

WINTER 2018

**GIFT GUIDE**  
Our best picks  
for Christmas

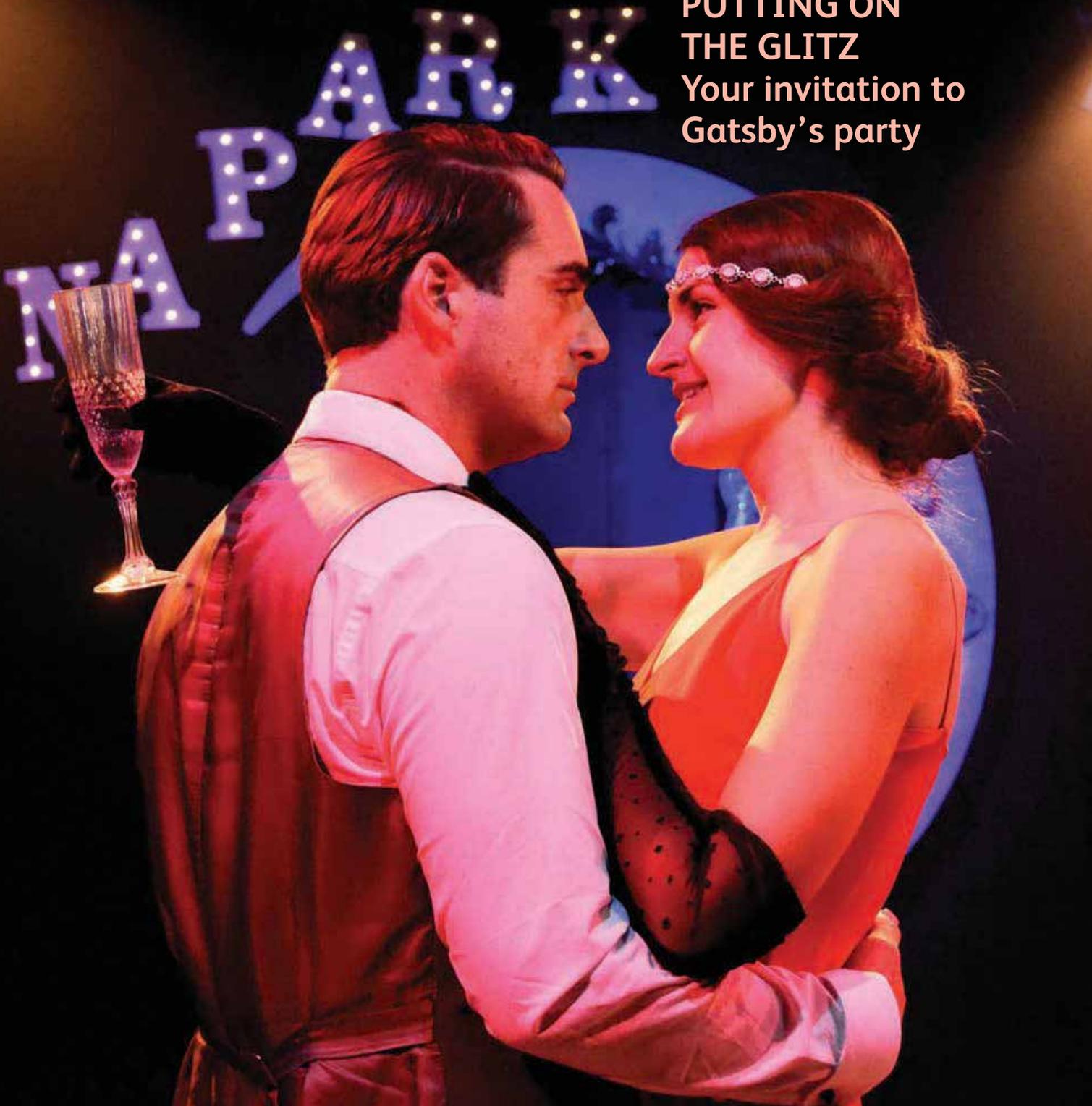
**THEATRE**  
Cameron Mackintosh  
on Hamilton

**TELEVISION**  
Eamonn Holmes  
on screen success

# Victoria

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# Winter

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**Victoria** *London starts here* is produced by Publishing Business on behalf of the Victoria BID

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**leo**

With foodie heaven at Market Halls, social darts in Sir Simon Milton Square and a new spa on Warwick Way offering massage, manicures and more, there's something for everyone in Victoria



▼ If you're finding life in the fast lane too much like hard work, a new spa in Victoria may be the answer.

The Slow Life Concept aims to help people de-stress and take the time to establish meaningful connections with themselves, other people and their community.

Owner Gloria Portella said: "It invites us to find a balanced rhythm of life and to live a better life, knowing when it's time to slow down in order to achieve quality rather than quantity. To find a rhythm that is good for our body, mind and soul; for our relationships, for our society and community, for the planet."

The spa offers rituals and massages, facials, nail care, sugaring – including chocootherapy using melted chocolate – Eastern facelifts and Indian head massage. Prices start from £16.

55 Warwick Way, [theslowlifeconcept.co.uk](http://theslowlifeconcept.co.uk)



▲ Michelin award-winning chefs Jon Rotheram and Tom Harris are launching a grab-and-go bunshop stall in Victoria's Market Halls development.

Offering a taste of their cult dish, the duo's famous Marksman buns will be served from a flagship stall within the halls.

The menu will feature four different, seasonally changing, savoury steamed buns at £4 each, including Welsh rarebit and mushroom, and beef and barley with horseradish cream, made famous at their Hackney pub The Marksman.

Bunshop is just one of a diverse and eclectic group of food and drink traders who will be spread across three floors of the former Edwardian shopping arcade turned dining destination in Terminus Place. It is set to open on November 12.

▶ Trains to and from Victoria will be disrupted over the Christmas period to allow improvements to the line at Battersea Junction Pier.

Platforms nine to 19 will close from 1.05am on December 23 until 4am on January 2, with most Southern trains rerouted to London Bridge. There will be no Gatwick Express trains, but Southern and Thameslink services for Gatwick will run to and from Blackfriars and London Bridge. A limited bus service will replace local journeys between Clapham Junction, Battersea Park and Victoria.

Revised train times will be available nearer the time via [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)



▶ A club dedicated to “social darts” is opening its third London venue in Victoria this month.

Flight Club has reinvented darts for the 21st century, making it a social occasion akin to bowling. It will launch in Sir Simon Milton Square on November 30, with 18 oches (playing areas), private rooms for parties and an outdoor terrace.

Each oche allows 12 people to play at once, with tournament tech that can connect up to 200 players using dart tracking technology and instant scoring.

The bar will serve craft beers and cocktails, alongside food such as sharing plates and pizza.

More than half a million people have thrown 41 million darts at Flight Club venues to date. Founder and CEO Steve Moore said: “We’re incredibly excited to become part of the Victoria neighbourhood.”

To book, visit [flightclubdarts.com](http://flightclubdarts.com)



Photo: Edward Lloyd

▶ Soprano turned jazz star Natalie Rushdie attracted a stellar, star-studded crowd as she performed two intimate gigs at The Other Palace theatre.

Former Olympic gold medal-winning cyclist Victoria Pendleton and actress Denise Van Outen were among the guests in the studio at the Victoria venue.

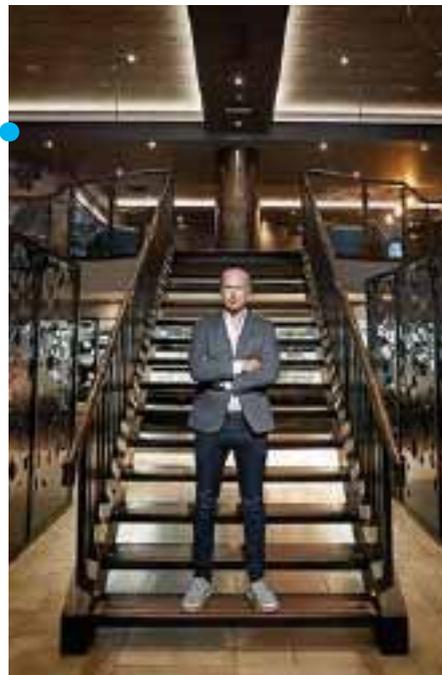
Natalie, the daughter-in-law of celebrated author Salman Rushdie, performed a selection of her favourite jazz songs with her band, including classics from the likes of Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald.

▶ Martin Williams, CEO of M Restaurants, has heaped praise on his team of staff and customers following his nomination for a top award.

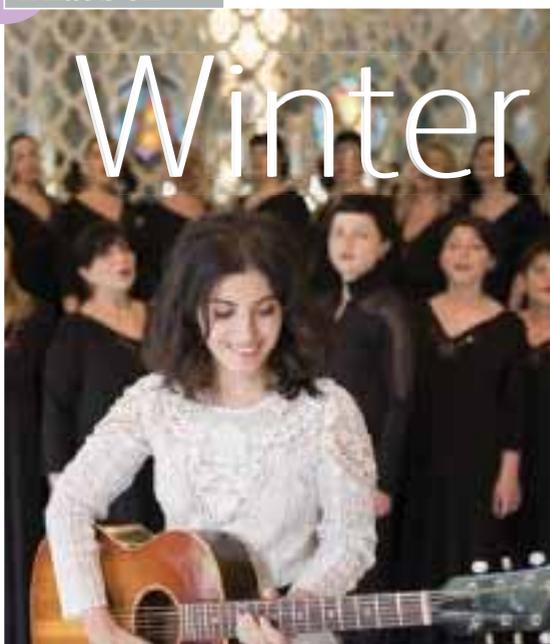
The founder of the dining chain, which includes M on Victoria Street, is up for the *City AM* Entrepreneur of the Year award alongside four other candidates.

Following the announcement, he said: “I am honoured to be nominated in these upcoming awards. The success of M wouldn’t have happened without the amazing team at M and the fantastic support from customers over the last four years.”

The final decision will be made by a panel of independent and prestigious judges from the world of business and will be revealed at a ceremony in the Grange St Paul’s Hotel on November 8.



# Winter events



## KATIE MELUA

Multi-award-winning singer Katie Melua will perform live with the Gori Women's Choir at Central Methodist Hall in December.

Known for hit songs such as *The Closest Thing To Crazy* and *Nine Million Bicycles*, her seventh studio album, *In Winter*, marks a departure from her mainstream success.

