

# **BLACK +GREEN BLACKHEATH +GREENWICH MAGAZINE**

**ISSUE 21 - SPRING 2025**



**Interview: Tom  
Kerridge**

**Greenwich charity  
shop retail boom**

**Artist Max  
Middleton**



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ISSUE 21 - SPRING 2025

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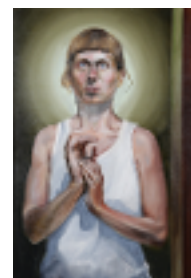
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It's always really gratifying receiving all the lovely comments we get about Black and Green Magazine. It is clear that there's a sizeable and growing readership that appreciates our strong emphasis on the best quality editorial, and we hope that you consider it a welcomed free asset to the community.

As well as covering local news and features, our quarterly magazine ventures further than south London, with celebrity interviews, lifestyle, property and travel articles, and much more.

We're hoping that you'll be keen to get involved in our magazine in some way, whether as a reader, advertiser, or perhaps stockist. We'd certainly welcome your views and suggestions, and please send us information, letters and photos you think suitable for the magazine.

Unfortunately, the magazine can't exist from advertising alone, so please consider helping secure its future by taking out a subscription to guarantee your copy (just email us at [info@blackandgreen.biz](mailto:info@blackandgreen.biz)), or perhaps by becoming an investor in this dynamic title.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

The Black + Green team



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# What's on

## Pirates

Daily to 4 January, 10am-5pm

This major new exhibition traces the changing depictions of pirates throughout the ages and reveals the brutal history often obscured by fiction. While sometimes portrayed as tricksters or scoundrels, pirates are primarily swashbuckling adventurers associated with lush islands, flamboyant dress and buried treasure. The Pirates exhibition deconstructs these myths and illuminates the realities of pirate life, including those of the pirates Edward 'Blackbeard' Teach, William Kidd, Anne Bonny and Mary Read. The exhibition covers piracy across the globe looking at the South China Sea, Indian Ocean and Barbary pirates who operated off the coast of North Africa.

National Maritime Museum, Romney Road, Greenwich SE10 9NF; 020 8858 4422; [rmg.co.uk](http://rmg.co.uk); adults £15, children £7.50; recommended for ages 10 and above



## Afternoon tea at St James' Court

Daily

Afternoon tea is a British institution, so do it in supreme style at St James's Court Hotel in Westminster. Intricately designed pastries, scrumptuous savoury treats, scones with clotted cream, the finest teas, champagnes and soft drinks and more are all served with impeccable service in the smart Kona tea room.

St James' Court, 54 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6AF; 020 7834 6655; [stjamescourt.co.uk](http://stjamescourt.co.uk)

## No Direction Home: stand-up comedy

Friday 24 June, 7.30-8.30pm

To celebrate Refugee Week 2025, the Cutty Sark will be hosting an evening of stand-up comedy with No Direction Home, a comedy collective produced by Counterpoints Arts featuring new stand-ups from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Michael Edwards Studio Theatre, Cutty Sark, Greenwich SE10 9HT; 020 8312 6608; [greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://greenwichtheatre.org.uk); tickets pay what you can, £5, £10

## Parlour Song

Friday 2 to Saturday 24 May

A blackly hilarious exploration of deceit, paranoia and desire, as the spirit of the Blues lands in leafy suburbia. Demolition expert Ned lives in a nice new house on a nice new estate on the edge of the English countryside. He loves his job. Barbecues. Car-boot sales. Fitness programmes. Outwardly his life is entirely unremarkable. Not unlike his friend and neighbour Dale. So



why has he not slept a wink in six months? Why is he so terrified of his attractive wife Joy? And why is it every time he leaves on business, something else goes missing from his home? Jez Butterworth's play Parlour Song was first performed at the Atlantic Theater, New York, in February 2008, before receiving its European premiere at the Almeida Theatre, London, in March 2009. The show now receives its first major London revival at Greenwich Theatre following its acclaimed production of Jez Butterworth's The River, in a new version revised by the playwright, in 2024. It stars Kellie Shirley (In The Long Run, Eastenders), Naveed Khan (Death on the Nile, Humans) and Jeremy Edwards (The Locke Inn, Hollyoaks).

Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, Greenwich SE10 8ES; 020 8858 7755; [greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://greenwichtheatre.org.uk); tickets from £26.50, £21.50 concessions



## Tirzah Garwood: Beyond Ravilious

Until 26 May, Tues-Sun, 10am-5pm

Discover the first major exhibition devoted to the visionary artist and designer Tirzah Garwood (1908–1951). Best known until now as the wife of Eric Ravilious and as the author of the autobiography *Long Live Great Bardfield*, Garwood excelled as a fine artist and printmaker. This retrospective marks the first time the full extent her output has been shown, giving these captivating works the critical examination and public showcase they deserve. It is a rare opportunity to view more than 80 of Garwood's works, and explore her 'sophisticated naïve' approach that infused apparently innocent subjects with deeper meanings. Representing each area of her practice, the exhibition showcases almost all of Garwood's existing oil paintings, alongside her witty wood engravings, pencil sketches, experimental marbled papers, and collaged paper constructions. Included in the exhibition, 11 works, including watercolours,

by Eric Ravilious will draw out the thematic similarities, shared interests, and distinct artistic personalities of this remarkable creative couple. Journey into the imaginative world of an artist who carved fairy tales out of difficult times, and breathed life into the inanimate.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, Dulwich SE21 7AD; 020 8693 5254; [dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk); adults £18, students, concessions £9, Pension Credit/Universal Credit £1, under 18s free

## Astronomy and Islam

Sundays 26 April, 25 May, 22 June, 19 July 10.30-11.15am

These shows focusing on different aspects of astronomy and Islam are held before the predicted sighting of the next New Crescent Moon. A Royal Observatory Greenwich astronomer will guide visitors on a trip through the night sky, usually followed by a short presentation by the New Crescent Society, a Muslim community-led astronomy organisation.

Peter Harrison Planetarium, Royal Observatory, Blackheath Avenue, SE10 8XJ; 020 8312 6608; [rmg.co.uk](http://rmg.co.uk); tickets £10 adult, £5 child

## Black Heroes Soul Food Cafe

Friday 2 May, 7.30pm

Celebrating Black History, Food for the Soul. Black Heroes Foundation invite you to their award-winning Soul Food Café, a creative space celebrating Black Britons and their contribution to the world. Featuring music, dancing, quizzes, conversation and refreshments. Come along ready to get moving and share your thoughts, music and talents. Black Heroes Foundation are a community-based charity that uses the arts to celebrate Black heroes, developing cultural awareness and promoting a world where Black heroes are acknowledged, respected and celebrated.

The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford SE8 4AG; 020 8692 4446; [thealbany.org.uk](http://thealbany.org.uk); free; for ages 12+

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# What's on

## Thames-Side Studios open studios weekend

Sat/Sun 7/8 June, 11am-5pm

With more than 550 studios, free entry, exhibitions, free kids' activities and workshops, Thames-Side Studios annual open studios weekend is a perfect opportunity to meet local artists, makers and designers, find out about what they do, and to buy directly from their studios.

Studio practices cover a wide range, from painting and drawing, fashion design, carpentry, jewellery, millinery, illustration, photography, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture and installation, tailoring, leather work, picture framing, stained glass making, writing, furniture making, upholstery, textiles, conservation and restoration, lutherie, graphic design, film and video, skin care, architecture, product design, and more. Street food and free limited parking is available on site.

