

THE ELEPHANT

MAGAZINE

Issue 21 / Summer 2021



THIS ISSUE

THE ELEPHANT'S TOP CAT

Natty Bo on art,
performance and the
return of live music

TELLING OUR STORY

The new Southwark
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Walworth Library

COOL DOWN AT ELEPHANT PARK

The water feature
making a big splash

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.



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We welcome your ideas, comments and contributions, so please get in touch.

Photography from left to right: John, Black Cowboy Coffee; cans at The Cinema Museum; Elephant Springs; East Street sign; Orbit brewery; Drawing Room; food at Beza; Rene, Superarts; St Mary's Churchyard Park; ladies at Blackfriars Settlement; The Cinema Museum; Walworth Living Room; Elephant Park; elephant statue; Sarah Wardroper; Southwark Playhouse, Newington School of Historical Dress; Castle Centre sign

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COOL DOWN AT ELEPHANT PARK

Take off your shoes, relax and enjoy a dip at Elephant Springs, the newest addition to Elephant Park.

Elephant Park has reopened and it's now more than double the size.

The eagerly awaited, second phase of the park was completed in June and includes a wonderful, new water feature called Elephant Springs.

Elephant Springs is a rocky, watery, natural addition to the park landscape that everyone can enjoy. Children, adults and families are all invited to come and get their feet wet amongst the streams, rocks and water jets that have already created a big buzz throughout the neighbourhood.

The design of the second phase of

the park, including Elephant Springs, has been driven by the community. When Lendlease spoke to local people, it was clear they wanted something unique and special for the neighbourhood; something for the whole community, where people of all ages could come together. And that's exactly what Elephant Springs delivers.

It was designed by Mel Chantrey, who also designed Tumbling Bay in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the Diana Memorial Playground in Kensington Gardens. Mel wanted to create a green oasis for Elephant and Castle; a place where

children could connect with the natural world and where their parents and carers could have fun as well.

Outdoor play is one of the best ways that children can learn and develop. It teaches the importance of exercise, fresh air and how to take risks, safely. It also gives kids opportunities to explore and experiment; to enjoy nature and to learn how to care for it. At Elephant Springs, they can clamber over the rocks, slide down the slides and splash around in the fountains, while the adults dip their feet in the running streams. Or the other way round of-course!

NEW STREETS AND OLD FAVOURITES

Despite the pandemic, some fantastic local bars, cafes, shops and amenities have opened in Elephant Park in the past year. These include new additions to Sayer Street, Ash Avenue and Walworth Road. Many of the businesses are local, south London, success stories, such as 400 Rabbits on Ash Avenue, or Bayroot on Sayer Street. Others were born here in Elephant and Castle, such as Ecuadorian restaurant, Miko's, which used to be in the shopping centre (see page 16). The Sayer Street beautician and hairdresser, Dima Beautiful started life in Lendlease's business incubator, the Artworks Elephant, which was located just around the corner on the junction of Walworth Rd and Elephant Rd. These are complemented by handy, local amenities such as JN Money, Kiki & Miu Miu Oriental food market and of-course the brand new Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library (see page 10).



PICNIC IN THE PARK

This summer why not come and picnic in Elephant Park? Right up until the end of August, participating cafes, bars and restaurants along Sayer Street and Ash Avenue are laying on a special picnic menu. The menu comprises light bites, from across four continents, which you can mix and match to create your own picnic to enjoy in the park. Visit the Elephant Park website or pick up a leaflet from participating retailers for more information.

www.elephantpark.co.uk/natural-play-area

www.elephantpark.co.uk/eat-drink-and-shop/events-and-fun

Creative Elephant: putting arts and culture on the map

Elephant and Castle's creative venues are celebrated on a new interactive map from London College of Communication.

With so many of us unable to travel this summer and the Mayor of London inviting us to become 'staycation tourists', what better time could there be to get out and about in Elephant and Castle and check out all there is to offer, right here on your own doorstep?

Thankfully, the new Creative Elephant website and map, produced by London College of Communication, has arrived just in time to lead the way.

Creative Elephant was initially developed by the college in 2019 to showcase local creativity as part of

its degree shows. Last year, it was developed further (partly in response to the pandemic) to serve as a year-round guide that will help to support all of our local arts and culture venues.

From Corsica Studios and Siobhan Davies Dance through to the Cinema Museum and the Imperial War Museum, our neighbourhood is home to some world-leading venues, as well as many hidden gems. And whether you want to go clubbing, take in a show or simply soak up some Southwark history and heritage, this new map reveals just how much creativity and culture

our neighbourhood has to offer.

Gill Henderson, Cultural and Communities Partnerships Manager at London College of Communication told the Elephant Magazine:

"Being without a crystal ball, we had no idea how events would unfold way back in April last year when we decided to create a website to showcase and promote the wonderful creative and cultural spaces in and around Elephant and Castle. And now they've reopened, we're delighted to be able to support those venues as they get back on their feet."

Highlights from the map



Southwark Playhouse

Southwark Playhouse ran a hugely successful programme of online events throughout the pandemic but now it's back at its live, loud and limitless best. An Elephant and Castle success story, the Playhouse, which has been based in 'temporary' premises on Newington Causeway since 2013, is due to open a brand new, purpose-built, 300-seat theatre at Newington Butts later this year. Watch this space.



