

THE ELEPHANT

MAGAZINE

Issue 13 / Summer 2018

THIS ISSUE

MAMA THAI

Ten years in the Elephant and locals still can't get enough of Mama's cooking

THAT'S MY MANOR

Boxers, bathers and Buddhists: the fascinating history of Manor Place

BLUE ELEPHANT

Celebrating 20 years of community theatre

THIS IS THE ELEPHANT



This is the Elephant.
And this is the Elephant Magazine.

The Elephant Magazine is the publication dedicated to all things Elephant and Castle. We want to celebrate all that is fabulous about our neighbourhood and our community. We want to look back with fondness on the area's past and look forward with optimism to the future. The Elephant is changing and the Elephant Magazine will be following every step of the way.



The Elephant Magazine is published by Southwark Council. We welcome your ideas, comments and contributions, so please get in touch. Editor: Richard Wells / Additional copy: Nikki Spencer / Main photography: Hannah Mauleffinch / Designer: Nathan Heins, Westco Design and printed by Swiss Post / Enquiries: councilnews@southwark.gov.uk



Photography from left to right: Irene Hayes, choreographer; Frank Bowling, artist; Castle sign; young dancers, Superarts; East Street sign; paintbrushes, LCC; Siobhan Davies Dance; new homes, Wansey Street; breakfast at Louie Louie; poster, the Cinema Museum; netball at the Castle Centre; street food; George Dyer, tailor; Lou, former Heygate estate resident; Hotel Elephant; elephant statue; Imperial War Museum; Stanley Kubrick Archive; Bermondsey Council stables; local university buildings; Baldwins Apothecary

SUMMER IN THE ELEPHANT

Every summer, London bursts into life with loads to do. And in Elephant and Castle you don't have to go far to enjoy all that the city has to offer, with a fantastic summer of fun waiting for you right here on your doorstep.



MERCATO METROPOLITANO

Located on the site of a disused paper factory, Mercato is the open air destination for Elephant and Castle's foodies. Summer is the perfect time to visit. And if craft beer and street food - from Argentine steaks to Vietnamese curries - doesn't float your boat then they've also got a cinema; cookery school and an authentic Italian deli.

www.mercatometropolitano.co.uk

ART EXHIBITIONS

The Art Academy on Walworth Road and Drawing Room on Rodney Place are the go-to destinations for the visual arts in Elephant and Castle. Both feature regular, free exhibitions alongside talks, workshops and, at the Art Academy, art classes too. Coupled with the free exhibitions regularly staged by London College of Communication and Morley College, there's bound to be something to pique the interest of every art lover in the neighbourhood this summer.

www.artacademy.org.uk/newington
www.drawingroom.org.uk | www.morleycollege.ac.uk
www.arts.ac.uk/lcc/events

SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE

Catch the final summer season at Southwark Playhouse's current site before it relocates to a brand new purpose-built theatre in St Mary's Churchyard, next year. Shows include Goodnight Mister Tom (25 July – 25 Aug) and Bring it On, a musical written by Tony Award winner, Jeff Whitty of Avenue Q fame (2 Aug – 1 Sept).

www.southwarkplayhouse.co.uk



THE CINEMA MUSEUM

Earlier this year, the Cinema Museum, one of the Elephant's "hidden gems", scooped Time Out's Love London award as the Capital's favourite culture spot. If you've never been, pay a visit this summer. As well as the standing exhibition – a wonderful homage to the golden age of the Picture Palaces – the museum's got an incredible line up of screenings, talks and events scheduled between now and October.

www.cinemamuseum.org.uk

ARTWORKS

With two bars, six restaurants and two cafés, the courtyard at Artworks is the perfect place to escape the hustle and bustle of Elephant and Castle. Check out Marcel and Sons for Mauritian comfort food, the Athenian for perfect souvlaki and the Six Yard Box for World Cup football right through to the final.

www.theartworks.london





CASTLE CENTRE

Southwark's newest council leisure centre has rightly earned its reputation as one of the best in the borough. With a six-lane, 25m swimming pool, a four-court sports hall and a 140-station gym, it's the perfect place to tone-up before the holidays. And best of all, there's free swim and gym for all Southwark residents on Fridays plus weekend afternoons from 2pm onwards.

www.everyoneactive.com/centre/the-castle-centre

LOST RIVERS: GAMEBOXX

Lost Rivers Elephant goes from strength to strength. Gameboxx is the new gaming experience just launched in their shipping container 'arena'. Gameboxx features old-school arcade classics (Virtua Striker anyone?) alongside traditional bar games such as pool and table football. But it's the Virtual Reality contests that are pulling the pioneering punters in. Teams of 2 to 4 people work together or against one another to compete in a range of next generation VR adventures.

www.lostriverselephant.com

BLUE ELEPHANT THEATRE

Blue Elephant kicks-off the summer on 12 July with a one-man show, The Dame, starring former Blue Peter presenter Peter Duncan. Also coming up is contemporary dance from Kamienski and a full programme of youth workshops throughout the school holidays.

www.blueelephanttheatre.co.uk

ELEFEST

The Elephant's annual festival of film, food and music is set to round-off the summer when it returns later this year. Slated for 22 September, this will be the 16th year of this ever-popular celebration of the past, present and future of SE17, brought to you by the team behind the Shortwave Cafe. Details are still being confirmed but keep an eye on @ElefestLondon on Twitter for announcements.