Thames-Side Studios, Harrington Way, Woolwich SE18 5NR; 020 8301 8844; [thames-sidestudios.co.uk](http://thames-sidestudios.co.uk); free



Thames-Side Studios open studios weekend

## Urban Village Fete at Greenwich Peninsula

Sunday 18 May, 11am-7pm

Celebrating its 10th birthday, the fete will be a day packed with world-class DJs, live performances, independent markets, creative experiences, and incredible street food. DJs Gilles Peterson, Jack Hemingway and Touching Bass will be providing the music alongside the London Soul Choirs and Loose.Fm taking over the design district with disco, Balaric beats, hip-hop grooves, smooth jazz and more. There'll be workshops on dog training, pottery, upcycling old t-shirts and more, while BBC Radio's Robert Elms will host creative conversations on education, community and collaboration, and fashion. There will be a food market, makers' market and much more.

Greenwich Peninsula, Soames Walk, Greenwich SE10 0SQ; [greenwichpeninsula.co.uk](http://greenwichpeninsula.co.uk); free

## Footsteps: imprints from a creative journey

To Wednesday 30 April

Southeast London artist Xavier White is exhibiting 'Footsteps', a visual journal over the last decade as an outsider artist. Much of his work is defined by the brain injury he sustained in a cycling accident in 1985. The journal explores a successful decade of creative process and development research behind his stained glass sculptures, wall hangings, performance and installations. Over the last 10 years Xavier has been able to return the care he received in the form of hospital-enhancing artworks with glass and nursing training workshops and presentations.

Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath SE3 7SE; 020 8858 1749; [mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://mycenaehouse.co.uk); free



Tom Kerridge

# Interview: Tom Kerridge

*The celebrated chef has created his delicious dishes in a host of settings. Here we find him cooking for a glamorous party in the middle of a heavenly Suffolk wilderness*

BY BEN WEST

There was a huge buzz of anticipation as we traipsed up the hill in the thick black darkness towards the flickering lights. There we found ubiquitous Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, who, with his team, had set up a makeshift kitchen in a clearing in the forest, including a unique 10ft-high cooking cage and a large fire pit.

Guests were treated to such delights as roast chicken and lamb and salt cooked roast potatoes, Scottish langoustines, charcoal and pine mayonnaise, Blythburgh pork belly with crackling on the side, fire baked apple sauce and beef fat sticky toffee pudding and clotted cream.

The magical feast was served under a large bright white marquee with immaculately laid tables of white linen, graced with candlelight and fresh flowers. Afterwards, live music effortlessly got everyone to dance. Guests had previously tried their hand at axe-throwing (thankfully before they had



sampled too many wines) and been spellbound by a fire-eater.

I asked Tom what challenges there were cooking outdoors at The Wilderness Reserve, and cooking outdoors in general?

"Cooking at The Wilderness Reserve was incredible, we had the most amazing cuts of meat: whole lamb, pork belly, beef and lobster. But cooking outside has its challenges. It can be really cold, wet and windy, but you have to be prepared for the elements.

"Once your fire is up and running, it's about timing. You have to make sure the heat from the fire is just right for cooking. It may take a while, so you need to be patient. The other thing to remember is that you probably need more wood than you think, and it must be dry, otherwise you will get excessive smoke billowing from it - and nobody wants that."

Generally, did he prefer discovering an exciting new recipe of his own, or someone else's creation?

"Both, to be honest. I cook quite a lot with my

son, Acey, and we often throw random things together and it turns out much better than expected. But yes, I do love it when I try new dishes from my head chefs. I'm often blown away by how talented they are and what flavour combinations they come up with."

What special qualities does a chef need to stand out from the crowd, for example to gain Michelin stars or become a tv chef?

"Passion and drive are so important. It's a really rewarding job but you have to work hard too. I think the best thing is to focus on a great plate of food, every time, maximising flavour using the best ingredients you can get your hands on. The rest will fall into place."

Tom was particularly worried for his industry during the pandemic, and many restaurants, cafes and bars are still struggling now.

"Hospitality has been hit so hard, but it's a resilient and creative industry and will bounce back stronger. I am optimistic about the future but we do have to acknowledge that the next few years are still likely to be tough, so we need people to support their local pubs, cafes and restaurants to ensure their survival."

Does he prefer cooking for others or others cooking for him?

"I much prefer cooking for other people, I relax more."