Recorded in her native Georgia, it features traditional Ukrainian carols alongside Katie's original material, all recorded with the renowned Gori Women's Choir.

Tickets start at £27.50, available from [katiemelua.com](http://katiemelua.com)

Expect glitz, glamour and seasonal sparkle in Victoria this winter, with events ranging from a snow globe and cracker draw to Gatsby-inspired theatre shows

## CHRISTMAS CHEER



The season of goodwill is just around the corner and there is plenty of festive cheer in Victoria.

This year will see the return of the popular snow globe attraction in Victoria Place shopping centre. The winter wonderland will take centre stage from December 4-6, when it will be open to the public to enjoy and take pictures from 11am to 3pm.

There's also a cracker prize draw in Cardinal Place on December 13 from noon until 2pm, with 1,000 crackers handed out.

Property developer Landsec will host a series of Christmas events in Cardinal Place from December 7-14 as part of a new mountain resort experience, and there's a carol concert at Westminster Cathedral on December 13.

## RUSSIA: ROYALTY AND THE ROMANOVS

Featuring art, personal mementos, photographs and archival documents, this major exhibition explores the relationship between the royal families of Britain and Russia.

Tsar Nicholas II and King George V were first cousins and their histories were interwoven for centuries, until the Tsar and his family were murdered by Bolshevik forces.

The exhibition is at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, from November 9 to April 28. Tickets from £12.



Fabergé silver, amethyst and diamond brooch, circa 1909



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LUNA PARK



### THE GREAT GATSBY

Prepare to be razzle-dazzled as the Roaring Twenties arrive in Victoria.

Old sport it promises to be quite the affair, with two of the area's premier venues paying homage to F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Linnie Reedman's *Looking for Gatsby* picks up where Fitzgerald's novel left off, delving into the supposed secrets the author did not reveal. With an original score – think 1920s jazz meets electro-swing – it puts Gatsby's former lover, Daisy Buchanan, in the spotlight as she confronts the past to help look to the future.

From November 12-14. Tickets start at £10, available from [theotherpalace.co.uk](http://theotherpalace.co.uk)

Meanwhile, those in the mood to party Gatsby-style are cordially invited to St James' Court for an evening of jazz-age hedonism.

The hotel has partnered with Hartshorn – Hook Productions, to stage the UK's longest running immersive Great Gatsby theatre show.

Guests will find themselves at one of Jay's infamous parties surrounded by a host of talented actors and actresses from the West End.

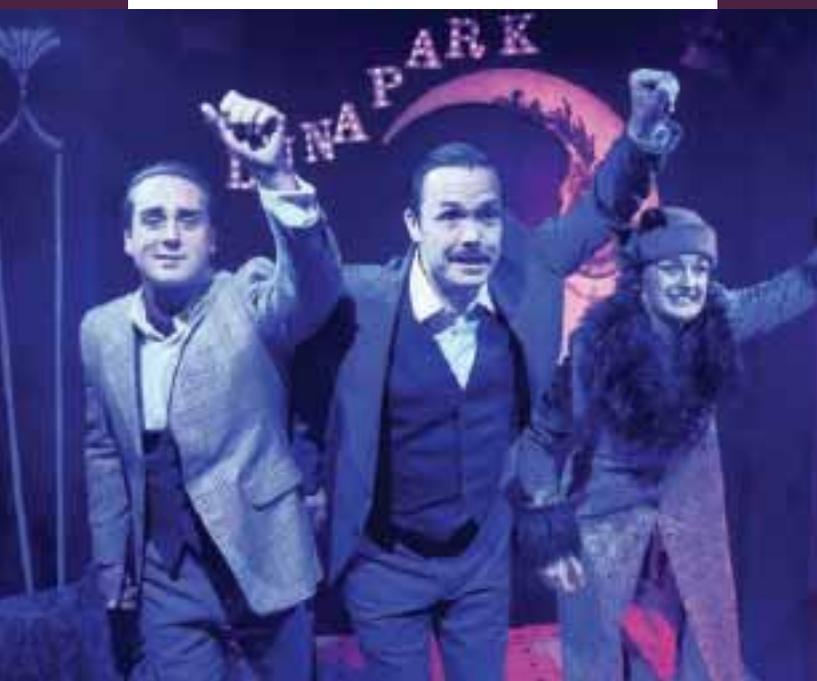
A drinks reception kicks off the party from 7pm in Gatsby's Drugstore bar, before narrator Nick Carraway throws open the doors to Gatsby's mansion.

Dig out your best vintage wear – flapper dresses, braces, you name it – and be prepared to learn some dance routines from the era.

Guests will be able to enjoy a three-course meal staggered throughout the performance, served in the extravagant surroundings of the Taj hotel's banqueting suites.

The Great Gatsby Christmas Experience takes place on December 15 and 18. Tickets cost £105 and large corporate bookings are available. Visit [stjamescourthotel.co.uk/christmas](http://stjamescourthotel.co.uk/christmas) for more information.

Now, inject some Gatsby glitz into your wardrobe with our fabulous fashion finds from Victoria's shops on page 14...



A new arts society that is open to everyone has launched in Victoria with a series of lectures covering all aspects of the arts.

Those behind the new Arts Society Victoria are keen to dispel the idea that they are a high-end group only open to a select few.

Chairman Mary Attwood said one of their main aims is to attract anyone with an interest in the arts and, by holding lectures in the evenings, particularly younger people who live and work in Victoria.

The society, which is run entirely by volunteers, meets on the first Monday of every month at the Grey Coat Hospital school on Greycoat Place. It costs just £50 a year to join, which includes admission to all 10 monthly lectures, plus a £10 joining fee. "I don't think you can do

anything in London for £5 an evening, so it's a pretty good deal," said Mary, an art historian and teacher. "Our lectures will cover all aspects of the arts, not just fine art, so that can be anything from garden design and architecture to music, food and theatre."

One lecture will be led by Antony Penrose, who knew the artist Picasso when he was a child and accidentally bit him during a boisterous game.

"We are keen to encourage younger people to join and that's why we're holding evening lectures so people who work can attend," Mary said. "Victoria is a vibrant, interesting area with a diverse group of people, so we're really hoping we can reach a broader scope of people."

For more information, visit [theartsocietyvictoria.org.uk](http://theartsocietyvictoria.org.uk) or call Mary on 07752 298113.

The Arts Society Victoria holds its first lecture this month – and all are welcome

BY HELEN BLOW



LECTURES LINED UP FOR THE FIRST YEAR

**November 6:** Foreigners in London 1520-1677: the artists who changed the course of British art, with *Leslie Primo*

**December 4:** The Christmas story in medieval art, with *Dr Sally Dormer*

**February 5:** Whitehall – the road to power and glory, with *Peter Lawrence*

**March 5:** The history of Windsor Castle and its royal occupants, 1080 to the present day, with *Oliver Everett*

**April 2:** Now you see it, now you don't – the art

of visual deception, with *Bertie Pearce*

**May 7:** The impact of Handel on 300 years of British culture, with *Peter Medhurst*

**June 11:** On cupboards and in drawers, with *Janusz Karczewski-Slowikowski*

**July 2:** The boy who bit Picasso, with *Antony Penrose*

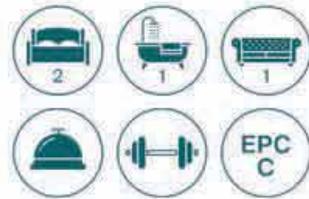
**September 3:** Guerra! Guerra! Music, the arts and war: 1800-2000, with *Daniel Snowman*

**October 1:** Old buildings, fakes and fallacies, with *Philip Venning*

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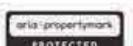
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A play starring former soldiers has captivated audiences. As it opens in Victoria, Jonathan Lewis explains what compelled him to write it

BY ALEX BRIAND



# A military intervention



“**T**here are lots of benefits to having veterans in a rehearsal room. They’re always on time, and they’ll always tidy up.”

I’m sitting with director Jonathan Lewis in the cafe of Victoria’s The Other Palace theatre, where his play *Soldier On* is showing for a month following a storming national tour – a tour which, he tells me, was almost cut short.

“At the end of the London shows, the actor who played Harry did an appeal, with collection buckets, so that it could continue,” he says. “It raised an enormous amount of money, enough to take us to York and Oxford. It was like a fairytale.”

The play has captivated audiences of veterans and non-veterans alike, with ex-military personnel praising its humour and frankness. One described it as “like a therapy session without having to open my mouth”.

Jonathan, who is best known as the playwright of the award-winning *Our Boys*, excelled at two things at school: drama, and the Combined Cadet Force. He won a military scholarship to Sandhurst, and his fortunes seemed set until a back issue put an end to his army career. He went on to study acting at Guildhall, and soon after he landed a role in the cast of 1990s ITV drama *Soldier Soldier*.

His new play, *Soldier On*, is inspired by the stories he workshopped with servicemen and women and their families over five years at the Soldiers’ Arts Academy (SAA), which he describes as “a platform for the veteran community to launch off into the performing arts”.



Inspired by the sincerity he saw in the SAA’s workshops, he came up with an idea: a play within a play, in which the veterans tell their own stories of returning from conflict. The 16-strong cast of *Soldier On* is half actors and half veterans, and according to audiences, it is nigh-on impossible to tell which is which.

At first, Jonathan says, there was “resistance, anxiety... all of those and more. The flip side of that of course is that you get some incredible authenticity”.

In fact, the transition was easier than many might think. “A lot of their skill set transfers directly to what we do”, says Jonathan. “One of the cast, Cassidy Little, told me that the feeling when you’re coming off the back of a chinook into a firefight, is pretty much the same [as stepping on stage]. On stage there aren’t any bullets flying around, but you are in the moment, and you are frightened, and you have to decide how to deal with that.”

He speaks passionately about how the play has helped veterans: “I think the antidote to destruction is creativity – whether it’s making plays or keeping bees or flower-arranging. It’s been very positive. I’ve felt them grow in stature, in confidence, in presence. It’s been empowering for them. I often have them texting me with suggestions of things to add or change. It’s a living thing, this play, it’s growing all the time.”

Plus, rather unexpectedly, it’s hilarious. “People don’t tend to expect a play about these issues to be funny,” says Jonathan. “But that’s how the military works. How you cope with any kind of trauma is that you have to make light of it.”