www.facebook.com/Elefest

ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

Enjoy the fountains at St Mary's Churchyard. This Newington Butts park has undergone a £1m refurbishment, completed last year. Alongside the landscaped lawns, ponds and plaza, you'll find an array of interactive water jets. What better place for the kids to cool off after an energetic session on the trampoline or zip-wire in the children's playground?

www.southwark.gov.uk/parks



ELEPHANT PARK

Summer is the perfect time to get to know Elephant and Castle's newest park. Half of what's set to be the biggest new park in central London for 70 years, is already open to the public. It's a beautiful place to while away a sunny afternoon and this summer there's a full programme of events to take part in too, from sassy storytelling for kids through to Shakespeare in the Park for the grown-ups. Highlights include the South Social Cinema South American film festival, Wimbledon tennis coverage and plenty of live music.

www.elephantpark.place/events

Find out more about events in Elephant and Castle this summer and throughout the year at www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/events



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IT STILL FEELS LIKE
A BIT OF A DREAM

—

BLUE ELEPHANT

Hidden away off Camberwell Road, Blue Elephant is a small theatre that offers innovative dance and drama alongside free theatre workshops for young people.

There aren't many theatres where the Co-Artistic Director answers calls to the box office but then, as Niamh de Valera explains, Blue Elephant tends to do things differently.

"We're a very small team. You're quite likely to find me helping the duty manager behind the bar before a performance and we'll all be mucking in, painting a wall next week. That's how it's always been. Our chair of trustees, Chris Lawrence, still remembers painting the toilets as they raced to get the theatre ready to open nearly 20 years ago! There's no time for airs or graces and there are certainly no egos here."

Blue Elephant Theatre was established in 1999 by writer and director Antonio Ribeiro. It was set up as a place where emerging artists could put on new work; a tradition it continues to this day. Each season, Niamh and her co-director, Jo Sadler-Lovett, programme an eclectic programme that includes dance shows, new writing and reworked classics.

"We don't charge hire fees. We simply split the box office takings with the companies that perform here and support them as much as we can by providing rehearsal space, technical support and help with press and PR" explains Niamh.

The theatre company received a welcome boost last year, when it was one of only five theatre organisations in London to be added to the Arts Council's portfolio of regularly funded organisations.

"It still feels like a bit of a dream" recalls Niamh.

"I was actually on my way back from Glastonbury and I started getting these texts on my phone. I hadn't thought we stood any chance of getting it so I hadn't checked for the official notification. It came into effect in April this year and it's going to make a huge difference. We get some core funding from Southwark Council but this Arts Council money (which lasts for four years) has given us more stability. It will enable us to

put on some of our own shows and we're already planning a Christmas show for children."

Plays at Blue Elephant this summer include *Boxman*, by Flugelman Productions (4 – 6 July) about a child soldier who lives in a cardboard box in an inner city park; *The Dame* (12 July) a one-man show about a pantomime dame with actor and former Blue Peter presenter Peter Duncan and *An Evening, A Beginning* (19 – 21 July), two new works by contemporary dance company Kamienski.

It's wise to book early to ensure your place at this compact 50-seat theatre. Southwark residents get a discount and there are a limited number of free tickets for people who live in SE5 and SE17.

The theatre also runs a monthly writers group where people can bring along new work to share and, on 1 August, they're putting on free interactive storytelling sessions for pre-school children and their families in Elephant Park.

For the last ten years, Blue Elephant has run free Young People's Theatre workshops every Saturday for local 7 – 18 year olds, funded by Children in Need. In 2014, eleven children from the classes joined celebrities at Abbey Road studios to record a single for the charity.

As well as taking part in workshops and a show each term, the young people get the opportunity to perform at other venues and see West End performances. The theatre also runs two hugely popular free summer schools over the holidays (one for primary aged children and one for secondary).

Past Young People's Theatre students include Daniella Connor, who now assists on the project and Amari Harris, who's now an actor, storyteller, prolific drama facilitator and Blue Elephant's young person's mentor.

"It's a great training ground for all areas of life" explains Niamh, who volunteered at the workshops, herself, for many years. "You can see how it

helps young people gain confidence and learn to work as part of a team."

Blue Elephant also offer Free to Act dance and drama classes for children aged six and over, at the nearby Bethwin Road Adventure Playground and run a Creative Minds project working with pupils at local primary schools.

"We're very much part of the local community. Jo's been delivering Creative Minds workshops for so long that she can't step out of Blue Elephant without meeting young people she's taught. That's always her excuse if she's running late, anyway" laughs Niamh.

The theatre clearly holds a very special place in people's hearts. Shelves in the upstairs café bar are decorated with blue elephants of every shape and size, from soft toys to ornaments, which have been given as gifts.

"It's become a bit of a thing. People bring us all sorts of blue elephant stuff and you'd be surprised at what they find" says Niamh. "I even saw a dress decorated with blue elephants a while ago. I just had to buy it!"

Next year is the theatre's 20th anniversary and they're very much looking forward to the future. "We're already planning a special programme of events so watch this space" says Niamh.



Blue Elephant Theatre,
59A, Bethwin Road, SE5 OXT
020 7701 0100
www.blueelephanttheatre.co.uk

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES FROM LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY



Language expert, Martina Eco is just one of 60 local entrepreneurs who've received help from LSBU's Business Solutions Centre.