It's interesting that many people think an expensive tasting menu at a highly rated restaurant is exorbitant, but are happy to pay £200 for bad seats miles from the stage at a pop concert. Does Tom think good food is often undervalued, and if so how does he think the unfair perception could be addressed?

"I think good food, good ingredients and great service are all underrated. It's easy to look at a menu and think it's really expensive without appreciating everything that happens behind the scenes to make that plate of food happen. Sometimes I'd like to show people



all the work that goes into the menu at my two Michelin-starred pub The Hand and Flowers, and how talented the team that work there are."

What advice would he give to aspiring chefs?

"Work really hard, and always treat people really well. The industry is small and hard work gets noticed. Build yourself a solid reputation and good things will follow."

Lastly, I asked if he hadn't been a chef, what career would he have liked to have had?

"I'd be a white van driver. Honestly, that's the truth!"

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# The Wilderness Reserve

The Wilderness Reserve is an 8000-acre Suffolk estate of woodland, lakes and rolling pasture located between Sibton and Yoxford east of the county near Saxmundham. It contains an eclectic collection of historic and traditional Suffolk properties with features like oak frames, lime plaster and thatch roofs, which have been lovingly restored by artisans, using traditional materials. Each home has unique character, from the grand Grade II listed manor house and restored 15th century barn, to charming thatched cottages and romantic retreats.

These delightful properties are available to rent as luxurious holiday homes and include one-bed Hex Cottage, which has no electricity and requires the AGA to be stoked to heat the radiators and hot water. There's also Sibton Park, a grand 12-room Georgian mansion, The Farmhouse, a pink six-bedroom cottage, and Chapel Barn, which sleeps 38 people and features a games room, playground, sauna and steam room, cinema, gym, two treatment rooms and indoor pool.

It is, unsurprisingly, popular with celebrities, which have included actor and comedian Jack Whitehall, television presenter and model Alexa Chung, singer Cheryl and her co-stars in Girls Aloud to celebrate her 40th birthday, and comedian Sandi Toksvig.

Wilderness Reserve is also a long-term conservation and restoration project, protecting English nature and breathing new life into historic properties. It is owned by Jon Hunt, billionaire founder of British estate agents Foxtons.

Over three decades the family has bought up more and more land, and during that time more than 1.5 million trees have been planted, with the planting continuing at a rate of about 100,000 trees a year. Initiatives such as the digging out of moats or creation of wetlands has meant that the initial 38 bird species the Hunt family first found has now risen to more than 150 different species.

Wilderness is planning to more than double its accommodation by adding the nearby Cockfield Hall estate, which will allow for a

further 250 bedrooms in another swathe of restored historic properties, including a new country house hotel.

Although you're just a short drive from the



popular seaside towns of Southwold and Aldeburgh, once you arrive at Wilderness, you won't want to leave, not least because of the feast of activities on offer. These include wild swimming, paddle boarding and boating on the lake, archery, axe-throwing, falconry, biking - and of course Fire Feasts, which are a fantastic experience, whether in the company of Michelin-starred chefs like Tom Kerridge, or not.

Wilderness has its own fleet of helicopters at guests' disposal, but there's also, within the 8000 acres, ample places to park a car, should you wish to travel by more modest means.

*Further information: Wilderness Reserve: 01986 802113; wildernessreserve.com*



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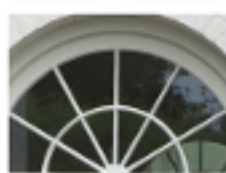
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SHOPPING

# Greenwich's charity retail boom

*The cost-of-living crisis is causing a boom in sales for local charity shops*

BY POLLY MORGAN

*One small positive in this cost-of-living crisis and high inflation that we are experiencing currently in the UK is that charity retail has seen an unexpected boom in sales as people struggling to afford the high-cost hikes in mainstream shops go hunting for a bargain. Here, Polly Morgan meets two charity shop managers in Greenwich who are witnessing an increase in sales in their shops*

Kathy Parkhouse has been the manager of the Oxfam second-hand bookshop next to Greenwich market for around a year and has overseen a real turnaround in sales in the shop.

