditate almost through something else than typing on a keyboard.

What would be your top list of places to food shop? (roughly in w9 ideally)

Clifton Greens is where I get all my vegetables and fruit. All the sort of fancy spices, seeds and nuts are from there as well. It's as "close to home" as possible, as I can get in our area. We're not talking about "one kind of tomato" but five. Same goes for almost every other fruit or veg you could think of.

Provenance Village Butcher is another good location. Most of my beef and lamb come from here. Very good quality. Some incredible Spanish ham and chorizo too. And, on the little shelf right behind their door, some exceptional "already made" sauces, salsas and chimichurris.

Panzer's is another, perhaps not W9 local, but a great institution to our wider area for when you're looking for something specific. A lot of niche products like Caviar, roe, certain cheeses and Asian vinegars and soys. And if you're after pasta, they have probably every kind under the sun. It's a joy to walk down these shops getting inspired. As that's genuinely how I cook – I walk through these little shops or markets and when something stands out and looks incredibly fresh – that's when it comes to you.

Thyme & Tahini is another new edition to the area that I'm starting to pop into more often. A really inviting delicatessen.

Even if most of my fish and seafood gets delivered to my area via a different provider, **Coastline Galicia** up on Abbey Road always have incredible Fish and Seafood. For many years I lived down in "downtown Warwick Avenue" and completely missed this gem. Take a stroll up through glorious Hamilton Terrace and go visit.



Follow Jo on instagram @itgirllondon

"Taste, is key. If something looks incredible but tastes like an old jockstrap, then what's the point of it being beautiful?. But when you manage to get both taste and art, onto a plate – then you've got magic.."

Johanna Wikstedt

Salt Baked Beet Tartar with Horseradish Cream & Caviar

A little goes a long way; this is an absolute family-gem that leads people to believe you actually know what you're doing without ever having touched a knife in your life before, OR a beet for that matter.

Ingredients – Salt baked Beetroot

- 200g coarse sea salt
- 200g fine salt
- 3 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 250g plain flour
- 2 rosemary sprigs, de-stalked
- 125-175ml water
- 6 medium beetroot

Method

1. To make the salt crust, place the two salts, egg whites, flour, rosemary leaves and most of the water in a food processor and whiz until combined. Add the remaining water until the mixture forms a firm dough that isn't too sticky. Tip out the dough and squish together into a ball, cover with plastic wrap and set aside for roughly two hours.

2. Heat the oven to 170C. Scrub the beetroot and closely trim, but do not peel.

3. Roll out the dough on a bench and cut into six pieces. Place a beetroot on top of each one, and press the dough up and over each beetroot until completely sealed. Thickness should roughly be about a one pound coin.

4. Bake for 1 1/2 hours, then crack open the crust, once cooled down.

5. Once cooled, dice into smaller pieces, to taste. Pour a few drops of olive oil, lemon juice and grate some fresh lemon zest over the beets. Only to get some shine and acidity back. Don't add too much, you don't want the mixture to go soggy.

Ingredients - Toppings

Horseradish Cream
200g Full Fat Crème Fraiche
Freshly Grated Horseradish to taste.
Pinch of white pepper.



Method

Mix all together. Note that Horseradish gets stronger overtime, so take your time tasting it after 30 minutes, and place in fridge. Then taste again before serving.

Serving

Top with fresh Dill And Caviar, alternatively Elsinore Black Lumpfish Roe.

Warm Comforting Prawn Bisque from the Swedish West Coast

Don't be put off by the elaborate plating and Swedish pzazz, it's all about finding loop holes. In terms of those prawns, believe it or not, I did not stand there for forty-eleven minutes with a pair of confused kitchen tongs acting like tweezers, swearing like a Viking, trying to fit the prawns into a nice seafood Jenga tower. All you really have to do, is find a round cookie cutter, or similar, and place the prawns in a clockwise manner on top of each other, and Bob's your uncle. It truly is that straight forward. The texture of the seafood itself will bind them nicely together. The very same cookie cutter or shape, was used for the Beet Tartar.