Based in the University's refurbished Clarence Centre at St George's Circus, the Business Solutions Centre is a one stop shop for local businesses seeking advice and support on a range of issues from marketing to finance.

The Centre focuses on developing students' skills in enterprise and entrepreneurial management, so that they can provide tailored help to local businesses. In the two years since it opened, the Centre's 26 student advisors have already provided free guidance and support to 60 entrepreneurs in Elephant and Castle.

It's a two-way process; the businesses benefit from the support provided and the student advisors benefit from the consultancy experience. All of the advisors have been specially trained and receive support from staff at LSBU's School of Business and the department of Research, Enterprise and Innovation.

Martina Eco runs her translation business from the Centre. An LSBU Marketing graduate herself, Martina says "Marketing has been absolutely crucial to my business development. While some students come to university because they want to start a business, I came to LSBU because I already had a business."

Martina found herself drawn to the workshops put on by the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute at the Clarence Centre. "I attended three Start and Evolve talks about PR, freelancing and networking and I've been checking their activities ever since."



MARKETING HAS BEEN CRUCIAL TO MY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

LSBU is proud of the collaborative model it has developed with business; something that other universities want to emulate. Last year, the 72 businesses housed at the Clarence Centre, alone, generated a combined turnover of £82 million and employed 100 people on-site. The relationship also helps to generate funding support for PhD students, curriculum development and opportunities for guest lectures; all of which enhance the education and experience of LSBU's students.

While working at the Clarence Centre, Martina came runner-up in the Freelance category of LSBU's

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute's annual Make It Happen competition.

"I'd heard about it, but didn't think I had enough time to put together a strong application" Martina explains, "but the fact that their staff took an interest in me and suggested I try was enough to give me the push I needed."

"The main benefit isn't the prize itself but the experience that comes from pitching as part of the competition" says Martina. "It's something I'd never done before, so it made me understand how I could improve in future. The coaching I received about how to pitch really helped me to understand my business better and the possibilities that lie ahead."

Martina's advice to those students hoping to follow in her footsteps, is to make the most of LSBU's focus on enterprise skills and the services offered by the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute. "I wish I'd had all the help LSBU has given me lately when I was just starting out" says Martina. "In my home country, Italy, universities aren't employment-focused like LSBU. So all the things I had to learn about the 'non-translation' side of my business, I had to learn by myself."

Martina plans to continue to make use of the support on offer from LSBU. "I'll keep attending workshops and making the most of the University's network," she says. "I might even rent a nice office at the Clarence Centre to hold my own workshops and talks for freelancers!"

Find out more about the Business Solutions Centre at www.lsbu.ac.uk/business-solutions-centre





ESCAPE PLAN: YOUR FINEST HOUR

Hidden behind a red door in Iliffe Yard, Escape Plan is a live gaming experience for wannabe code crackers set against the backdrop of World War II.

“When we saw Iliffe Yard for the first time, we knew it would be the perfect location for what we wanted to do” explains Brendan Mills who launched Escape Plan at the historic Pullens estate in the summer of 2015 with his wife Kerry.

“We wanted somewhere central in Zone One that was easy for everyone to get to. We’d almost given up on ever finding somewhere when we saw an ad on Gumtree for a photographer’s studio above the Electric Elephant Café, Elephant and Castle.”

“Before we came to view it, we didn’t know anything about the cobbled streets around here, let alone all the wonderful historic buildings at Pullens Yards. It was a very welcome surprise. It’s brilliant that they all survived the Blitz and didn’t get pulled down in the 50s or 60s either.”

The game that Brendan and Kerry created at Iliffe Yard (aimed at 2 – 7 players, aged 11 and upwards) is called The Battle for Britain. It’s set on an RAF base on 18 August 1940, following heavy bombing by the German Luftwaffe. The players are the only survivors and have just 60 minutes to access the strategic operations room and mobilise the RAF before a second attack.

“We started out just for three months as a pop-up but it’s been so popular that we’ve been here for three years now” Brendan explains.

The game was inspired by a visit to The Battle of Britain Operations Room at RAF Uxbridge but the husband and wife team have also drawn on their own family experiences too.

“My grandfather was a mechanic in the RAF and my grandmother was in the WAAF, working in the operations room, while Kerry’s grandfather was a navigator in a Lancaster bomber. We use photos of them in the experience along with authentic props such as original typewriters, old oak barrels and Morse Code tappers. We wanted it to be as historically accurate as possible.”

To add to the atmosphere, Escape Plan also uses soundscapes played through an old 40s radio. The eerie sound effects were created by Oli Harrison who’s also produced audio for the Elephant’s other wartime attraction, the Imperial War Museum.

The Battle for Britain has been so successful that Escape Plan has now added a second game at Rich Mix in Shoreditch. It’s called The Adventure Begins, but this time it’s set in a Prisoner of War camp.

“Both games appeal to all ages and they’re a great outing; for a family, a group of friends or a team of workmates” explains Brendan.

“It’s a shared experience and inter-generational. We’ve had 70th birthday parties where people have come with their kids and grandkids. We’ve also hosted parties for

teenagers where they come with their parents. Seasoned gamers love it but it also appeals to the first timers.

Visitors love coming to Iliffe Yard, part of the Pullens Yards complex of artist studios and workshops, and Brendan and Kerry clearly love working there.

“There’s a great sense of community here, especially with the twice-yearly Pullens Yard Open Studios. It’s a real creative hub” says Brendan. “There’s always something going on and the yard’s often used for filming - everything from car commercials to pop videos. The King’s Speech was filmed here and Sam Smith did a video a while back.”