"Nationally, Oxfam has seen its biggest growth area in books and has a good reputation for selling second-hand books," she says. "Oxfam is known as the biggest second-hand bookseller in Europe, and this bookshop in Greenwich is well-situated for footfall being next to the famous Greenwich market which is a tourist destination and local favourite. We get a great deal of footfall with our situation, especially at the weekends when tourists and Londoners come to Greenwich to visit world-famous highlights such as the Cutty Sark situated across the road from us.

"This last financial year, our bookshop contributed £40,000 more to Oxfam projects as profit than in the previous year, which is a real success to be noted. In the last few years, second-hand retailers have become 'cool' in the eyes of the public, also due to the sustainability focus due to the climate change crisis plus the recent cost of living crisis. We noticed particularly last Christmas that customers were on the look-out for a bargain of a pre-loved gift.



"Being the manager of this Oxfam bookshop has been a fulfilling, rewarding job and a real dream come true for me. I manage a team of more than 40 volunteers, who are all well-trained and keen, and we are a popular place for volunteers to seek out. Art and literature second-hand books sell particularly well in this shop as well as fiction. We have lots of rare collectibles and old books too, which prove popular with collectors and book lovers. Our online shop has doubled its turnover since it started. Donations are key to generating quality stock and we are always on the look-out for more quality donations so please do drop in any book donations if you have them!"

Clothes for Causes is another popular charity shop, located on Trafalgar Road, East Greenwich. It helps the homeless by selling women's and men's clothes, shoes, and accessories.

"I wouldn't say we've noticed a real boom in the charity retail market here as the high street is still getting back on its feet, but we've noticed shoppers come in looking for a bargain who wouldn't normally go into a charity shop," says manager Veronique de Crop.

"Our vision when opening Clothes for Causes was to introduce a new type of charity shop to the high street, that wasn't the traditional format, so we are blessed to receive high-end and designer and good quality clothes, shoes and accessories that go down a treat with our customers.

"We are well-placed in Greenwich to attract a good range of customers, plus quality donations. We are also unique in that instead of recycling what we can't sell, we sell a lot of stock such as having a £1 rail for people who might be struggling to afford clothes

elsewhere. We've noticed more people hunting for a bargain recently, as well as young people, as for £15 or so you can walk away with a couple of nice outfits."

*Support your local charity shop:*

*Oxfam Books, 2 College Approach, London SE10 9HY; [onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk](https://onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk)*

*Clothes for Causes, 158 Trafalgar Rd, London SE10 9TZ; [clothesforcauses.org.uk](https://clothesforcauses.org.uk)*





# Tranquility on the Turkish Riviera

*With loads of restaurants, bars, pools, an aquapark and so much else on site, you'll not want to leave this luxurious all-inclusive hotel*

BY BEN WEST

All-inclusive hotels sometimes get a bad rap, but while there are many with mediocre food and facilities, it's unfair to tar them all with the same brush.

I must admit I was a bit unsure I'd like staying in one, but the moment I entered the swish, recently opened Liberty Signa on Turkey's southwestern coast in Fethiye, Muğla, my mind changed completely.

## The location

Open from March to November and boasting a great beachfront location, the hotel is a great base for exploring the broader Fethiye region. It is well worth visiting bustling Fethiye Market, with fruit, vegetables, honey, clothing and crafts, and Fethiye Museum provides an insight into the area's past, housing artefacts from the Lycian, Roman, and Ottoman periods.

Ancient burial sites, the Lycian rock tombs, are carved into cliffs overlooking the town and are remnants of a civilisation that thrived in the region more than 2,000 years ago.

History buffs can also visit the ruins of Tlos, one of the oldest and most important Lycian cities, located near the modern town of Seydikemer, and where you can explore the ruins of city walls, tombs, and a Roman amphitheatre set against a mountainous backdrop.

For those in search of adrenaline, a visit to Babadağ Mountain offers a thrilling paragliding experience offering panoramic views of the coastline and surrounding mountains.

