

BLACK +GREEN

BLACKHEATH +GREENWICH MAGAZINE

ISSUE 26 - AUTUMN 2026

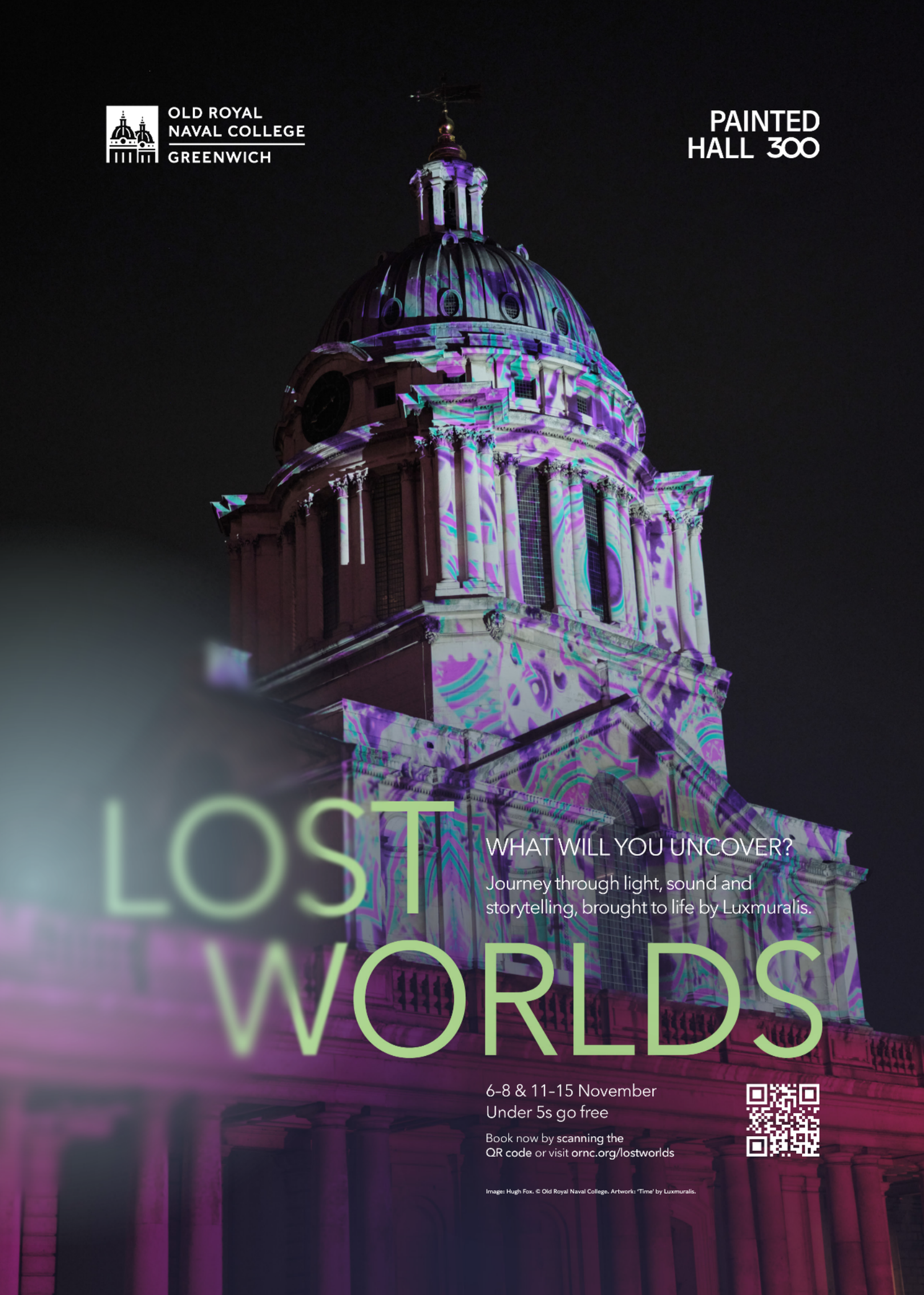
Actors of Blackheath and Greenwich

Thoughts of an astronaut

Horse riding for children

The best style and fashion tips

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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), or perhaps by becoming an investor in this dynamic title.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

The Black + Green team

blackgreenmag

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BLACK +GREEN BLACKHEATH +GREENWICH MAGAZINE

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What's on

Swaying in the Wind

To 9 January

Swaying in the Wind is a unique exhibition of the fans of the contemporary French fan maker, Frédérick Yvan Manuel Gay. The exhibition showcases around 100 stunning fans to a British audience for the first time.One of very few fan makers working in France today, Frederick's expertise combines traditional technique with contemporary innovation. The fans in *Swaying in the Wind* will appeal to both our senses and our spirits. Passionately inspired by history and fashion, Frederick's creative approach reflects our fast-moving modern age while also questioning our response to the world of the past. Alongside his independent practice, Frederick Gay designs and creates fans for the luxury and couture collections of the Parisian House of Duvelleroy. The fans displayed in the exhibition demonstrate the dynamic and forward-looking principles that have informed Duvelleroy's vision since it was established in 1827. Frederick Gay is also a committed teacher, working with students to ensure that the craft of fan making survives. Works by some of his students are shown in the exhibition, as well as those made by a small group who attended a three-day masterclass and workshop organised by The Worshipful Company of Fan Makers early in 2026. The Fan Museum's mission is to celebrate the history and artistic brilliance of the craft of fan making, while seeking to promote a lasting future for this important art form through showcasing the work of our finest contemporary practitioners.

The Fan Museum, Crooms Hill, Greenwich, SE10 8ER; 020 8305 1441; thefanmuseum.org.uk; suitable for all ages; free with admission to the ship



Blackheath Christmas Fair

Sunday 15 November, 10.30am-4.45pm

It's the biggest and best Age Exchange Christmas Fair yet! This year Age Exchange is bringing you more stalls, more gifts, more festive fun, and more activities for children and families. Browse a fantastic range of handmade crafts, Christmas gifts, books, treats, and festive goodies while supporting your local charity. The café will be open throughout the day, serving delicious seasonal refreshments, cakes, and light lunches. Highlights of the fair include local artisan and community stalls, children's activities and festive fun, charity Christmas cards now on sale, books, gifts, decorations, and stocking fillers, festive refreshments in the café, and a raffle and seasonal surprises. Come along, soak up the Christmas atmosphere, and support the work of Age Exchange in your community.