Most thrilling of all for Brendan was when Brad Pitt arrived to film his 2016 Second World War spy thriller, Allied, surely the perfect film for any 1940s enthusiast. “I tried to be cool about it all but I was star-struck” confesses Brendan.



Escape Plan, 13a Iliffe Yard,
London SE17 3QA

Open Wednesday–Sunday
12–10pm (booking essential)
www.escapeplanltd.com

RETAIL AT ELEPHANT PARK



WE'RE
PROPER
COFFEE
GEEKS





Hej Coffee is the first business to move into one of the new affordable retail units being built by Lendlease at Elephant Park.

Hej (pronounced 'Hey') is bringing its special blend of friendly, community vibe, Scandi-inspired food and own-roast coffee to Elephant and Castle.

Located in the award-winning Trafalgar Place development, if you're into your coffee, Hej is the place for you.

You can roast your own blend in the day or come for an evening and enjoy locally sourced craft beer, wine, cocktails and delicious Hejballs (you'll have to visit to know more).

Given a helping hand by affordable rent, Hej is the first retailer to get started in Elephant Park. By providing affordable retail on site, Lendlease

intends to ensure the local community has sustainable, innovative and fun places to visit at Elephant Park.

Lendlease is currently on the lookout for more businesses to take on affordable units, especially those that have a positive social and environmental impact.

JEREMY KNIGHT, CO-FOUNDER OF HEJ, REVEALS ALL:

WHY ELEPHANT AND CASTLE?

It's an upcoming neighbourhood with a really cool vibe; a hugely exciting area right in the heart of London. We're ready to embrace it and immerse ourselves in the community.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM HEJ?

You can hang out anytime. Use the space for gatherings and chill out with coffee and food, day or night.

We hope people will come by after dropping the kids at school, or bring their laptops and get some work done.

We've also got a community space that's free to book. So whether you run a book club or a residents' association, we'd love to host you. A laid-back, community vibe is what we're about.

WHY THE NAME HEJ?

It's 'hello' in Swedish. Hej was 'conceived in Sweden, born in Bermondsey', where we opened our first roastery and coffee house. We love the fact we've been able to grow our business locally.

WHAT MAKES HEJ DIFFERENT AND SPECIAL?

Simply, we're proper coffee geeks. We make coffee with love and care, roasting small batches of beans on site so we can experiment. That does mean first-come-first-served though; if it's gone, it's gone.

We're also a training academy, where people can learn barista skills, grinding, roasting and brewing. We're looking to recruit locally as much as possible, so if you're a coffee lover living in the area and want to come and work at Hej Elephant then please get in touch.

WE HEAR YOU'RE DOING YOUR BIT FOR A GREENER PLANET?

All our takeaway cups are compostable – though we'd love it if you brought your own. We're reducing the amount of plastic and foil packaging we use, too.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL FAVOURITE COFFEE?

That would be a flat white, though my waistline is expanding a bit at the moment, so I've been moving to macchiatos...

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD?

It's a seasonal smorgasbord (Swedish again!) of fresh, healthy food and drink.

Overnight oats for breakfast, and open sandwiches, salads and baguettes for lunch. At night, it's meatballs, craft beer and sharing plates.

Not forgetting our favourite meal – long weekend brunches with a glass of Mimosa and blockbusting flat white.

WHAT ELSE IS IN STORE?

Our 'Sunday roast courses' (not just on a Sunday). Book in choose your coffee flavours, and roast your own blend to take home.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HEJ IN THREE WORDS?

Inclusive, friendly and part of the neighbourhood – that's more than three, isn't it?!

Hej is now open at Trafalgar Place on the corner of Rodney Road and Balfour Street

www.hejcoffee.co.uk

Find out more about Elephant Park and the affordable retail space on offer at www.elephantpark.co.uk/retail



KRAFT WORK

Three friends have opened an eco-friendly German microbrewery in Elephant and Castle.

Visitors to Mercato Metropolitano, the popular community food market on Newington Causeway, certainly won't have missed the brand new German Kraft micro-brewery on site.

Giant, shiny vats glint in the summer sunshine as customers in the garden tuck into food from the market's 40 plus stalls; many of them enjoying a cold German beer, freshly brewed right next to where they're sitting.

"Beer is best when it's brewed and served fresh" explains 23-year-old London College of Communication graduate, and self-confessed beer-obsessive, Felix Bollen, who opened German Kraft in the spring with his old school friends Anton Borkmann and Michele Tieghi.

"Beer is my passion. Back in 2016, I was sitting in a brewery in Franconia (where my grandparents come from) talking to my dad about opening a brewery to make German beer in London, as no one else was doing it. It was a bit of a pipe dream at first but we've actually made it happen."

Felix enlisted the help of fellow LCC graduate, Anton, who studied spatial design, and Michele, a school friend who studied Business Management, with his dad acting as mentor.

After working on a business plan and securing an investor, they started looking for premises in south London. It was Michele's sister who suggested they visit Mercato Metropolitano.

"We simply walked into the office and explained what we wanted to do. We were delighted when they told us that the one thing they still needed at the market was a microbrewery! It just fitted perfectly" says Felix.

Mercato Metropolitano's eco-friendly ethos was a perfect match too.

"We'd decided from the outset that we wanted to brew our beer in a way that was good for the environment" explains Felix.

