

MAIDA UNVEILED



www.W9W2.co.uk

Artwork by Jesse Brown

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our Spring/ Summer 24 edition of Maida UnVeiled, from PW&MVS/ W9W2, we hope this finds you well.

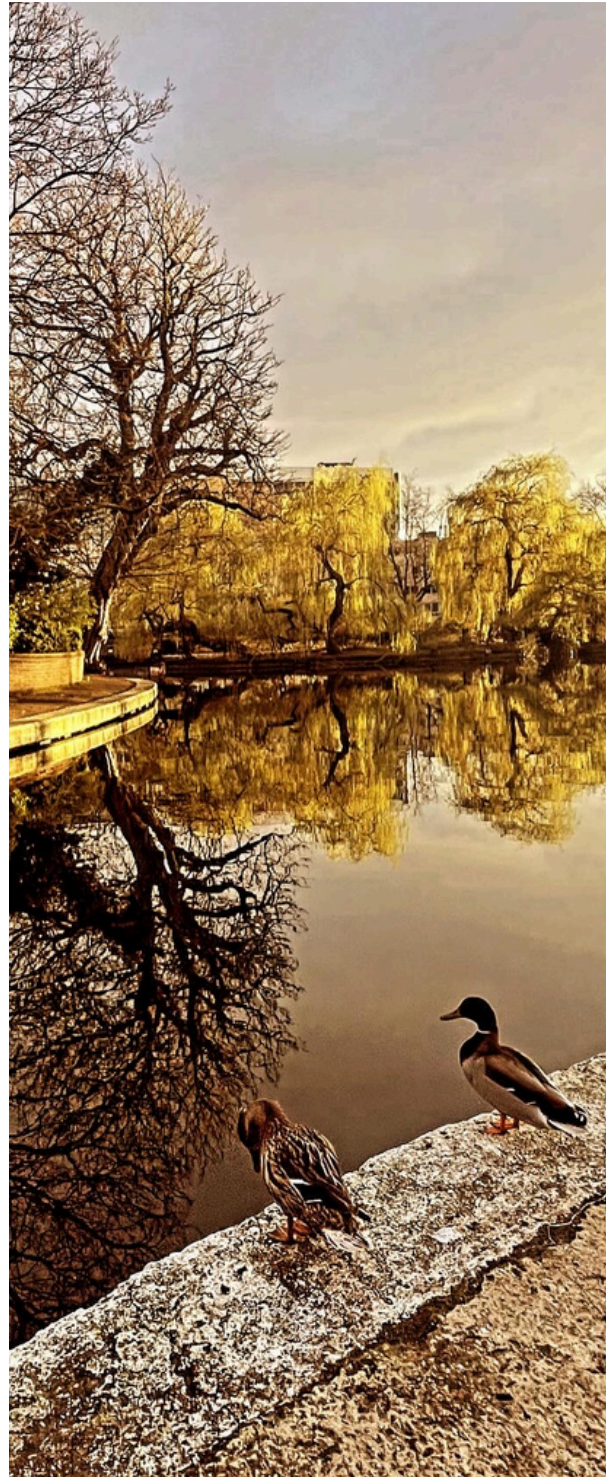
After what seems to be to have been an interminable and soggy winter, punctuated with regular traffic jams courtesy of Cadent, Spring is now in the air and the area is coming to life in the sunshine and we are lucky to have many outdoor community areas to enjoy whether the pavement cafes, the track at Paddington Rec or the Go-Boats to the canal and of course the Cavalcade on the early May bank holiday weekend. All of these activities speak to the varied and dynamic nature of our area and once again we thank the MUV editors for once again bringing many of these to life within these pages.

The planning arena is also coming alive and we would urge you to engage with applications directly as you see fit. Not the least of these is the consultation process around the Baltic Wharf/ Travis Perkins site, where a new scheme is being shared by the developers and meetings are being held. In addition, there have been a number of well supported WCC consultation walks looking at the opportunities for improvement of the area around Warwick Avenue Tube, the process will continue as part of the Paddington Places initiative.

So, it's a great time to enjoy and become involved with our area - I trust the stories in these pages will inspire you.

John Zealley,

May 2024



A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We are thrilled to present the latest issue of Maida Unveiled, bursting with the vibrancy of spring and the promise of summer in our beloved neighbourhood.

One highlight of this issue is our feature on Kimani, the local Thai kickboxing world champion from the North Paddington Youth Club. His dedication and skill are an inspiration to us all, showcasing the talent and resilience thriving within our community.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability, we delve into the importance of our canal and offer valuable tips from the esteemed conservationist, Dr. Kate Thompson. Her insights empower us to make meaningful changes to protect our environment for generations to come.

Front and centre on our cover is the captivating work of artist Jesse Brown, whose painting of Paddington Rec captures the essence of our communal spirit and natural beauty.

We also delve into the history of the Worsley House fire, a poignant reminder of our community's resilience in the face of adversity.

In our 60-second section, we sit down with Paddington Station Manager Denise, gaining valuable insights into the heartbeat of our bustling and vital transportation hub.

Of course, we haven't forgotten our regular updates from our dedicated local councillors and MP Karen Buck, who continue to work tirelessly for the betterment of our community.

And for a touch of fun, don't miss our charming aristocratic hamster featured in the Lonely Pet column, sure to bring a smile to your face.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Maida Unveiled as much as we've enjoyed putting it together. Here's to celebrating the diversity, resilience, and beauty of our beloved W9/W2.

Alice Sinclair and Giulia Matteoni



Editor Alice, an integrative transpersonal psychotherapist with a practice in Little Venice, is also a dedicated feminist activist, advocating for gender equality and empowerment. She has chaired the Healthcare Circle NGO and served on the international boards of the Samburu Girls Foundation in Kenya. Recently, Alice joined the board of the North Paddington Youth Club. Her dedication to the community during the Covid pandemic earned recognition from the late Queen in 2021.

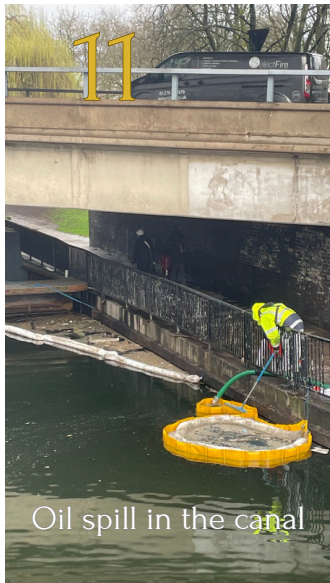


Editor Giulia works as environmental consultant for a multinational professional services firm in London, where she specialises in the management of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for urban development projects. Giulia moved to London in 2013, after completing her studies in Civil Engineering at the Technical University of Denmark, near Copenhagen. She has been living in Maida Vale since; you may have seen Giulia walking around the area with her inseparable companion Oscar, a Labrador Retriever.

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Oil spill in the canal



60 seconds with Alice

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@maida_unveiled



www.W9W2.co.uk



maida.unveiled@gmail.com

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

KAREN BUCK

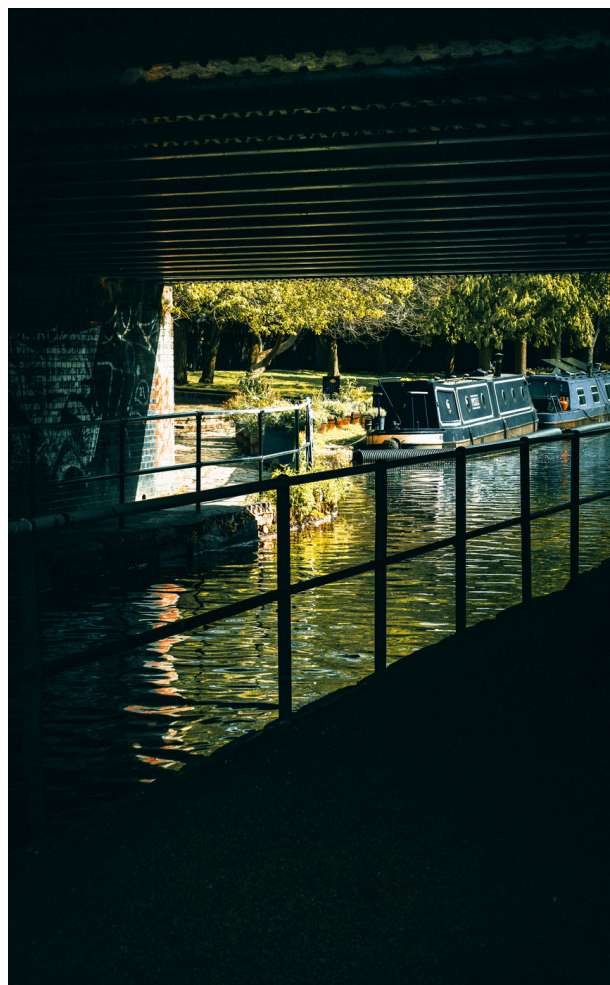
Our Local MP

The approach to a General Election is inevitably a time for taking stock. Governments ask the electorate to focus on what they have done.

Opposition parties offer their critique and an alternative vision of the future. This coming one - which must be held by January 2025 - will be significant in several ways. It may or may not end a lengthy period of Conservative government, for one thing. Not so long ago changes of political control happened quite regularly, after one or two terms. In recent decades, there have been relatively long stretches in which one party dominates: the Conservatives in power between 1979 and 1997, Labour between 1997 and 2010, now the Conservatives again since 2010. So it will be an important choice.

Then, the constituency itself has changed once more, from Westminster North to Queen's Park & Maida Vale, shedding four wards to other constituencies and adding 3 wards in Brent. Finally, and certainly of significance to me, at least, I will not be contesting the election as a candidate, for the first time since 1997. After 7 general elections in two variations of the constituency (and 7 years as a local councillor prior to that), it's time for someone else to take the reins and for me to find new challenges. Representing this extraordinary, diverse, fascinating area in Parliament, an area that has been home for 40 years- has been the great privilege of my life. It's been enormous fun, sometimes stressful, and never, never, boring. I will miss it, of course, but hope to find ways of staying involved in the community in the future. In any event, over these remaining months, I will continue to do my best to serve the constituency, taking up issues and responding as much as possible to people's concerns.