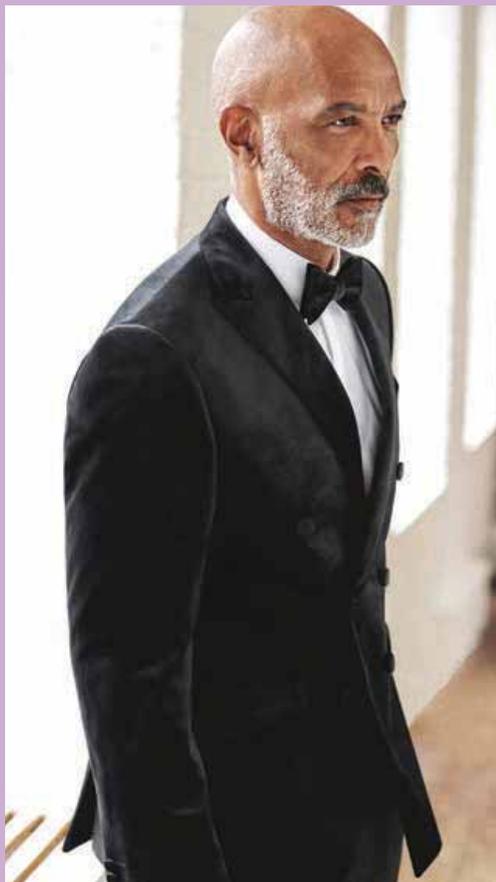
*Soldier On* now finds itself at The Other Palace, for what looks like the end of the current run. Jonathan couldn’t be more pleased: “I can’t believe our luck. It goes up almost like an amphitheatre, which for this play is absolutely perfect. You can create a cauldron-like intensity when it’s full.”

Jonathan has no shortage of ambition for *Soldier On* – a musical, a film, international versions and the West End are all mentioned. But outside of it all, it’s the audience that matters most: “You have to entertain people, first and foremost.”

*Soldier On* is at The Other Palace theatre until November 24. Tickets from £35. [theotherpalace.co.uk](http://theotherpalace.co.uk)



# Party dressing



## M&S

Any outfit that starts and ends with a velvet black bow tie, £12.50, and fitted black blazer, £89, is a guaranteed party pleaser.

**CARDINAL PLACE**

## Zara

To top off any 1920s look, there's got to be a fedora, and this one in black felt from Zara, £25.99, fits the bill perfectly.

**82 VICTORIA STREET**



## Turner & Sanderson

The brace really came into its own in the 1920s and this deep red pair from Turner & Sanderson, £16, made of stretch cotton with silver-toned hardware will put the Gatsby into your garb.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,  
101 VICTORIA STREET**



## Next

The monk shoe reached the height of its popularity in the 1920s, but it appears to be making a resurgence. This pair, £60, in tan leather, is versatile enough for wearing to an evening party with a suit, to work or on the weekends.

**VICTORIA PLACE, 111  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD**



You never know when Gatsby might make that phone call – so get ready

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS

## WOMEN

### Dorothy Perkins

The metallic gold geometric clutch, £22, with its unmistakable Art Deco design is what the decade was known for.

**VICTORIA PLACE,  
115 BUCKINGHAM  
PALACE ROAD**



### Frock and Frill

This V-neck beaded flapper dress, £125, will transport you to the Roaring Twenties with a swish of its beaded tassels.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,  
101 VICTORIA STREET**

### Dune London

The Mazzure sandals, £95, with their T-bar shape, flattering heels and pearl design, encapsulate the 1920s in a pair of shoes.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,  
101 VICTORIA STREET**



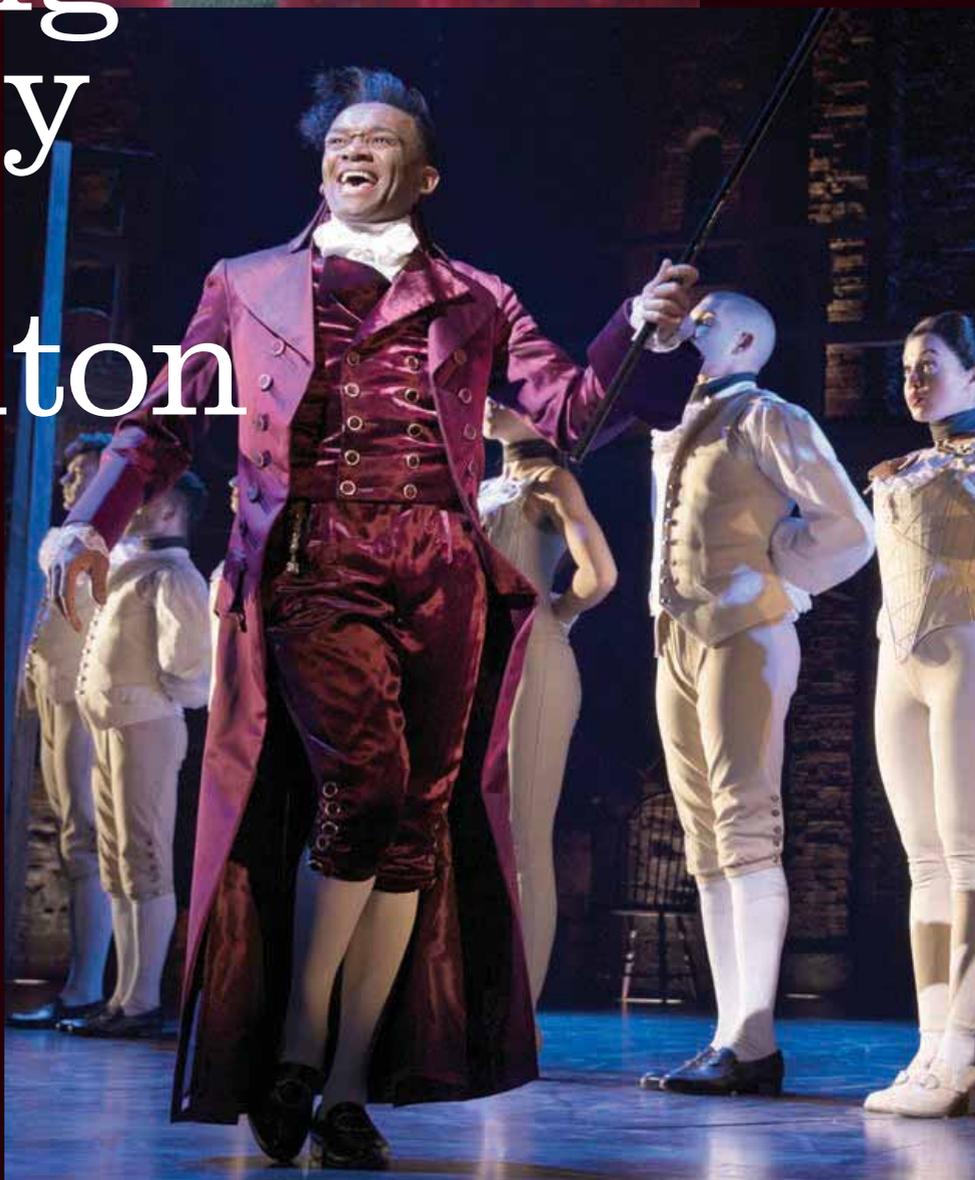
### Accessorize

These Nile crystal combs, £12, will jazz up an up-do in no time.

**UNIT 32, VICTORIA  
STATION**



# Making history with Hamilton



Theatre impresario Cameron Mackintosh tells the extraordinary story of how he brought smash-hit musical *Hamilton* to the UK

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



When Cameron Mackintosh first heard about *Hamilton*, the musical was still in preview in New York; President Obama hadn't yet jokingly laid claim to its discovery, creator Lin-Manuel Miranda hadn't yet become a household name and its comet-like success was still to blaze its trail across the 52 states whose very history it articulates.

As it was, Cameron tucked into lunch that day just a stone's throw away from the Victoria Palace Theatre with little idea how his own association with the musical would unravel.

"I'd heard about this hip hop musical, and in fact Andrew [Lloyd Webber] was the first person I knew who'd actually seen it and told me how wonderful it was. We were having lunch in Victoria so it was obviously predestined for the show to land in Victoria, though I didn't realise it at the time," he laughs.

Written by theatre visionary Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* tells the story of America's forgotten founding father Alexander Hamilton through rap and hip hop. It went on to win a staggering 11 Tony awards, Grammys and a Pulitzer prize.

Fast forward to December 2017, when the doors of the Victoria Palace were opened amid unprecedented fervour and anticipation after an unavoidable two-week delay. Tickets to see the phenomenon that is *Hamilton* were the hottest in town, and Cameron had yet again made musical theatre history.

It has, of course, become something of a habit for the theatre impresario extraordinaire, a man whose half-century-plus experience of theatre producing is underpinned with a near-divining-stick instinct for knowing what the public wants to experience at the theatre. With record-breaking runs of shows such as *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver!*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*, Cameron has amassed a fortune, estimated at more than £1 billion, enabling him to purchase and refurbish a clutch of London's historic theatres (the ninth is in the pipeline) including the Victoria Palace.

Yet when he changed his Big Apple travel plans after his friend and fellow producer Jeffrey Seller also urged him to see *Hamilton* while it was still in preview, he still had little inkling of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity he would encounter.

"I just went over really as a friend and as someone who loves musicals, but seeing something that original happens rarely in one's

lifetime and I was blown away. Then they asked me afterwards, did I think it would work in London? I said, 'I'm sure it will work in London'. I didn't know if it would be the sensation it would be in New York, one can never know with these things, but as far as I was concerned it was one of the best shows I'd ever seen in my life and that's all that matters.

"Then to my surprise – because I really did think they were just asking my advice as to whether it could work in London – they asked me if I would do it with them, and I went, 'God, I would be flattered and honoured', as I am. I've had a wonderful time doing the show and I think we're all completely thrilled with how brilliant a British cast we were able to find because you know, on the face of it, it seemed a completely American musical.

"Everyone now realises it's far beyond that because Lin's amazing lyrics tell such a wonderful story," he says, adding: "Everyone has got the complete nuance of all the storytelling. The great delight when you bring a show from another world like that is to see the material speaks to the British audience entirely as if it had never been done anywhere else. They're not going to see it because it's American, they're going to [see] it because they love the story, love this music and they're blown away by the whole production. Audiences are coming again and again from all ages – it really touches a nerve right across the board and that's very, very rare.

