

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM LOCALS



SUMMER 2022

KEEP IT LOCAL!

In the Spring issue of Hammersmith & Fulham Locals we are featuring businesses with a long history in the area and some that are recent arrivals in the borough.

In the latter category is Ombretta & Ante's Winehouse on Fulham Road. The Italian-Croatian couple have worked in the hospitality trade for many years (Ante looks after the food and Ombretta the wine) and the friendly, welcoming atmosphere of the wine bar is already proving popular with locals.

Much more well established is the Fulham Dental Clinic (formerly called Dental Beautique). Owner Justyna Kamecka opened her practice three years ago and she is now offering a new hour-long appointment for anyone who got out of the habit of having regular hygiene check-ups during the pandemic. So now there's no excuse!

Neil

Neil McKelvie, Editor
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Ante and Ombretta



Photographs: #doris_heinrich_photography

HOME FROM HOME

Fine Italian wines, excellent Croatian cuisine, a warm welcome and two thoroughly charming hosts...

'It was our dream to have a wine bar,' smiles Ombretta Barboni. 'Ante and I knew that we had the knowledge, experience and passion. So we thought, let's make a change in our lives and go for it. We opened three months ago: we want the Winehouse to be a friendly neighbourhood bar where customers meet, feel welcomed and are looked after.'

Located near the junction of Fulham Road and Fulham Palace Road, Ombretta & Ante's Winehouse is surely unique in being London's only Italian-Croatian establishment. The couple definitely have all the hospitality bases covered. Originally from Milan, Ombretta studied to become a sommelier and managed restaurants in the UK and Italy; Ante Zuban is from Split in Croatia, where his family owned bars and he trained as a chef.

'We serve a mix of Croatian and Italian dishes, many of which you won't find elsewhere,' says Ante, who handles the culinary side (he has also begun running cookery demos, such as bread-making, in the kitchen).

'The focus is on charcuterie and cheese boards featuring, for example, Dalmatian prosciutto, Pag Island cheese, *Cevapi* (grilled beef mince with sweet spices), Adriatic tuna pâté and homemade Italian *focaccia*. I also recommend Vis Island Pie, a traditional recipe from my mother of sardines, tomato and onions, and *Cupavci* cakes (coconut sponge) which are made by a lovely Croatian lady.'

Ombretta has put together a first-class wine list for every budget (Italian with a few Croatian additions) and all bottles are sold by the glass. 'In particular, Cannonau di Sardegna, a full bodied red from Sardinia, and our Sauvignon Blanc from Trentino and Sicilian Chardonnay are popular,' she says. 'We also have guest beers, Croatian shots, Italian liqueurs and regular live Friday night music.'

'We already feel at home here. We've met so many lovely people and taken bookings for private parties and corporate events (maximum capacity 25). Do come and say hello, we look forward to meeting you.'

Ombretta & Ante's Winehouse

770 Fulham Road, SW6 5SJ
020 7731 0626
contact@ombrettawinehouse.co.uk
#ombretta_ante_winehouse



Samuele Alberton

THE SEVEN DEADLY PLUMBING SINS

Forearmed is forewarned! The Italian Plumber's insider tips on making sure that the job is on time, on budget and done to your satisfaction

'Over the past decade, the plumbing trade has definitely upped its game on customer service,' says Samuele Alberton, aka The Italian Plumber. 'And that's down to online reviews; with platforms such as *Checkatrade* and *TrustATrader*, there's no hiding a bad experience.

'However, there are still cowboys out there committing the Seven Deadly Sins. Here's what to look out for... **Greed:** over-charging and unnecessary work. You received a written quote for the job, but when it is finished the bill bears no resemblance to what was agreed. Among the usual excuses are: "We had to fix A in order to fix B" or "the job was much more difficult than expected..."

'**Dishonesty:** poor communication. You agreed a time for the work to start, but no-one shows up or the plumber does arrive, but without the necessary parts. **Disrespect:** a disregard for property and possessions. The job will create a mess, but no protective measures are taken or else an old vacuum cleaner that would struggle to pick up confetti is used.

'**Slovenliness:** lack of self-respect. The plumber turns up looking like they've had a night on the

tiles and the prospect of tackling the job is an inconvenience. **Sloth:** a lazy approach. The plumber can't be bothered to explain what they've done in layman's terms and the invoice lacks a basic job description, leaving you completely in the dark.

'**Consideration:** or lack of it. All of a sudden you hear the toilet flush upstairs. Not asking for permission is an absolute no-no. **Assumption:** you must pay. The plumber spots an opportunity to make a few extra quid by doing additional work. They don't inform you and complete it without approval or saying anything - and then expect payment.