Superarts Academy

Known locally as Rene's, Superarts has been teaching children and young people dance and the performing arts for more than 50 years. Classes range from ballet to street dance, from tap to acrobatics. Students have regular opportunities to take part in professional productions, alongside neighbourhood events, and many former pupils have gone on to perform in the West End and around the world.



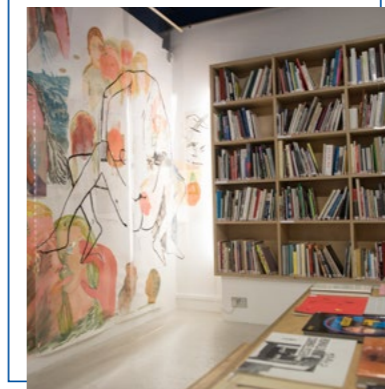
The Cinema Museum

A must for all movie buffs, this fabulous museum is home to a collection of historic cinema and film artefacts unrivalled anywhere in the UK. The hallways of this former workhouse (once home to a young Charlie Chaplin) are decked with classic movie props, posters, artwork and movie memorabilia dating back to the dawn of cinema. The museum runs regular tours and hosts many screenings, talks and Q&As. The museum will start to reopen later in the summer so check their website for updates.



Siobhan Davies Dance Studios

The Studios is a vibrant arts space hosting a regular programme of exhibitions, performances, projects and new commissions from leading artists drawn from the world of dance. Founded by pioneering choreographer, Siobhan Davies, and based in Elephant and Castle since 2006, it is at the very forefront of contemporary dance.



Drawing Room

Drawing Room is a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to discover contemporary drawing. It comprises free exhibitions by international and emerging artists, a library and learning space and a shop stocking books and artists' materials. Look out for the *Drawn Out* exhibition (17 July to 22 August) which features the work of five artists; each exploring personal experience through the slow process of drawing.



Corsica Studios

This iconic music and arts venue, based in a pair of Elephant and Castle railway arches, has established itself as an essential destination for London's clubbers. Renowned for the high quality of its music programming, Corsica was named Small Club of the Year by DJ Mag in 2019.

Read about each of these venues and many more at creativeelephant.uk

SOMETHING TO TWEET ABOUT



Song thrush © Simon Chinnery. Facing page: bee © Alvesgaspar. Both photos illustrative.

During lockdown many people reported seeing more wildlife and hearing more birdsong. Here in Elephant and Castle, at least, it seems this wasn't just their imagination.

Walking by the lake in Burgess Park, Dave Clark stops suddenly. "Did you hear that?" he asks. "It's a reed warbler. I first heard it years ago, literally ten feet away from the anglers by the water. It's the size of a robin, but it comes

all the way from the Sahel (south of the Sahara) to breed here; just 200 yards from the Old Kent Road!"

A few steps more, another abrupt stop: "That's a coot... and on the corner there, are two crested grebes. I was heartened to see them come

back and rebuild the nest."

This year alone, Dave, a local, freelance ornithologist, has spotted around 90 different types of bird in the park.

For 13 years, he has watched and catalogued the borough's birdlife.

While he's passionate about all of Southwark's green spaces, Burgess Park is definitely his favourite. He says it's the place where Southwark Council "has got everything right."

From the wildflower meadows, briar and reeds, to the lake, the maintenance and the care, Dave says "This is a shining example of what can be done in a busy, poor urban environment because the habitat is wonderful."

Surveying the lake, he says "In the winter, this will be full of about 300 birds, gulls and geese. They'll be nesting elsewhere (maybe the Thames) but some of the ducks and coots will have stayed. Every year, we get rare species, like the goldeneye that came here this winter; the Mediterranean gull; or the white-fronted goose, which was particularly interesting because it stayed for about ten days and fed happily and securely with the greylag geese."

"The reason why the birds choose Burgess Park is simple" says Dave, sweeping his arms around him at the edge of the lake. "Look at this vista! They'll be flying past, and they'll judge that it's safe and the right habitat."

The walking education continues; this time through the green surrounded by Neate Street, Coburg Road and Trafalgar Avenue. "That's a blackcap we're hearing" says Dave. "The male has the black cap, the female, a brown one. It's one of the few species in this country where the female also sings. Robins do as well."

While Burgess Park is the largest park near Elephant and Castle, other green spaces include Walworth Gardens, Pasley Park, Dickens Square Park, St Mary's Churchyard Park and the recently expanded Elephant Park where birdlife is actively promoted and protected.

Nearly half of Lendlease's Elephant Park development is public realm, with plenty of room for wildlife (birds, mammals and insects) alongside the picnickers, walkers and sunbathers.

Ewan Oliver, Lendlease's Public Realm Development Manager, says "It's unique for a central London development to have such a large amount of green space and public realm compared to the buildings."

"It offers a huge opportunity. We took it upon ourselves to make

biodiversity improvements, regardless of any planning obligation, simply because it's the right thing to do. As developers, we understand that an ecologically rich, well designed public realm - for humans and wildlife - is better for everyone."

The company's Biodiversity, Ecology and Nature (BEN) principles (set out in 2012 before construction began) is a guide to bringing in bird and bat boxes and log piles etc. alongside diverse plant species in the ornamental, planted landscapes.