Ingredients

- 100g butter
- 4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1kg fresh sustainable Atlantic prawns (I prefer to use already cooked/smoked/boiled prawns – raw also work but requires a bit more preparation). Peel and save heads and shell.
- Prawn meat to be saved for serving.
- 1.5 litres fresh fish stock
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 turnip/celery root, finely chopped
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 2 fresh flatleaf parsley sprigs
- 4 tbsp tomato purée
- 3 tbsp brandy or cognac, plus an extra dash
- 2 pinches cayenne pepper
- 3 small ripe tomatoes, chopped
- Squeeze lemon juice
- 200ml White dry wine
- 50ml double cream

Method

1. Melt butter with 1 tbsp of the oil in a saucepan.
2. When foaming, add the prawn heads and shells and cook over a medium-high heat for 3-5 minutes, stirring regularly, until the mixture smells fragrant.
3. Add the tomato puree, and sear for another 5 minutes, this helps get rid of the acidity in the tomato.
4. Add in the chopped vegetables – and over a low heat, cook the shells and vegetables for 8-10 min, without letting the veg get coloured (add a bit more butter and oil if needed).
5. Add the fish stock, wine, bay leaf and parsley sprigs. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer gently for no more than 30 minutes. Prawn Shells can get very bitter if cooked for too long.



6. Remove shell and soup mix from the heat, pour through a fine sieve into another large pot.
7. Increase the heat to medium, for 1 minute, stirring.
8. Turn up the heat to high, then add the brandy or cognac and bubble until evaporated. Add pinch of Cayenne pepper and cream. Don't forget to taste as you go along. Do you need more salt, do you need a pinch of sugar to bring out the wine. Do you need more water/fish stock if too salty?
9. Leave to reduce on low heat, let the soup simmer until you're happy with its taste and thickness. This Can take from 15-40 minutes depending on how concentrated you like your bisque.
10. When the soup is to your taste, add a bit of fresh cut dill.
11. Place the peeled prawns to your liking in a deep soup bowl, and pour the Bisque around or over.
12. Serve with warm bread and butter. Serving Tip, top the prawns with some Caviar or Lumpfish Roe, and always, more Dill.

Venison with Red Wine and Blueberry Jus. Served with seared Chanterelles

A hearty dish that makes your mouth drool. Make that as literal or not as you wish. Gorgeous light game flavour mixed with sharp sweetness of wine and berries. A first good step in making anything more appealing on a plate, is “make it smaller”, you’re right, that’s rarely something you’d expect to come out of people’s mouths – but on this occasion, it’s true. Less is more. You can always go for seconds (and you will, trust me). The eye always wants more than the stomach – so let the ingredients speak for themselves, and be sparse with your plating. Before you know it – you’ll be able to plate just as well as my inner single semi-desperate Swedish-Nigella-self.

Perfect for a first date, the in-laws you merely tolerate or the people you truly love and want to spoil”

Ingredients

700g Venison Fillet
200g Golden Chanterelles

Ingredients Red Wine & Blueberry Jus.

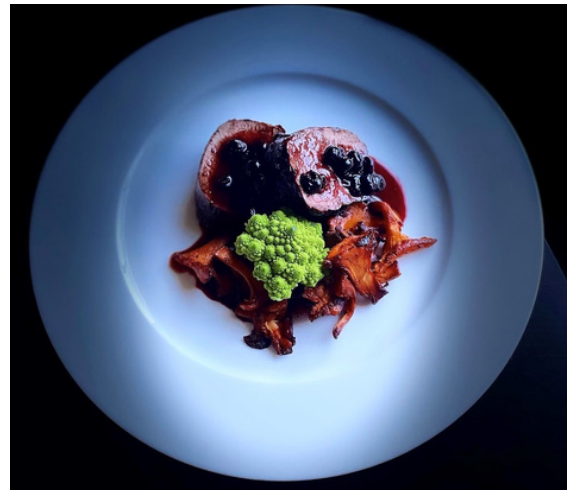
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 175ml port
- 175ml red wine
- 1 rosemary sprig
- 1 bay leaf
- 800ml beef stock
- 2 tbsp butter
- pinch sugar
- 150g Blueberries

Method

1. Put the olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat and fry the shallots until golden and caramelised, about 10 mins.
2. Add the port, wine and herbs and simmer for 10 mins, or until reduced by half.
3. Pour in the stock and continue to cook until reduced by half again, then strain, discarding the shallots and herbs.
4. Transfer the sauce into a new pan and bring to the boil. Add the Blueberries. Simmer for another 15 min. Remove from the heat and whisk in the butter, then season to taste.