Blackheath Halls, 23 Lee Road, Blackheath SE3 9RQ; 020 8318 9105; ageexchange.org.uk; entrance £3

Free on Fridays

6, 13 November and other dates, 1.30pm

The Blackheath Conservatoire runs free lunchtime concerts on selected Friday afternoons. All ages are welcome, including babies and children. Entry is free with no need to book and there is an optional retiring collection at the end - all donations go directly to the performers. These concerts are, quite understandably, very popular so please arrive promptly to avoid disappointment. Running time is usually 45-60 minutes.
On 6 November Helen Chenaf, Hilary Dolamore, Mairéad Sheerin and Richard Black perform Upstairs Downstairs, an exploration in status in opera and musical theatre. Who had more fun - the servants or their masters? Spanning over 300 years of high staus/low status characters on the stage, including music from *The Marriage of Figaro, My Fair Lady* and *La Boheme* and more.
On 13 November The Holtag Quartet, a dynamic string quartet, will be performing. Their repertoire spans classical and contemporary works, from Hadyn, Beethoven and Ravel, to crumb, Maconchy and Glass.

Blackheath Conservatoire, 19-21 Lee Road, Blackheath SE3 9RQ; 020 8852 0234; conservatoire.org.uk; free



Makers Market

Sat/Sun 21/22 November, 11am-4pm

The third annual Makers'Market features a whole weekend showcasing our creative community at Thames-Side Studios Woolwich.Kickstart the festive season and buy handcrafted pieces from local, talented makers. Enjoy a hot drink while you explore 40 unique stalls. There will be ceramics, homeware, textiles, jewellery, wooden objects, prints, leather goods, stained glass, stationery, seasonal gifts, crystals and clothing.

Thames-Side Studios, Harrington Way, Woolwich, SE18 5NR; 020 8858 0572; thames-sidestudios.co.uk



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Age Exchange

Blackheath Christmas Fair

Sunday 15th November

10.30am to 4.45pm

Blackheath Halls, 23 Lee Road, SE3 9RQ

£3 entry All proceeds support Age Exchange, their Creative Dementia Programme & Blackheath Community Library

Grant Saw

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What's on

Bones in the Desert

12-17 Nov, various times

Two lives. One past. A hundred years apart. A story that refuses to stay buried.Berlin, 2022. Artur, a 19-year-old refugee, is trapped between worlds, haunted by memories of fleeing the Syrian civil war. When someone from that journey reappears, their joyful reunion unravels into a powerful reckoning with identity, belonging and the cost of silence. Spanning the deserts of 1915 to the turbulence of today, Bones in the Desert confronts the long shadows of war and the lives it still shapes. With raw honesty and urgency, it confronts mental well-being, racism in contemporary Europe and the devastating cost of silence. Written by British-Armenian playwright Joe Nerssessian, this powerful new play speaks directly to young adult audiences with heart, humour and an unflinching gaze. It's about where we come from, who we carry with us and what it means to belong. Presented in an immersive style with a pulsating contemporary soundtrack, Bones in the Desert is the latest production from Half Moon, the UK's leading small-scale young people's venue and touring company. After the performance there is an onstage Q&A session with the company.

Half Moon Theatte, 43 White Horse Road, London E1 0ND; 020 7709 8900; halfmoon.org.uk; suitable for age 13+; tickets £9



Charlie Mackesy: The Boy, The Mole, The Fox, The Horse...and You

3 Nov to 7 Feb

Bringing together never-before-seen early sketches, unpublished studies, and original works from across author and illustrator Charlie Mackesy's career, this one-room exhibition will offer audiences of all ages a unique insight into his creative process, celebrating the universal message thatart is for everyone.Visitors will encounter rarely displayed preparatory sketches alongside finished illustrations from Mackesy's internationally best-selling books. Praised for their compassion and gentle wisdom, these works have captured the hearts of a generation, inspiring messages of resilience, hope and friendship.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, 14 Gallery Road, Dulwih SE21 7AD; dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk; entrance included with gallery ticket

Free on Fridays

23 Oct, 6 and 13 Nov and other dates, 1.30pm

The Blackheath Conservatoire runs free lunchtime concerts on selected Friday afternoons. All ages are welcome, including babies and children. Entry is free with no need to book and there is an optional retiring collection at the end - all donations go directly to the performers. These concerts are, quite understandably, very popular so please arrive promptly to avoid disappointment. Running time is usually 45-60 minutes.

Blackheath Conservatoire, 19-21 Lee Road, Blackheath SE3 9RQ; 020 8852 0234; conservatoire.org.uk; free

Jazz Saturdays

First Saturday of the month plus Saturday 21 November, 1pm

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of Deptford Market with Jazz Saturdays. This family-friendly drop-in makes the pleasure of live music free for the community.

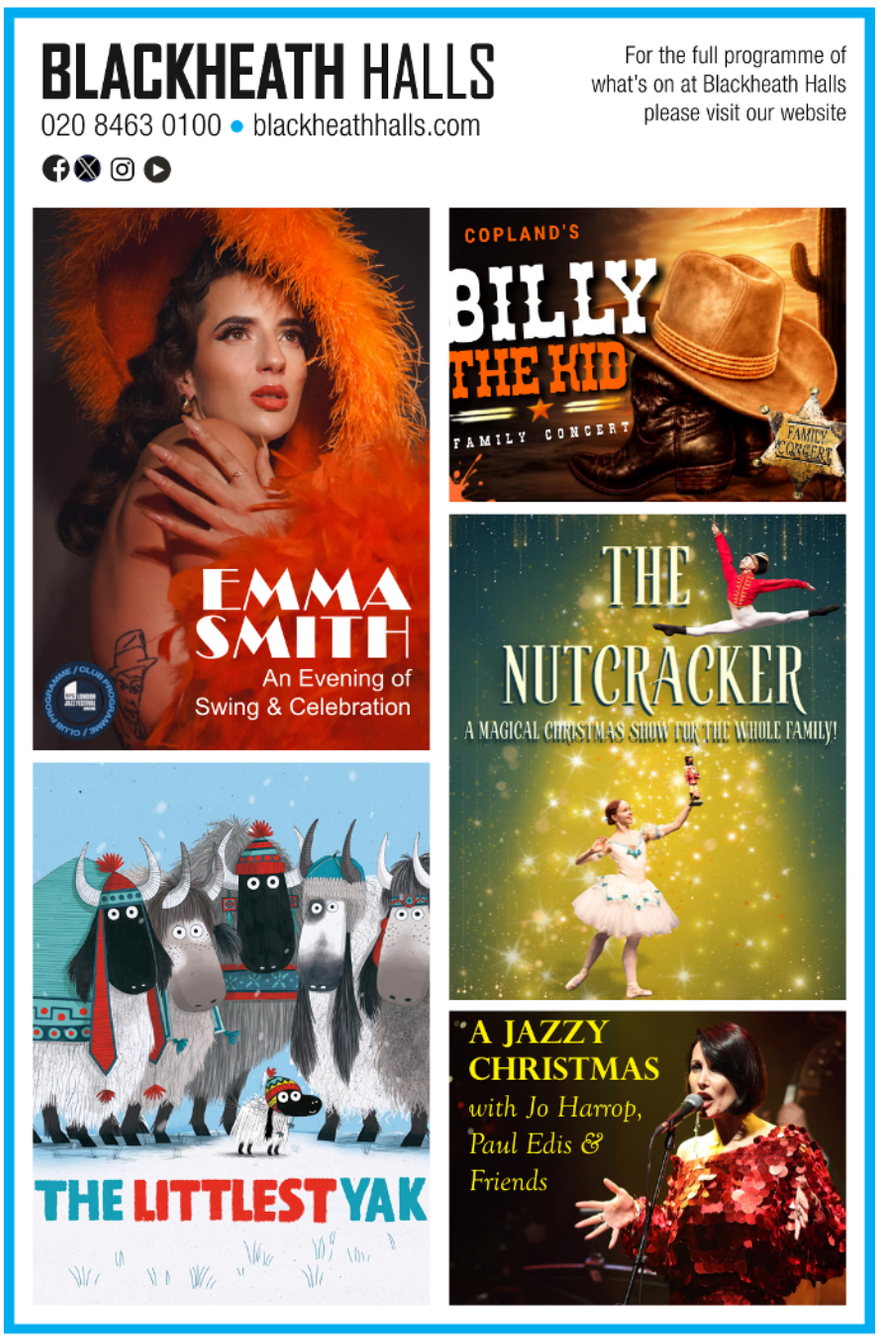
The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford SE8 4AG; 020 86924446; thealbany.org.uk; free