« —————
We make sure the plants have a high pollen and nectar count to attract bees and insects
————— »

"We make sure the plants have a high pollen and nectar count to attract bees and insects and that, in turn, helps to provide food for other species like birds" says Ewan.

Jon Best, Southwark Council's Ecology Officer since 2004, says one of the main improvements for birds and other wildlife in the borough has been the green infrastructure included in new developments.

"A lot of new buildings will have green roofs and the Elephant Park development is a classic example" he says.

Bat bricks and swift bricks have also been put into buildings. "The council's

Biodiversity Action Plan has a number of priorities that includes swifts. These birds have struggled because people have removed their nesting sites.

Traditionally, they were on old houses and a lot of modern housing doesn't provide any opportunity for a swift to nest. So we have introduced the swift brick. We call it a 'universal nesting brick' - swifts will use it but it will also house sparrows and starlings."

For the smaller green areas that form part of the Walworth Community Gardening Network (WCGN), Jon says the council would like to add more water features. "We're putting in more ponds, which is a good start as it improves the quality of wildlife habitat."

Vince Brown, from the WCGN, says "The way we promote wildlife is to ensure our greenspaces are well looked after. We encourage people to plant a diversity of plants and organic sources where they can. For example; in Pullens Gardens, we took the concrete walkways and planted apple orchards and installed raised beds to turn a concrete pathway into a garden oasis. It attracts insects and bees and improves the food source for birds."

The initiatives are clearly working, according to Jon, who says "I'd never seen a song thrush around Elephant and Castle before - it's on the red list of birds - but I saw one, recently, in Elephant Park. That's a direct result of creating the green space and habitat, which obviously attracted it here."

Ewan Oliver agrees. He says "It feels like there are more birds and wild creatures around. The sound of birdsong in Elephant Park is quite noticeable, even amongst all the urban noises of construction work and traffic. To be able to hear birdsong above that is a good indicator that we have a healthy environment around us."

Back in Burgess Park, Dave Clark stops suddenly, once more. He's listening to what he calls "a wonderful, explosive song."

"That's a Cetti's warbler. And it's the first time they've nested here!"

Find out more about local parks and open spaces at elephantandcastle.org.uk/better-place-walk



TELLING OUR STORY

There's loads to see and do at the brand new Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library.

If you're hungry for art, culture and creativity following a year of lockdowns, then this is the place for you.

Delivered by the council in partnership with Lendlease, this stunning new venue combines a heritage centre for the borough with a local library for Walworth.

Packed with exhibits, artefacts and artworks, the centre tells the story of Southwark and its many communities. It provides a fantastic new setting to exhibit hundreds of items from the borough's vast heritage collection. This includes pieces that were previously at the Cuming

Museum, alongside new additions and many gems from the archive that have rarely been seen before.

The centre, which is free to visit, has a permanent exhibition, *Story of Southwark*, and will also run an annual programme of temporary shows.

And of course, there are all the things you'd expect from your local library, including thousands of books, public computers, free wifi and study space. There will be poetry readings, history talks and storytelling sessions and the centre even has room for small community meetings and local events.

**Southwark Heritage Centre
and Walworth Library**
147 Walworth Road, London SE17 1RW

Opening Times
10am to 8pm Monday to Friday
10am to 5pm Saturday
12 noon to 4pm Sunday

www.southwark.gov.uk/shc&wl

We're bringing Southwark's story right up to date. Share your memories of our borough at: tinyurl.com/tj6u3dkd

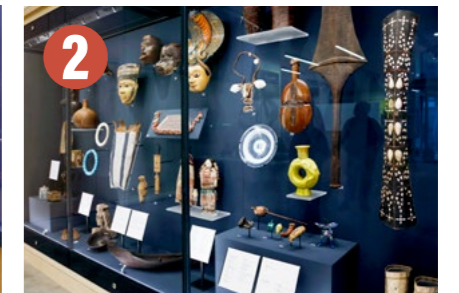


HIGHLIGHTS THE FAB FIVE



1 A tale to be told

The permanent *Story of Southwark* exhibition is the centre-piece of the heritage centre. Revolving around the themes of Place, People, Work and Play, it unfurls Southwark's long history from Roman times through to the present. But the story isn't finished yet. The centre is working with local residents and community groups to continue to develop the exhibition to ensure it remains a living, breathing and inclusive story; one which keeps pace as Southwark evolves.



2 From Walworth to the world

Check-out the wonderful 'World Wall'. It features artefacts from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Americas and from a multitude of cultures. Stand-out exhibits include a pair of 18th century dolls in full traditional costume, made by Cree women from North America, and a highly decorated shield from the Solomon Islands.



3 Spark your creativity

The Faraday Room is inspired by local-boy-done-good, Michael Faraday. Renowned as one of the world's greatest scientists, Faraday was a pioneer in the fields of electricity and magnetism. This meeting room, encased completely in copper, mimics one of his most famous inventions, the Faraday Cage. It blocks out all electrical signals from the outside world and, yes, that does include your mobile phone!



4 Big reads for little people

The centre includes a fully-stocked children's library. There are thousands of titles from Peppa Pig to Harry Potter, from picture books to adventure stories. There's plenty of room for children and parents to sit and read together too. And remember to watch out for the children's storytelling sessions, coming soon.