'So, there you have it. Do always check who you are dealing with by using the online trade platforms and never be afraid to ask plenty of questions when you make the initial enquiry.'

The Italian Plumber

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020 8945 7457

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Chelsea Fine Arts

IT'S ALL IN THE METHOD

Summer holiday drawing and painting classes that encourage young people of all abilities to develop their artistic skills

Artist Stephanie Villalba founded Chelsea Fine Arts in 2009 with the vision of teaching any child, whether naturally gifted or an absolute beginner, to draw and paint realistically. One glance at the completed and 'in-progress' paintings around the two light, airy studios (opposite Ravenscourt Park and in Chelsea Wharf) proves that her approach does work.

Over the summer holidays (11 July-26 August), Stephanie and her experienced team will be running classes for young people aged 8-18. The teaching method, which is followed by all the tutors, is founded on the belief that confidence and artistic talent is best developed once basic techniques have been learned.

'Without mastering core drawing skills, the ability to create will always be limited,' explains Stephanie. 'Our method is based on showing students how to work from observation. By focusing on tone and line, we encourage them to break down the way they view objects; from these building blocks, they can then develop an original vision.'

The classes include a mix of ages with each student taught on an individual basis and

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materials are provided. The children work from beautiful and inspiring still-life set-ups that are composed to focus on key skills, such as perspective, composition and the use of complementary colours.

'We teach in a variety of media because each is relevant to a particular technique or skill,' adds Stephanie. 'For example, charcoal is excellent for encouraging students to depict tonal shapes (dark, medium, light), paint and pastels are used to learn colour mixing from primaries, while ink and pencil help identify textures and line work.'

Stephanie recommends taking a minimum of three to five sessions to make the most of the classes. 'No previous knowledge is needed. Often students who come with no experience progress the fastest. It's wonderful to see their self-confidence grow and their pride when they leave with their own framed work of art.'

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Dr Hala Mahfoud

GET SET FOR SUMMER HOLIDAY SUN

'I really enjoyed my first visit. Dr Hala was warm, friendly and professional and good at taking the time to explain everything.' – Diane Noel

Holidays are on the horizon and Dr Hala Mahfoud and her experienced team of therapists will ensure that you are looking fabulous and feeling rejuvenated, energised and fully beach-body confident.

'Our "summer-ready" facials are always very popular,' confirms Dr Hala. 'We specialise in hour-long HydraFacials (for men and women) comprising five different stages – lymphatic drainage, exfoliation, extraction, hydration and light therapy – which ensure the skin is perfectly prepared for sun exposure.'

'Of course, every client is different – the skin may be dry, rosacea-prone, pigmented or have fine lines – and that's why we always tailor our facials to the individual. And we take exactly the same approach to body contouring, whether that's using ultrasound and radio frequency to

break down fat tissue or carboxytherapy, which smoothes out cellulite and stretch marks and tightens the skin.'

Having worked for many years as an NHS Consultant, Dr Hala opened her family-run clinic in 2017 with the vision of bridging the gap between aesthetics, beauty and medicine. Since then, she has expanded the therapies available and launched her own successful Skincare Collection, which includes an eye serum to reduce wrinkles and dark circles, a lip plumper and a lightweight sunscreen.

One increasingly in-demand treatment is Ozone Therapy, and to some extent that is due to the pandemic. 'It is a safe, effective way of boosting the immune system,' explains Dr Hala. 'Ozone gas injections reach the cellular level, boosting oxygen delivery to the blood

and so activating the immune system to fight infection and combat inflammation and pain.

'Also, hardly a day goes by without an enquiry about PRP (Platelet-rich Plasma therapy), which is based on the body's natural ability to regenerate tissue. Blood is centrifuged to leave a platelet-rich solution which is topically applied or injected into a targeted area – for example, into the scalp to promote hair growth – so starting the healing response.'

Dr Hala's signature personal touch is complemented by investment in the latest medical technology, such as the Femi-Lift laser, which stimulates collagen, the protein responsible for skin strength and elasticity. 'Post-birth, many ladies leak when they exercise, sneeze or cough,' she says. 'The Femi-Lift provides proven, non-surgical relief from stress urinary incontinence and alleviates vaginal dryness and sensitivity during sex.'

'In addition, we have two Alma lasers: the Harmony XL Pro lifts and refreshes skin and is ideal for healing scars, acne, vascular lesions and mole and tattoo removal, while the Soprano ICE Platinum laser has revolutionised hair removal – it is fast, pain-free and suitable for all skin types.'