Roller Disco

Third Thursday of the month, 6pm

Get your skates on and head to the main hall at Deptford Lounge, complete with vibey lights, a disco playlist and plenty of room to whizz (or stumble) around.This is a relaxed event and all abilities are welcome, whether you're beginning your journey on eight wheels or want somewhere to practice your dance skills. Just bring your own skates.

Deptford Lounge, 9 Griffin Street, Deptford SE8 4RJ; deptfordlounge.org.uk; all ages; pay what you decide



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What's on

The Music is Black: A British Story

Until 10 January

This innovative, immersive exploration into the cultural footprint of the Black diaspora in Britain charts a 125-year story of resilience and survival through joy and expression. From the traumatic roots in Empire and the slave trade, through calypso, reggae, dub, Northern Soul, Brit funk, 2 Tone, UK garage, jungle, drum and bass, the Bristol sound/trip hop, grime and mainstream pop, it features cultural artefacts like early sound systems, Shirley Bassey's Goldfinger dress, JMEs Nintendo, Pauline Black's purple porkpie hat, Stormzy's Banksy-designed bullet-proof vest - all the while with an anthology of music, more than 120 tracks playing through Sennheiser headphones, it brings feelings of warm nostalgia of growing up in south London, the euphoria of warehouse raves and the DNA of modern Britain.

V&A East Museum, 107 Carpenters Road, E20 2AR; 020 7942 2000; vam.ac.uk/east; tickets £22.50, under 26 £11, Artfund £10

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert - free community screening

Sun 15 November, 7pm

The classic celebration of drag and fabulousness, hosted by drag sensation Loren.Get ready for a night of glitter, camp and unapologetic queer laughs. Expect camp commentary, big laughs and the kind of warm, chaotic energy only Loren can deliver.

Woolwich Works, 11 No 1 Street, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18 6HD; woolwich.works; tickets free but you will need to book in advance; film certificate 15

Oli 'Mississippi' MacDonald

Fri 20 November, 7.30pm

UK Blues Hall of Famer and four-time UK Blues Award winner Oli "Mississippi" MacDonald brings his soul-drenched blues to Mycenae House for one night only.A Londoner with a deep feel for Memphis soul, Mississippi MacDonald has spent the last five years quietly becoming one of the most authentic voices in British blues. Hhe's since topped the charts on both sides of the Atlantic:*Heavy State Loving Blues*held the UK IBBA number one spot for two months running, a feat no artist had managed in years, while*I Got What You Need*hit number one on the RMR Global Soul Blues Chart within a week of release.*Do Right, Say Right*was named one of Mojo's top ten blues albums of 2022.

Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath SE3 7SE; 020 8858 1749; mycenaehouse.co.uk; tickets £20.00

Olamony

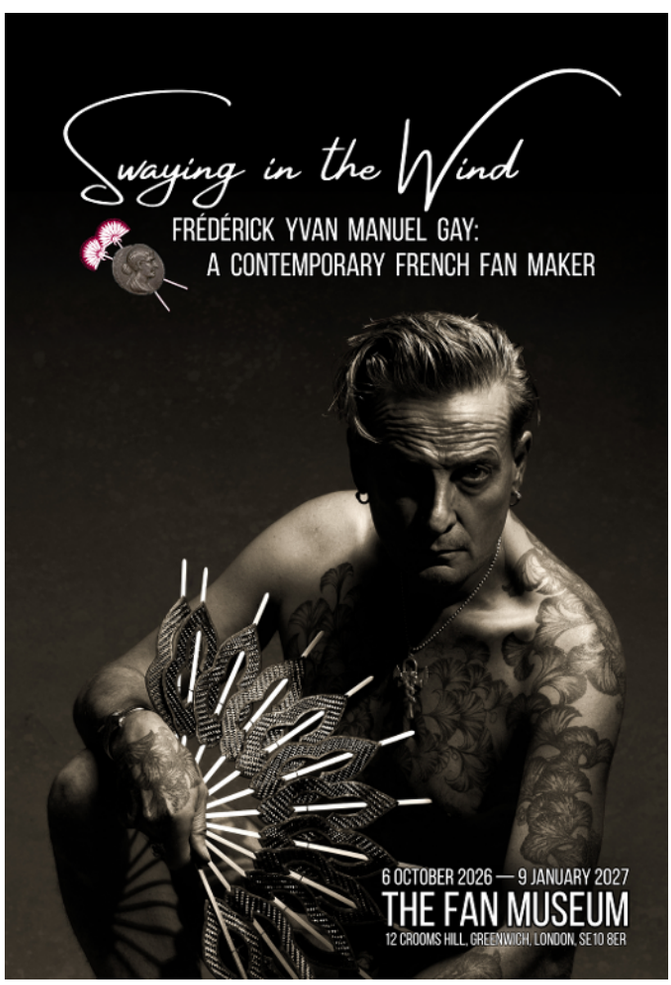
Fri 6 November, 8pm

Join Nigerian-born musician Ọlá Akíndípe (Olamony) and his 10-piece band as they raise the roof with an exhilarating night of Afro-fusion music, infectious rhythms and


Oli 'Mississippi' MacDonald

feel-good energy. Blending African and global influences with powerful vocals, irresistible grooves and soaring brass, Olamony brings a vibrant, uplifting sound to the stage. Expect big energy, plenty of rhythm and a performance that will have you up on your feet from start to finish. This event has unreserved seating with seats for everyone as well as room for dancing!