5 The bear is back

Older residents will remember south London's most famous bear. Sure, he's no Paddington but he's ours. And he's been living (ok, residing) in Walworth for more than 200 years. Having had a bit of a spruce-up, he's just one part of the wonderfully eccentric and extensive Cuming Collection, which has made a very welcome return to Walworth Road.

THE ELEPHANT'S TOP CAT



Live music is one of the pleasures that people have missed most over the past year but now it's finally coming back.

Walking into the back garden of the Delipan on Walworth Road, Natty Bo is an instantly recognisable figure.

With a wide brimmed hat, generously cut suit, vintage tie and his broad, gold-toothed grin, he's Natty by name and natty by nature.

He has been a familiar face in Elephant and Castle for more than 30 years and

is known more widely as the lead singer of The Top Cats, Ska Cubano and now, his latest band, The Flames of Rhythm.

The Delipan Colombian bakery and coffee shop is one of Natty's favourites, his love of Latin American music, especially cumbia, having long since spilled over into a taste for the food. Thankfully, on Walworth Road and throughout the neighbourhood,

he's somewhat spoilt for choice.

Settling down with an espresso and aguapanela chaser, Natty explains how Elephant and Castle came to be home, back in the 1980s.

"I was born in Hackney but grew up in south London, in Thamesmead" he says "but, after art college, I gravitated towards this area through a combination of friends and having

busked regularly on Walworth Road and in the shopping centre."

Natty studied at Chelsea College of Art. Painting, drawing and photography have been a large part of his life for decades, alongside his music.

"There was a very creative and artistic community around the Pullens estate when I moved here in the late 80s" he explains. "There still is, in fact, including the likes of Sir Frank Bowling whose studio is in the yards. So as an artist, it was a great place to be."

If you've ever seen one of his ebullient stage performances, you might be surprised to hear that Natty wasn't always a natural performer.

"Before art college, I was pretty quiet and shy" he says. "Coming from Thamesmead and then going to study at Chelsea was a little intimidating at first but it also gave me confidence. As well as the painting, I also got into performance art, which really helped."

It must have helped a lot. For a time, Natty could be found performing around the world as part of the circus troupe, Cirque Archaos, before his music career took over. Performance and art also seeped into the way he dressed.

"There was a time when I could be seen around Walworth with a TV screen hung around my neck or covered in clocks and dials. I was interested in surrealism, dreams and psychology and I particularly liked the work of the occult artist, Austin Osman Spare, who lived and worked around here in the 1930s and 40s. I suppose it kind of took over."

As well as a passion for art, Natty has had a lifelong love of music with particular fondness for the mavericks, outsiders and showmen, such as Lee Scratch Perry and Screaming Jay Hawkins.

He grew-up listening to blues and jazz and his eyes light up as he recounts being introduced to New Orleans pianist, Champion Jack Dupree by a family friend at the 100 Club.

American pianists like Champion Jack and Fats Domino were a big influence on the ska sound that came out of Jamaica in the 60s and which would later become a staple part of Natty's repertoire.

Natty got to know Gaz Mayall, who's father, John, had been a big part of the British blues scene that gave birth to the likes of the Rolling Stones. The two shared a love of Jamaican

music and Natty joined Gaz's band the Trojans and DJ'd with him for a time, before forming his own band.

His first group, which began in the mid 90s and is still going strong today, were The Top Cats. They play a traditional ska sound and have become a popular fixture on the London circuit. However, his second band, Ska Cubano, are probably better known.

It started as a recording project with local musicians in Cuba; the idea being to combine Cuban sounds with those from Jamaica. Despite having similar histories, the music of these two large Caribbean islands, whilst both firmly rooted in African music, had gone on to develop quite separately. Natty wondered what it might sound like if they brought the threads back together.

The resulting record, 2010's self-titled Ska Cubano, proved a big success.

“ I could be seen covered in clocks and dials ”

This led to a touring band being put together. It comprised Natty, former bandmates and several London-based Cuban musicians that Natty came across in Elephant and Castle. "They were actually rehearsing in my street!" he exclaims, looking as if he still can't quite believe his luck.

Together, they played concerts and festivals around the world for the next fifteen years.

Today, Natty is mainly focussed on his most recent group, The Flames of Rhythm, which he describes as "Harlem Swing".

With Natty's gravelly voice and a sound that harks back to Cab Calloway and the jazz bands of the twenties and thirties, this latest project certainly matches Natty's sense of style - not least his penchant for a Zoot suit - and the band has become a big hit with the "vintage" crowd.

"We were doing very well and we had a lot of gigs lined up for last year" says Natty "but then..."

Natty and his bandmates were among the many thousands working

in the arts, culture and music who were hit hard by the pandemic. As self-employed workers, earning their living by performing in packed clubs and crowded festivals, 2020 was a total wipe-out.

Natty is philosophical, however. Despite the fact that self-employed workers were largely overlooked by the Government to begin with, he and his fellow musicians were able to access some financial support, eventually.

"It gave me time to concentrate on painting" says Natty.

He has been doing a series of night paintings of Pullens Yards. And he's been sketching scenes elsewhere around Elephant and Castle, as the old shopping centre comes down, new buildings go up, and the area continues to change around him.