"Lin has delineated and brought to life wonderful historical characters in a very contemporary way. Only Lin could have written *Hamilton*, and no matter what else he does in his life, this will always be one of the supreme achievements. How rare it is that one man can write [the] book, music and lyrics, never mind star in the part in the first place, but he was perfect casting for it."

Clearly, theatre producing is still a labour of love for Cameron, who says he decided on his career path on his eighth birthday when he precociously introduced himself to composer Julian Slade during a production of *Salad Days*.

"I'm very lucky to have been the person who for whatever reason has liked the material. And it is the material at the end of the day. I mean, I'm

"As far as I was concerned, it was one of the best shows I'd ever seen in my life"



not a bad producer and I do obviously have an instinct the public like, but it's because I've been inspired to want to produce some extraordinarily different material. The one thing that unites all my shows is that they have amazing and unusual unique material that they've grown up from."

Cameron has a love of architecture, and he is immensely proud of the new lease of life he has been able to breathe into some of London's much-loved historic theatres: "I've loved not only bringing them back to their old splendour but also making them more splendid than when they opened with modern conveniences."

But he concedes that the refurbishment of the Victoria Palace Theatre was far from a smooth process, and a mammoth undertaking: "It nearly put an end to me last year, it was absolutely exhausting," he says. "I bought the theatre long before I'd ever heard of *Hamilton*, but of course when you buy any old building, when you dig

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## Regency Street, Westminster SW1



- Porter
- Communal garden
- Regency Street conservation area
- Approximately 763 sq ft

*A beautiful apartment situated on the third floor of a prestigious red brick mansion block.*

Guide price **£750,000**

Leasehold; approximately 93 years remaining

[robert.oatley@knightfrank.com](mailto:robert.oatley@knightfrank.com)

020 3866 2971



## Sussex Street, Pimlico SW1



- Outside space
- Self-contained apartment
- Pimlico conservation area
- Approximately 3,381 sq ft

*A generously proportioned period townhouse, arranged across five floors.*

Guide price **£4,450,000**

Freehold

[robert.oatley@knightfrank.com](mailto:robert.oatley@knightfrank.com)

020 3866 2971



into the ground or into the fabric, that's when you find the trouble.

"Also it had to be done in a certain time because of the huge rebuild of Victoria around there, so it was literally a once in a hundred years opportunity where you didn't have any adjacent buildings so you could actually do the work. By the time work started, *Hamilton* had happened and the producers had decided that this was the best theatre for it in London irrespective of whether I owned it or not, that's where they wanted to do it, so we took a gambling risk that has certainly paid off, but it was touch and go."

Somewhat ironically, given his role in the history relevant to *Hamilton*, it was the discovery of 200-year-old drainage from when George III acquired Buckingham Palace that wrought havoc on the theatre's refurbishment.

"It was under a third of the theatre and the complication that caused was astronomic. I had a project that was going to cost £35 million, a lot of money, which ended up costing over £60 million to do. It does look like I've spent the money on it! But I can tell you it was touch and go and we're still finishing off bits of it."

Known for his forensic attention to detail, unforeseen health issues affecting key members of his team left Cameron increasingly involved in ensuring his original vision was achieved.

**"Hamilton really touches a nerve right across the board and that's very, very rare"**

"VP was by far the biggest project I've ever done in my life. I had to be there most days and nights, well, not all nights but it was an exhausting four or five months. It was nerve-racking. At one point we were having 400 people a day there to try and meet the deadline.

"Of course the show delivers, but the fact that we ended up only going back by two weeks I think is one of the most miraculous things that has ever happened in the history of the theatre."

But all's well that ends well. *Hamilton* swept the board at the Olivier awards, and it remains the hottest ticket in town, with Cameron's ticketless ticket system scuppering the touts.

"After over 50 years at it I'm thrilled that most of my musicals are still going as fresh as a daisy," he says. "It has been an added bonus to be co-opted onto the next musical sensation around the world."

[hamiltonmusical.com](http://hamiltonmusical.com)

# LEASEHOLD IN THE FIRING LINE AGAIN

Foreign buyers of London homes are mystified by leasehold tenure, and will often refuse to buy if the lease is not very long and ideally carries with it a share of the freehold. Unsurprisingly, therefore, leasehold continues to court controversy and excites strong opinions across the political divide. England and Wales are virtually the only nations in the world to operate the leasehold system, which is a relic of Empire – every other former colony has either abolished it or is well on the way to doing so.

The Government already intends to ban ground rents on new build houses; now the Law Commission has announced a consultation on a range of measures which would, if adopted, transform the rights of long leaseholders to extend their leases or obtain their freeholds (collectively in the case of blocks). The Commission's remit is to improve the position for leaseholders without contravening human rights legislation, and indeed many of the measures are designed to create consistent qualification criteria and processes for houses and flats and to reduce the scope for valuation argument. How many of the proposals will be adopted following the consultation period, which ends on 20 November, will not be known until late 2019, and no-one knows when parliamentary time may then be found to bring them into force.

John Stephenson, Head of Enfranchisement at Bircham Dyson Bell, said 'So many leaseholders of houses and flats will be affected by these proposals, and the Law Commission is expecting a big response; I am already getting queries from owners about the effect and likely timing of the changes'. Hema Anand, Head of Residential Property at Bircham Dyson Bell, added 'Not only sellers and buyers, but agents too, will need to be up to date with these proposals, as they will affect both timing of sales and possibly pricing too'.

For a summary of the Law Commission's proposals and how to respond go to [www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/leasehold-enfranchisement](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/leasehold-enfranchisement); and look for the 'Summary' document.



**BIRCHAM DYSON BELL**

By Hema Anand and John Stephenson

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FIND US ON  



## New Look

Since when is a reindeer reserved solely for Christmas? Brighten up a kitchen with these reindeer salt and pepper pots, £6.99.

**VICTORIA PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE**



# Gifts: stocking fillers

These covetable Christmas gifts from Victoria's shops are sure to go down a treat with friends and family

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS



## Byredo

The Rose rinse-free hand wash, £25, with a scent of rose, pink pepper, raspberry, magnolia, musk and patchouli is simply irresistible.

**4 CATHEDRAL WALK, SPACE NK, CARDINAL PLACE**

## Linea

Add a splash of colour to anyone's bed or sofa with the Jacob cushion, £15, printed in lines of vibrant asymmetrical shapes.

**HOUSE OF FRASER, 101 VICTORIA STREET**



## Kiko Milano

The water eyeshadow, £8.90, will create the perfect Christmas glow. The clever powder can be used wet or dry for either a high-coverage creamy effect or a light touch of shimmer.

**135 VICTORIA STREET**



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**ODDBINS,  
2 DENBIGH STREET**



# Gifts: food & drink

## Hotel Chocolat

The grand advent calendar, £74, will be enough to give any family the festive feeling, with a selection of treats including drinking chocolate, salted caramel puddles and even cocoa gin.

**133 VICTORIA STREET**



## Nespresso

A collaboration with interior designer India Mahdavi, this festive season Nespresso is offering a limited edition collection of capsules and accessories, with flavours of Parisian patisserie including macarons, madeleines and praline, at £4.10 for 10.

**94 VICTORIA STREET**

## Oliver Bonas

Oliver Bonas never fails to deliver on creating pieces to uplift any home at Christmas, and this Tarina collection teacup set, £30 to £48, is no different.

**UNIT 49, VICTORIA ISLAND**



# Get party confident ★ *this* season **with Skinsmiths**

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## Lulu Guinness

Youngsters and adults alike will be unable to resist this blue glitter pouchette, £95, covered in blue and pink glitter. It can keep anything safe, from makeup to money.

**HOUSE OF FRASER,  
101 VICTORIA STREET**

# Gifts: difficult to buy for



## Ruark

The new Audio R1, £220, in limited edition burnt saffron, features a DAB radio and bluetooth speaker system, USB port and easy-to-use clock and alarm functions.

**HIFI CONFIDENTIAL,  
32 BUCKINGHAM  
PALACE ROAD**

## Raymond Weil

For its music icons series, Raymond Weil has launched the freelancer AC/DC limited edition, £1,795 – a tribute to the Australian rock and roll legends. It's an ideal gift for any hardcore rocker.

**GOLDSMITHS, 90 VICTORIA  
STREET**



## Les Senteurs

There are many ways to say I love you, but let the four elements – earth, air, fire and water – do it for you with Tom Dixon's candle set, £100.

**71 ELIZABETH STREET**



## From Dance Hall to Market Hall: MARKET HALLS LAUNCH IN VICTORIA

THIS AUTUMN, MARKET HALLS WILL BE TRANSFORMING THE ABANDONED ARCADED BAYS OF VICTORIA'S TERMINUS PLACE INTO A SUSTAINABLE NEW DESTINATION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS, WORKERS, COMMUTERS AND VISITORS TO THE CITY.

Since 1909, the space has housed an Edwardian shopping arcade, a restaurant, and more recently the super-club, Pacha. When the doors reopen in early November, Market Hall Victoria will showcase a diverse and eclectic offering of food and drink across three floors with eleven kitchens, a coffee shop, and three bars championing independent British-made beers, spirits and soft drinks. Market Halls will bring together some of the most-loved restaurants from across the capital including BaoziInn, Monty's Deli, Flank, Squirrel and Kerbisher & Malt, whilst introducing exciting new offerings from some of London's biggest hitters – Koya Ko by Koya, Gopal's Corner by Roti King, Super Tacos from Breddos, Nonna Tonda from Fat Tony's and bunshop from The Marksman. Joining these kitchens will be some popular faces from Market Hall Fulham, Fanny's Kebabs and Press Coffee.