Blackheath Halls, 23 Lee Road, Blackheath SE3 9RQ; 020 8463 0100; blackheathhalls.com; tickets £15







NASA astronaut Steven Smith; photo copyright NASA

Meeting with a NASA astronaut

NASA astronaut Steven Smith talks about his space travels at Kennedy Space Center, Florida

BY BEN WEST

I met NASA astronaut Steven Smith at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The Center teaches you so much about the history of space, space today and in the future.

Here's Steven talking about his experiences, responding to questions asked by myself and by others.

The first moment I looked out of the window when I was in space, I was in awe. Earth looked so beautiful. And the main message I give to people, in terms of what the Earth looks like, is that it's an island. What we see from space as astronauts is this little island in this vast ocean.

And of course, when we see this island, we're inspired to take care of it. We need to re-establish our relationship with Earth, we need to be kind to our island.

The second thing when we see Earth from space is that there are no borders. So you don't see the states in our country, you don't see the borders of the countries on the different continents. And so it does look like one global community. It looks like one family. This is called the overview effect, this feeling of taking care of the Earth and promoting tolerance and world peace. It changed me, to see the Earth from that perspective.

In some ways, I wish we could send all the leaders into space. Maybe Earth would be a different place as a result.

When we first started flying to space, we thought you had to have gravity in order to eat. Because you put the food in your mouth and the only way it will move down into into your stomach is through gravity. That's actually not true. There are muscles in your throat and system that take the liquid and the food throughyour body. So you can eat in zero gravity and drink in zero gravity.

Since the spaceships are so small and we don't have as much power as we like, we don't take a refrigerator and so we don't have refrigerated food. We take camping-style food, which is dehydrated. We also have turbo-stabilised food, which you can buy in the supermarket.

It doesn't have to be in the fridge, it's in a foil package, already cooked, and you just throw it into the microwave and it gets heated up. Even though we're really careful eating it, we end up with food all over the place. We take alcohol wipes and someone has to go clean everything out, like there's some spaghetti over there, there's Bobby's coffee on the ceiling over there.

Can we take salt pepper with us? No, because if you shake salt and pepper, it just floats around. That's really dangerous,



Smith, left, Hubble Space Telescope maintenance: photo copyright NASA

because it could go in your ear, up your nose or in your eye. So we take liquid salt and liquid pepper.

My first space flight was a low Earth orbit flight, and two and three were to the Hubble Space Telescope, which was broken and also needed some upgrades. So I would go outside the spaceship on a space walk to fix things. My last flight was on the Atlantis space shuttle, to help build the space station. We brought a 20-ton piece of the space station from Earth, and used a robotic arm to move it into position, then two of us went outside and attached it.

I love spacewalking. The suit you wear weighs 150 kilograms on Earth, or 330 pounds, and every time I tried it on on the ground, a crane would have to hold me up. But in space, I was like a lightweight ballerina. I could just float around, because it doesn't weigh anything.

You know, zero gravity is really hard to fully appreciate. It's almost hard to even believe. As part of my job, working on the Hubble Space Telescope, I was moving things around that weighed a ton with just two fingers. For me, getting my head around the fact that I could sleep on the ceiling if I wanted to, or I could have a big water ball in front of me and have some fun was really hard to really process. We make the impossible possible.

The way we practice a space launch is in a giant pool atmosphere in Houston, Texas, at the Johnson Space Center. And that's because when you're in the pool, you can kind of pretend you're in space. There is the drag of the water, which isn't accurate, but besides that it's pretty good.

So we put pretend spaceships in the water, we put pretend space suits on and then we practice space walks for hundreds of hours. We wear that suit for up to eight to 10 hours. What happens if you're thirsty outside? Can you just open your helmet, take a drink, and then close your helmet? No, because we're wearing the suit because there's no air out there, right? So you cannot open the visor. So we actually put a water bag in here, inside

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the suit, with a special straw that's up by your mouth with a special valve on it. And you can't itch your nose - and just when they put the helmet on, you know what happens to your nose? It starts itching!

I don't have a favourite or most memorable mission - any mission to go into space is memorable. If I was a bachelor, I would have not left NASA after four flights, I would have kept flying, because it's addictive. It's just so exciting to me, and it's something I dreamed of for 33 years before I was selected.

It's pretty spiritual to work on the Hubble Space Telescope, because it is a time machine. Some of the pictures we get from Hubble are things that happen 12 billion years ago. So you look at the picture, and what you're looking at no longer exists. It just took the light that long to get to the Hubble. So it's really kind of a spiritual thing. In fact, in the 1990s and through to 2010 the dream was to go on a Hubble flight and go outside and fix Hubble. So for me to do that twice, I was super happy about that.

When you see the Earth from space, it's so inspiring and so much like a magnet for your viewing, that any free time you have, you spend at the window. We don't have a lot of free time, but it's wonderful to see the Earth go by. It's spiritual to see it, because you look at it and reflect on seven billion people living there. There's nothing to the left or the right except the Moon, but that's essentially a dead rock. Twelve people have seen the Earth from even farther away, they were on the moon.

Someday rocket travel will be normal, you'll decide whether to go to the USA, to Antarctica, to the moon. That'll happen, probably in our children's lifetimes.

How does this profession affect family life? I've been married to Peggy for 35 years. We met at college and on our second date at Stanford we were having a lunch and I asked what she wanted to do in life. She said she loved foreign travel and wanted to learn a lot of languages and to live overseas and work for the US government in an embassy. She made that happen.

She then asked what I wanted to be. I said I wanted to be an astronaut. You know what her reaction was? Silence. She was kind of looking around for cameras, thinking maybe it was a joke. Anyway, she then realised, of course, that I was serious. And four years later, we're out on the launch pad, standing in front of the Endeavour, the day before my first launch.

Every day before launch, your spouse can go to the launch pad, which is a pretty incredible opportunity. A lot of the spouses don't want to do it, but Peggy did, and if you were seeing pictures from her, she looks happy and fine and not nervous, even though the next day her husband might die. And then there's another picture seven years later, standing in front of Atlantis before my fourth flight. Same thing, she's just fine. So how is that? Well, two things. One is her personality, a super strong person, super loving, super giving. She has grit. She lost a brother when she was young. So a strong person. But the other thing is, we talked about why we fly in space. We're flying in space to make lives on earth better, including the lives of our own children. We have two children, and so she really believed in that.