Turn oven to 200 degree Celsius.

Season the meat with some black pepper. Sear the Venison Fillet on a high heat on each side (2min a side) in a frying pan, before placing on a baking tray. Place in oven for about 5-7min. Then leave to rest for about 8-10 min. Sprinkle with sea salt.



Sear the fresh mushrooms in the same pan, season to taste (salt/pepper).

Serve the gorgeous fillet sliced, with the crispy golden chanterelles and a spoonful of that sweet rich red wine and blueberry jus.

ASK DR DANIAL

Dr. Daud is a GP currently working in several surgeries across central London as well as the London Central West Out-of-hours service. He is also the Mental Health Co-Ordinator for MERCY Humanitarian UK, London-based NGO providing medical and humanitarian assistance to communities in crisis, in the UK and internationally.

Why I like Little Venice?

I like it for how beautiful the canal is in the summer and for the parks surrounding it. People are friendly and there is a sense of community around here. Most importantly, D1 café serves the best cortado in town which helps me start my day after my long on call night shifts.

What is menopause?

Medically, menopause is the time after a woman stops having her periods for 12 months. This generally occurs between the ages of 45 to 55, with 51 being the national average in the UK. For most women going through menopause is a natural process that occurs when a woman's oestrogen levels start to drop, affecting her periods and causing her to begin experiencing symptoms. Leading up to menopause, defined as the 'peri-menopausal' period – usually in the early 40's, some women begin experiencing physical symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, sleep disturbance, lethargy, vaginal dryness and low libido. Mood symptoms such as anxiety, irritability and depression can also typically occur. These symptoms are usually connected, and their severity is typically measured by how it affects a woman's quality of life. Some patients say they can cope with the hot flushes, but they need help with their sleep because it affects their work. Others may need a bit more help with their anxiety or low mood. Patients also have different preferences in treatment. Some may want medications, while others prefer alternative therapies such as meditation.

Whichever way these symptoms present, it is always good first to consult your GP and discuss how to manage these symptoms effectively. A good example would be HRT. HRT is one of the main medical treatments offered and works by replacing the hormone oestrogen, thereby improving the symptoms caused by lack of it, particularly symptoms such as hot flushes and low mood. Many women experience improvement in their symptoms a few weeks after taking HRT and may decide to continue on it for several years. Again, this needs to be discussed carefully with the GP as it has its risks and side effects. Counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy are examples of options that should also be considered, particularly for symptoms related to mood and mental health. They can especially be very effective when used in conjunction with medical treatment.

Overall, there are many options to help women through menopause. Management plans should always be individualised and holistic, incorporating medical, psychological and lifestyle interventions based on a woman's needs and preferences.



Dr Danial Daud, MBCHB, MRCP

Is there such thing as MANopause?

No and Yes. The term itself does not exist medically, but yes, men generally in their mid 40s to early 50s can also begin to experience symptoms. As men age, their testosterone levels slowly drop. This drop does not happen as rapidly as the estrogen drop that women experience but can also give rise to some symptoms similar to menopause. Some men develop sleep disturbances, sexual dysfunction, weight gain, a significant lack of energy and as well as loss of muscle mass. Low testosterone is a factor but not the primary one. Usually, lifestyle factors such as lack of sleep, poor diet, lack of exercise, alcohol and smoking may play a more significant role in causing these symptoms. Many men who experience these symptoms are not aware of it, as they develop very gradually and are just put down normal ageing.

There is also a lack of awareness about how these symptoms present and how to manage them. Men of any age experiencing these symptoms should see their GPs first for a proper physical assessment and request relevant blood tests to help exclude any underlying medical diagnoses. As mentioned, many factors that lead to these symptoms are modifiable. We should also aim for an individualized approach that includes medical treatment and discuss options to help improve mental health and reduce stress, such as counselling, psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy.