Reflecting on some of the changes that have taken place since I was first elected, it's striking how much the volume of correspondence has changed. Then, letters would arrive in bundles, dozens a day, mostly asking for help with problems (housing above all, though in practice everything from HMRC to the Home Office, police, schools and planning) but sometimes also seeking my views on a particular domestic or international issue.



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The growth of email and social media has transformed the landscape utterly. Now my office will receive several hundred enquiries daily as a matter of course, and this can often soar skywards as events dictate. Anything from the floods that hit Maida Vale in 2021 to desperate local families trying to help their loved ones in Afghanistan as Kabul fell so dramatically, can double the workload overnight, and my small but dedicated team of staff deserve massive credit for rising to the occasion over and over.

The crisis in Gaza has been something else again, however, with well over 10,000 constituents writing to me on this issue alone (across the breadth of opinion) since the October 7th massacre and its aftermath. But although Gaza has generated a truly exceptional volume of emails, it's far from the only matter of concern. In the last month, constituents have written in about assisted dying, cancer services, access to abortion, the conduct of elections in Pakistan, trophy hunting, badger baiting, school meals, the state pension, plastic reduction targets and much more. I do my best to reply to them all, and personally I welcome the fact that people do feel they can write to their MP- the alternative is much worse!

Liaising with all the various agencies providing services to the area is a big part of the role. Over the last month we have had a big row over North West London NHS's plans to introduce 'same day access hubs' as a proposed way of improving access to GPs. Whilst we all agree that patients at some practices get hugely frustrated trying to get GP appointments, there was a predictable anxious response to a proposal which seemed to imply some people would not get to see clinicians and may be directed to services elsewhere instead of seeing their own GP. Whatever the merits of options designed to relieve pressure on stretched GP services, there was clearly a problem with communicating how the changes would work. I met with NW London NHS managers to discuss this and am pleased that the plans have been postponed for further consideration.

I have also been taking up more complaints about the Grand Union Canal, including the state of the towpaths and the serious pollution incident caused by cooking oil dumping. As I have reported before, the Canals and Rivers Trust has had huge cuts to their funding and are clearly struggling to cope with the demands on them. Little Venice Councillor Sara Hassan has asked anyone interested in setting up a group to work with the council and the CRT to get in touch with her: shassan@westminster.gov.uk.

I also continue to work closely with the local police, responding to concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour, with Transport for London and with Westminster councillors on other services, so (until the election at least!) please keep writing in.

With all good wishes,

Karen Buck,

May 2024

You can email me at buckk@parliament.uk



AN UPDATE FROM OUR MAIDA VALE COUNCILLORS

We are very pleased to be able to work together with Westminster's parks and leisure team to bring new investment to our much loved **Paddington Recreation Ground**.

The Bluebell Glade has been very successful and is getting well used by local children. The walkways have been upgraded and a new Forest School classroom erected by the bowls pavilion. The classroom is made from a bike shelter recycled from the Queen Mother Sports Centre in Victoria. The original Environmental area (with the pond) has been replanted and new paths constructed to help it cope with the high demand from local schools.

The main children's playground, which gets a huge amount of use, has also seen the replacement and refurbishment of much of its equipment over the winter. We are still pressing for floodlights in the playground so that children can visit after school even when it's dark outside.

Many of you will have noticed the very large puddles that form on the paths in the main part of the Rec. Works to resolve these problems are scheduled by the end of April.

Looking ahead, we are keen to see whether we can replace one or more tennis courts with Padel Tennis. This is one of the world's fastest growing sports, normally played as doubles and easier to learn than tennis. We think it would be a very popular addition.

In the near future, the council hopes to undertake significant works to the Village Green. Large chunks of concrete from the original velodrome are working their way to the surface and causing a hazard for cricketers, school sports days, dog walkers and others. We are also hoping to replace the cricket nets too as they are worn out after years of heavy use.

Finally, we want to investigate whether we can replace lawn bowls, which is rarely used these days, with allotments for local schools and residents. Lawn bowls players are very welcome at Paddington Sports Club, five minutes' walk from the Rec.



Participatory budgeting

Westminster Council has introduced different ways for local residents to be involved in decisions of how funds are allocated to different local charities and community groups according to the needs and priorities of the local community. Currently, there are two such opportunities -one is to be a member of the Area Panels that will make decisions over a fund of approximately £100,000 for Maida Vale and Abbey Road wards or Little Venice and Church Street wards or to take part in a pilot to involve residents in the Maida Vale ward budget decisions (a fund of approximately £46,000). If you are interested in either, please get in touch with Nafsika (nbutler-thalassis@westminster.gov.uk).

Ernest Harris House - Community Hub

The large ground floor/ basement area below Ernest Harris House on Elgin Avenue has been vacant for some years.

We are very pleased that the Council will be transforming the space into the latest Community Hub and we think, because of its location under a sheltered housing block, the focus should be on providing services for older people.

Swifts

We have swifts nesting on Sutherland Avenue and Essendine Road. If you love these birds, why not join the local swift group on Facebook: Brent and Westminster swifts.

Planning news

Parkcity has returned with a new planning application to build six new flats in the roof space of Lauderdale Mansions West. The previous proposal was rejected by Westminster's planning committee after a strong campaign by the residents, supported by the Maida Vale councillors.

A different developer has begun community engagement about a scheme to replace the old garage building on Widley Road with a block of flats. You can see details here: <https://61widleyroad.co.uk/>. Again, a previous proposal was rejected by the Council as too large for the site and with an inappropriate design for the conservation area.

Finally, we understand that a developer is interested in building a residential block on the site of the garages opposite the Cochonnet on Lauderdale Road. We would welcome replacing garages with much needed housing, but any new block needs to be designed appropriately for the conservation area and not be so large as to block the light from neighbouring flats.

Maida Hill Market

Construction works to upgrade the market square are coming on nicely. The new layout with extra greening, space for events and improved infrastructure for the traders will be open in the late summer.

Extending controlled parking hours

We met Westminster's parking officers with residents from Kilburn Park Road to discuss extending controlled parking hours. With the new developments on the Brent side of South Kilburn, Westminster residents are finding it increasingly hard to find a parking space at evenings and weekends. While extending hours is positive for local car owners, we are mindful that it would mean visitors having to pay to park at times that are currently free of charge.

We expect a full consultation from Westminster in May which will include Carlton Vale and Randolph Gardens as well as Kilburn Park Road. Other roads would remain with the current controlled hours. Please let us know what you think when the time comes.

Cllr Geoffrey Barraclough, Cllr Nafsika Thalassis, Cllr Iman Less

Maida Vale Labour Councillors

May 2024



AN UPDATE FROM OUR LITTLE VENICE COUNCILLORS

We look forward to seeing many residents at Canal Cavalcade where we hope that the weather has improved to show Little Venice at its best.

Parking concerns

Many Little Venice residents are very unhappy about the significant hikes in resident parking permit costs as well as increases in parking charges. The parking permit charges are increasing by up to 71% even for those with electric or hybrid vehicles.

We strongly believe that any pricing changes and especially for residents should be cost neutral. These new charges will raise an additional £6.24M. There is also no evidence that these charges will reduce congestion, so there is in our view no basis to justify them happening.

Consultation issues

We are becoming increasingly concerned about the consultation processes that the council is undertaking or in several cases not doing so. There is now a '25 metre rule' which is resulting in some cases of zero residents being consulted. An example of this was the recent siting of a cycle hanger in Warrington Crescent that was universally opposed by all residents in the immediate area. It took many months for the council to finally move it 5 metres away to a position that Cllr Caplan had suggested last August.

Warwick Avenue proposals

The council is currently seeking views on whether it should develop a scheme to improve the area around Warwick Avenue. We are supportive of measures that would tidy up the recycling centre, green the hideous ventilation shaft and improve the footpaths around the canal.

However, we would resist significant amounts of money being spent on more drastic measures that would change the area without improving it significantly. It has been made clear by residents that live in the immediate locality that ideas such as a 'piazza' near the cab shelter are not supported due to the already existing anti-social behavior issues in this area and around the tube station.

Paddington Places

We do not object to seeing areas improved, but we question some of the ambitions that are being suggested around Paddington Green Churchyard and around St. Mary's Church. There is no great clamour from residents to see major changes and funds are not currently in place to do improvements in any case. As local councillors we are not privy to what the designers are being asked to produce, so whilst we are in the dark, we remain nervous about what will be proposed and how much such proposals will cost. The principal area that we support improvement is around the canal and its approaches.

Polluted Little Venice Canal

A disastrous industrial amount of cooking oil was illegally thrown into the canal from a 'dark kitchen' in Alperton. This happened in February and at the time of writing in late March, the effects of this oil spill are still very apparent in the Little Venice canal. This has spread six miles and all those that live on the canal or near it have seen the awful consequences for wildlife in Little Venice which is now almost non-existent in the area.

We hope that wildlife will return to the canal and lessons will be learnt that more urgent action is required by the Canal and River Trust when such issues occur.

Planning

We still await the formal Travis Perkins planning application. Our current view is that whilst the new application may be an improvement on the previously rejected one, we still do not support the addition of 600 student flats. These are not needed for local students and the substantial buildings are not appropriate for the area and will put huge pressure on local services.

Housing department in crisis

We are increasingly concerned that the housing service to some 20,000+ properties run by Westminster Council is failing to deliver for its residents. We know that the demands are high, and the challenges are significant, but many residents tell us the service has got worse in the last two years. Repairs take longer to be done, phone calls and emails take much longer to be answered or are not responded to and the potential cost of major works to lessees that are proposed are completely unaffordable.

Transport concerns updates

There have been an increasing number of noise and vibration issues caused by the underground and these are affecting many residents in Warrington Crescent. We held a meeting with TFL in March and continue to push for more action by TFL to resolve these problems.

The end of the Maida Avenue traffic signals saga looks to be finally nearing a conclusion. We have been told that they will implement the solution that we proposed 18 months ago by the Summer. Watch this space.

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**

May 2024



AN UPDATE FROM OUR LITTLE VENICE COUNCILLORS (continued)

Last month, I was very sad to learn of the deliberate industrial scale cooking oil spill on the Grand Union Canal Paddington Arm.