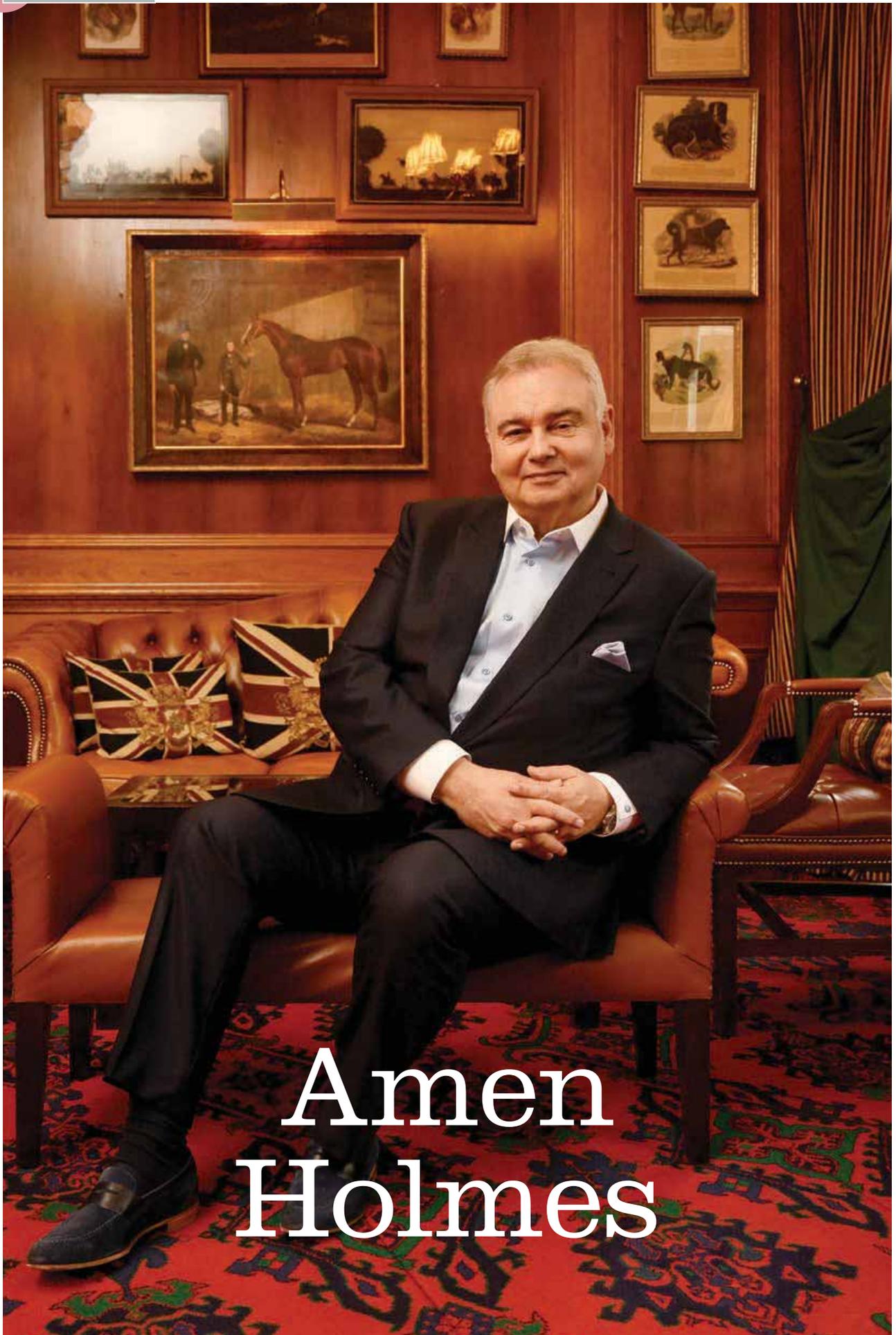
*"Victoria is a reinvigorated and dynamic district that is currently experiencing massive regeneration. We found a site in the heart of Victoria that has been derelict for years, after we restore the building back to its former glory, we look forward to bringing something new and exciting to the area."*

*"Victoria has an interesting mix of customers, we expect it to change throughout the day and week. We're anticipating a combination of local residents and workers during the daytime, with commuters figuring heavily before and after work (we'll provide the perfect place to sit out any transport delays) alongside tourists and theatregoers during the early evenings and especially at the weekends."*

Simon Anderson, Chief Operating Officer

[www.markethalls.co.uk/market/victoria](http://www.markethalls.co.uk/market/victoria)  
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3 BARS  
11 KITCHENS  
1 COFFEE SHOP



Eamonn Holmes photographed by Andy Lowe exclusively for *Victoria* magazine at The Chesterfield Mayfair hotel

**H**e exudes more warmth than an Aga in a snowdrift, the Belfast burr and Blarney-kiss charm now so familiar that millions of us across the UK can confess to having woken up with Eamonn Holmes at some point during his remarkable career in television broadcasting.

It is now 38 years since he landed his first job presenting on Ulster TV at just 19 years old. Working as a farming reporter, Eamonn was asked to step into the breach when the producer and presenter had a studio bust-up.

He recalls: "The producer shouts at him, 'You're fired!' and I'm there at 19 years of age, watching this. Then he says, 'Young Holmes, have you got a shirt and tie?' So I said, 'Yes Mr Fitzpatrick', and he says, 'Right, go and put them on because you're presenting this programme.' So that was my introduction to television presenting. I read the autocue, and my heart was beating so fast that I couldn't hear a word I was saying."

Eamonn went on to present news, sport and then eventually early morning television for a record-breaking, albeit somewhat sleep deprived, 26 years. Honoured this summer with an OBE for services to broadcasting, it's been an impressive career trajectory, encompassing hard news journalism alongside topical programmes such as *This Morning* with his wife Ruth Langsford.

"I'm very grounded, I know what I do well," he says. "I can't play a musical instrument, I can't speak a foreign language, I can't cook, I can't dance, I'm pretty useless overall. I'm as good as it gets when it comes to being a live presenter on TV and that's about it really."

"If I look back at my diary and the pace of it, who I meet, what I do, sometimes I think maybe I do too much to actually appreciate it, but I was in Buckingham Palace on Wednesday night for about three hours and I hosted a royal wedding on Friday."

Growing up in Belfast in dark times played a key role in Eamonn's career choice. "I had a very normal childhood until I was eight, and then the Troubles happened, and we knew all about it."

He recalls the first time his school bus was hijacked. "This guy came on the bus in a balaclava and two others came up behind him and he said, 'We're commandeering this bus on behalf of the provisional IRA, everybody out'

and they started sprinkling the bus with petrol, so we all ran out and somebody lit a petrol bomb and threw it, and the bus burned. I had about a mile left to go to school, so I ran that mile. The bell had gone for class, and our headmaster was stood there reading his morning matins, and I'm running up what seems the longest driveway in the world, and he looks at me and says, 'Why are you late Holmes?' So I told him, panting, what had happened, expecting him to say, 'That's awful, come into the office, have a cup of tea'. But he just said, 'Detention!'

"His attitude was that our school should be an oasis outside the Troubles. We were surrounded by areas that were very volatile. You'd be at lessons, and you'd hear bombs, you'd see smoke plumes going into the sky and see burning going on around you, but within our college they closed the front gates and it was an oasis."

I mention the celebration now made of Irish contributions in the Birmingham Irish Association's documentary *We Built This City*.

"I tell you this, even this morning when I walked through this hotel [The Chesterfield Mayfair] I'm thinking this is pretty classy, right, and it does cross my mind, I'm maybe the second, if not the first generation of Irish migrants who actually frequent places like this as opposed to work in them, that is the difference. Before me, my parents' generation all would have either built these places or serviced these places, and that sense of humility never really leaves me."

Eamonn is also passionate about the charity Kids For Kids, which supports families suffering from famine and hardship in Sudan by loaning them goats. As patron, he will host the charity's annual candlelit Christmas carol concert.

"If me getting my photo taken for a glossy magazine, or getting to chat or host a carol concert, if that helps them get another hundred goats, how amazing would that be for those families? And that's a very simple thing for an otherwise useless man to do, so if that can be of use I'll be so proud of that, you know."

**Eamonn will host this year's Christmas carol concert in aid of Kids For Kids at St Peter's Church in Eaton Square on November 29. Tickets from £15-32. Visit [kidsforkids.org.uk](http://kidsforkids.org.uk)**

**Broadcaster  
Eamonn Holmes on  
TV bust-ups, living through  
the Troubles and the charity  
close to his heart**

**BY CORRIE  
BOND-FRENCH**

Four fitness classes in Victoria leave our writer exhausted and exhilarated in equal measure

BY MAX CHAMBERS

# Fighting fit

**W**ho are all these lycra-clad, sweat-drenched, shiny, happy, beautiful people we see wandering around Victoria these days? Where do they come from? How can I be more like them? What Faustian pact must I sign to glisten and glow like the gods and goddesses of SW1?

I get an anonymous tip that Victoria's newest fitness studios may be the cause of the escalating smugness. As a local worker, I decide to dust down my trainers and sign up for a class at four of the best.

## 1REBEL

First up I head to 1Rebel, a new spinning class in the Nova complex. Here, 45 minutes of high-octane, loud and energising cycling await around 30 "rebels" – complete with pyrotechnics, spiritual cooldowns and perfectly chilled flannels in the changing room.

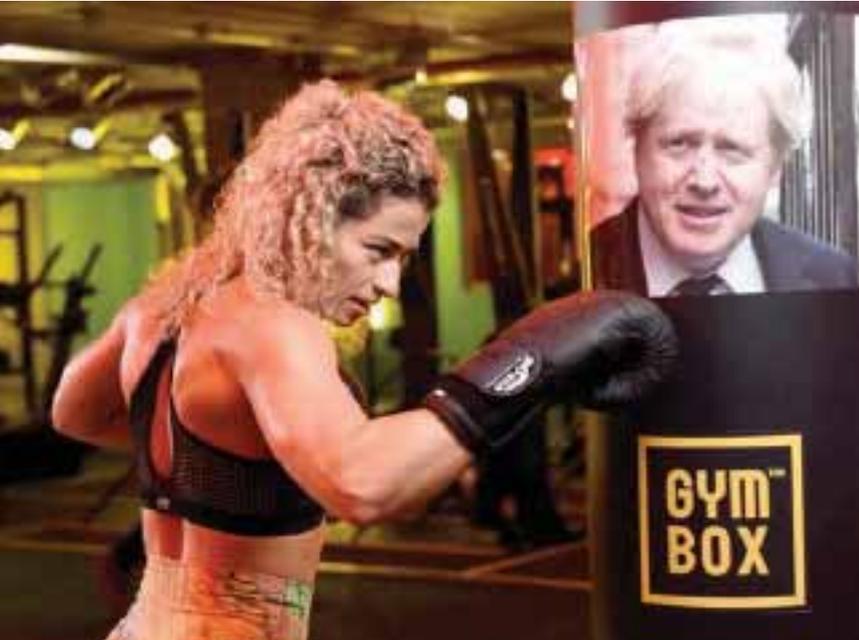
If you like spinning, you'll love 1Rebel. And if you've never tried it, this is a great place to start. The instructors are engaging and clearly command loyal followings (ours knows a lot of the rebels by name).