"My parents had started a charity that allows you to desalinate water for drinking, using very little energy, so we've used the technology here.



London tap water is fine but to make really great beer you need great water. So we use the waste heat from the fermentation process to distil the tap water and remineralise it. Mercato now reuse the waste water from our process for cleaning the site."

It took the young entrepreneurs six months to install their state-of-the-art brewery.

"We designed it ourselves and did most of the building work too. As the

market was still open we often had to work at night so it wasn't an easy task" recalls Felix.

After putting in new flooring, foundations and piping, they installed the huge vats, which came from Hungary. "We were told we'd need a seven-ton forklift to remove them from the lorry but we still couldn't move them over the gravel grounds. In the end we enlisted the help of about 20 men from a construction company and pushed them in by hand."

They served their first beer in March and it's been going down nicely, ever since. "The response from customers has been amazing. I love working behind the bar and seeing people enjoy their first taste" says Felix.

German Kraft offers a core range of three beers: a lager; a wheat beer and a German pale ale, along with a monthly seasonal beer.

"People can't seem to get enough of our signature Heidi Blonde lager, in particular" say Felix. "As well as the water, what makes our beer special is that it's served straight from the tank or keg. It's never bottled or canned - which means there's no need to use additives. You can really taste the difference."

In September, they're planning to brew a special beer using hops grown by their Mercato Metropolitano neighbours, Rootlabs.

Hugo Horlick and Sam Cox run the Rootlabs urban food project in a double decker London bus and have partnered with German Kraft to create a hydroponic hop growing system using recycled beer barrels.

"Everyone at Mercato works together and helps each other out. There's a real sense of community" says Felix. "We couldn't imagine a better location."

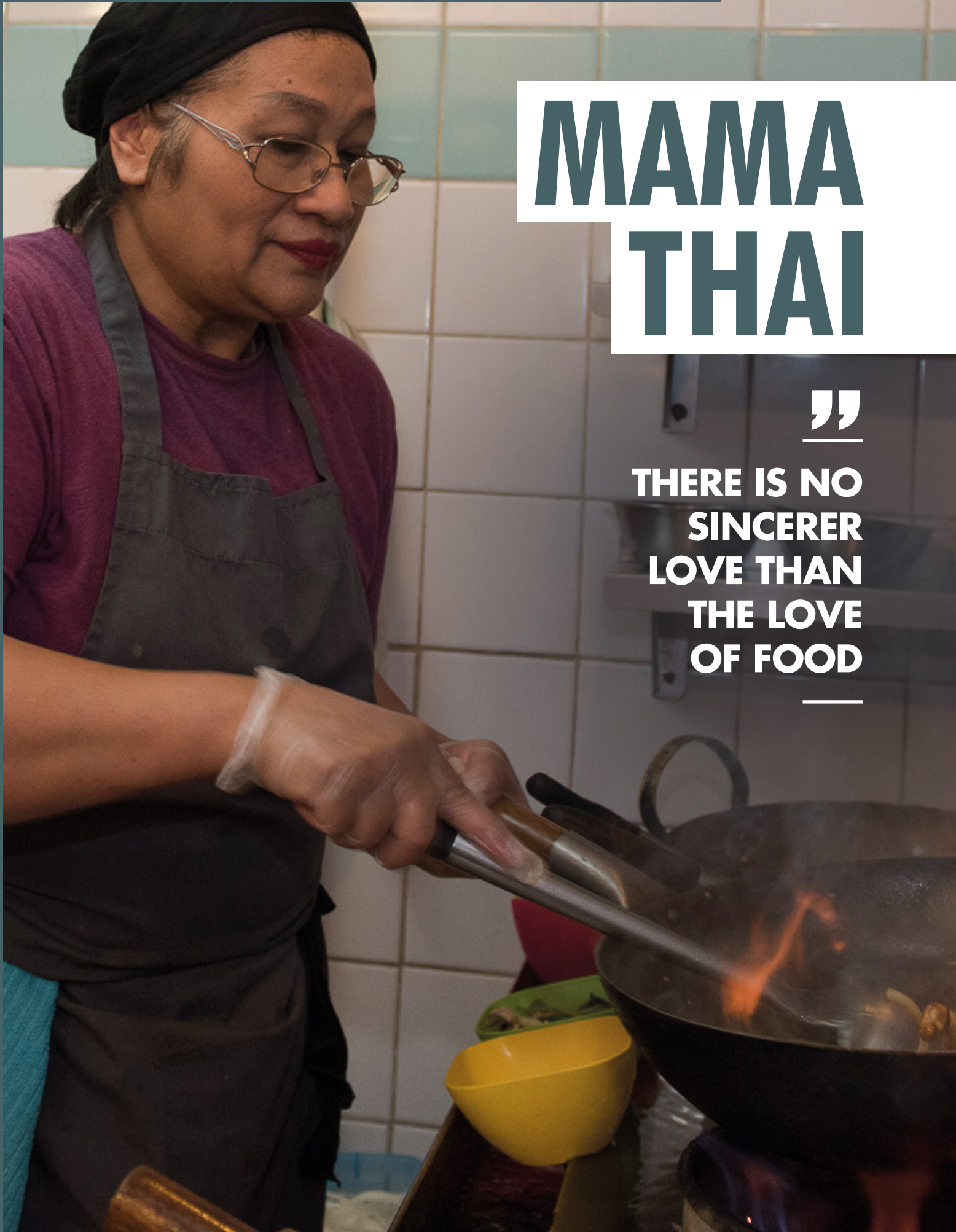
German Kraft, Mercato Metropolitano, Newington Causeway, SE1 6DR
Open Monday 5pm-11pm, Tuesday-Sunday 11am-11pm | www.germankraftbeer.com

THE BEST OF THE ELEPHANT

MAMA THAI

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**THERE IS NO
SINCERER
LOVE THAN
THE LOVE
OF FOOD**





Mama Thai, the much-loved Walworth restaurant is celebrating its tenth birthday this year.