It was rated as a Category 3 incident by the Environment Agency. I was in regular communication with the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) and spoken the Environment Agency (EA). I sent a letter to the Secretary for Environment Steve Barclay lamenting the fact that funding cuts to both the CRT and EA have hollowed out their capacity to respond. It took them ten days to respond to the incident.

The CRT were forced to pay for the £10,000 per day bill for the clean-up, which is funding they currently do not have. I organised a walk with Westminster City Council (WCC) staff and our new cabinet member for Climate Action, Ecology, Cllr Ryan Jude to survey the damage. I'm looking to support more coordination with WCC and to set up a local pressure group to discuss the steps needed to improve responses. I encourage anyone interested in getting involved with this to get in touch with me.

I was happy to see strong engagement from the local community during WCC's site walks focused on improving and greening the space by Warwick Avenue tube station. I'm told that more than 2000 people responded either in person or online. As expected, there differing views on how best to improve the space and I hope each of those views are taken into account by WCC. The plan is part of a wider proposal which includes possible improvements to areas by Paddington Green and the canal pathway and it also deals with safety. This would be funded by money earmarked solely for community infrastructure improvement.

I've been meeting regularly with the City of Westminster College to discuss safety and security following a number of worrying incidents which occurred last year. A new monthly coordination meeting has been set up between the College and Westminster City Council. The first meeting included the Integrated Gangs Unit (IGXU). This unit is run by experts from Family and Children's Services, the Police, Community Safety and Westminster Employment Service.

The college also said that they will be looking into possibly upgrading the lighting and installing new cameras outside of the college.

Meanwhile, I've been reporting graffiti and occasional flytipping in Little Venice and have been working with our City Inspectors. I continue to spend time supporting council tenants, housing association tenants and others with urgent housing and cost of living issues.

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

May 2024



COOKING UP A STORM OF POLLUTION ON THE CANAL

The threat of pollution around the canals of Little Venice and Paddington Basin is growing. A recent dumping of thousands of litres of cooking oil into the canal as far away as Alperton reached the six miles up into Browning's Pool and Paddington Basin bringing distress and death to wildlife.

It brought filth and a vile smell into the heart of what is normally a haven of calm and wildlife in the heart of central London. And it highlights the continuing dangers that threaten the canal basin.

It is thought that the worst outbreak of the year so far came from a 'dark' kitchen, industrial catering premises used to prepare meals that are then delivered to customers across West London.

The problem is that both enforcement of the laws against such pollution and the ability to clean up any pollution have been steadily compromised by cuts to budgets over recent years. The funding for the Government's Environment Agency has been roughly halved across the last decade. And there has been a steep reduction in funding of the grant that keeps the Canal & River Trust afloat and able to care for waterways.

The result is that companies feel that they can get away with the polluting. At the time of the most recent mass pollution incident a spokesperson for the Canal & River Trust said:

'We've been dealing with deliberate industrial scale cooking oil pollution on the Grand Union Canal Paddington Arm for several weeks, which has been rated as a Category 3 incident by the Environment Agency.'

This means the financial responsibility for the clean-up falls entirely on our charity, with little prospect of the polluter being made to pay'.

It is a canal Catch-22. The Environment Agency is judge and jury as to how serious an incident is and whether it is legally their problem and whether it is their responsibility to clean it up. In this case the Environment Agency decided it was not their problem and the Canal & River Trust had to engage contractors at around £10,000 a day to clean up the six-mile stretch.



Left: Plastic and oil pollution in the Browning's Pool. Right: The clean-up operation.

The Trust's spokesperson said:

'Our team and contractors have been working to tackle the pollution at the suspected source in Alperton, West London, and as far as six miles along the canal at the Paddington Basin, using booms to gather the oil and pump it out.

The operation has cost our charity tens of thousands of pounds and we urge anyone with information about the source of the pollution to report it to the Environment Agency so that the culprit is identified'.

The continuing dilemma is that the Environment Agency has the legal powers to do something about it but hasn't the resources it really needs while the Canal & River Trust is only a custodian of the nation's waterways as a charity.

From the point of view of residents the answer is to be vigilant and alert and report incidents to the Environment Agency hotline:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident>

and to donate to the Canal & River Trust:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk>

and keep local councillors informed of the seriousness of your concerns.

Robert Bruce,

May 2024



The Canal and River Trust are calling out to YOU, our amazing community, to join us in cleaning up Little Venice and Paddington.

Whether you can spare a day or just a few hours, your time contribution can make a huge difference.

Let's come together to protect and preserve our much-loved scenic spot.

For those who can help, please email:

volunteer@canalrivertrust.org.uk

KIMANI STEVE WILMOT

A young kick-boxing champion on a global stage

In the vibrant atmosphere of the Paddington North Youth Club (NPYC) on Lanark Road, a shining talent has emerged in the realm of kickboxing.

Kimani Steve Wilmot, a dynamic 20-year-old, not only excels in mastering the art of kickboxing but also adeptly manages academics, employment, and a profound dedication to community service.

Kimani's journey into kickboxing commenced at the tender age of eight, and as he reached the milestone of twenty years old in March 2024, he boasts an impressive record of over 60 junior fights, clinching two British titles along the way. Transitioning into the adult category, Kimani has emerged victorious in all five of his matches.

Kimani's formidable skills were most recently displayed with a dominant triumph in Thailand, at the international world championships. Kimani soared onto the global stage, recently returning from the World Amateur Kickboxing Championships in Thailand with two coveted world titles. Bopping the USA, Thailand and Taiwan off the podium. KA-SPLAT.

However, Kimani's vision extends far beyond personal achievement, with a fervent determination to leverage his newfound expertise to benefit his community, particularly his home turf of Maida Vale and the NPYC, where his journey began.

At the core of Kimani's training regimen is his mentor, the charismatic Lloyd Heaven, who guides and supports him at every level. Kimani's journey to the international championships was made possible through the unwavering support of the club, which recognised his potential to bring home gold medals, a feat he accomplished in two categories.

In addition to his athletic prowess, Kimani embodies a deep respect for the ceremonial rituals of *Muay Thai*, or *Thai kickboxing*. Before each match, Kimani diligently performs the *Wai Kru Ram Muay*, a ritualistic dance paying homage to his trainers, ancestors, and the spirits.



Kimani Steve Wilmot. Copyright: @byseli_photography

Donning traditional *Mongkhon* headbands and *Pra Jiad* armbands, he seeks blessings and protection for the bout ahead, symbolising honour, respect, and gratitude.

Kimani's dedication to education and work is equally impressive. Despite the demands of his rigorous training schedule, he is pursuing a business degree at university while managing the responsibilities of a shift manager at a restaurant in Soho, showcasing remarkable time management skills.



Copyright: @byseli_photography

In an exclusive statement to Maida Unveiled, Kimani underscored his commitment to giving back to the community, expressing his intention to share his knowledge by teaching youth classes at NPYC following his triumph in Thailand. His aspirations transcend the confines of the ring as he aims to inspire younger members, demonstrating through his own journey that dedication and hard work can turn dreams into reality.

Thanks to Kimani's achievements, the youth of the club find inspiration in his success, uplifting the local community by showcasing the boundless potential residing within each and every local child. ka pow ! (or whatever sound a kick makes!).

What is next?

Kimani's next stop is the European championships of which he has been invited to represent England. We suspect that with his current world title he will be making his future opponents very nervous indeed.

Follow Kimani's progress on Instagram

@Ksw24s and @lloydheavenboxingacademy

Alice Sinclair,

May 2024

Top: from left to right Kimani Steve Wilmot, Ronnie Renney (North Paddington Youth Club Manager), Lloyd Heaven (Kimani's trainer).

Bottom: Kimani Steve Wilmot.

Copyright: @byseli_photography



SEEKING A WAY FORWARD FOR WARWICK AVENUE

The changes over the years to the wide boulevard of Warwick Avenue are plain to see from a view of a 1905 postcard and the vista today.

So we all await the collected views of the initial soundings of the **Warwick Avenue Public Realm project** to, at least, tidy the area up. Certainly the views were extensive and wide-ranging.

Some people thought the existing church an example of brutalist architecture and wanted to bulldoze it. Others extolled its virtues.

Some people wanted the stack building above the tube station condemned as an eyesore and, at the very least, covered up with a green wall or similar disguise.

The views ranged widely. They were expressed on the various walks that took place in late winter/early spring as part of the Warwick Avenue Public Realm Project being undertaken by Westminster City Council.

The idea was to canvas as many views as possible as to what might be done, if anything, in the area between Warwick Avenue Tube station and the canal basin at Little Venice.

The walks had been timed at different times of the day across a couple of weeks to ensure that different users were able to make their views plain. And they were well attended with over a hundred people on the walks and a further thirty or so at the final workshop session.

In the interim the mass of notes of the views expressed to the various specialists involved will be collated, synthesised and brought together.

'Our team captured a wide range of thoughtful and insightful views which we will take into account during the design development process'

said the head of the initiative, Saskia Blake.

What was really heartening were the sheer numbers of people who came out in all weathers, (it was very chilly on the night walk), to chat away, sometimes vehemently, other times amiably, about what they liked about the area, what they didn't, and what could be improved.



Warwick Avenue in the early years of the past century. Photo courtesy of Julian Futter

The recycling bins around 'the stack' above the tube station were a particular source of complaint. Could they be re-sited perhaps? But, overwhelmingly, could they please be emptied more regularly.

People would like the second road by the taxis to be closed and the area landscaped and tidied up more. There was support for taking the flowerbed traffic island out of the centre of the road, where it is rammed by traffic on a regular basis, and moved to the southern side of the road by the taxi shelter.

A lighting designer with an extraordinarily powerful torch on the night walk showed how effective the floodlighting of the church could be. It made it into a stunning feature, it was thought, and would be even finer if the stained-glass windows could, at the same time, be illuminated from inside.

People wondered if the path down the centre of the avenue of trees stretching from the station up to the bridge over the canal could be made more prominent, perhaps with lantern lighting of a subdued kind marking the way through the trees.

There was a suggestion that a statue, perhaps of Alan Turing, who was born nearby, could be a focal point on the south side of where the stack is.

And there were suggestions that the stack could have, variously, a green wall built around it, or colourful tiling, or have a water feature falling down its sides like a fountain.