I burn 680 calories in 45 minutes, and admittedly I could have worked harder. The classes would be even better with personalised performance data so you can make sure to push yourself to the limit. But it's hard to be too critical: a great session, friendly staff, spotless changing rooms, free water, towels and spinning shoes, and you can be in and out in your lunch hour. What more could you want?

**7a Allington Street**

## GYMBOX

I used to work for David Cameron in 10 Downing Street, and lost my job along with him after the referendum. So, when Gymbox started offering a class called “Brefit” – the chance to take out all of your frustrations about Brexit – it seemed tailor-made.



Brefit consists of a series of high-intensity exercises that are specially aimed at maximising frustration release. According to Gymbox’s website, the classes “put our politicians in the firing line by challenging gym-goers to unload their Brexit anger (or anything else for that matter)”.

Sure enough, the session offers half an hour of high-intensity training in 45-second sequences – heavy squats, lunges, fast rows and rides – all while looking at a cardboard cut-out of Jacob Rees-Mogg.

Then I get to punch a bag with Boris Johnson’s face on it, and throw a 20kg ball at Jeremy Corbyn’s head. Now this is what I call motivation.

I burn 440 calories in 30 minutes. My anger is residing. My mental health improved. Catharsis is delivered. I could have carried on all afternoon.

**123 Victoria Street**

## MANOR

Next up is a boxing “bags” class at Manor, which is just around the corner from Victoria Station.

Billed as a “no gimmicks” studio, the serious, stripped-down approach is definitely reflected in the class and the clientele, as well as the facilities. This is a hard workout, for serious trainers.

I am paired with a Liverpoolian who has been boxing for three years, and is quite forgiving (at least at first) about my terrible footwork and lack of rhythm.

The workout is pretty punishing for a first timer, and comes complete with vigorous instructor Chris, who will pull you up fast for taking a rest or getting things wrong – exactly what I need to push myself.

It feels a bit like a dance lesson at first (helping to explain why I suddenly feel so self-conscious) – and then you combine the footwork with hitting a bag, or your partner’s gloves. In between, there are press-ups, burpees and shadowboxing.



Burning around 920 calories in a 50-minute class – I am spent by the time we warm down – it’s a hardcore as well as a full-body workout. The pain the next day lets me know that it worked muscles I don’t normally exercise – the sign of a really great session.

However, the changing rooms and showers could be fancier and I would be more inclined to return if the minimalist approach of the class didn’t translate to the whole experience of the gym. But the class is full, and clearly the clientele are buying into the “anti-brand” branding.

**84 Eccleston Square**

## BARRY'S BOOTCAMP

In the newly redeveloped Eccleston Yards is an import from LA that instantly becomes one of the most fun HIIT (high intensity interval training) workouts I've had in years.

Roughly 20 people running on military training treadmills; another 20 doing floor exercises. Three alternating rounds of each – every one more brutal than the last – and each day's classes focused on a different region of the body. Today is "butt and legs" day, with our instructor, Izy, providing just the right balance of instruction and encouragement.

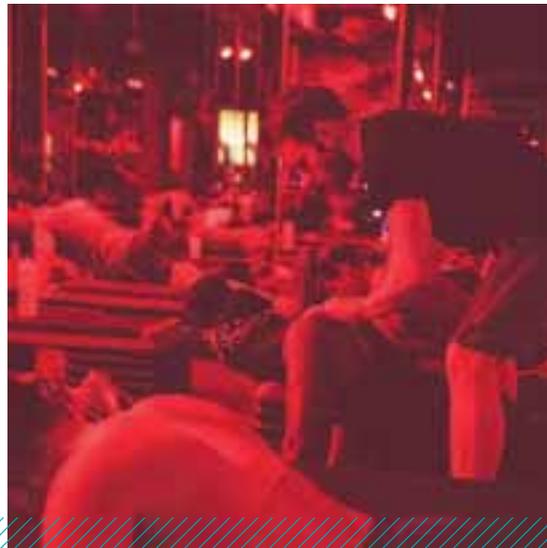
Barry's offers a brilliant workout, especially for those who want to build fitness fast. No breaks between running and floor periods, all active recovery, and the chance to really push yourself to the limit. It's best not to go off too hard too early on the treadmill, but if you challenge yourself on the hill runs and the fast sprints, you'll achieve the perfect balance between exhilaration and exhaustion.

The music choices are strong, the lighting dark (and flattering), and the recovery drinks from the shake bar are tasty. With enough showers not to be waiting around, nice toiletries – there is a

promotional partnership with brand Beckham – and plenty of gym and shower towels, there is a lot to like.

My Apple watch reckons I burnt 780 calories in a 60-minute class. Not bad going at all. And while at £20 a pop (unless you buy classes in bulk) Barry's is not cheap, it's the kind of class you could add to your exercise regime once a week or a few times a month, and still see real impact.

### 16 Eccleston Yards





Escape the pressures of modern life with a specialist treatment at this boutique salon where a sense of calm reigns

# The essence of time

**T**ucked away in the heart of Pimlico is a luxury boutique salon with an exquisite eye for excellence.

Founded by Angela and Rachael Burnett, the pair opened the doors to Moreton Place Beauty & Wellbeing in 2016.

Located on Moreton Street, the space features a nail bar, four treatment rooms and a secluded garden.

Excitingly, in the spring, the salon will be offering outdoor facials in the garden which is adorned with shrubs and plants to create a harmonious and relaxing natural space.

The salon's speciality is facial treatments, working with brands such as Natura Bissé, Environ, CACI, Dermalogica and Germaine de Capuccini.

The facials are led by Gillian, with over 25 years experience in the realm of beauty, having worked for Chanel, Liz Earle, Sisley and Carita.

With an infectious passion for beauty, Gillian understands the importance of looking after the skin both on the inside and the outside.

Reflexology is carried out by Harriet, also a specialist in Indian head massage, both offered at the salon alongside other massage treatments, while Rebecca is the salon's aromatherapist.



Waxing, threading, nails and brows are also offered to meticulous standards, including using new wax sticks for every application and triple sterilised beauty tools.

Angela says: "At Moreton Place, we prefer not to rush our clients and therefore appointments are not booked back-to-back which also allows our therapists to focus and re-energise, ready for their next client. "Also, if we feel someone should not have a specific treatment, we will advise accordingly; for us it is quality not quantity."

Each person who walks through the door is treated to a selection of drinks from the complimentary drinks menu that includes everything from herbal teas such a rose to coffee, Crémant and wine.

Angela adds: "The best compliment we are given is that Moreton Place Beauty & Wellbeing is a place of calm where the results speak for themselves."

**40 Moreton Street, Pimlico.**  
**moretonplace.co.uk 020 7821 1020**

**MORETON PLACE**  
BEAUTY AND WELLBEING

Former politician Jonathan Aitken, who spent seven months in prison for perjury, on how he became a man of the cloth

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

# Prison to prayer

**O**n Christmas Day, the majority of us will be among family and friends, marking another year with festive traditions, gifts under the tree, turkey in the oven and good cheer. This year, 18 years after the doors of Belmarsh prison clanged shut behind him, former politician Jonathan Aitken will spend Christmas Day back in prison, an occasion he fully expects will be a “bittersweet experience”.

A former Tory minister, infamously jailed for his hubristic perjury in 1999, Jonathan was ordained as a deacon in the summer, and now works both as an unpaid prison chaplain, visiting prisoners inside London’s prisons every week, and at St Matthew’s in Westminster, where he delivers sermons and officiates at hatches, matches and dispatches.

We meet in the drawing room at St Matthew’s, within the sound, until recently, of the chimes of Big Ben. Father Jonathan, as he is now known, still walks the same streets of his former life in power, but has followed a very different path.

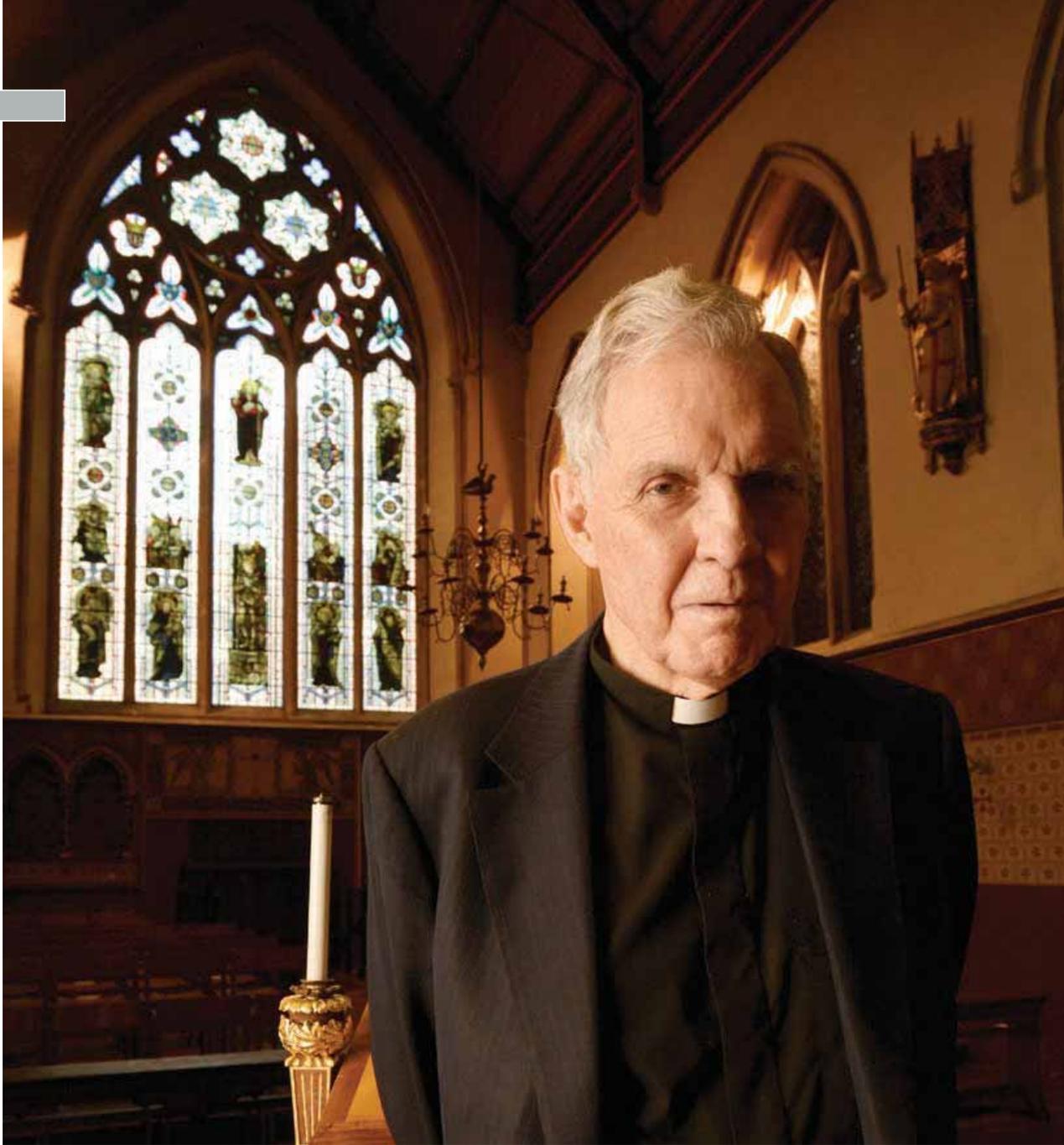
As he and his close friend and mentor, St Matthew’s vicar Father Philip Chester, warmly try to pinpoint the exact moment they met – plumping for 30 years ago – it is clear that Jonathan’s recent ordination has been much-welcomed by the congregation at the local church. But it was not an easy decision.