So the families are treated very well, and that's because in earlier space flights, when bad things happened, we didn't really take care of them. So now before each flight the families come out to the Kennedy Space Center together. I'm in quarantine at this point. We're not allowed to go out in public that last week. So typically, the families have parties and there's other astronauts with them. My flights were only two weeks in length, because I was on the space shuttle, which only flies in space for two weeks. So I wasn't gone too long. The flight plus quarantine is about three weeks. But if you go up for six months, that's a long time to be away.

We could communicate in space. At the beginning it was just fax machines, but by the end we had cell phones. I called home from the space station, which had email and WiFi, and now you even get news and movies and things like that.

I wrote my kids and wife letters that they would have gotten if I hadn't come back. So you can imagine how hard those were to write. They'd never have seen those letters. My wife and I talked about maybe exchanging them on our 30th anniversary, but the kids,

I think I'll give them their letters when they become parents. But you can imagine writing to a five-year-old kid, saying I love you so much, I'm so thankful for you, I know what a great person you are, I'm sure you'll do great things in your life. I'm so sorry, but this happened. I was pursuing a bigger cause.

When you're out in space, you're not that much closer to the stars, because remember, the stars are a long way away. They don't sparkle, because you're not looking through the atmosphere. The atmosphere on Earth, with its wind and temperature changes and pressure changes, make the stars sparkle. There's no light pollution in space, though, so you see many more stars, and the Milky Way is very obvious.

The other thing that's cool about the stars in space is, you know, when you live somewhere on Earth and you're there most of the time, you only see half the stars in the sky. As I grew up in America, I never saw the stars around the bottom of the earth unless I travelled to Australia or some country down there. Well, in space, you're going around the Earth, so you can see the northern stars and then the southern stars in just 90 minutes.

When we travel in space, we go around the world 16 times in one day. That means in one day we see 16 sunrises. So the sun goes up 45 minutes later, it goes down, up down, up down, up, down. It's super strange, very confusing. So when you go to sleep you put an eye mask on.

I didn't ever see a black hole. However, the Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope have. I don't want to get too close to one of those either, because it'll just pull you into it.

You do spacewalks to exercise. You don't freak out doing thembecause you have been so well trained you feel confidence. And the way you handle stressful situations is to compartmentalise, you're just thinking about what's in front of you. So if you're fixing the Hubble Space Telescope, you don't worry that the Earth is 360 miles below you, you're not too worried about the radiation. And when you make a mistake, the most



Smith, right: photo copyright NASA

important thing is to just put it behind you and not just dread over it. Part of that I learned through sports too, because in sports you have got have to move on if it doesn't go your way. In life it's really important to do that. What we've done in our training is figure out how to manage the risk.

I do feel patriotic pride for working for NASA, because it's a $5 billion investment our country made, and it did amazing things to make the world a better place along with our international partners.

I think there's other living things in the universe. We live in a galaxy called the Milky Way, and so I'll call that our neighbourhood. And in this neighbourhood, there are stars. They're pretty far apart, but there are a lot of them. There's 200 billion. So there's 200 billion stars in our galaxy, in our neighbourhood, Within the the other 200 billion stars, almost certainly, there's got to be some that have life.

The Hubble Space Telescope makes it even more compelling, because Hubble has told us there's many neighbourhoods, many galaxies, not just a million, not just a billion, but maybe a trillion galaxies. So if there's a trillion galaxies with each having hundreds of billions of stars, I personally believe mathematically, there has to be something out there.

I don't know if they're like little microbes, or they're 100 feet tall and they're purple, and they have 27 arms, and each arm has its fingers with the head on each end, and they have 27 eyes. I mean, who knows? Or maybe they're invisible, maybe they're made of energy or gasoline or some kind of gas. Maybe they're here already. Who knows? I don't personally think they're here now. I don't think they've been here yet. But who knows?

You can meet Steven Smith and other former astronauts at the 'Astronaut Encounter' at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex (kennedyspacecentre.com)



Ten things I have learned about style - mostly by refusing to behave

BY SARAH TUCKER

At 62, I was recently asked to do a fashion shoot for an Ibiza style magazine. This was not an outcome I had anticipated when I agreed to write a biography of Edward de Bono, the man who invented the concept of lateral thinking. Of all the books I have written over the years, I did not imagine that the one about thinking would eventually require me to stand on a beach at eight in the morning wearing a cocktail dress, covered in seaweed and fishing nets.

Life, like fashion, occasionally has better ideas for you than you have for yourself.

There I was, walking into the warmish Mediterranean fully clothed, wearing silver trousers I now own, sitting on a chair positioned in the sea and laughing when presumably I was supposed to look smouldering. I cannot pout. I have tried. I look as though someone has just informed me the Waitrose delivery has been cancelled.

What I discovered is that style becomes considerably more interesting when you stop treating it as something you can get wrong.

Here are ten things I have learned.

1. Stop dressing for the person you used to be

We spend an extraordinary amount of time carrying former versions of ourselves around. The woman who went to that office. The woman who attended those dinners. The woman who believed she required twelve different black dresses because this constituted sophistication.

Your wardrobe should belong to the person you are now, rather than operate as an archaeological site dedicated to previous incarnations. Clothes should move forward with you. Otherwise you are not getting dressed. You are curating a museum.

2. Colour is cheaper than therapy

I love colour, particularly colour which announces itself before I do. Lime green with purple. Apricot with lilac. Orange with pink. Colours which conventional wisdom tells us ought to be separated for their own protection.

There comes an age when fifty shades of beige begins to feel less like elegance and more like surrender. Colour changes posture. It changes mood. It alters how other people respond to you. There is a small act of courage involved in wearing something that refuses to apologise for being visible.

3. Contrast makes things interesting

I rarely like an outfit in which everything agrees with everything else.

Leather with linen works because the fabrics argue. Cotton with cowboy boots works because there is tension between them. A beautiful evening dress with slightly battered shoes can be infinitely more interesting than perfection from head to toe.

People are like this too. We tend to be fascinated by contradictions. The elegant woman who swears. The formidable businessman who grows roses. The professor wearing fluorescent trainers.

Perfect consistency is useful when manufacturing refrigerators. It is rather less appealing in human beings.

4. Never let your age dictate your wardrobe

There are clothes that do not suit me, but very few of them fail because I am 62. They fail because they are the wrong shape, the wrong fabric, the wrong proportion or because I resemble a lampshade. Age itself is an extraordinarily lazy stylist.

The question should not be, “Am I too old to wear this?” but, “Does this make me look and feel magnificent?” If the answer is yes, put it on.

5. Wear one thing that slightly frightens you

Not literally. I am not recommending chain mail.

But there should occasionally be something in an outfit that requires a fraction more confidence than you currently possess. The boots. The enormous earrings. The crimson coat. The silver trousers.