What is testosterone replacement?

Some men have asked about testosterone replacement and whether it can be beneficial to help improve their quality of life. This can be true especially if a man is found to have low testosterone – a condition known as male hypogonadism. However, testosterone treatment should always be initiated after consulting an Endocrinologist and monitored by the GP.

What can help?

Positive lifestyle changes can improve symptoms significantly both for men and women. A healthy diet consisting mainly of plants and vegetables and a good exercise regimen can improve overall health, not just menopausal or 'male-menopausal' symptoms. Reducing sugar and health intake can also help with weight loss, reducing the effects of hormonal imbalances. We are also always recommended to reduce smoking and alcohol, which can affect our hormone levels. There are a lot of resources within the NHS to help us do all of this. We should educate ourselves and be open to discuss our symptoms with our GPs other healthcare professionals.

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LOCAL BUSINESSES

PLANETIS

WHAT'S NEW IN THE VALE?

Planetis

It was on the eve of my 50th birthday, I decided to change the track of the rest of my working career and do something exciting and rewarding.

A few months later I set up a new business, importing and marketing Natural/Organic products from all parts of the world. (US, Canada Europe & India). That part of the business is still running.

Once driving along Clifton road, my wife and I felt it would be nice to have a good health foods shop in this neighbourhood. Noticing an empty shop with an estate agent's board, the next day we contacted the agent, arranged a meeting with the landlord, and agreed on terms to take a new lease on the shop.

It was an act of blind faith, a sense of adventure, and gut feeling. We feel we couldn't have chosen a better location to open a new shop.

The retail side of the business was completely new to us. Since opening the shop in July 2021, we have received nothing but support and encouragement from the local residents.

We are totally committed to serving the local community and redeeming the faith they have put in us. It is the interaction and banter with the local residents that make it worthwhile coming to the shop in the morning.

The business is slowly getting toward viability, especially after opening the new foods section.

I actively invite suggestions from our customers. All sections of the shop will improve as we receive suggestions and feedback from the customers.