If it's home-cooked Thai food you're after, there's one place that's on everyone's lips in Elephant and Castle – Mama Thai.

"We offer something that people can't get elsewhere" explains Ameer Khasru, who opened his homely, 35 seat restaurant with Thai chef Chalor Santhaveesuk in 2008.

"All of our food is freshly prepared using ingredients that I buy, personally, from London's markets. It's a great collaboration. I source the ingredients and Chalor does the cooking. People seem to appreciate the time and trouble we go to. So many places, today, don't cook their food from fresh, they just heat things up."

Every Thursday, Ameer gets up at 3am to go to Smithfield, Billingsgate and New Covent Garden. He also buys produce locally, from East Street Market and Longdan Vietnamese Supermarket. He says "Not many restaurateurs buy from the markets anymore, but I do and many of the traders have become friends. I like shopping locally. We've even grown our own Thai Sweet Basil at Walworth Garden Farm."

Green Curry and Pad Thai are the most popular dishes on the extensive menu, which includes everything from soups and salads to stir-fries, rice and noodle bowls. The restaurant isn't licensed but customers can bring their own alcohol for a small corkage fee. They also have freshly made fruit juices and non-alcoholic cocktails.

Ameer and Chalor, who've worked together for more than 30 years, have an impressive track record when it comes to serving great Thai food. In the 80s, Ameer opened the Thai Pavilion in Dulwich, having fallen in love with Thai food when working as an accountant in Bangkok. The restaurant proved popular and in 1988 he moved to a 100 seat restaurant next to the Trocadero in Piccadilly with Chalor as head chef and a team of cooks from Thailand.

"Thai Pavilion was one of the most successful Thai restaurants in London. We won numerous awards and people came from all over to eat there" recalls Ameer, who went on to add a second branch, Thai Pavilion East, near his home in Kennington.

When he reached his 60s, Ameer sold both businesses so that he could take things a little easier but a chance walk along the Walworth Road one day, changed his plans.

"I noticed that the Wimpy was closing down so I got chatting to the guys in the building and found out that it was for sale. I was planning to retire but Chalor didn't want to. She persuaded me that we should open a small restaurant on the site and call it Mama Thai. Chalor's the Mama!" he explains.

"The building was in really bad shape" he recalls. "The upper floors were unusable so that was quite a challenge." The pair refurbished the place and opted for traditional paintings and furnishings, which they brought from Thailand. "Some people said we should have gone for a more modern style but I'm glad we didn't. Everywhere else looks the same but our restaurant stands out."

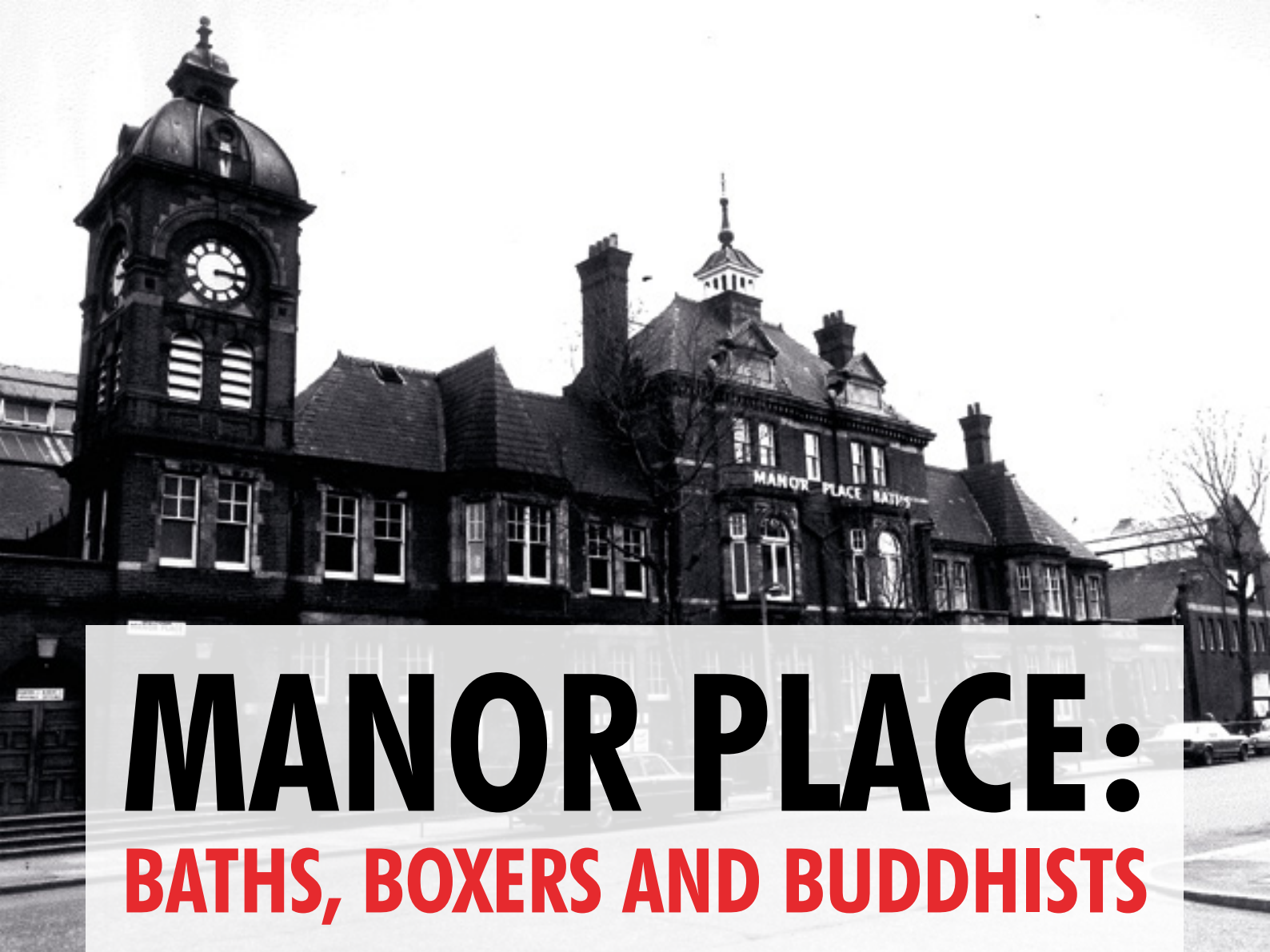
Many former customers followed them to the new premises in Walworth but they've also built up a large, local clientele and provide catering for various community events, including Southwark Carers Christmas party and functions at the nearby Walworth Garden Farm.