Confidence is rarely something we acquire before doing something. More often, we perform the action and confidence catches up with us afterwards, slightly out of breath.

6. Your clothes should reveal something

Clothes are autobiography without the inconvenience of writing 80,000 words. They tell people whether you want to disappear, impress, provoke, reassure, seduce, entertain or possibly chair the parish council.

The interesting question is not whether something is fashionable. It is whether it says anything about you. If your wardrobe could belong equally well to several thousand other people, it may be worth introducing yourself to it.

7. Stop saving your best clothes

This is one of the great middle-aged crimes.

We buy something wonderful and then imprison it in a wardrobe waiting for an occasion sufficiently important to deserve it.

Wear it to lunch. Wear it to the supermarket. Wear it while making an omelette, although possibly not if it has sleeves designed by Alexander McQueen.

Life is the occasion.

8. Style applies to houses too

I have never understood why people who happily wear colour suddenly become



terrified of it when confronted with a wall. Your home should have personality too.

Mix old with new, rough with polished, expensive with ridiculous. Put the antique chair beside something modern. Allow a room to contain surprise.

A house in which everything matches perfectly can sometimes feel as though the owners have already left.

9. Ignore rules, but understand proportion

Breaking rules works best when you know which rule you are breaking. This is where confidence and discernment meet.

A large jacket may need narrow trousers. A dramatic colour may need simplicity elsewhere. An eccentric piece often looks more deliberate when surrounded by something restrained.

Rebellion, strangely enough, benefits from structure. Even chaos appreciates good tailoring.

10. Dress like you intend to participate

Perhaps this is the only rule that matters.

Style is not really about clothes. It is about presence.

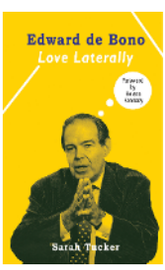
There is a temptation, particularly as women get older, to make ourselves gradually less noticeable.

Softer colours. Quieter shapes. Sensible shoes. Nothing that might cause comment.

I think the opposite. Wear the purple with the lime green. Put on the cowboy boots. Sit on a chair in the Mediterranean in silver trousers if somebody asks you.

You are not dressing to look younger. You are dressing to look entirely, unmistakably alive. And if a photographer tells you to pout, laugh instead. It gives them something much more interesting to photograph.





Sarah Tucker is a journalist, broadcaster and lecturer. Her book, Love Laterally, published by Aurora Metro Books, is an award-winning biography of Edward de Bono, the leading pioneer in thinking who invented the concept of lateral thinking. You can purchase the book from the Aurora Metro website, aurorametro.com

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Treading the boards

Many actors have made Blackheath, Greenwich and environs a place to live over the years

BY BEN WEST

The Blackheath and Greenwich area has long had more than its fair share of thespians. Blackheath was the birthplace of Vanessa Redgrave *(*films include *Blow-Up*, partly filmed in Maryon Park, Charlton; *Howard's End)* and Hugh Bonneville *(Paddington, Downton Abbey)*, and one of Blackheath's longest standing residents was another outstanding actor, Glenda Jackson *(Women in Love, A Touch of Class)*.



Glenda Jackson

Her strong ties with the area continued even after she moved away from acting in 1992 (but not moving from Blackheath) to pursue her new career as Labour MP for Hampstead and Highgate. For example, she joined in a protest at the threatened closure of Blackheath Village Library, one of five that Lewisham Council had planned to cut in 2011, and gave a talk about her films at the sadly now defunct Deptford Cinema.

Daniel Day-Lewis *(My Left Foot, Gangs of New York)* was born and brought up in Greenwich, and indeed there is a blue plaque outside his Georgian childhood family home on Croom's Hill, opposite the Greenwich Theatre. However, it commemorates the fact that his father lived there, the Anglo-Irish Poet Laureate, Cecil Day-Lewis, rather than him. Another actor lived at that address also: his mother, Jill Balcon *(Nicholas Nickleby, An Ideal Husband)*.

Day-Lewis attended Invicta Infants School at the Blackheath Standard and then Sherington Primary School on the Blackheath/Charlton borders, which I reckon he probably found quite a rough and tumble establishment at the time, if my experiences there a few years later are anything to go by. His mate, celebrated musician Jools Holland, also attended those schools.

The schools and the area must have made quite an impression, as in his Oscar acceptance speech for *There Will Be Blood*



Jude Law: photo by Harald Krichel, Creative Commons 4.0 license

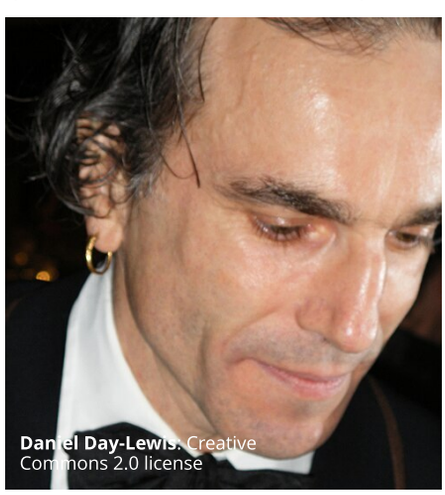
Day-Lewis said: "Invicta Infants School, Sherington Primary School in Charlton, Greenwich Park, Blackheath - these were the playgrounds of my early life."

To date he has won three Oscars, one more than Glenda Jackson - who, incidentally, he shared the screen with in the 1971 film *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, his earliest film role, aged 14, playing an uncredited child vandal damaging cars outside a church.

Jude Law *(The Talented Mr Ripley, Sherlock Holmes)* also grew up in the area, attending John Ball Primary School in Blackheath Village, Kidbrooke Secondary, and then Alleyn's in Dulwich.

John Ball was also the primary school actor Dominic Cooper *(The History Boys, An Education)* attended, before moving on to Thomas Tallis Secondary School. Blake Harrison *(The Inbetweeners)* was born and grew up in Greenwich too.

Lenny Henry *(Chef!, Othello)*, Simon Day *(The Fast Show, Troilus and Cressida)* and



Daniel Day-Lewis: Creative Commons 2.0 license

Helen Lederer *(Absolutely Fabulous, Fawlty Towers)* are perhaps best known as comedians, however all have impressive acting CVs too. Henry quite recently lived in Granville Park, by the heath, while Lederer attended Blackheath High School - as did Sophie Aldred *(Doctor Who, Daisy Pulls it Off)*.

Further underlining the fact that the area has long been popular with thesps is that it is or has been the home to Howard Ward *(Downton Abbey, War Horse)*, Charlie Norfolk *(Dr Who, Bugs)*, Frank Bourke *(The Wind That Shakes the Barley, His Dark Materials)*, Julia Marsen *(The Six Wives of Henry VIII, Casualty)*, Joe Absolom *(EastEnders, Doc Martin)*, Christopher Knott *(Macbeth, Gertrude's Secret)* and the late Robert Demeger *(Othello, The Woman in Black)*.