“I have been for a long time a rather reluctant clergyman,” Jonathan says. “I did my studies at Wycliffe Hall at Oxford 18 years ago – I joked that I went to the one place in Britain with more uncomfortable beds and worse food than prison. I spent two very happy years there but I didn’t feel I was right to be an ordained vicar.

“It’s only about 18 months ago that I started to get woken up in the night by a serious murmur saying, ‘I want you to be ordained’ and I more or less said politely, ‘Please God, no, I’m too old, I’m not properly up to it or worthy of it’, but the serious call of God is too strong to resist.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been more happy or fulfilled in my life as I have been since being ordained. It’s testing but worthwhile,”

**“I went through a phase that I call defeat, disgrace, divorce, bankruptcy and jail, and that’s a pretty good royal flush of crises”**



he says, conceding that his prison chaplaincy is challenging: “It’s not your tranquil Church of England cucumber sandwiches on the lawn, country vicarage. It is the rough end. I go to Pentonville prison regularly on duty and our day usually starts with overnight reports on who’s tried to commit suicide, who’s self-harmed.

“Having been a prisoner myself I’m very much at home in a prison, I understand how it works, I get on with the officers and get on with the prisoners and it’s a much-needed ministry. I can say I’ve been there and know what it’s like, and then they sit up and take notice.”

Jonathan can still vividly remember his first night in a cell. “I got into that cell and my first reaction was, well, it was a tough day, possibly the worst day of my life, but I was expecting it. I’d pleaded completely guilty so it wasn’t a shock, and I hoped now I’d just be able to get my head down and get a good night’s sleep.

“But in Belmarsh there was something which needless to say I had not encountered and wasn’t expecting, which was doing a ‘quizzzy’ – shouting questions from one to another. They do it every night in Belmarsh, and they’re usually high as kites on drugs and I didn’t know that either. Of course I was in the news, every news bulletin was saying ‘Aitken jailed, going to Belmarsh’ and suddenly this very

raucous, very obscene quizzing started, and the gist of it was, 'Do we know that 'effing 'effing Aitken is now here in Belmarsh? What are we going to do to him tomorrow, 'effing 'effing Aitken?' And then all kinds of very imaginative, crude suggestions about what they would do to various portions of my anatomy, just to show me what they thought of 'effing 'effing Tory cabinet ministers.

"I make light of it now but at the time I was really shocked by the sort of venom and viciousness. Of course I had no idea at all that these guys were high as kites, secondly I didn't know that of course they didn't mean it. The next night they went on about an officer or something and what they were going to do to him. It was just, in Belmarsh, a way of letting off steam in the evening. But I was pretty terrified."

But despite his situation, Jonathan found much to be positive about in prison. "Of course, I wish that I had not had my tremendous failings of character and morals and not told a lie in the libel case, and I wish I had not gone to prison, but once it had happened, despite a lot of anguish and agony along the road, I had a pretty good and very interesting journey. I had to go through prison, which was not that tough in the sense that everyone said I'd get beaten up and all that sort of stuff, but not a bit of it. The guys were very friendly.

"I did know how to handle myself because I certainly wasn't giving myself any airs or graces, not at all, I was just going with the flow of the thing and actually I found there was a lot to like. There was masses of humour, I had to learn a completely new language, rhyming slang, I got to know people I would never have got to know when I was at cabinet level, I met some very interesting and very kind people. I always had, which was not fashionable for a prisoner, a lot of time for the officers, who I thought were rather special people. They get rather a lot of bad press but in my view they had one of the most interesting jobs in Britain, coping with impossible situations most days."

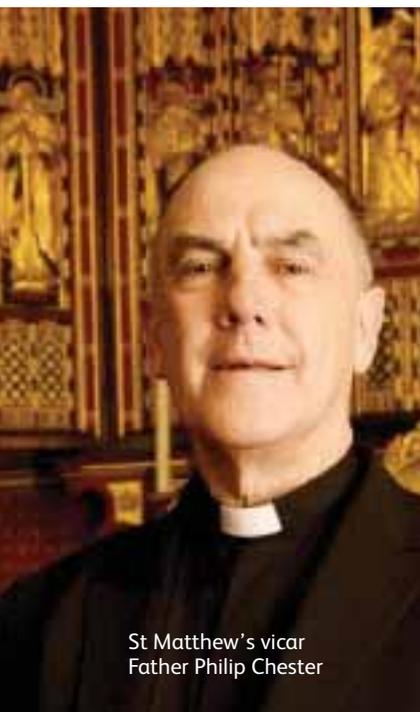
Jonathan soon realised he could help other prisoners and be useful. "I gained a lot," he says. "I was very careful and cautious and very polite, and I had a trade which was writing letters and reading letters for the very high percentage of prisoners who can't write a very good letter, so the word gets around that a fellow prisoner is quite a decent bloke and he's writing letters and reading our letters to us."

He still sees friends he made inside, including Noel "Razor" Smith, who now works on the prison newspaper *Inside Time*. Razor and other former prisoners attended his ordination party this summer.

Jonathan is also happy to mingle with his former political colleagues. "The last thing I think of myself as is as a politician, but of course you don't spend 24 years of your life in the Houses of Parliament without enjoying it or without making friendships.

"Life is full of surprises, on the whole. I went through a phase that I call defeat, disgrace, divorce, bankruptcy and jail, and that's a pretty good royal flush of crises by any standard. I think I've got better at containing my ego, not entirely successfully. I think when you're something like defence secretary which I was, you go everywhere in an aeroplane and you really do think you walk on water, and now I know someone else walks on water."

"I got to know people [in prison] I would never have got to know when I was at cabinet level. I met some very interesting and very kind people"



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# Festive feasts

Christmas is looming, but what are you planning to eat and drink? Reyhaan Day goes on the hunt for tips, tricks and recommendations from Victoria's finest

## THE ENGLISH GRILL AT THE RUBENS AT THE PALACE

### Ben Kelliher, executive chef

Christmas is not complete without turkey and all the trimmings. When I prepare Christmas lunch – either for my family or for our guests at The Rubens – I buy turkey crowns and legs. As the meat from the crown and legs are so different, you need to prepare and cook them separately.

The stuffing I make normally consists of cranberries, chestnut, sausage and sage and the turkey is bone-tied and rolled with enough stuffing to bring out the aroma and flavours.

I usually roast the turkey with onions, carrots, celery and chicken stock. Throughout the two-and-a-half hour cooking time, don't forget to continue basting the meat – this will help keep it moist. You can't really go wrong with adding truffle butter under the skin.

Vegetarian guests shouldn't be an afterthought on Christmas Day, and a serving of extra roast vegetables or a side salad won't cut it. I usually prepare a chestnut and cashew nut roast with fragrant herbs like dried rosemary, sage and thyme.

Also, why not add finely chopped onion and garlic, butternut squash and carrots to the mixture, and serve this with roasted parsnips and carrots on couscous. The other guests won't know what they're missing!

*39 Buckingham Palace Road*

## M WINE STORE

### Lenart Cernelic, manager

The first thing you should do when choosing a wine is to ask yourself: "What do I really feel like?" People get caught up in trying to find the perfect pairing for each dish – only to end up not enjoying the wine. If you like Malbec but are having fish, it's still better to go for Malbec rather than going for a perfect white that you won't really enjoy.

With that said, you can always tweak to get the best of both worlds. You can think of wine as a gradient, going from lightest to richest. From light white, medium white, bold white, light red, medium red, all the way to bold red. Now compare this with food and align the gradients. The lightest dish won't really work with the boldest red; and likewise, the boldest dish won't really work with a light white. Perfect pairings are where the dish and wine are aligned on the gradient. The closer your pairings can get, the more it will help your enjoyment.

South Africa seems to be the best value lately, as the French have lost their marbles and their prices just keep on increasing, while the quality isn't really catching up. I also find Australian wines to be great for the cold winter months.

Malbec from Argentina and Bordeaux are safe options; they rarely disappoint and they go great with food and make great gifts. I am quietly hoping for a bit more diversity this season, with some excellent wines on display from Uruguay, Austria, Chile, Canada and even Brazil.

*74 Victoria Street*



## RIPPON CHEESE

### Jon Harris, commercial director

At Christmas, people normally go for the usual cheeses – and the most common is cheddar. But I think Christmas should be a time where you try something a little bit different; so instead of cheddar, maybe try some Old Winchester or Old Sussex – they're nice and tasty but a bit more unexpected.

Blues are also big at Christmas. Everyone buys stilton, but there are so many different blues, and we produce so many beautiful kinds in the UK. Try Mrs Bell's Blue or Alex James' Blue Monday.

The ideal Christmas cheese board should have at least one hard, at least one blue – both covered – at least one soft, and at least one goat's. On the goat front, try Innes Log, Golden Cross or Ragstone.