However, the sheer range of facilities at this upmarket resort just a 35-minute drive from Dalaman Airport is impressive to say the least and it's possible you won't want to leave the complex at all.

## Hit the beach and pools

Overlooking mountains on one side and the glistening Aegean Sea on the other, the hotel has a number of swimming pools including freshwater pools, adult-only pools (including one with a swim-up bar), kids' pools, a waterpark and two indoor pools.

If that wasn't enough, there's a private blue-flagged 220m beach complete with sun beds and cabanas.

So it is easy to find your perfect spot, whether travelling with family, as a couple, or solo. There's a range of watersports on offer, including scuba diving, kayaking, sailing, beach volleyball, white water rafting and water polo.



## What are the rooms like?

Rooms are spacious and benefit from sea or garden views. Many have direct pool access, or even their own plunge pool. There are a number of room options to choose from, including family rooms with PlayStations and suites geared to couples. Calming neutral tones like taupe, tan and white abound, with natural wood and marble used for table tops and flooring. All rooms feature air conditioning, a LED TV, a safety deposit box, minibar and capsule coffee machine.

## Fab food and drink options

There are nine restaurants and eight bars on site, including a very varied buffet restaurant and a 24/7 à la carte option. Restaurants include Tatre Türk Turkish Restaurant with authentic food from across the country including kofta, dolma, lahmacun, pide and regional specialities such as manti (Turkish ravioli), and ekşili tavuk and yuvalama yoghurt-based soups. Okeanos Seafood Restaurant has dishes like grilled grouper with asparagus, capers and tomato concasse, or pan fried jumbo prawns with lime and garlic butter. At Miyabi Asian Restaurant there is an Asian Fusion menu featuring sushi, tempura and more, while Ricotta Italian Restaurant features dishes such as beef carpaccio, gnocchi and tiramisu. Bon Bon Patisserie is another treat, serving ice creams, pastries and refreshing iced coffee.

While not everything is included in the

all-inclusive deal, the overall range and quality of the food here is very high.

## Other facilities

There is a large open-air theatre space with nightly entertainment, and an outside gym, while activities like yoga, pilates, zumba, tennis, belly dancing classes and aqua aerobics are held during the day. There is also an on-site nightclub, and a kids club open from 10am to 11pm that organises activities like sushi-making and treasure hunts.

There is also a decent fitness centre and a lovely hammam offering both traditional Turkish baths and various spa treatments including massages, facials, and hydrotherapy. There is no booking required for using the sauna, steam and salt rooms, and there is a vitamin bar with herbal teas, freshly made smoothies and juices.

The spa treatments usually incur an extra charge, but cost much less than similar services in many other parts of the world, making Turkey an attractive wellness destination for those on a budget.

And with the exchange rate remaining favourable, coupled with Turkey offering warm, sunny weather year round and being less than four hours' away by plane, it is no surprise the attractiveness of this destination.

*Liberty Signa Hotel:*  
[libertyhotels.com/en/hotels/liberty-signa](http://libertyhotels.com/en/hotels/liberty-signa)

## Blackheath and Greenwich hotels

### Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath

The Clarendon Hotel, with its imposing row of attractive Georgian buildings on the outskirts of Blackheath village, has been a feature of the area for many years. A comfortable, well-maintained 175-room hotel overlooking the beach, with uniformly friendly and helpful staff, it looks that just only a traditional independent hotel can do, which is gradually disappearing as chain hotels increasingly equip our towns and cities.  
 Mosses Road, Blackheath, SE20 8NN; 020 8318 4321; clarendonhotel.com



### Pilot Inn, Greenwich

Nestled within a lovely little Georgian terrace of eight cottages – there's rather peculiarly surrounded by the modern skyscrapers of North Greenwich – this cosy pub, dating from 1800, has surprisingly plush and funky rooms above its cosy and pleasant bar featuring exposed beams, nautical paintings, ship's wheels and the like. The cottages have quite a history: being artisan housing, built for workers at the nearby tidal mill and chemical works. They were featured in the famous video for Park Life by Blur and Damien Hirst lived in one for a while.  
 68 River Way, London SE10 0BE; 020 8868 0810; pilotgreenwich.co.uk