At the time of writing, he is preparing an exhibition of his artwork at the Electric Elephant cafe. But what he's most looking forward to, is getting back to performing; both with the Top Cats and The Flames of Rhythm. The bookings have started to come in again, including Twinwood, the vintage music and dance festival held every August.

As a regular DJ at Notting Hill Carnival (on the Gaz's Rockin' Blues sound system) Natty has fond memories of performing when Walworth's own carnival, Carnaval Del Pueblo, first came to town in 2006.

"It was wonderful to see floats and dancers making their way down Walworth Road that summer" he says, a little misty-eyed, "and then to headline the carnival concert in Burgess Park; that's definitely something I'd love to do again."

With the public's pent-up demand for live music, and his own appetite for performance clearly undiminished, it seems certain that Natty will be performing on home turf again very soon. Maybe Burgess Park or maybe one of his acclaimed St Peter's church gigs. And if it's anything like as good as the last Walworth gig he played, in 2019, then it will have been well worth the wait.

Natty's exhibition runs at The Electric Elephant café and gallery until 31 August

nattybo.space
electricelephantcafe.co.uk
www.delipan.uk

AN ICON RETURNS

The famous elephant statue has returned to Elephant and Castle after a well-earned wash and a scrub.

While the whole country wondered whether football would come home this summer, one homecoming that was never in doubt was that of our beloved elephant statue.

The mascot made a triumphant return to Castle Square at the end of June, greeted by fans at a big welcome-home party. The celebrations included performances by People's Company, Latin dancers, African drummers, and a soundtrack of hits from the Community Hub Choir.

The statue, which stood outside the Elephant and Castle shopping centre for decades, was taken down in January and sent to Kent for restoration. It has been thoroughly cleaned and repainted, and can now be seen, keeping an eye on proceedings, from high above the shops in Castle Square.

The statue derives from the

Elephant and Castle pub sign. An elephant statue adorned the grandest incarnation of the pub from 1898 to 1959.

The pub, which has been rebuilt several times over the centuries, dates back at least 250 years and is thought to be the origin of our neighbourhood's unusual name.

An Elephant and Castle sign can be seen hanging from the pub in drawings as far back as 1800.

It is thought that this symbol is a reference to the Cutlers' guild, which oversaw the medieval trade in ivory handled swords and knives, and possibly had some connection to the original pub (or at least to the site of the pub).

The pub relocated to the corner of New Kent Road and Newington Causeway in the 1960s and the elephant statue will also relocate, once more, when the town centre

development, being built on the site of the old shopping centre, is complete.

In the meantime, it will remain in Castle Square, enjoying an unrivalled view of the hustle and bustle of all the shoppers, the diners in the square and all the families enjoying the sunshine over in Elephant Park.

Castle Square, 40 Elephant Road, London SE17 1EU

*Find out more at
www.castlesquarelondon.com
Instagram: @castlesquarelondon*



RESIDENTS GET THE KEYS TO THEIR NEW HOMES

The first residents have moved in to their new council homes at William Cuffay House in Walworth.

Overlooking the greenery of Pelier Park, and with panoramic views of London from the upper floors, William Cuffay House has delighted the first new tenants who moved in earlier this year.

William Cuffay House is a new block of housing which was built by Southwark Council last year. The seven-storey development contains 17 high-quality, spacious flats, including four three-bedroom homes which are ideal for families.

All of the flats are council flats provided at council rents to local people in housing need.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, along with Southwark councillors, met some of the new residents in June.

Jessica Smith, one of the first new residents to move into the building, said "I'm so happy with my new flat. It's really spacious and an enormous improvement on where I was living before. I love that everything is brand new, it's like having a clean slate."

The development is named after William Cuffay, the son of a former slave who was a leading figure in the Chartist movement, nearby in Kennington, in the 1800s. The Chartist movement was the first mass popular political movement in British history and campaigned for workers' rights and universal suffrage.

By 2025 more than 5,000 new homes will have been built throughout Elephant and Castle as

part of the regeneration, including at least 2,050 affordable homes.