Charming and friendly, Dr Hala meets all new patients. 'We get to know them and often they become friends,' she smiles. 'We're proud of our work and, and, with the scope of our facilities, we will achieve the best bespoke outcome every time.'

Treatments include: * PRX Peel: scar management and wrinkle reduction
* FibroBlast: lift sagging skin and smooth lines
* Mesotherapy: rejuvenate skin and boost hair growth * Mesosculpt: eliminate facial fat pockets * Non-invasive cellulite and stretch mark reduction using radio-frequency and ultrasound
* Wart, mole, tag and tattoo removal
* Botox, fillers and herbal and chemical peels
* LPG Endermologie: tighten skin and target fat

Dr Hala Medical Aesthetics

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Warren and Matt

Photograph: #annabelmoellerphotography

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Adapting domestic spaces to suit changing professional and lifestyle needs

CP Architects was founded in 1992 as Chartered Practice Architects and it has operated from the same Askew Road building ever since. Co-Directors Matt Hedges and Warren Hagues joined the business in 1999 and 2004 respectively and, over lockdown, they began re-branding the practice: that included the new name and a re-design of the premises with a smart exterior and upstairs studio-cum-office.

‘We fully appreciate the irony that we didn’t take our own advice about moving out and completing the job in one time frame,’ smiles Warren. ‘Having to work through the chaos has been a reminder of what our clients often have to endure!’

Matt and Warren specialise in Hammersmith and Fulham’s housing stock and are well-versed in the complexities of local planning processes. ‘As a consequence of the pandemic, we are still receiving many enquiries about creating tailor-made domestic work areas,’ says Matt. ‘The key is to come up with innovative ideas that minimise family distraction and are conducive to being productive.’

Adapting homes to respond to changed circumstances, whether because of age-related concerns or disability issues, is an area in which Matt and Warren have a particular interest and expertise. ‘Often, it’s about revising how the property works to enable clients to stay where they love living,’ explains Warren.

‘That could mean finding ways for a wheelchair to negotiate narrow doorways or changes of level or something as subtle as a more accessible storage option. It’s rewarding for us to make a positive difference to someone’s life.’

Whatever the project, Matt and Warren follow a defined process. ‘We look at how people live and work, we listen carefully and then devise solutions,’ says Matt. ‘We never assume an “off-the-peg” approach. We provide individual designs that tick the boxes of the brief and meet the budget – and, contrary to popular belief, we’re often the ones holding the purse strings tighter!’

CP Architects Ltd

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Justyna Kamecka



GOOD HEALTH STARTS IN THE MOUTH

Have you missed regular hygiene check-ups? The Fulham Dental Clinic is offering one-hour examination and deep-clean appointments

‘This summer I would like everyone to focus on their oral hygiene’, smiles Justyna Kamecka, the owner and Clinical Director of Fulham Dental Clinic. ‘Thanks to the pandemic, many patients seem to have lost the habit of having check-ups, and that’s alarming.’

‘Maintaining good oral health is so essential, and it’s not just a matter of dealing with staining and tartar. Harmful bacteria that leak through the gums have been linked to wider concerns, such as diabetes, fertility, low birth weight and heart and lung issues. For example, we know that the same bacteria are present in gum disease and the arteries of those suffering with heart disease.’

To address the problem, Justyna has launched a new

hour-long appointment for people who haven’t seen a hygienist for six months-plus. ‘I will carry out an in-depth examination of the mouth and gums, and that includes using a special dye to identify bacteria on the teeth. I can then show the patient exactly where they need to focus and it allows me to pinpoint areas which need an extended deep clean.’

‘The same service is available for children – I ask them to bring in their toothbrush and I demonstrate how and where to clean – and it is particularly relevant for anyone with braces, as bacteria will accumulate much quicker in their mouths.’

It is now three years since Justyna opened her independent practice, which she has recently re-branded

as the Fulham Dental Clinic (it was previously Dental Beautique). ‘We feel that we’re now part of the community and that inspired us to take that decision. And while we have a new name, everything else – the professional treatments in all disciplines, the highly skilled team and relaxing spa-like atmosphere in which even nervous patients feel reassured – remains exactly the same!’

Treatments include:

- * Cleaning with Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT)
- * Children's Clean
- * Periodontal Clean
- * Orthodontic Clean

Fulham Dental Clinic

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Madie Ager-Warner

Photograph: #annabelmoellerphotography

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

Track and understand key health indicators and live better for longer

'Many people associate us only with Covid testing,' says Madie Ager-Warner, the Manager of Randox Health's recently opened Fulham Clinic. 'In fact, this year we are celebrating our 40-year anniversary and, in that time, we have worked with health care organisations worldwide.'