### StayCity, Greenwich

If you're not looking for a fully-fledged apartment but want somewhere to stay that is like a hotel room but with its own kitchen area, StayCity's Greenwich Aparthotel may be the answer. It doesn't have all the facilities of a typical hotel – the lobby area only has a couple of vending machines and there's no restaurant or cafe on site, although it can arrange breakfast room service delivered from the cafe opposite – but it's very clean and functional, with neutral, simple decor.  
 65 Greenwich High Road, Greenwich SE10 02D; 020 8691 5282; staycity.com



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LOCAL HISTORY

# The origins of Brookmill Park

BY MARY MILLS

Many sites that once had industries on them have over the years been turned into places where people go to have fun and relax. Brookmill Park, on Brookmill Road, running from Deptford Bridge towards Lewisham, is one such site, an excellent example of how industrial buildings and sites can be turned to positive leisure and educational use.

The name 'Brookmill' itself is a clue to how the park originated. In the early 18th century a water mill on the River Ravensbourne was used to make a waterworks supplying fresh water to people in Greenwich and Deptford. This was done most successfully and wells on the side of the park still supply much of the water we use today.

Over the years the waterworks owners built reservoirs to store the water until it was needed, and in time these old ones were closed and new ones built. In 1880, a park was opened on the site, on an old reservoir that had been filled in. After the Second World War land was added to the park from bomb sites along Brookmill Road. At that time it was named 'Brookmill Park', but in 1951 it was renamed 'Ravensbourne Park'. In the 1990s it was made even larger during the construction of the Docklands Light Railway because by



then the water works needed much less land. Its name reverted to 'Brookmill Park' again.

As you walk through the park there are many features which have survived from the days of the old waterworks. There is a beautiful garden with ponds, pergolas and flowerbeds. There is also part of an old reservoir which is now a lake full of water birds. It's a really good example of how an industrial site can become something useful and beautiful. At the Lewisham end of the park there is a footpath from the nearby Docklands Light Railway Station, which goes into the park. This path

follows an old railway line which used to go from Greenwich to Nunhead. It continues to the other side of Brookmill Road where there is another separate nature reserve, only open to the public by appointment. In the park where the original waterworks entrance was now stands the Stephen Lawrence Centre. This stunning new building is such a fitting memorial to the murdered teenager who had aspirations to be an architect himself. The centre offers educational activities to tackle under-achievement among young people.

On the other side of the river is the James Engine House, the remaining pumping station for the Brookmill waterworks. The water is pumped from deep wells and after more than 300 years it still provides high quality water to a great deal of the local area. Hidden among the houses and flats built on the far side of the river are the decorative 'caps' on top of wells which are no longer used. A footpath and cycle path in the park are part of the Waterlink Way, which extends through Lewisham to Bromley. It also forms part of National Cycle Route 21, which goes all the way from the River Thames to Eastbourne.

Further information: [www.brookmillpark.com](http://www.brookmillpark.com); books by Mary Mills are available at Amazon

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Max Middleton: Self-portrait

# Max Middleton: a life unbound by paint

*Celebrating the late local artist, dedicated to a lifetime of art*

BY TRISTAN MIDDLETON

The late Max Middleton was a beloved artist with deep ties to Blackheath, Greenwich and the surrounding area. His untimely death aged 78 was an enormous shock to his family and friends. Losing a loved one is huge, words are never enough. When it is unexpected, it brings with it so many abruptly unfinished stories and conversations, and Max was a great storyteller. To celebrate his life through his life's work and dedication to inspiring other artists allowed his echoes and laughter to resound.