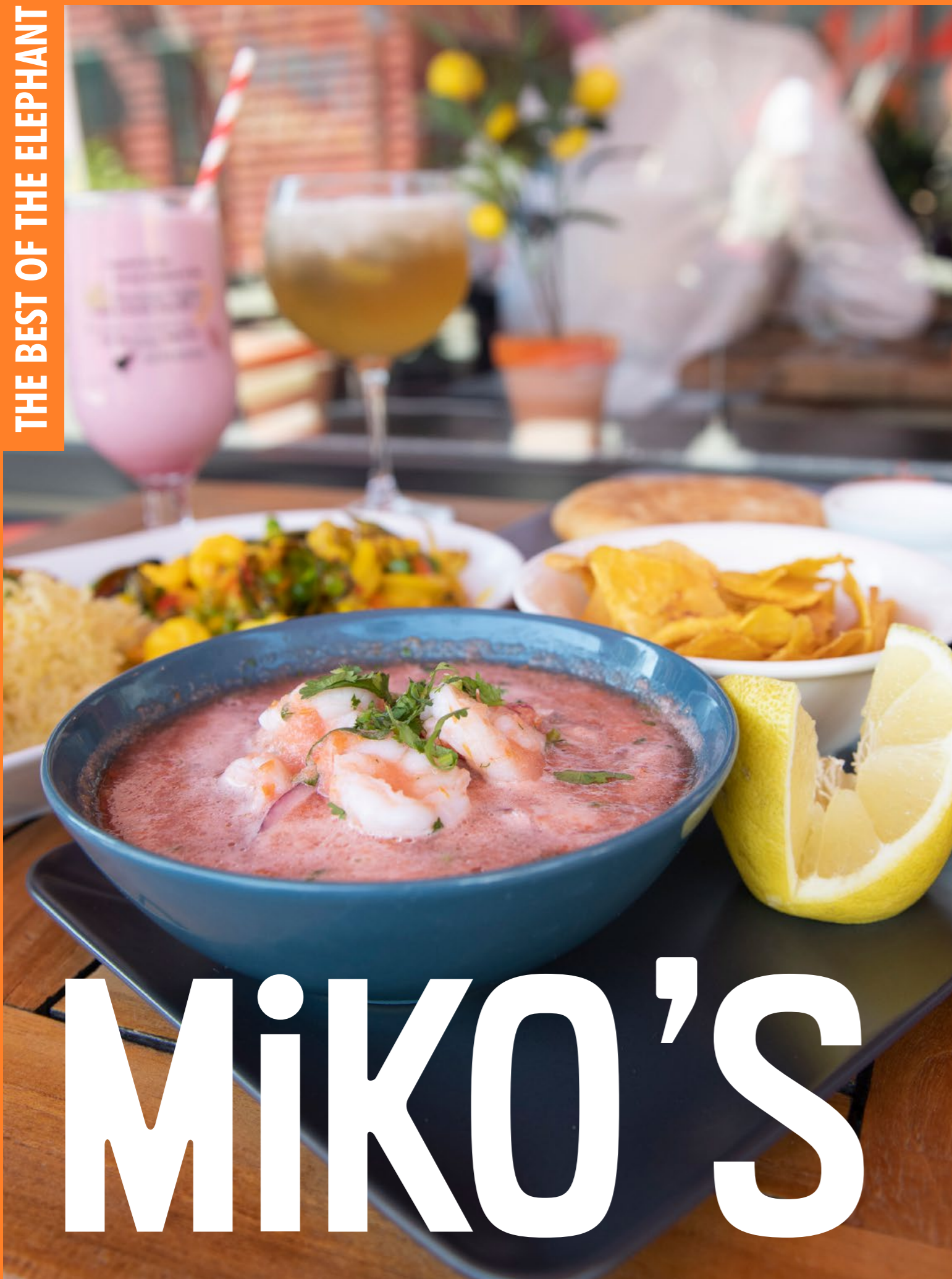
The William Cuffay development has been delivered directly by Southwark Council as part of its ambitious New Homes Programme, which is building 11,000 new council homes across the whole borough by 2043.

Find out more about the regeneration of Elephant and Castle at www.elephantandcastle.org.uk

Find out more about the council's borough-wide New Homes Programme at www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/new-council-homes



CASTLE SQUARE



MiKO'S

Lenin Erazo and his wife, Mariela are serving up a taste of Ecuador at their new restaurant in Elephant Park



On a sunny Wednesday lunchtime Miko's is bustling. Customers are making the most of the weather and dining alfresco underneath the restaurant's bright orange awnings.

The owners, Lenin and Mariela and all the waiters are darting in and out carrying plates laden with delicious Ecuadorian food.

Lenin is clearly delighted to see things so busy. "I'm really happy" he says, taking a short break to sit and chat.

The last 18 months have seen some big changes for the restaurant. Previously based in the shopping centre, Miko's relocated to their new premises, in Sayer Street, last year.

"We had only been open for a few weeks when lockdown happened again in December" says Lenin, "so that was tough."

The business managed to survive by delivering food via apps etc but Lenin couldn't wait to be able to serve customers in person again. "When we were closed, we had so many people calling us and asking when we would be back" he says.

The restaurant has seating for 48 customers inside and 20 outside. It offers a mix of Ecuadorian and Spanish dishes, such as their very popular *encocado de camarón* (king prawns in coconut sauce) which is served with fried green plantain and salad, and *paellas* and *tortilla*; along with coffees, milkshakes and Latin American sodas.

Lenin loves the fact that, unlike in the shopping centre, they now have outdoor space. This meant

they were able to reopen in April when restrictions first eased. They chose the bright orange awnings as they wanted to stand out among the other restaurants and cafes in Sayer Street, and also because that was the colour they had used in the shopping centre. "It makes it easy for people to find us" says Lenin.

Previously, Lenin did all the cooking at Miko's but since the move, they have employed a full-time chef. They also buy much of their produce at nearby East Street Market and from local shops. "We like to support other businesses in the area" Lenin says.

« **When we were closed, we had so many people calling us and asking when we would be back** »

Miko's is also an informal hub for the local Ecuadorian community. "People would often come into Miko's in the shopping centre to ask about how to find a job or for advice and I'm sure it will be the same here" says Lenin.