"We have lots of loyal customers" says Ameer. "Mama Thai is very popular with the South East Asian students who live nearby and they bring their friends too. We also get quite a few newcomers who've just moved into the neighbourhood, as it's one of the fastest growing areas in London."

Ameer has no intention of slowing down, either. He's looking forward to the tenth birthday celebrations in October, when they'll host a traditional Thai feast and he's also planning some wine pairing events so that people can learn what wines go best with their Thai food.

"I should have retired by now but I think it's good to keep working, both physically and mentally," he smiles. "After all, as George Bernard Shaw said, 'there is no sincerer love than the love of food.'"

Mama Thai, 235 Walworth Road, SE17 1RL
Open daily 12–3.30pm and 5–11pm | www.mamathaihomecooking.co.uk



MANOR PLACE: BATHS, BOXERS AND BUDDHISTS

Manor Place and its baths have played an important role in the history of Walworth. Local historian, Dr Patricia Dark uncovers the past of this intriguing location.

Manor Place is named after the Manor of Walworth (specifically the manor house). The Domesday Book (1086) describes the manor as “five hides” in area; enough land to support five families or to produce £5 in taxes.

In the 11th century, the manor was gifted to the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, who leased it out for a yearly rent. For centuries, the Lord of the Manor of Walworth paid the monks and their successors for the right to farm the land and, for many years, each Walworth resident had the right to graze two cows and a horse on what’s now the site of the Aylesbury estate. The lord was an influential figure and the manor itself was covered by “rights of justice”, which meant he could exert a degree

of legal authority, for example by fining local brewers for short measures.

The manor house once stood at the intersection of what’s now Manor Place and Penton Place. Records show that in the 18th century it had three main rooms: a hall for a dining cum living space, a kitchen and an upper room where the lord and his family slept. There was also a barn, a stable and a dovecote to house pigeons.

Until 1750, London Bridge was the city’s sole bridge across the Thames. This inhibited the development of outlying areas such as Walworth. However, the opening of Westminster Bridge, shortly followed by Blackfriars Bridge, brought about big changes and a new, burgeoning

population. Over time, Walworth was transformed, first from farming village to prosperous Georgian neighbourhood and then later, into a crowded urban slum.

By the time that Charles Dickens was hitting his stride, conditions were pretty bleak. His 1836 collection of essays, *Sketches by Boz*, would shine a light on the problem; particularly the lack of sanitation in overcrowded housing.

For the most part, Walworth’s housing lacked dedicated bathrooms and hot running water until well into the 20th century. For most people, taking a bath involved heating a large amount of water on the stove and pouring it into a tin bath that several members of the family might share. Otherwise, you might have a “wash-down” – standing

in a smaller container and pouring water over your head – or simply a wipe down with a wet flannel.

There were similar problems with doing laundry. As clothes and linen had to be scrubbed by hand with soap, laundry day and bath day were often one and the same!

The lack of basic sanitation facilities had knock-on effects for public health. In an effort to improve conditions for the local population, the vestry of Newington built the Public Baths and Wash Houses in Manor Place.

Work began in 1895 with a grand opening in March 1898. The complex contained three swimming pools; originally a first and second class pool for men and one for women (mixed bathing was introduced in 1904). It also had 72 individual bath cubicles - the majority of which were originally for men - showers and a public laundry.

At the time, Manor Place Baths were amongst the biggest and best in London; so big, in fact, that the rector of Newington reflected that some observers might think they were too big. The Baths provided a valuable service. Not only were they a means to keep clean, but they offered people some much-valued privacy (generally missing from their day-to-day lives). They were an affordable luxury that could make a hard week at work a little easier or provide a first pleasure to mark the weekend.