Prominent local residents, like Glen Matlock, Paul Weller, Nicolas Kent and others, gave their views. Sir Tony Robinson perhaps came up with the most typical of the views saying that Maida Vale was by far the loveliest part of London and perhaps we should not try to disturb it too much.

There was general agreement that the tube station had been allowed to fall into a dilapidated and dangerous state. More maps and directions were required once passengers had exited the station to make clear to the growing number of visitors wanting to find the canal and pool at Little Venice how to make their way there.



Warwick Avenue today

To a visitor with no prior knowledge it seems counter-intuitive to walk up a hill to look for a canal-side basin. A pillar with a map of the local area on it outside both exits was the least that could be done. And perhaps a community noticeboard there as well.

People suggested that there should be more hire-bikes available as they tend to have all gone by 9am.

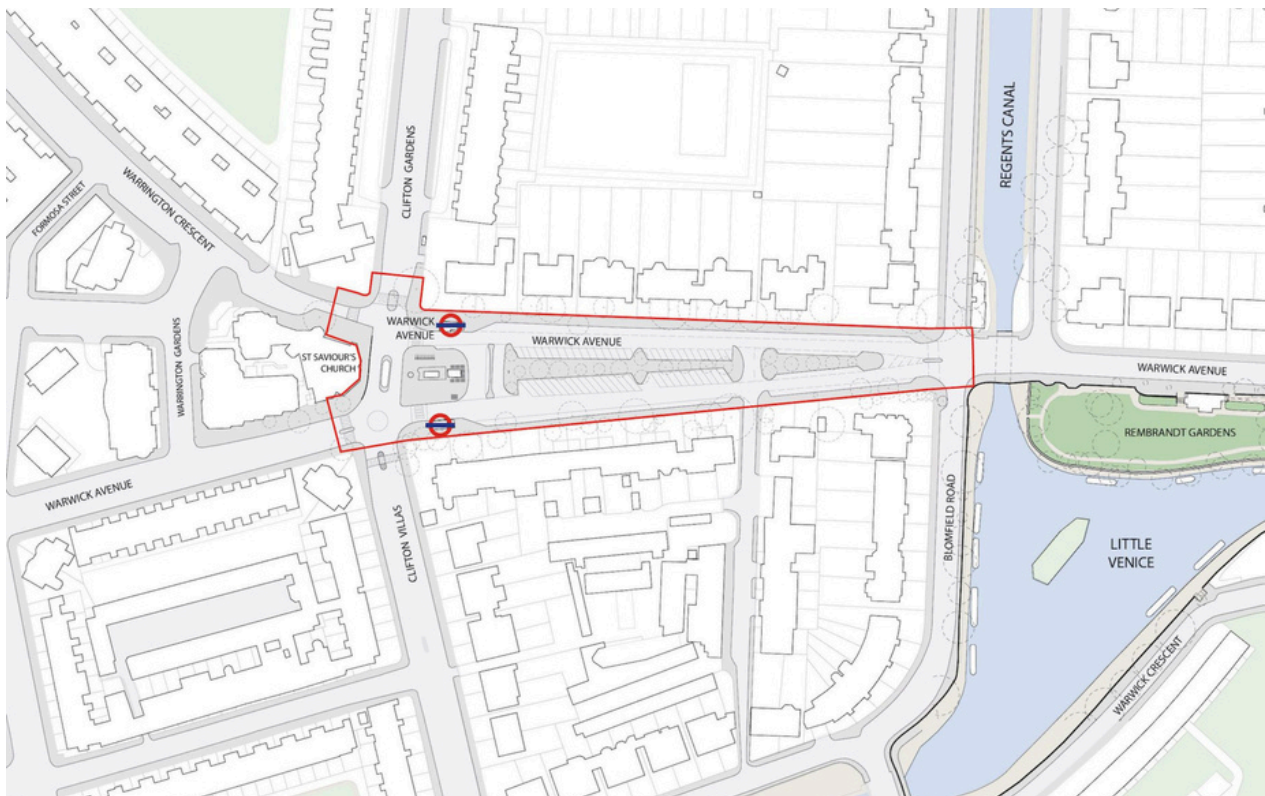
There was an appetite for the cabmans' shelter to serve the public, which they do at other locations, and provide some temporary tables and chairs if they can be persuaded to provide food and drink. There were suggestions for making the redundant telephone box into a book exchange and for widening the central section of the boulevard and perhaps providing facilities to play boule. But above all the exploratory soundings should be given the widest possible public exposure and scrutiny.

Details of the project can be found at:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/place-shaping/paddington-place-plan/warwick-avenue>

Robert Bruce,

May 2024



Project area. Source: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/place-shaping/paddington-place-plan/warwick-avenue>

LOCAL ARTISTS

JESSE BROWN

LIAM O'FARRELL

ANTONIO CANALETTO

JESSE BROWN

Our front cover artist

Jesse Brown grew up in Shepherd's Bush, but has been living in North London for a while now. He studied graphic design at Kingston, and ran a successful graphic design agency for several years, with strong emphasis on illustration. Covid gave him a chance to reevaluate, and since then he has been building a career as an illustrator and artist.

Jesse's illustrations reflect everyday life and the little interactions between people on the street. He loves to wander around the city observing people going about their daily lives, the urban landscape, the buildings, the parks and squares and ever present building sites. Sometimes armed with a sketchbook, sometimes a camera, Jesse records those little scenes, and then translates them into life on paper, using a range of media: watercolour, ink, coloured pencils and markers.

Jesse has collaborated on commercial projects for clients including Bamford, The BBC, The Connaught, Marriott Hotels and Pump Street Chocolate. He has also created illustrations for magazines, designed wine labels, wedding invites and murals.

He has exhibited at several galleries and art fairs in London and the UK.

Jesse's career as an illustrator and artist is very much a work in progress. He is continually trying to hone his style, experimenting with subjects and materials. He is always on the look out for new and interesting projects; he would particularly love to illustrate a recipe book for example!

Get in touch if you have any ideas

[@jessebevanbrown](https://www.instagram.com/jessebevanbrown)

jessebrown.co.uk

Right (top and bottom): scenes at Paddington Recreation Ground by Jesse Brown.





By Jesse Brown.



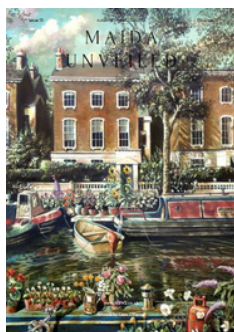
By Jesse Brown.

A PAINTING OF MAIDA VALE...

...exhibits at the Royal Institute of Oil Painters

Can you recollect the painting which featured on the front cover of our last (Autumn/Winter) issue?

If (like us) you were impressed by its beauty, you may not be surprised to hear that it was selected for a special exhibition at the Royal Institute of Oil Painters! Below you can hear more on this from Liam O'Farrell, the artist who produced it.



Late last year, I was very pleased to discover that it has been chosen to be exhibited at The Royal Institute of Oil (ROI) Painters annual exhibition at The Mall Galleries in London.

This year's special theme was 'Urban Life' for which The ROI Themed Painting Prize is on offer to the best interpretation. I felt that depicting the urban life in Maida Vale might be a nice option.

The Royal Institute of Oil Painters was founded in 1882, promoting and exhibiting work of the highest standard in oil paint. The ROI provides a centre of excellence and encouragement for all who love this robust medium and is based at the Mall Galleries, London SW1.

About my painting of Little Venice:

I began on a rather chilly day in January. I travelled to Little Venice with my sketchbook to take some drawing notes. These help me to work on a larger oil painting back in the studio.

For this painting I needed to get off the tube at Warwick Avenue and walk down to the Regent's Canal to Little Venice.

The houseboats and converted barges, evoke a curious piece of rural England ploughing through the metropolis.

Also, it contrasts rather dramatically with the community on dry land. The difference in these communities is what makes Little Venice so interesting as a subject matter. Once I found my ideal spot, I quickly settled in to one of my small drawings to be worked-up as a large painting later.



It's interesting that a large and detailed drawing is not required to make a large and detailed painting. You just need the essence and basic shapes to deliver the flavour of the final piece.

Drawing of Maida Vale and canal:

Eventually, I was happy with the basics of the drawing and had something ready for a larger painting back in the studio.



In the studio I got to work on the easel. I generally get the sky in first, it helps set the scene for the rest of the painting and from there I get to work on the buildings at the back and some of the fine details. Next, I look at the canal boats. The most challenging part of this was getting the light working as it passes through the trees, casting soft shadows on the hulls and upper parts.

It's at this time that I start thinking about the water. It needs to be completed towards the end of the process as it reflects everything above.

Lastly, I worked on the foreground. I really enjoy all the fussy details. All the brick-a-brac and plants.

Delivering my painting and the opening night:

Prior to the exhibition the artists are asked to deliver their artworks to The Mall Galleries. We are asked to drop them off around the back in the tradesman's entrance. Not quite as salubrious as the front entrance, but still a thrill



My next date was for the private view. Here you get a chance to sit back a bit and enjoy your achievement. It's always a treat to see your work on the wall of a gallery and, as most of an artist's life can be solitary, it's always good to catch up with other artists again.



I really enjoyed painting Maida Vale and will return again, it is a subject that just keeps giving.



Liam O'Farrell,

May 2024

Enter for a chance to win an original piece of artwork of the Bridge House pub, generously donated by our talented cover artist, Liam O'Farrell!

Simply sign up to our mailing list at www.w9w2.co.uk.

One lucky member will be selected at random during our AGM on May 20th. Don't miss out – join us in celebrating local artistry and community spirit!



The Bridge House by Liam O'Farrell

EXPLORING THE 'WILD TABLE OF LOVE'

at Paddington Station

Just outside the bustling heart of Paddington Station lies a captivating piece of art that adds a touch of enchantment to the daily rhythm of commuters 'The Wild Table of Love', a thought provoking sculpture, invites passersby to pause and engage with the beauty that lies within the ordinary.

As I lingered near the sculpture for a while on a drizzly Friday in March, it became apparent that a shared experience resonated among those passing by, their faces collectively brightening into smiles as the sculpture's presence captured their attention. Magic.