Hemant Khamar,

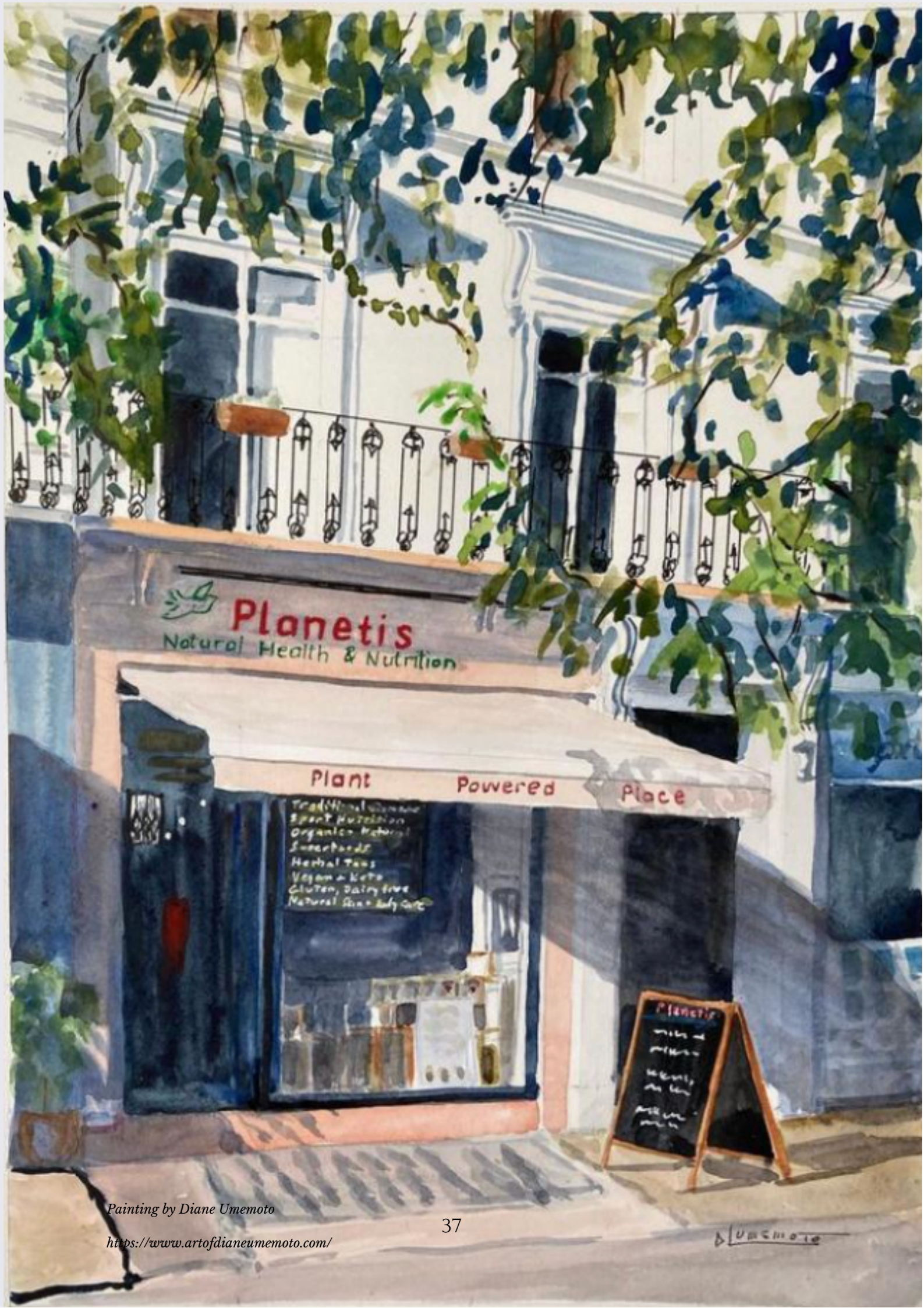
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Follow Planetis on Instagram at [@planetishealth](https://www.instagram.com/planetishealth) for information or pay a visit today

"Perhaps the quaintest family run health food shop in W9, Planetis Health and Nutrition provides wholefoods and pantry staples for the health-conscious generation."

Oscar, local resident



Painting by Diane Umemoto

<https://www.artofdianeumemoto.com/>



The Lonely Pet Column

Name: Kira

Species: Golden Retriever and Poodle

In Kira's words...

My name is Kira. I am a goldendoodle - that means I am a mix between a golden retriever and a poodle. I was born on a farm in the Midlands but then I moved to London and became a city girl. I like Maida Vale and a few of my favourite things are going for walks in Paddington Recreation Ground, especially the dog park area where I meet my friends and have a run around. On the walk home I love going into Gail's bakery because there are always bread crumbs on the floor and I'm always hungry.

I appreciate art (some might say I am an art critic) as I go to a lot of art galleries. I especially love Lauderdale Gallery in the neighbourhood. I do get a lot of attention. It's nice because I am a bit of an attention seeker, and I'm not too ashamed to admit it. I am very friendly with other doggies and their owners because I am playful at heart. My granny was a bit scared of dogs before she met me and now she even lets me jump on her bed. I also like going for drives in Maida Vale. Sometimes you will catch me in my dad's car with my head out the passenger window. I like how the breeze feels on my face. I am a happy doggie.

My Instagram is @kira.shmira

**** Have you got a pet who you think would like a partner? please email alice.sinclair@w9w2.co.uk if you would like them to feature in our next issue ****

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MAIDA
UNVEILED

AUTUMN
WINTER 2022



Artwork by Eleanor Abou-Sakr :
<https://www.eleanorabousakr.com/>

**Paddington Waterways & Maida Vale Society W9W2
Christmas Carols**

**Tuesday 13th December 2022 at 7pm (Doors 6.30pm)
St Mary's church, Paddington Green**



CHRISTMAS CARDS

By Eleanor Abou-Sakr, a local artist who lives and paints in Maida Vale

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