The laundry had an impact beyond its primary purpose, too, helping to strengthen a sense of community as neighbourhood women swapped children's clothes and traded advice while they finished the weekly wash.

The Baths also provided an opportunity for exercise, and it wasn't just swimming; as Manor Place was soon to earn its place in the hallowed history of British boxing.

The first class baths were designed to be covered over with wooden flooring in the winter; presumably to save money on heating or because of a lack of demand. This meant that the

space could be used for other pursuits; including boxing.

Boxing has long been important to the area, with world-famous venues for training and competition located close by; including the Ring on Blackfriars Road and the Thomas a Becket pub. Manor Place saw its first bout in 1908 and went on to host a roll-call of the famous and infamous, including the Kray twins. It became so well known that when the BBC began to broadcast boxing, they chose Manor Place as their first venue.



The Baths' most treasured boxing tradition began in 1936 when a group of locals, including pub landlord Jack Burnett, tailor Dave Lyons, and local shop-keeper Joe Collier, decided to raise money to send local kids on a seaside holiday. They held a charity boxing match at the Baths, which would go on to be an annual event. For more than 40 years, The Metropolitan Borough of Southwark's Charity Boxing Committee organised the bouts, which saw the cream of the boxing world come to Walworth, giving locals the chance to see top-flight, professional boxing on their own doorstep.

By 1975 the council had begun to rethink its role in providing subsidised laundry and bathing to an ever-decreasing number of people, especially when every home in the borough was expected to have a bathroom by 1980. Manor Place

had structural issues and a new leisure centre nearby offered better facilities for swimming. So, after one final Mayor's Boxing Show in April 1978, the Baths were closed.

The building fell into disuse for many years, until English Heritage awarded it Grade II listed status and added it to the Register of Buildings at Risk in 1996.

In more recent times, it received something of a reprieve. The Buddhist group Kagyu Samye Dzong renovated the building in the early 2000s and leased it as a meditation and complementary health centre until 2010. In 2013, Notting Hill Housing bought the Baths (along with the recycling depot, next door) and the building is now being converted to housing.

However, in a tribute to its glorious past, one final boxing reunion was held at the Baths earlier this year. The event was arranged by the Essex Ex-Boxers' Association as a fundraiser for the families of light-heavyweight Scott Westgarth and former middleweight Herol Graham.

The event commemorated the legacy of everyone who'd fought at Manor Place and provided a fitting send-off to an iconic venue that will now continue to serve the local community for generations to come by providing much-needed housing, including new affordable homes, on site.



For more local history visit the Southwark Archives at 211 Borough High Street. www.southwark.gov.uk/libraries You can also visit www.heritage.southwark.gov.uk to see the council's collections online, including those of the Cuming Museum and Southwark Archives.

MY ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

Locals tell us
what they
love about
the Elephant



Anne

What's great about Elephant and Castle is that it's quite quirky but not full of tourists like some parts of central London. It's definitely got better, too. I like the new developments and the fact there are lots of parks and nice pubs in the area. I've brought my friend from Denmark to see Mercato Metropolitano today, as I knew she'd love it. It's great for lunch and a glass of wine. The Vietnamese wraps and the Argentine food are especially good.



Ade

I grew up around here so I've seen a lot of changes, especially over the last ten years. It's great that you don't have to leave the area to "go out" now. I like Louie Louie on the Walworth Road, they've got good food and good music and there are interesting pubs nearby, like The Tommyfield and The Old Red Lion. There's certainly more of a buzz now. People say gentrification's a bad thing, but it does mean there's more to do; with new gyms opening and new places to go etc.



Nikki

I've got a young son and it's a good area for kids as there's lots going on. I like going to the soft play at the Castle Centre. It's right by our house and I've taken my son swimming there too. We often go to Kennington Park as well as Little Dorrit Park in Borough, where there's a nice play area and tables where you can have a picnic.



Kundan

The area's changing a lot. Overall, the change is good, so long as it still reflects the local community. I'll miss the shopping centre if it goes. The building is dire but the people in the shops and cafés are lovely and they have a good rapport with customers. One of my favourite places is Nova as the coffee is so good and it's reasonably priced too.



James

I used to go to evening classes at London College of Communication in the 90s and the area is completely different now. Back then, Elephant and Castle was all clogged up with traffic and the main thing that anyone noticed was the huge pink shopping centre. There's still traffic but it seems more contained. I like the new road layout as it's much better for cyclists. My only worry about all this development is that it's making the area unaffordable for some people.



Sherry

I've lived in the Elephant for six years now and there's lots more going on. I like the mix of different cultures and there are loads of places to get really good food. The food at Artworks is amazing, there's Mauritian food and Caribbean food and a gluten free café, too. Another good thing about living here is that it's so central. It's so easy to get everywhere and there's something in every direction.



Hugo

There's always something going on around here, whatever time of day it is. Corsica Studios has good club nights and gigs and I used to enjoy going to The Coronet. I like the South American places underneath the arches for a coffee and you can buy good Spanish produce there too. The tunnels under the roundabout were awful so I think it's great they've removed them and pedestrianised the area more.

The Elephant Magazine is produced by Southwark Council. We would love to hear your feedback and welcome suggestions for future features. Drop us a line at councilnews@southwark.gov.uk

Read more about the regeneration programme at www.elephantandcastle.org.uk


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