The sculpture is Crafted by the talented artist duo Gillie and Marc, and was unveiled as part of the Paddington Square development, injecting a burst of creativity into the station's contemporary ambiance. The concept behind 'The Wild Table of Love' is rooted in the idea of celebrating the diverse and interconnected nature of life.

As you approach the sculpture, you'll be greeted by a collection of intricately designed animal figures, each meticulously placed on a long communal table. This table symbolises unity, shared experiences, and the communal aspect of breaking bread together. The animals, ranging from Gorillas to koalas, are intricately detailed, showcasing the artists' commitment to capturing the essence of the wild in the centre of an urban landscape.

The use of bronze for the sculptures adds a timeless quality to the artwork, echoing the enduring themes of love, community, and the untamed beauty of the natural world. The artists intentionally left the surfaces unpolished, allowing the bronze to weather and develop over time, mirroring the ever evolving nature of relationships and life itself.

The Wild Table of Love' serves as more than just a visual delight; it sparks conversation and connection. The shared communal table, with these charming creatures gathered around, encourages individuals to see beyond the daily hustle and appreciate the beauty that exists in the simple act of sharing a space.



The Wild Table of Love

'If you pass nearby Paddington Station, it is worth taking a moment to let 'The Wild Table of Love' stir your imagination.

Whether you're a regular commuter or a first-time visitor, this sculpture stands as a testament to the power of art to transform ordinary spaces into extraordinary experiences.

A poignant reflection that beauty has the capacity to flourish in unforeseen corners, emphasising the imperative to safeguard our wildlife at all costs.

Alice Sinclair,

May 2024

CANALETTO

The Greatest Artist who never lived in Little Venice

1,000 miles away from the canals of Venice sits No. 10 Howley Place, with a blue LCC plaque stating that the famous painter of Venice's canals, Antonio Canaletto, worked from a studio here from 1746-1755.

During the 10 years that he lived in London he created hundreds of canvases, some 50 of which King George III purchased. One of them appears in the scene when Daniel Craig has an audience with the Queen before taking her to the helicopter that she parachuted out of for the 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony and another adorns the drawing room of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh.

What inspiration he must have derived from a house overlooking the canal at Paddington!



Portrait of Canaletto



Except that he did not. The canal was not opened until 1801, more than 30 years after his death and Hawley Place in the 1740s was just a field.

He did live and paint in London but it was in Beak Street in Soho.

So why the blue plaque? Because it is a fake. English Heritage have no association with it and its origin is a mystery.

Julian Futter,

May 2024

Left: Blue plaque at 10 Howley Place

PRESERVING HERITAGE

The Storied Legacy of Paddington Recreation Ground

Situated amidst Kilburn Park Road, Grantully Road, and Randolph Avenue in Maida Vale, Paddington Recreation Ground stands as a verdant testament to the enduring community spirit and the visionary foresight of Sir John Aird. The park spans 27 acres and has weathered the passage of time, with its history enmeshed within the vibrant tapestry of Maida Vale.

In the late 19th century, Maida Vale underwent a significant urban metamorphosis. Originally part of the Bishop of London's estate, the grounds were saved from the clutches of development through the visionary efforts of Sir John Aird, the first Mayor of Westminster. In 1889, Aird played a pivotal role in transforming the private estate into a public park, ensuring that the community had access to a much-needed open space.

Amongst the sporting facilities you can still get a sense of the Victorian elegance that was under the hands of landscape architect Alexander McKenzie. Formal gardens, promenades, and ornamental features adorned the landscape, creating a picturesque retreat for residents seeking stillness from the hustle of city life.

During both World Wars, Paddington Recreation Ground played a crucial role in the war effort. The park's grounds were repurposed for wartime functions, from victory gardens to air raid shelters. Despite the challenges, the local community displayed resilience and determination, working together to restore the park after the war.

As the 20th century unfolded, the park evolved into a haven for sports and recreation. Tennis courts, a running track, and a cricket pitch became iconic features, drawing sports enthusiasts from Maida Vale and beyond. The bandstand, a silent witness to history, remained as a symbol of the park's enduring legacy.

Central to the park's legacy is Sir John Aird's remarkable vision and determination. His efforts to save the grounds from development continue to resonate as Paddington Recreation Ground thrives as a community hub for sports, leisure, and cultural events. The choice to safeguard our local spaces, made 133 years ago, is a healthy pattern we need to continue, in this increasingly urbanized world.

Recent years have seen concerted efforts to conserve the park's historical and ecological significance. Projects aim to maintain its original design while integrating contemporary amenities to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Paddington Recreation Ground remains a symbol of unity, community, and foresight. The park stands as a living testament to the shared history of Maida Vale, with Sir John Aird's legacy woven into its fabric. With ongoing community engagement and support, the park is poised to continue evolving and preserving its heritage for generations to come.

In every tree, every pathway, and every community event, Paddington Recreation Ground tells the tale of Maida Vale's past, present, and future. It is a green lung, and a reminder that preservation efforts, fuelled by community spirit, can transform a vision into a thriving reality.

Jesse Bevan Brown's front cover painting, capturing the enthusiasm of a cricket match with female players, infuses the park's surroundings with a stirring narrative. Notably, the absence of a women's team to date lends significance to this artwork, as it stands as a beacon of inspiration, encouraging inclusion and diversity within the sport at a local level.

I am heading down there now, to take a breath and enjoy watching a squirrel, or two.

Alice Sinclair,

May 2024

Sources

- Historical records and archives related to Sir John Aird's contributions to Paddington Recreation Ground. (London archives)
- Local wartime accounts and historical documents detailing the park's role during World Wars. (London archives)



A watercolour painting of Paddington Recreation Ground by Jesse Brown (our front cover artist)

TIPS FROM DR KATE THOMPSON

To reduce your environmental impact and conserve resources

We had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Kate Elizabeth Thompson. A top award winning conservationist, dedicated to safeguarding the planet's natural treasures. Below she has shared with us some tips on how to be eco-conscious. But first a little about her journey.

Her journey into the realm of conservation began with humble roots, nurturing a deep-seated love for nature.

Following her undergraduate studies at Aberystwyth, Dr Kate pursued a master's degree specialising in Biodiversity Conservation, delving into research on bird disturbance at Poole Harbour. Fuelled by her curiosity for the world's biodiversity, she embarked on transformative placements in Brazil and South Africa, solidifying her commitment to wildlife conservation.

Throughout her academic journey Dr Kate actively engaged in fundraising and collaborated with esteemed organisations such as the Zoological Society of London and World Animal Protection. Her contributions to conservation earned her recognition, including the prestigious Freedom of the City of London honour.

Armed with extensive knowledge and experience, she now channels her expertise towards assisting companies in adopting sustainable practices, with a focus on biodiversity enhancement.

Notable highlights of Dr Kate Thompson's career include her poignant encounters with African elephants in the wild and her collaboration with the Africa Childrens' Education Foundation on an eco-toilet project for a school in Kenya, benefitting 800 children. Her commitment to environmental education shines through in her work, exemplified by a dedicated chapter in her PhD thesis delving deep into African elephant conservation: an incredible species that acts as an ecosystem engineer. Now, armed with a wealth of knowledge and experience, Dr Kate applies her expertise to assist companies in fostering sustainable practices, with a particular emphasis on enhancing biodiversity.



Dr. Kate Thompson

"The momentum in this field is truly remarkable, with companies demonstrating a genuine eagerness to improve their ecological footprint. Witnessing the scale of these companies operations has been eye-opening", she said.

Dr Kate takes pride in knowing that her efforts contribute, albeit modestly, to the broader landscape of conservation consultancy. She firmly believes that every action, no matter how small, creates ripples of positive change in the world of conservation.

What can we do here in Maida Vale?

I often encounter discussions surrounding eco-anxiety and the overwhelming feeling individuals experience when contemplating what they can do to support our planet. However, amidst these concerns, it's crucial to recognise that there are countless small actions we can take to make a positive impact.

I draw inspiration from Anne-Marie Bonneau's empowering words:

"We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly."

Embracing this philosophy across all sustainability practices could truly transform our world for the better.

Indeed, the journey toward sustainability begins with individual actions, and it can start right at home and within our immediate environment. By taking consistent, small steps, we can collectively enact meaningful change. Here, I've compiled a list of ten actionable steps that anyone can begin implementing today to contribute to a more sustainable future:

1. Switch to natural deodorants: Many conventional deodorants come in plastic packaging that contributes to plastic pollution and landfill waste. By choosing natural deodorants that come in eco-friendly packaging such as recyclable or biodegradable materials, you can minimize your environmental footprint and support sustainable packaging practices.

2. Beeswax wraps: Beeswax wraps are washable and reusable, allowing you to use them multiple times before needing replacement. This reduces waste and saves money over time compared to single-use plastic wrap. At the end of their lifespan, beeswax wraps are biodegradable and compostable, breaking down naturally without contributing to plastic pollution in landfills or oceans.

3. Bar soap and shampoo bars: Many bar soaps and shampoo bars are made from natural and biodegradable ingredients, such as plant-based oils, essential oils, and botanical extracts, which are less harmful to the environment compared to synthetic chemicals found in liquid products. They require less water to manufacture and use compared to liquid soap and shampoo, helping conserve water resources and reduce environmental impact throughout the product's lifecycle.

4. Reusable menstrual products: Consider switching to reusable menstrual products such as menstrual cups, cloth pads, or period underwear, which are cost-effective, eco-friendly, and reduce the amount of disposable menstrual products ending up in landfills.

5. Turn your boiler off: Boilers consume energy to maintain the temperature of water or steam, so shutting it off when it's not in use can help conserve energy. Decreased energy consumption from turning off your boiler translates to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.

6. Shop at local green grocers: Green grocers often showcase a diverse range of varieties of fruits and vegetables that may not be available in mainstream supermarkets. By celebrating biodiversity and heritage crops, they help preserve agricultural diversity and promote resilient food systems. Locally sourced produce travels shorter distances from farm to table compared to products sold in supermarkets, reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation and distribution. This promotes environmental sustainability and helps mitigate climate change.

7. Grow your own herbs: Growing your own herbs reduces your carbon footprint by eliminating the need for transportation and packaging associated with store-bought herbs. It also promotes biodiversity and ecosystem health by providing habitat and food for beneficial insects and pollinators in an urban environment.