Max's life and art were celebrated at a retrospective exhibition in August 2023 at the Thames-Side Studios Gallery. With its high-ceilings, the wonderful open-plan 2,770 square-foot gallery is one of South London's largest single exhibition spaces. Just across from the Thames-Side Print Studio, which had seen so many of his prints emerging, was perfect for a tribute to Max's unfaltering dedication to a lifetime of painting, drawing and printmaking. A dedication that saw encouraging other artists to develop creatively as an integral facet of his work.

Max's exquisite draughtsmanship and enjoyment of colour and its transparencies was often focused on the human form, gestures and the emotions they convey, as well as animals and landscapes. In his words, art 'provides a means of processing deep feelings when words fail.' Wrought full of tensions and humanity, his evocative paintings are always exploring new terrain. His stunning drawing is a true commitment to 'the obsessive study of the visual world'. And his skills as a printmaker was already clear from early on in his career when he published the book Etching and Intaglio Printing.

He said: "My works are not ends. They are resting places of interest on that continual journey." Both the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue are a testament to that journey.

An inspiring teacher, Max was larger than life. Many people cannot believe he is gone and maybe that is because he will always remain a part of the artistic development of so many. During years of teaching at foundation art level and as a university lecturer, Max was a trusted and respected tutor. When he taught people to draw, all he had to do was pick up a pencil to inspire confidence. Towards retirement Max returned to the classroom, working with young people who had been excluded from mainstream school and supported their learning in local special schools. He continued to teach and mentor young and aspiring artists throughout his life. His warmth and generosity were only matched



by a love of learning, so he was himself in constant renewal and a fount of knowledge.

Max is fondly remembered by the many people who he supported, enriched and gave refuge to, and the resounding collective memory of him is full of generosity, laughter, art, music, poetry, food and wine. Not to mention rugby, which he had played in his youth, or a good cowboy film.

Music was a passion and he played a range of instruments including banjo, fiddle and slide guitar in a number of local bands, and tutored many beginners in how to play. Even beyond the world of art and culture, Max made friends in every walk of life and enjoyed people for who they were. He was never too pressed to make time for a chat and was beloved amongst other dog-walkers in Greenwich Park and local shops. His laughter and smile are etched into many people's memory.

Although Max exhibited widely in the UK,

Northern Europe and France, his artistic career was always rooted in South East London where he lived.

Locally based exhibitions included the Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair, Thames-Side Studios Gallery, Second Floor Studios, including a beautiful tribute by the No Format Gallery at the Deptford Foundry, Greenwich Theatre and the Woodlands Art Gallery.

He was an assiduous member of the Thames-Side Print Studios, never too busy to help others with technical tips, and regularly attended life-drawing sessions in Blackheath and the Lewisham Art House, as well as being a life-drawing tutor himself.

Max's family ties with the area were also strong and he saw his mother, Peggy Middleton, become Mayor of Greenwich before being elected to the Greater London Council as well as the Inner London Education Authority. Until it was replaced by

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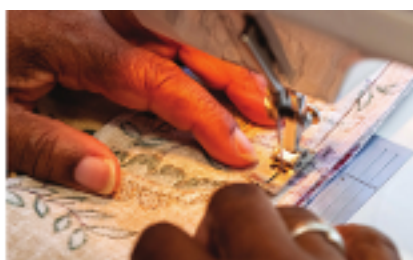
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## ART

urban redevelopment, Peggy Middleton House was part of Greenwich Council and the local architecture. A portrait by Max Middleton of his mother hung in the entrance and is now housed in the UK's public art collection at the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust.

Political engagement has always been important in the family. Max had been a member of the Labour Party as well Momentum, an active trade union official, and also designed posters for a variety of causes. He marched for four days from Aldermaston to London with his sister Hannah in the famous Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Alongside all this was an unwavering belief in sustaining the welfare state and he had witnessed over the years how cuts to the NHS were becoming more palpable. Max is survived by his partner, son and two grandchildren, daughter, sister and one of two brothers.



## A smile to be proud of: invisible braces at Sparklysmile

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At Sparklysmile, they like things that are a bit different, but also like to make a difference. They simply adore helping their patients achieve the smile of their dreams, through the numerous techniques and dental innovations that they have available.

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