Miko's is named after Lenin and Mariela's son. Now aged 15 "he's actually called Angelo but Miko was his nickname when a baby" says Lenin. They also have a daughter, Meghan, aged eight.

Lenin was born in Quito in Ecuador but moved to Spain where he worked as a lorry driver for many years. When the financial crash happened in 2008, he lost his job and the family decided to come to Britain to make a new start.

"I needed to find work quickly but didn't speak English very well. So I got a job as a kitchen porter working at the Ecuadorian restaurant, Costa Azul, here in Elephant and Castle" he says.

Lenin has always loved food and his boss took him under his wing and taught him to cook. When an opportunity came up, about ten

years ago, to take over the Los Colorados kiosk in the shopping centre, Lenin and Mariela jumped at the chance to run it together. Things went so well that they soon decided to open Miko's restaurant.

When Lenin heard that the shopping centre was due to be redeveloped, he was very worried. "I thought that was the end for us but then Santiago, from Latin Elephant, told me about the possibility to talk to Lendlease and Southwark Council. He said they may help us to find somewhere else, locally."

Sayer Street is part of Lendlease's Elephant Park development and Lenin says "When we came to look as this place we were very excited but also very nervous - as it's a lot of money to spend. But Lendlease have helped us so much with everything."

Mariela designed the new restaurant. Fitted out with stylish wooden tables and chairs, the space is dominated by a huge colourful mural by Ecuadorian artist, Carlos Gualo alongside many smaller artworks.

Miko's has built up a loyal customer base and people travel from far and wide to eat here. The restaurant is particularly busy at the weekend when they offer a special menu featuring traditional Ecuadorian dishes such as *encebollado*, a much-loved fresh tuna and cassava soup, pepped up with pickled onions.

"We get a lot of Latin American families come to eat here on Saturdays and Sundays" says Lenin. "When we were still in the shopping centre, we had one customer phone us to tell us he was coming all the way from Manchester" he recalls. "But then - everyone loves our food. It's just so tasty!"

Miko's

17 Sayer Street,
London, SE17 1FY

Open daily 11am to 9pm
(10pm Sat and 8pm Sun)

07814 476 705

POWER UP

The Faraday Room at the new Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library pays homage to the pioneering scientist, Michael Faraday.

The words you are reading were typed on a laptop. The layout of this page was designed on an Apple Mac and you may well be viewing this article on your tablet or mobile phone.

It's likely that none of this would have been possible were it not for the work of two formidable scientists, both born in Elephant and Castle, just weeks apart, in 1791; Michael Faraday and Charles Babbage.

Babbage was a mathematician

who, together with Ada Lovelace, lay the foundations of modern computing by designing the world's first programmable, computational machine.

Faraday, on the other hand, designed the world's first electromagnetic generator and established the principles that we still use to generate our electricity, today; the kind supplied to all our homes via the national grid, and which powers our refrigerators, kettles, computers and mobile phones.

Faraday was born in Newington Butts. One of four children, his was a poor family and he received little in the way of formal education. What knowledge and skill he did acquire was almost entirely self-taught. At the age of 14, he was apprenticed to a bookseller and binder in Marylebone. This fortuitous opportunity gave the precocious young teenager access to hundreds of books on all manner of subjects.

Faraday had a keen mind and,

over the course of his seven-year apprenticeship, he eagerly took advantage of the chance to read widely. The turn of the 19th century was a golden age of scientific discovery and Faraday became particularly interested in the methodology of science as well as the burgeoning fields of chemistry and electricity.

As a young man, Faraday started to attend public lectures at the Royal Institution where he became acquainted with the distinguished chemist, Humphry Davy.

The Royal Institution had been established a decade or so earlier and was one of number of clubs and organisations in London dedicated to sharing ideas and discoveries. Having impressed Davy with the detailed and copious notes taken at his many lectures, Faraday was offered a job as Davy's assistant in 1813.

Under Davy's guidance, Faraday experimented with chemistry and studied gasses. He produced new forms of optical glass and even invented a heating device to help with experiments (prefiguring the more famous Bunsen Burner now known to school children everywhere).

But it was by studying electromagnetism that Faraday made his name.

Electricity was not widely understood at this time and it had often been treated as something of a mysterious novelty rather than as a serious field of study. But this had started to change by the late 1700s, most notably through the work of two Italian scientists; Anastasio Volta and Luigi Galvani.

Using his knowledge of chemistry, Volta had invented the world's first electrical battery in 1799. Known as the 'voltaic pile', it comprised a sandwich of several copper and zinc discs, soaked in brine, and was capable of producing a continuous electric current - much like a modern battery, today.

Meanwhile, Galvani had experimented with electricity to 'revive' dead animals (at least to make them twitch and convulse). And in 1803, another Italian, Giovanni

Aldini, 'Galvanised' the corpse of a deceased criminal at Newgate Prison.

These electrical experiments may well have inspired Mary Shelley (herself, the daughter of another famous Elephant and Castle resident, Mary Wollstonecraft) to write her influential novel, *Frankenstein*, in which a monster built from dead body parts is brought to life.

Faraday had experimented with making his own voltaic piles, using halfpennies for the discs. And, as an assistant to Davy, who had used voltaic piles to help discover new elements, Faraday would come to learn much more about electricity.