8. Eat more plant-based: Plant-based diets have a lower environmental footprint compared to diets rich in animal products. Plant-based foods generally require fewer natural resources such as water, land, and energy to produce, and they generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental pollutants. By eating more plant-based foods, you can reduce your ecological impact and help mitigate climate change.

9. Buy a recycled bird feeder: Bird species are a great indicator to show how well an environment is doing. They support many different species within an area. Some species have adapted well to urban environments whilst other haven't. By providing food and habitat for birds, bird feeders can contribute to conservation efforts aimed at mitigating threats such as habitat loss, climate change, and pollution. They can also help raise awareness about the importance of preserving natural ecosystems and protecting vulnerable species.

10. Support wildlife in your local area: Did you know that canals are an important ecosystem for conservation? They play an incredible role in keeping cities cool by a reduction of up to 1.6 degrees centigrade.

Canal water is also being used to heat and cool buildings. Up to 350,000 homes could benefit saving 1+ million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

You can find out more about canal conservation and support your local canal at

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/little-venice>

By incorporating these sustainable tips, you can reduce your environmental impact, conserve resources, and contribute to a healthier planet for future generations.

If you want to follow along with my journey, follow me on Instagram:

@drkatet



PRE-LOVED AND RE-LOVED IN MAIDA VALE

Integral to any walk I take through Maida Vale is catching a glimpse of the local fashion and the locals showing off their best attire.

Recently there has been a well-deserved rise in second-hand fashion, and with it are many benefits, including affordable garments and the reuse of something that would be put straight into landfill otherwise. Why do that to your vintage Chanel?

Fast fashion is common on the high street and dominating online shopping websites. As demand increases, the working conditions for those that create the garments while we sit behind our screens, grinning at the bargains, decreases exponentially. To be able to offer clothes at bargain prices and to respond rapidly to changing fashion trends, clothing brands and retailers are continually looking for cheap production locations that can accommodate complex orders and deliver quality goods at short notice. The increased pressure on short lead times and low prices has a knock-on effect throughout the whole supply chain. The 'fast fashion' model has a deteriorating effect on working conditions. Low wages, forced labour, unhealthy and dangerous working conditions and child labour are rampant throughout the garment supply chain. The number of children in child labour rose by 8.4 million (reaching 160 million worldwide) within the last 4 years. The COVID-19 pandemic was amongst the main factors, from schools being closed to the economic challenges it presented. Giving fashion a new life not only combats this, but allows for creative expression as more unique items find themselves in the trendy wardrobes. In the heart of the neighbourhood, we have been gifted with unspoken gems that do just this, giving rise to a more pragmatic slow-fashion model, from trash to incredibly stylish treasure.

Situated on Clifton Gardens, conveniently near many food and wine shops are two shops of this kind. The first being Marys Living and Giving, which gives its profits to Save the Children, working to provide children with the education, food, and medicine they need across 100 countries including the UK. They believe that *"In a world where every child has a chance of the future they deserve. With children, for children, we change it for good."*

This is all done, with stocked racks of all kinds of designers, in fabulous condition, throughout London, but with a branch right in the heart of Maida Vale. When I entered this tucked-away boutique with stylish mannequins in the window and dim lighting, I was welcomed with a cheery hello and a compliment, before sifting through colour-coded racks of skirts, shirts, and blouses. The staff advised me on the choice of a cute mustard sweater, allowed me to try it on, and provided me with it wrapped in red tissue when I decided to purchase it. I left without any shopper's guilt, and a fantastic addition to my wardrobe.

The second is the Shelter Boutique just a minute away. Standing for the rights of everyone across England and Scotland to have a safe home "Because home is Everything", offering support worldwide, with an online chat and emergency helpline if needed. The Shelter is a must-shop when walking down Clifton Gardens. Their stock is always changing, with huge amounts of accessories, bags, and shoes, alongside their ever-flourishing clothes selection all donated and sorted by locals. Wonderfully, they are open all day, and hold up equality between women's and men's fashion, even with a kid's section. Although keeping the freedom to dabble in either because if these shops prove anything it is that fashion is limitless and universal. Shelter provides a calm shopping environment, all in brilliant condition and for attainable prices and sold to you with a smile. These shops truly change the trajectory of so many people's lives and do it ever so glamorously.

In the UK, we buy more clothes per person than any other country in Europe. Around 300,000 tonnes of clothing end up in household bins every year, with around 20% going to landfill and 80% incinerated. One [report](#) shows evidence that when synthetic textiles are landfilled or incinerated, they can leach harmful microfibres into the environment. We overall create over 92 million tonnes of waste a year.

Just before I give you my my final suggestion for second hand fashion, there are many local shops that stock clothes that are unique and beautifully made, such as The Brimful Store on Formosa street. Shops like these have mindfully sourced and well made clothes, escaping from the fast fashion trend, stocking the finest cashmere, wool and other fine hand made products. Shopping in shops like this is a lifetime investment as the clothes are made to last, buying something that will never land in landfill and buying well to buy once, these clothes are not second hand but in shops like these they really do stick with you. The “slow” fashion revolution is not about always buying second hand, it is about being conscious about where your garments have been sourced, and how long they will last, making sure they are well made lifetime commitments.

My final second hand suggestion is just a stone's throw from Kilburn Park Station, is St Augustine's Carboot. Carboot sales bring second-hand fashion to a completely new setting. Every Saturday morning, independent vendors set up stalls with piles and piles of second-hand items, transforming a standard car park into the hustle and bustle of the community and drawing in eager customers. You are bound to stumble upon what makes shopping here an adventure.

You have brilliant conversations and spend a good part of your morning discovering more and more antiques and vintage in a unique and casual way, that makes hardly a dent in your wallet. The Carboot celebrates exactly what is so deeply in the heart of sustainable fashion, you never come away with the same thing twice, and it is a shopping experience like no other. This is a brilliant substitute to those websites that have these “bargains” , as the clothing is at such good prices and normally better quality, and really embodies what should be done across England and the world, as these clothes are almost being saved from landfill. In the future when in the market, take a chance to explore pre-loved fashion, right here in the centre of our neighbourhood, It can do much more good than harm. Let's start revolutionising the way we buy clothes and its impact on the entire planet!

Theodora Jackson,

May 2024



Mary's living & giving shop on Clifton Road.



Shelter Boutique on Clifton Road.

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE of poet and editor Eddie Linden

The funeral has taken place of Eddie Linden, the Scots-Irish editor of the influential poetry magazine *Aquarius* who was also a noted poet in his own right.

Linden, who died in Maida Vale, on 19 November, aged 88, had a Catholic funeral followed by a humanist committal service.

Among those attending the funeral on Friday, 8 November were actor Bill Paterson, Karen Buck MP, leader of Westminster City Council Adam Hug, writer Robert Fraser and gay rights activist Peter McGraith. Paterson, who narrates *The Repair Shop* on BBC One, was personally chosen by Linden to play him in an unrealised film adaptation of his biography.

It was only in April last year that Linden's biological father, whom he had never known, was positively identified. Although Linden had been abandoned by his Irish birth parents as a child, both his mother and father's family were represented at his funeral. A paternal cousin was keen to attend, and travelled from Ireland to be there. Linden never married or had children, but left behind a legion of cousins.

Friends and family assembled at the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Vincent de Paul on Harrow Road to say their farewells to a man whose gay and illegitimate identity led to a complex relationship with the Catholic Church. Readings were given by Linden's close friends, the writer Theo Morgan and critic Hilary Davies, the widow of Linden's biographer Sebastian Barker.

At the West London Crematorium in Kensal Green, the service began with *Úr-Chill An Chreagáin*, a traditional Irish waltz, as a mass took place in Dublin at the same time for those unable to make it in person. A humanist celebrant welcomed mourners, including those watching via video link.

Former *Times Literary Supplement* columnist James Campbell paid tribute to Linden, who was renowned for his daily phone calls to friends.

Campbell recalled his previous comment that Alexander Graham Bell could have invented the telephone with Eddie in mind. These calls would usually end with Linden saying "I'll let you go", whereupon he would hang up. Campbell concluded his address with the words "Eddie, we'll let you go."

A message from the Northern Irish novelist Glenn Patterson was read out, in which Patterson said that he never left Linden's company or put down the phone without feeling that he had learned something of value.

Flowers of the Forest by the Scots Guards was played as reflection music for Linden, the Lanarkshire-born poet who had lived in London for over sixty years but never lost his unmistakable Scottish accent. His most famous poem, *City of Razors*, vividly describes the sectarian violence of postwar Glasgow, where he had worked as a young man, before moving south.

His cousin Geraldine Gallacher (the founder and CEO of the Executive Coaching Consultancy) read a poem written by Linden for his late uncle James, which was thought to be previously unpublished.

The cremation service concluded with Beethoven's *Ode To Joy*, from the Ninth Symphony which Linden mentioned in his biography, recalling the period after he had moved to London in 1958. "With his death, a whole era in postwar British poetry has come to a close", *The Irish Times* wrote in its obituary of Linden. For those who knew Linden, a character as boisterous as the *Ode To Joy* has hung up the phone for the last time.

Theo Morgan,

May 2024

A black and white portrait of Eddie Linden, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark, vertically striped suit jacket, a dark shirt, and a dark tie. He is holding a white cup with a geometric pattern in his right hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

Eddie Linden photographed by Granville Davies (1985)
Credit: Granville Davies

60 SECONDS WITH ALICE

We spoke with Denise Arnolin, Station Manager at Paddington train station. Denise sat down for 60 seconds with our editor, Alice

Can you provide a brief overview of your background in the railway industry that led you to your career path as a Paddington train station manager?

I joined the rail industry in 2005 with Heathrow Express as a Customer Service Representative. My job was a multi-tasking role where I worked on train to check tickets, worked at the ticket office to sell tickets and platform duties to dispatch trains. I was based at Heathrow T5, Terminal 2&3, Terminal 4 and my favourite station, Paddington.