Born in Dulwich, Tim Roth *(Reservoir Dogs, Vincent and Theo)* gravitated Greenwich-way for some years as his career took off, while



Helen Lederer

Gary Oldman *(Slow Horses, Darkest Hour)* was brought up in Deptford. Moving a bit further afield, you'll find Timothy Spall *(Secrets and Lies, Mr Turner)* in Forest Hill.

From the late-1980s the McGann brothers (Paul *(Withnail and I, Doctor Who)*, Mark *(Lennon, Blood Brothers)*, Joe *(Rockcliffe's Babies, The Rise and Fall of Little Voice)* and Steve *(Call the Midwife, The Hanging Gale)* all lived together for a while in a house on Shooters Hill Road. I met Mark once or twice during that period and ended up one night having a game of pool with him and Joe in a pub after a West End show, *Up on the Roof,* that Mark was performing in. Not watching much television at the time, I asked Joe what he was up to. Modestly, he said, "A little bit of telly." The way he said it suggested that he was third spear carrier from the left or understudy for one of the extras and I duly commiserated and said in a grave fashion something along the lines of my being sure that things would pick up soon. It wasn't until I got home and picked up the Radio Times that I found he was starring in ITV's biggest sitcom at the time,*The Upper Hand*.



A dream escape in the heart of Umbria, Italy

The 16th century cottages at Casa San Gabriel provide a tranquil stay amongst beautiful surroundings

BY BEN WEST

In 2004 UK-based David and Chrissie Lang discovered a 16th century rural farmstead near Umbertide, in Umbria, fell in love with it, moved there and began painstakingly restoring the dilapidated buildings into an*agriturismo with*three comfortable, characterful holiday cottages set amongst stunning Umbrian vistas of olive groves, vineyards and ancient woodlands, with the Apennine mountain range and the historic hill town of Assisi beyond.

Many travellers overlook Umbria and instead head for Tuscany next door, which has a much-more developed tourism industry. Yet Umbria's more off-the-beaten-track status means it has many unspoiled landscapes, down-to-earth hill towns and villages, and a feeling you are in the 'real' Italy rather than a touristy version.

Location

Situated down a one mile (1.5km) steep gravel country road, 2.5 miles (4 km) from the village of Pierantonio (where there's a few shops and a supermarket), you'll ideally have your own car. Perugia and its airport are a 20-minute drive away north of the property, the E45 highway is just five minutes away, and Casa San Gabriel is also a good base for exploring Gubbio, Assisi, Todi, Cortona and other Umbrian and Tuscan hill towns.

The accommodation

The three self-contained properties are of varying size, sleeping from two to four, and each have good wifi, a tv, kitchenette with a hob and mini-oven, air conditioning, a





terrace, covered pergola and lovely views, the only sound being birdsong.

Decked on the exterior with creepers, the interiors are unpretentious and have character, with features like exposed stone walls, beams and terracotta tiles.

Il Fienile, the former hayloft, is the largest of the cottages, and has amezzanine.*La Cantina*, previously a wine cellar, has a centuries-old staircase to the bedroom above.*La Stalla*, the old stables, has a wide panoramic terrace.

Facilities and activities

Facilities include an outdoor unheated swimming pool and gardens that include a vegetable and herb garden and a communal barbecue area with wood provided that guests are welcome to use. In the main house is a lounge with books and board games. There is a pizza oven that guests can use, and regular pizza evenings.

Activities in the area include hang-gliding from Mount Subasio, hiking in the Monte Subasio Natural Park, cycling, nordic skiing, mountain biking and fishing. Antognolla golf course is under a mile away (1.6km) and a tennis court a 15-minute walk. Bike hire can be arranged.

The winery and restaurant

There is a winery and restaurant, Vineria del Carmine, a 20-minute walk from the property, that's lovely, if hilly on the way back.

"From late April is when the fireflies come out, and when you walk back from the restaurant in the dark they flit around you and illuminate your way," says David.

The excellent restaurant creates dishes so beautiful to look at it seems a sacrilege to eat them. Focusing on Umbrian cuisine, examples of the tasty dishes include slow-cooked pork belly with saffron foam, and an unusual sweet and savoury beetroot



risotto with Gorgonzola and walnut.

As well as meals, the winery offers wine and olive oil tastings, vineyard tours, truffle hunting and pizza-making classes.

Are children welcome?

Babies and children are welcome, and there is a playground with a playhouse, infant and child swings, a slide, roundabout and lots of toys. They will also love the resident alpaca and goats.

Nearby, Lake Trasimeno offers child-friendly beaches, water sports and other activities and water parks Oasi del Tezio, Laguna Park Trasimeno, Tavernelle Water Park, Sansepolcro Water Park and Umbertide Swimming Pools are all easily accessed. In addition there are activity parks (Activo Park and Pinocchio Park), wildlife parks (Citta Della Domenica Park and Parco del Sole) as well as horse riding.

Are pets welcome?

Yes.

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THIS WEEK'S SHORT STORY

The Ratio

LISTEN ON SPOTIFY

KEEP READING HERE

Max arrived at 1pm on a Tuesday, I hated him by Thursday.

It started with his dramatic entrance. His helicopter almost crashed during the blizzard, putting all our lives at risk. Getting to a remote Arctic base is never easy, but he should have delayed the flight, not insisted on it.

The first time he took off his goggles his face instantly annoyed me. There was something familiar about it that I couldn't...

Why horse riding greatly benefits children

Horse riding for children offers many benefits. It encourages self-confidence - controlling a large animal and mastering new paces or jumps boosts self-esteem. Itteaches them courage, for it takes bravery to get on a horse.

It encourages empathy, as children build an understanding of the needs of the horse and to be gentle and kindwith them. It also encourages patience, as learning to be a good horse rider takes time.

Working with instructors and peers in group lessons enhances listening skills and teamwork. Horse ridingalso builds resilience: recovering from a fall or learning from a mistake builds grit and emotional strength.

It also is a great way to improve a child's physical health. Horse riding builds core strength, improves posture, strengthens muscles, promotes balance and stability, and burns a minimum of 400 calories an hour, which is similar to running and jogging.

It improves coordination too: using reins, legs, and voice cues all at once sharpens hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. And grooming and tacking up provide active, low-impact physical fitness too.

Last but not least, horse riding gets children off those dreaded screens and outdoors into the fresh air, while they make new friends.