In 1821, inspired by Davy's attempts to use electromagnetism to create an electric motor, Faraday discovered



that he could use a voltaic style battery to rotate a wire around a magnet in a pool of mercury. By generating a continuous, circular movement, powered by an electrical current, Faraday had created the first electric motor, known as a homopolar motor.

A decade later, and having done much to advance scientific understanding of electricity, Faraday went on to invent the first electrical generator or dynamo.

In a way, this device was an electrical motor in reverse. Whereas the motor had created movement from an electrical current, Faraday's dynamo used motion - the movement of a magnet through a coil of wire - to generate electricity.

This principle, the conversion of motion, via a generator or turbine, into electricity, is still used today.

In 1824 Faraday was elected a member of the Royal Society, a much older and more august scientific organisation than the Royal Institution. And in 1833 he was appointed as the Royal Institution's Fullerian Professor of Chemistry, the most prestigious of all his roles, having previously served as its Assistant Superintendent and, later, its Director of the Laboratory.

During his time at the Royal Institution, Faraday also inaugurated the famous Christmas Lectures, designed to inspire young people to explore the world of science. He personally delivered 19 of these lectures between 1827 and 1860 and they continue to run to this day, often broadcast by the BBC.

Faraday died in 1867 after a lifetime of scientific endeavour and public service.

Having laid the foundations for so much of what we now take for granted in the modern world, he is remembered and commemorated around the globe. Locally, in addition to a park, school and building at London South Bank University, Faraday is commemorated by the giant steel box in Elephant Square - the Faraday Memorial - which houses an electricity substation for the Tube.

The Faraday Room at the new Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library has a number of items from Faraday's collection, including a dynamo that he exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The room itself is lined in copper, mimicking the effect of a Faraday Cage. It blocks out electromagnetic signals, such as radio transmissions and mobile phone calls, and so it's the perfect place to quietly contemplate the legacy of Michael Faraday, undisturbed.

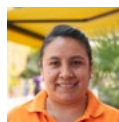
For more local history, visit the Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library at 147 Walworth Road.

www.southwark.gov.uk/shc&wl



MY ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

Locals tell us what they love about the Elephant



Jimena

I love Elephant Park and on a beautiful day like today there are lots of great places where you can sit outside. It's a huge change from how it used to be. The park is very welcoming for families and children. In fact, my family are coming to meet me after work today so we can go there. One of my favourite places is Bobo Social as they have burgers with sweet potato chips which I love.



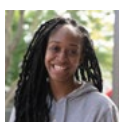
Adriana

Elephant and Castle has changed so much in the last few years. It's nicer, cleaner and safer. I love all the green spaces and there are so many cafes and restaurants where you can eat outside now. I like the Tap In sports bar and bottle shop in Sayer Street. They're so friendly there and the cocktails are nice. The plants on sale at The Nunhead Gardener on Sayer Street are beautiful too.



Cathy

The area just looks more appealing and inviting and safer. I lived on the Old Kent Road for 18 years and it has changed so much. Elephant and Castle used to be somewhere everyone passed through on the way to Brixton or Camberwell. It wasn't somewhere you would stop, but now it's somewhere to go out. It's good as long as local people can still benefit and are not priced out of the area.



Mari

I'm originally from Chicago where there are lots of vibrant and bustling local neighbourhoods. I feel that same vibe here in Elephant and Castle. I love living here. It was such an easy commute (when I had to go into the office) and there are so many local spots where they know your order and they treat you like you're family when you go to pick up your morning coffee. When I don't know what I want for dinner, Mercato Metropolitan is great as you can decide when you get there. They have so many different kinds of food and it was good during Ramadan. It's open late, so I could go there to break my fast.



Sam

I moved here three years ago from Streatham. I didn't realise that it's such a good place to live until I arrived. I've just been swimming at the Castle Centre., which is really good and really cheap. I've recently started cycling as I want to get fitter after lockdown and the area has good cycle links. It's also easy to walk to London Bridge or Westminster from here. I like that there are so many new places to eat out, but I also like all the different Latin American cafes under the arches.



Roger

Elephant and Castle has been transformed with all the new coffee shops and bars. I'm impressed but I do wonder if the spirit will be the same once everything fully opens up again after the pandemic? I miss some of the old buildings. The shopping centre was a bit rough and ready, but I always went there to get my phone fixed. The guy is now based in Castle Square but a bit tucked away.



Sabeen

You get all different communities in Elephant and Castle but they're not segregated; they're mixed together. It has such a nice, diverse vibe, and that shows in the food. You can get anything you could want to eat around here. I grew up here and I've come back to have lunch with my mum and sister at Ethiopian restaurant, Beza. The food is so good! A lot has changed for the better, so long as it stays affordable for the people who live here. I used to go raving at The Coronet, years ago, so it's sad to see that's gone.



Kristel

I have two children and this area is good for families. It's changed quite a lot since I moved here, 15 years ago. There's more to do, especially with Elephant Park opening up. We've just been to the Imperial War Museum where they have free family activities, and yesterday we went to the new fountains in Elephant Park. We also like to go to the Castle Centre and my daughters love the playground in St Mary's Churchyard.

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

Email info@elephantandcastle.org.uk to be added to our mailing list for digital updates: use the word UPDATES in the subject line, followed by your postcode.

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