After becoming a mum (three times), I then challenged myself further and decided that I needed to step into a role with more responsibilities; I started a Duty Station Manager role at Paddington in 2013. Paddington became my permanent station with Great Western Railway (GWR). It was the best decision ever. I had enrolled at my young age into an Apprenticeship, and I would have never believed that I would be passing my GCSE English and Maths and go to college at 48 years old. I have since then become an active member of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion group and representing R.E.A.C.H at GWR (Recognising Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage), where we aim to develop and promote diversity. I am a mental first aider, a care team member, a mentor and what can I say: GWR is my oyster.

Can you walk us through a typical day in your role?

My earliest shift is a 04:15 start till 14:30 and my latest shift is 14:15 till 00:40. I manage a team of 42 colleagues in total but have 10 direct reports. Not every day is the same, but I make sure that I am ready fit for my role as a manager. I get the operational updates from the Paddington Control Station; I make sure that I brief my colleagues and support them during disruption times and busy periods.

I deal with my colleagues' welfare and ensure they are able to carry out their roles. I look at for the station cleanliness, any faults that need reporting, I aim to support my colleague development when we have our 121-meeting called Time with Your Manager (TWYM) which I love doing. I also help with the recruitment process for new starters and help with the new starter induction.

Passenger engagement must be a big part of your role. Have you got any juicy stories?

We value our passengers and always aim to provide the best service. Queen Elizabeth II came to Paddington station in 17 May 2022 for the inauguration of the Elizabeth Line and it was a mesmerising moment and an honour to have her there. She was elegant, a role model and a true leader with a great sense of humour.





Denise with the King Charles train, arriving at the platform

Paddington is one of the key locations where our travelling customers want to come. Yes, there are loads of tourist attractions, passengers may be visiting London for the first time and may be lost so I step in giving them directions and recommendations. Paddington has beautiful local shops and the canal restaurants are just unique. I also deal with lost property, and I am keen to help and to look for their missing items and to see happy faces when reunited with items.

In what ways does the train station engage with the local community, and what are your plans for the future?

There is always room for suggestions as Paddington plays a key part within the community.

There are engagements with the local schools through Apprenticeship schemes and the Prince's Trust charity. We work with the railway delivery group to help ensure victims of domestic abuse can use our services to travel a safe place. GWR REACH (Recognition Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) which I am co-chair of, is looking to support a local charity, and are looking at potential candidates.

What are some of the challenges you face as a Duty Station manager? Can you share a specific instance where you successfully addressed a significant operational or customer-related challenge?

Providing an on-time timetable is challenging as there are external factors that often can change the course of the well-planned day. The railway has been subject to weather changes for example, such as flooding which has caused delays and cancellation for our customers. Some of our passengers can be travelling to catch a flight. Delays are more worrying to them so helping to find alternative ways for them to manage their connections is a priority.

Some customers are understanding of the situation, and others are not so happy. We also have a responsibility to keep our colleagues safe in their work - the introduction of the body worn cameras has added an extra tool to help protect our customers and colleagues.

Can you recall a particularly memorable or heartwarming moment during your time at Paddington? Are there any unique events or incidents that have left a lasting impression on you?

My heartwarming moment was when I met you Alice and we talked about your campaign and charity in Kenya, the Samburu girl's foundation about female genital mutilation (FGM).

My best memorable moment was when we, GWR REACH and Network Rail's Culture Fusion, worked together on a Carnival train on 27 August 2023 to bring 100 children from disadvantaged background to travel on the train from Bristol Temple Meads to Paddington. It was their first travel and opportunity to go to the Notting Hill Carnival.

The kids were met at Paddington by a steel band and some the kids started to dance and showcase their dancing skills to us. I had tears in my eyes. We, as a team, managed to make these kids happy, fed them and keep them safe.

What do you enjoy most about being a Paddington Duty station manager? How has this role impacted you personally and professionally?

I love meeting new people, seeing the goodbyes and embraces. I love problem solving and team dynamics. Paddington is unique and offers a variety of scenery and scenarios. I keep on learning every day and developing as a manager. My railway family is vast, and we all share the same vision to revalue the railway in the heart of the traveling public. I aim to be a leader and as a woman of a diverse background and ethnicity, I am proud to be part of an industry where Inclusion and Diversity is taken seriously. I love seeing people growing and progressing within the industry as a coach and mentor. I would recommend the railway as a place to work, and my daughter is coming for a work experience in April, and I cannot wait for her to share a glimpse of my role as a Duty Station Manager.

**Denise Arnolin (Duty Station Manager)
Paddington GWR**

May 2024

THE MURDER OF SAMUEL BRAGG

Things are not what they seem or how nearly to get away with murder

It is July 1964 in a very different Maida Vale and a very run-down Randolph Avenue.

The Post Office Tower has just been completed, the Beatles first film "A hard day's night" was released, Churchill was still the Prime Minister and our Little Venice resident Lulu was in the charts with "Shout". Only three weeks earlier Nelson Mandela had been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Living in council accommodation on the ground floor of No 7 Randolph Avenue, 77 year old Samuel Bragg is suffering from dementia and in very poor health. Kathleen Cotter, a part-time office cleaner with three children, Jean, Anthony and Timothy, and the other tenants kept an eye on him and would try to make sure he had his basic needs provided for.

Samuel Bragg lived in abject squalor and would not accept any assistance from Social Services. He had only the most basic necessities for life and ate the bare minimum to keep himself alive. He was infamous for his meanness and he was notorious for being a miser. He was paranoid about his money and kept it locked in a box with the keys kept on his belt.

Kathleen's children, who used to play with Samuel in the past, would now no longer do so since his room was now too unpleasant to visit.

Kathleen did Samuel's washing and when his bedclothes became foetid, she would see to their cleaning. She performed other odd jobs for him and even arranged for him to go to Saint Mary's for six months when his neglect became life threatening. On his return his lack of self-care deteriorated even further and he wanted no further contact with anybody.

In January 1966, seeing that Samuel's door was open and that his keys were unattended, Timothy Cotter stole £26 (the equivalent today of about £500) from Samuel's tin. Samuel did not go the police and Timothy arranged to repay the money in instalments.



No 7 Randolph Avenue today.

If only he had been charged then, the following terrible event might never have taken place.

On the 13th of July 1964 Kathleen lost the keys to the office that she was cleaning and the next day she gave her son Timothy a pound to buy bread and milk. Timothy spent three shillings of that pound on pinball machines.

Knowing that Samuel was very ill and having heard rumours that he had stashed away a large sum of money he decided to go to his room and steal some more money to pay back what he had taken from his mother.

But it all went terribly wrong. Samuel was lying in his bed and when Timothy tried to take his keys he woke up and struggled. In Timothy's own words:

"I took his keys off his trousers and was looking through the drawers when Mr Bragg woke up. I panicked and picked up the pillow. I held it there for about 1 to 2 minutes. While I was holding the pillow, he grabbed my hand and I held his hand until he let go of mine. He was breathing when I left him. I knew he was. I saw his stomach going up and down."

On Friday 17th of July 1964 Kathleen having seen no sign from Samuel for 4 days went into his room to check if all was well.

It was not. Samuel lay dead in his bed, a pillow over the side of his face.

With no obvious signs of foul play and because of his medical history it was assumed that he had died in his sleep and an inquest was held which recorded "death by accidental smothering".

Days passed and Kathleen never found her missing office keys. On Wednesday, 22 July, Kathleen heard the sounds of her two sons Timothy and Tony having an almighty row and she went to their room to sort it out. She heard her son Tony shout that Timothy had some keys. Thinking that Timothy had her missing office keys she demanded that he return her keys. Grabbing his jacket she pulled out the keys. One look at them shocked her to her core. They were not the office keys she expected but instead they were the keys to Samuel's money box.

The next day Timothy and his mother went to Paddington Green Police Station where Timothy admitted to entering Samuel's room and attempting to steal money and also to placing a pillow over Samuel's face.

Following the confession a second autopsy was held which confirmed that Samuel's death was consistent with Timothy's confession rather than being caused by accidental smothering and Timothy was consequently charged with Samuel's murder.

Timothy's plea of manslaughter was accepted by the jury and he was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The prosecuting Counsel at the trial was Michael Corkery QC, an ex-lieutenant in the Welsh Guards, also he had previously worked on the Stephen Ward case. He was later to successfully prosecute John Stonehouse and secure the convictions of Micky McAvoy and Brian Robinson for their part in the £26 million Brink's-Mat heist when three tonnes of gold was stolen from Heathrow. He was recently portrayed in the TV series "The Gold". A huge cricket supporter, after a three month trial in Hong Kong he was so delighted to be going home that he badly injured himself bowling an imaginary fast ball down the corridor of his hotel.

Timothy Cotter was released on licence and has disappeared into history.

This was the sordid end of a mean story of greed and avariciousness which led ultimately to misery and wasted lives for all concerned.

Julian Futter,

May 2024

TEN-YEAR DETENTION ORDER ON BOY OF 14

A schoolboy, aged 14, was ordered by Mr. Justice Thesiger at the Central Criminal Court yesterday to be detained at the discretion of the Home Secretary for 10 years.

The boy pleaded Guilty to the manslaughter of Mr. Samuel Bragg, aged 77, occupying a room in the same house, by smothering him with a pillow. His plea of Not Guilty to the capital murder of Mr. Bragg in the course of theft was accepted.

Mr. Michael Corkery, for the prosecution, said that Mr. Bragg lived in one room in the house and the boy's mother looked after him from time to time. She saw Mr. Bragg on July 14 and never saw him alive again. The next evening the boy went to Mr. Bragg's room to steal. Mr. Bragg was asleep, but he woke up and the boy smothered him with a pillow. The body was found by the boy's mother two days later.

Several drawers in Mr. Bragg's room were found open, but when the police unlocked another drawer they found it contained £24 in cash and £3,500 in securities.



Left: original newspaper article (right)

THE WORSLEY HOUSE FIRE

On the 13th of December, every year at 11, a sombre ceremony takes place outside Cunningham Court, 11 Clifton Gardens.

Fifty years ago it was known as the Worsley Hotel and the events of the night of 13th December 1974 are forever etched into the collective memory of the London Fire Brigade.

It was 3:03 on a freezing December morning when a 999 call was made from the Worsley Hotel and 4 appliances were assigned from Paddington Fire Station for what was immediately classed as a high risk fire.

Little did the crews imagine that by the end of the night there would be 80 appliances from all over London and one dead and three badly injured firemen.