When you consider the cost of land in London these days it is amazing that a number of equestrian centres remain in London. They include:

Mottingham Farm Equestrian Centre

Established in 1957, this horse riding school covers 55 acres of land and has more than 40 horses and ponies and eight different fields, allowing it to take multiple outdoor lessons simultaneously. This means that the Centrecan easily accommodate riders of different ages and abilities at the same time.

The Centre takes students from the age of four years and is able to offer an enjoyable riding experience for novice riders, nervous riders, intermediate riders as well as confident, seasoned riders.

During half term breaks there are usually a range of special events on offer including pole work lessons, jumping lessons, pamper-a-pony mornings, guided hack-style rides through our fields, and more.

Mottingham Farm Equestrian Centre, Mottingham Lane, London SE9 4RT; 020 8857 3003; mottinghamfarmriding.co.uk



Docklands Equestrian Centre

The Centre provides top quality indoor and outdoor all weather flood-lit facilities and holds regular events and a variety of children's activities during term time and school holidays. As well as private and group lessons for riders from beginner to advanced, pony rides are offered, a perfect way to introduce three- to five-year-olds to horse riding in a secure and friendly setting. Laps on one of the smallest ponies gets each child used to being in the saddle and holding the reins in preparation for ore advanced lessons.

Docklands Equestrian Centre, 2 Clapsgate Lane, Beckton E6 6JF; 020 7473 4951; docklandsequestriancentre.com

Wanstead Community Riding Stables

Situated near Wanstead Flats, the London edge of Epping Forest, Wanstead Community Riding Stables has lessons, courses and activities for both children and adults. For adults these include forest hacking and rides with a welcomed stop-off at the pub. For children there are pony games, picnic hacks and pony mornings. There is an indoor riding arena and sizeable paddocks.

Wanstead Community Riding Stables, The Stables, Empress Avenue, Manor Park, London E12 5HW; 07543 401512; wcrscic.co.uk

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The link between oral health and your overall wellbeing

Sparklysmile tell us why it's time to pay attention

We all know the phrase 'a healthy smile', but what does it really mean for your overall health? Oral health isn't just about keeping your teeth looking good. Phil Eisenberg at Sparklysmile wisely puts it: "There is no overall health without oral health as it can affect your whole body. From gum disease to tooth decay, the health of your mouth can affect much more than just your smile."

Your mouth is the gateway to the rest of your body, and poor oral health can lead to and contribute to serious systemic health problems. Research has shown that gum disease and untreated tooth decay are linked to conditions like heart disease, diabetes, respiratory infections, problems with pregnancies and of course can cause distressing pain requiring time away from doing things you enjoy or school or work.

It's not all doom and gloom though. Dental issues like tooth decay and gum disease are common, but the good news is that they are preventable and you can take proactive steps to prevent them.

Home care is essential: while Sparklysmile can offer treatment, the bulk of maintaining good oral health happens at home.

Brushing, flossing, interdental cleaning and regular check-ups form the foundation of healthy teeth and gums as well as a healthy diet. Keeping on track with your blood sugar levels not only helps prevent diabetes but also aids gum health and even can help control cavities in your mouth. Recent research has shown blood sugars to appear in the fluid around your teeth that then feed the bugs that cause tooth decay. Vitamin D is important too for the health of your bones that support your teeth or if you are thinking of having a dental implant. Even if you have been outside in the sunshine this year, it is always good to check what your levels are and supplement them if necessary.

The role of Sparklysmile's team in your health journey

Phil and the hygienists aren't just there to fix problems when they arise - they can help you prevent them in the first place. Educating you on the importance of oral hygiene, the connection between oral health and general well-being, and the steps you can take to protect are at the core of what they do.

Making behaviour changes is a journey, not a quick fix

Good oral health isn't achieved overnight. Just like any other aspect of your health, it requires



ongoing effort. Changing habits is a gradual process. With the right support from Esther, Tracey, Stef, Louisa and Alexandra, you can make lasting changes that will benefit both your mouth and your overall health. Sparklysmile have hygienists in their office every day and by giving you the right information, guidance, and support, they can help you take charge of your oral health and, by extension, your overall wellbeing. Whether it's through personalised advice, tips on brushing and flossing and your diet or understanding the links between your mouth and systemic health, they are there to guide you every step of the way. Think of them as your personal oral hygiene coaches.

If you're ready to prioritise your health and learn more about the connection between oral hygiene and your overall wellbeing, don't hesitate to get in touch.

A bright, clean, and healthy smile can make you feel younger, more attractive, and boost your confidence as well as achieve a healthy body.

These days, you don't even need to be a registered patient to see their hygienists.Call Sparklysmile to schedule an appointment.

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www.sparklysmile.co.uk



New veterinary clinic opens in Blackheath Village

A new veterinary clinic has opened its doors in Blackheath, promising a fresh approach to pet care for local owners.

Creature Comforts Blackheath officially opened at 15 Blackheath Village on 2 October, bringing its new kind of veterinary model to the heart of the Village.

The practice offers services for dogs, cats and rabbits, with a focus on accessible appointments, transparent pricing and long-term relationships between pets and their veterinary teams.

The Blackheath practice provides a wide range of services including routine health checks, vaccinations, diagnostics, surgery, dentistry, imaging, urgent care, travel documents and behavioural advice. Puppy and kitten care, microchipping, neutering, nutrition guidance and parasite control are also be available.

The clinic features separate waiting areas and wards for cats and dogs to help reduce stress for animals during their stay, as well as light- and climate-controlled kennels. It also houses a full dental suite with dental x-rays, an in-house diagnostic lab, an on-site pharmacy and specialist equipment for diagnosing skin cancer.

Members can sign up for £20 per month, which includes unlimited vet consultations, annual vaccinations, live chat with the team, instant app bookings and 10% off routine treatments. The practice also offers a £65 pay-as-you-go option for pet owners who do not wish to commit to a membership.

Appointments can be booked instantly through the Creature Comforts app, while members can message the team via live chat for advice between visits, whether that's a question about diet, a new lump or a change in behaviour. For local owners, it means everyday vet care close to home without leaving the Village.

Speaking to Black & Green magazine ahead of the opening, Head Vet Anita Ramatowska said: "We're so excited to become part of Blackheath's wonderful community, and to meet your lovely pets. We're here for any problems or concerns, big or small, to help them live their happiest, healthiest lives."

Creature Comforts says it aims to provide clear and transparent pricing, with any additional treatment or diagnostic costs discussed with owners before work is carried out. The company promises "no surprise bills - just open conversation about your options, based on you and your pet's needs."

The new clinic forms part of Creature Comforts' growing network of practices across London and the Home Counties with over 2,000 five-star reviews, with Blackheath becoming the company's newest location.

Customers can enjoy their first month free or get a half-price pay-as-you-go appointment to try out the clinic.

Creature Comforts
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