For a soft, there's probably only one seasonal cheese in the world – and that's a cheese called Vacherin Mont d'Or. It's around at Christmas, and it's a definite Christmas treat. You can eat it as a fresh cheese, but if you get to the bottom and there's a little bit left, you can put it in the oven with garlic and wine and have a little fondue all to yourself on Boxing Day night.

If you are lactose intolerant, then you need to avoid all soft cheeses; the harder the cheese, the lower the lactose levels. If you're intolerant to cow's milk, then there's a plethora of sheep's and hard goat's cheese. Berkswell is very nutty and full of flavour, like a mild parmesan. There's virtually no lactose in it whatsoever, so it's good for everyone.

*26 Upper Tachbrook Street*

## THE OTHER PALACE GIN PALACE

### Dean James, bar manager

One way to spice up the festive season is to try sloe gin. Sloes give you that dark red fruit; and sloe gin goes nicely with mulled wine and cider – perfect if you want to get creative with that. People go sloe berry picking at the end of summer – then once you’ve steeped your gin in sloe berries enough, it’s usually autumn or winter when you can start drinking your sloe gin.

Gin is amazing because there are so many different flavours and styles, and it’s so accessible. I’d use a spiced gin – something warming, like Sacred Cardamom, or Opahr if you like Indian spices.

Bols Genever is the first ever commercially produced gin; it’s really classic and juniper-heavy, but it also has spiced botanical notes. That would go well in a martini. A negroni is an all-year round drink – a great Italian classic. But with the bitterness of the Campari and a squeeze of orange, a classic Italian negroni with



no twists really suits Christmas. People are doing some interesting things at this time of year, like Christmas pudding gin. Sacred, the distillery, has done well to get that dark intensity while keeping it sweet and accessible. It’s a really interesting flavour – but I know not everyone likes Christmas pudding! We’re stocking that in the bar this Christmas.

To elevate your homemade cocktails, always have a bottle of Angostura bitters. You can never run out. It’s aromatic and it goes with so many drinks. You can get into the festive spirit and use cinnamon or chocolate bitters to get something nice and rich; or orange bitters for your old-fashioned and negronis, if you

want to get experimental. I’m sure you can get pumpkin bitters as well – probably even Christmas pudding bitters...!

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Ruth Duston, chief executive for both Victoria and the newly created Victoria Westminster BIDs in Victoria Square

**A**fter a year in the planning, the new business improvement district (BID) for Victoria Westminster has now been approved.

“The Victoria BID has been running really successfully and has built a good track record,” says Ruth Duston, chief executive for both Victoria and the newly created Victoria Westminster BID. It’s been a long time coming – initial conversations for extending the footprint of the Victoria district began in 2016. But with 86 per cent of voters in favour of the proposals, which will see the same team at the helm of Victoria rolling out its successful initiatives, it’s a welcome step for the residents, workers and visitors of SW1.

the decanting of the House of Lords. “That will have a large impact on how the area looks and feels, so that’s a big thing for us,” Ruth explains. “Wherever they go there’s obviously going to be a huge security operation implemented as a result.

“It could have quite a negative impact; if they are to relocate within the vicinity, then you get this big ring of security around it and it makes it difficult for businesses to function and operate. I can see the BID having quite a role in alleviating this.”

Another area of focus will be the food and drink options on offer in the area. In the run-up

# New horizons

“What we have seen in the last decade is quite a lot of investment in Victoria,” explains Ruth. “We’ve also seen that development pipeline expand into the St James’s Tube station area and further down Victoria Street and Parliament Square. With the sector mix shifting, with a lot of the government departments moving out and the area becoming much more vibrant, we had a lot of businesses that sat on the periphery of Victoria asking how they could become more involved in the work of the BID.”

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

It’s a busy time for the area. Development is already underway at Northacre’s The Broadway and at some point in the next five years will come

to the ballot, Ruth’s team spent time collecting the views of the public in SW1 and found that to be a key concern. “The biggest question that’s been asked is what’s available at this end of Victoria, in terms of where to go for a meal, where to get a good drink, what kind of facilities are available,” she says. “We’ll be looking at how we can expand the offer to have more of a selection to meet the demand in the area.”

## THE YEAR AHEAD

Central to the Victoria Westminster BID plans is to extend the work already being done across the Victoria BID footprint, and the first 12 months of the new BID’s term will see a roll-out of the services up and running in Victoria, Ruth says.

“We’ll be looking at some of the more practical elements, which will focus on the ‘Clean, Green, Safe’ agenda,” she explains, which means getting the security and street cleaning teams up and running, as well as the street ambassadors service to assist visitors to the area.

Another key project for the coming year will be the regeneration of Christchurch Gardens. “The project will redevelop the space and open it up, not just for business occupiers but for residents within the Victoria SW1 area,” says Ruth. “It should be open in summer 2019, and sits within the new BID footprint.”

[Victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk](http://Victoriawestminsterbid.co.uk)

With plans for the new Victoria Westminster BID finalised, chief executive Ruth Duston reveals what to expect in the coming year

BY LUCY DOUGLAS

**PETER SELLERS****Roebuck House, 20 Palace Street**

Comedy legend Peter Sellers was a resident of The View, or Roebuck House as it was previously known. He moved there in 1967, shortly before his divorce from Swedish actress Britt Ekland.

Sellers was at the height of his fame during that time, having achieved critical success for his roles in *Dr Strangelove* and *The Pink Panther*. But despite appearances, it was a turbulent period for him both personally and professionally. His erratic behaviour had strained his relationship with several directors and fellow actors, including Orson Welles, with whom he was to co-star in *Casino Royale*.

Sellers married his third wife, Miranda Quarry, at nearby Caxton Hall Registry Office in 1970. His fourth and last wife was Lynne Frederick.



# Who lived here?

The illustrious residences of SW1 have been home to many notable figures throughout history. Lucy Douglas takes a look at some of the famous faces to have called Victoria home

**LEE RADZIWILL****4 Buckingham Place**

This address was home to Caroline "Lee" Radziwill (née Bouvier), the younger sister of Jackie Kennedy, and her husband Stanislas Radziwill, a real-estate investor. They lived there for the duration of their marriage from 1959 until the early 1970s.

Lee was described by one admiring *New York Times* reporter in 1961 as "the epitome of all that is considered chic, and therefore elegantly understated, in the world today".

Her Victoria house – a three-storey, Georgian property located close to Buckingham Palace – was also suitably stylish, with a living room that was decorated by Italian stage designer Renzo Mongiardino. It caught the attention of Cecil Beaton, who photographed the space several times.

The Radziwills were living in SW1 during Jackie's short tenure as First Lady, and were invited to dine at Buckingham Palace alongside JFK and Jackie in 1961. Jackie also visited Lee at her Victoria home.



## **SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER AND VIVIEN LEIGH**

### **54 Eaton Square and Roebuck House**

The legendary couple lived around Belgravia and Chelsea for a large portion of their 20-year marriage. While their abode on Christchurch Street, Durham Cottage, is perhaps their most famous address, the couple also lived at 54 Eaton Square during the final years of their famously fiery marriage. Vivien kept the Eaton Square property after she and Laurence divorced in 1960, and lived there up until her death in 1967.

Laurence, meanwhile, married actress Joan Plowright, who at the time lived nearby in Knightsbridge. After their marriage, the couple no longer made London their main home: they moved to Brighton, where their children were born, and during the early 1960s, work launching Chichester Festival Theatre kept Laurence in Sussex. In the later years he would keep a city bolthole at Roebuck House, neighbouring Peter Sellers, where, supposedly, he was driven mad by Sellers' late-night parties.

## **HAROLD AND MARY WILSON**

### **5 Ashley Gardens**

Former Labour prime minister Harold Wilson and his wife Mary were longstanding residents of the area. Mary reportedly hated Number 10 – referring to it as “the flat above the shop” – so rather than return to the residence for Harold’s second term as PM in 1974, the couple moved into their home on Lord North Street, between Smith Square and Great Peter Street.

Harold was only in office for two years during his second term and stepped down in 1976, partly due to his declining health. He retired completely from the Commons in 1983. Mary, meanwhile, was an acclaimed poet and later a judge of the Man Booker prize. She published two collections of poetry (the first appeared in 1970) as well as an anthology of selected works.

Mary cared for Harold up until his death in 1995, and continued to live in their spacious mansion flat overlooking Westminster Cathedral until her own death in June 2018, aged 102.





# Forging a brighter future

SCHOOLCHILDREN from a deprived area of Africa are looking forward to a brighter future, thanks to an initiative by a group of dedicated UK teachers and funding from Victoria-based energy company, Ophir.

The Bright Tomorrow charity was born from a community project in Tanzania, bringing higher education within the reach of more children from the city of Mtwara, a disadvantaged area in the southeast of the country.

Headteacher Jeremy Cooper, from a small primary school in Devon, is one of those behind the charity, which aims to improve teaching in schools to allow more pupils to pass an exam that enables them to move on into secondary school and gives them a better chance of escaping the poverty of their childhood.

The charity developed after Ophir Energy plc began a corporate responsibility project running alongside their work in the area in the oil and gas exploration and production industry.

Jeremy was one of those involved in setting it up, as lead educationalist, alongside trustees and in-country support workers.

“Ophir was working really hard on the fabric of this one school, Lilungu, which was basically falling down: rebuilding classrooms, putting roofs on and so on,” says Jeremy, whose term-time job is running Appledore Primary School.

“I suggested more needed to be done in the classroom to improve the outcomes for these children. The teachers out there were facing class sizes of over 100 children with no resources beyond a chalkboard and a desk. These were huge challenges to overcome.”

The charity’s aim is to improve teaching strategies, not only in Lilungu but in each one

Thanks to a group of UK teachers and funding from Victoria-based company Ophir, children in Tanzania are being given a chance to escape poverty

BY HELEN BLOW



of the 30 schools in the Mtwara area. It is on its way to achieving this but is now looking for more financial support.

Thanks to a group of committed volunteer teachers from the UK who give up their school holidays to work with the charity – and the boundless enthusiasm shown by the teachers and children in Tanzania – The Bright Tomorrow has managed to increase the exam pass rate from 38 to 75 per cent in just two years.

*To find out more about the project and to get involved, visit [thebrighttomorrow.org](http://thebrighttomorrow.org)*

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