The Worsley Hotel, which was owned by Grand Metropolitan Group, served as a hostel for their hotel staff and consisted of 8 interconnected terrace houses. More than 150 people were living in the hotel and the maze of floors and rooms made the interior resemble a rabbit warren.

Within 3 minutes of the 999 call the first fire crews arrived to find a scene of absolute chaos. The fire engines could not gain proper access to the building because vehicles were parked in the small passage between the hotel and the street. People were wandering in a daze, hanging out of windows, crying for help and one person who jumped out of a window was stuck up a tree. Dozens of people were standing outside in the cold having escaped from the burning building. Although they were unaware at the time, one of those people was Edward Mansfield, who had deliberately started the fire and who was now watching his handywork.

Among the people living nearby, who were awoken by the fire, was the composer and radio personality Michael Berkeley, then a 26 year old BBC announcer.



The Worsley Hotel on the night of 13th December 1974

Within minutes of the arrival of the first trucks the magnitude of the blaze became apparent and more fire engines were called until eventually 38 appliances were at the scene together with 190 fire fighters. This was to be the largest fire that the Brigades fought that year.

Fire engines were called from every fire station in London - from Hendon to Lambeth. Only Euston Fire Station was not called out so that at least one station was still available in case of another fire in the capital.



Among the first to enter the burning hotel was a probationary fireman, 25 years old Hamish Pettit. He had only been at Paddington Fire Station for 6 months and was married with a 2 year old son. Only the day before he was assessed as “*showing good potential for the future*”.

Unknown to the officers, Mansfield had started the fire in two separate locations, further complicating an already confusing operation. Many of the internal stairways were made of stone which when heated by the fire and then suddenly cooled by water from the hoses, thermal shock caused them to collapse, undermining the integrity of the building and making internal operations extremely dangerous.

At 4:40 a sound like a muffled bomb blast was heard and the third floor collapsed with Hamish Pettit, Tony Stewart, Martin Walker and Colin Searle underneath it. Several floors above them had been weakened by the extra load of the partially collapsed roof came down on them, the devastation seemingly concentrated on that one room. The release of the trapped men from a collapsing and burning became the priority, which proved to be a difficult, dangerous and protracted rescue operation. One by one, 3 men were released (2 with serious burns and 1 with a serious back injury) but nothing could be done for Hamish Pettit who had been killed instantly.

It is a measure of their bravery that, notwithstanding the dangers, the most difficult task of the officers was to prevent men from entering the danger zone to assist in the rescue operation.

Once everyone had been rescued the task moved to one of extinguishing the fire that had now engulfed most of the hotel. Running out of water, they took what they needed from the Regents Canal. It was not until 7:00 in the morning that the operation finally came to end.

Six other people died in the building that night, all of them hotel staff. They were Patrick Dermite, waiter, aged 17 from France, Wilfredo Lacap, porter, aged 36 from the Philippines, Basdeobora Loakanadah, trainee manager, aged 23 from Mauritius, John Lloyd, trainee manager, aged 22 from Sway, Hampshire, Edward Simpson, porter, aged 64 and Ettore Luigi Vincon, assistant cook, aged 22 from Italy.

Edward Mansfield was arrested after starting two further fires at the Piccadilly Hotel on the 19th and 22nd December. Charged with the murders of 7 people, on the 12th November 1975 he was found guilty of manslaughter and arson and sentenced to life in jail.

Three firefighters received the Queen’s commendation for bravery, including firefighter Pettit posthumously, another four received the Queens Gallantry medal.

Today the buildings have been rebuilt and are known as “Connaught House”. A red plaque commemorates Pettit’s sacrifice also stands as a reminder of the bravery of his colleagues and the debt we all owe these brave firefighters who risk their lives to keep us safe.



Julian Futter,

May 2024



Every year at 11:00 a sombre ceremony
takes place outside
Cunningham Court, 11 Clifton Gardens.

SAVOURING TURKISH KURDISH FLAVOURS

Fatima's Gözleme Delights from Gaziantep at Thyme and Tahini

In a quaint corner of Thyme and Tahini, nestled in the heart of the city, lies a culinary gem that transports diners to the vibrant streets of Gaziantep, celebrated as one of the world's culinary capitals by UNESCO. Drawing inspiration from her rich heritage, Fatima brings the authentic taste of Turkish Kurdish gözleme to eager palates.

Gözleme, a traditional Anatolian flatbread, is special in Turkish and Kurdish cuisine. The word gözleme is believed to derive from the Turkish word "közleme," meaning to "cook on the embers," as the nomadic people were cooking the flatbreads originally on embers, imparting a distinctive charred flavour that adds depth to each bite. At Thyme and Tahini, Fatima showcases her mastery of this age-old delicacy with a live cooking station that sizzles with anticipation every day, except Wednesdays.

The menu offers three tantalising options, each crafted with care and bursting with flavour. For the vegan connoisseurs, there's the delightful combination of potato and leek, creating a harmony of earthy goodness. Vegetarians can savour the classic pairing of spinach and feta cheese, a timeless favourite that never fails to satisfy. Meanwhile, meat lovers can indulge in the robust flavours of beef mince, onion, and aromatic spices, a carnivore's delight that leaves taste buds tingling.

While enjoying Fatima's gözleme at Thyme and Tahini is an experience to cherish, adventurous souls can recreate the magic at home. With a basic gözleme pan, some feta cheese, and fresh spinach, anyone can embark on a culinary journey inspired by Fatima's expertise.





Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3/4 cup warm water
- 1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- Olive oil for brushing

Instructions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt. Make a well in the centre and add the olive oil and warm water. Mix until a dough forms.
2. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 5 minutes until smooth and elastic. Cover with a clean towel and let it rest for 30 minutes.
3. Divide the dough into 4 equal portions. Roll out each portion into a thin circle, about 8 inches in diameter.
4. Spread a quarter of the chopped spinach and crumbled feta cheese evenly over half of each dough circle, leaving a small border around the edges.
5. Fold the other half of the dough over the filling to form a half-moon shape. Press the edges firmly to seal.

6. Heat a lightly oiled skillet or gözleme pan over medium heat. Carefully place the filled gözleme onto the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown and crispy.

7. Brush the cooked gözleme with olive oil and serve hot.

8. Serve with some poached chicken (You can cook the earlier removed chicken breast in the reducing broth) Then slice it up thinly. Add some sliced leek and cooked carrot.

Hailing from Gaziantep, a city renowned for its culinary heritage, Fatima's dedication to preserving traditional recipes adds to the authenticity of her gözleme. With Gaziantep boasting a staggering number of registered recipes on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Fatima's culinary creations pay homage to her hometown's rich gastronomic legacy.

Whether you're seeking a taste of tradition or craving a culinary adventure, Fatima's gözleme at Thyme and Tahini promises an unforgettable dining experience that celebrates the rich tapestry of Turkish and Kurdish cuisine. So why not treat yourself to a slice of Anatolian heaven today?

The Lonely Pet Column



By Jesse Brown

Name: Lord Scrabble The Third

Species: Long haired Siberian Hamster, from aristocratic lineage

Profession: A retired wheel engineer

A day in the life...

Introducing Lord Scrabble, The Third of Randolph Avenue, a charming gentleman hamster with a pedigree lineage and a heart as big as his nut-stuffed cheeks! He has a refined palate for gourmet hamster cuisine and a discerning eye for exquisite bedding, Lord Scrabble is not only a connoisseur of the finer things in life but also a patron of the arts, often seen attending performances of the Rodent Symphony Orchestra or commissioning portraits of himself in oil and acrylic. In his spare time, Lord Scrabble indulges in scholarly pursuits, poring over ancient scrolls of hamster history and philosophy, all while reclining in his velvet-lined hammock.

This honourable little furball is on a quest for love in Maida Vale, hoping to find that special someone to share his ball with. A cheeky critter on the prowl, he's ready to sink his teeth into a romance as wild as his wheel spins. Lord Scrabble is also a hopeless romantic with a penchant for speedy cuddling and chomping treats by candlelight. He enjoys shopping at Planitis for organic seeds, sipping oat milk at La Piccola Deli, and gazing at the stars over Paddington Rec from his cage, which notably spans 7 floors.

If you're a fellow furry friend with a taste for adventure, Lord Scrabble would love to meet you. Whether you're a guinea pig with a passion for parsley or a goldfish dreaming of a life outside the bowl, Lord Scrabble believes that love is best served with a healthy side of fast cuddles. If you make the cut, he'll take you out for a pint down at the Warrington in his trusty ball (it's a convertible).

So, if you're ready to embark on a whirlwind romance, don't hesitate to reach out to Lord Scrabble the Third-today! After all, life is better when you have someone to roll around with.

**** Have you got a pet who you think would like a partner? Please email Maida.Unveiled@gmail.com if you would like them to feature in our next issue ****



W9W2

**PADDINGTON WATERWAYS
AND MAIDA VALE SOCIETY AGM**

**"TO PRESERVE, PROTECT AND
PROGRESS COMMUNITY LIFE"**

Community Meeting

MONDAY 20TH MAY 2024

8PM start. Doors open at 7.30PM with light refreshments

**LANARK ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE
235 LANARK ROAD
W9 1RA
(BETWEEN ELGIN AVENUE AND CARLTON VALE)**

All Welcome. Come and have your say on:

"Keeping Our Area Special"

GUEST SPEAKER:

Karen Buck, Local MP

**Opportunity to meet your local MV & LV Councillors
Hear about the work of North Paddington Youth Club**



For more information on us visit www.w9w2.co.uk
Instagram- @maida_unveiled

MAIDA UNVEILED

Editor/Designer
Alice Sinclair

Editor/Designer
Giulia Matteoni

Contributors

Contributor Robert Bruce

Contributor Dr Kate Thompson

Contributor Julian Futter

Contributor Theodora Jackson

Contributor Theo Morgan

Artwork Jesse Bevan, Liam O'Farrell

Photography Alina Seli

Editorial Office

maida.unveiled@gmail.com

@maida_unveiled

www.W9W2.co.uk



Paddington Waterways and Maida Vale Society Committee Members

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Vice-Chair/Planning	Andrew Garwood-Watkins
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Our W9W2 area...