Having played a pivotal role in the UK's National Testing Programme, Randox Health is now opening a network of clinics like the one on Fulham High Street. 'Post-pandemic, we have all become more used to taking responsibility for our health,' says Madie. 'By providing an extensive range of testing options, both at the clinic and for home use, we aim to help everyone be pro-active about their wellbeing.'

Randox's Health Check programmes are based on taking a blood test and analysing the wealth of data produced to identify any concerns. 'For example, our popular 12-month EveryMan EveryWoman service measures up to 150 data points linked to key health areas,' explains Madie. 'Every client then attends a consultation with a scientist who gives an informed breakdown of the results (an optional GP appointment is available). Most importantly,

the client has a repeat blood test six months later, so any problem can be monitored.'

'In addition, we offer a premium Signature programme (with up to 350 data points measured) and a new EveryMother programme. That comprises a comprehensive screen for expectant mothers from 20 weeks onwards and includes three diagnostic health checks (pre and post-natal) and a nutritional review.'

As well as in-clinic testing, clients can also pick up or order At Home sample collection kits to check issues such as heart and thyroid health and Vitamin D and Vitamin B12 levels, and, of course, Randox still delivers fast, competitive Covid-19 travel testing and certification.

'We're delighted to be in Fulham and want to build long-term relationships with our local clients,' says Madie. 'To find out how we can help you live a healthier life, do come in and see us.'

Randox Health Fulham Clinic

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THE ELECTRICAL PROFESSIONALS

SES's expert 'blue brigade' will diagnose and solve all your electrical issues and carry out a free energy-saving home survey

SES Electrical Contractors' distinctive blue vans are a familiar sight out and about on the streets of Chiswick. Since founding the company in 2010, Byron Sanders has built a successful business based on professional expertise, trustworthy advice and word-of-mouth recommendation.

The core of SES's work comprises electrical installation, repair and testing and, whatever the nature of the job, excellent service is always a given. 'When I was learning the trade, I knew electricians whose workmanship was superb but their customer care non-existent,' recalls Byron.

'My philosophy is to deliver the maximum on both counts, and that's why we are now offering free energy-saving surveys (until the end of July). With domestic running costs currently so high, we've seen a spike in the number of customers asking us to recommend and carry out more energy-efficient upgrades. For example, even something as simple as replacing old halogen spotlights with LED bulbs can make a significant difference: it requires 125 kWh of electricity to run an LED for 40,000 hours as opposed to 1250 kWh for a halogen.'

The SES team is also fully trained on all elements of commercial and light industrial electrics, BAFe-approved (British Approvals for Fire Excellence) to design, install and service fire alarms and accredited with the leading manufacturers of electric vehicles to source, supply and test EV home chargers.

'Since the pandemic inspired more people to work permanently or part-time from home we have seen far more WiFi and data-related enquiries, in particular for extra access points and reliable connections,' adds Byron. 'Equally, government legislation requiring all rental properties to have an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) has prompted a significant demand from landlords.'

'All are technicians are experienced and highly qualified, we carry high levels of stock and we respond quickly and efficiently. And do get in touch if you would like to book a complimentary energy survey of your home.'

SES Electrical Contractors

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Ellie Romanova

ARE YOU CONSIDERING A SHORT-TERM LET?

'Since Lettsgetsmart took over, our income has improved and is back to pre-Covid levels or better. Ellie is a very good property manager.' – Stephane Bellomo

'Until life changed so dramatically for everyone in March 2020, our short let properties in Hammersmith and Fulham were producing monthly returns 30-100% better than long lets,' recalls Ellie Romanova, London franchisee for specialist short let property management company, LettsGetSmart.

'Of course, tourism and business travel then fell off the Covid cliff. But now travellers are coming back. Demand is increasing faster than supply – on average our portfolio has 90% occupancy – and short-lets are again yielding higher incomes than long-term rates.'

For a home-owner, there are clear advantages in short-term letting: the property is rented only when and for how long they want. The downside is that the process does require constant attention to booking, payment, cleaning and logistical issues.

That's where Ellie, who has many years' experience in the sector, and LettsGetSmart come in. 'Most people don't have the time or resources to do what we can,' she explains. 'I get to know every new owner we work with,

as well as every detail of their home, and am always available as a point of contact. We take care of listing the property on platforms such as Airbnb, booking.com and VRBO and also contact our own, often repeat, guests.'

'Not only do we have the in-depth market knowledge to maximise returns by adjusting rates to fill any void periods and achieve excellent yields, we also handle all the time-intensive admin. That means looking after every element of the guest's stay, cleaning and maintenance and ensuring the rent is distributed once or twice monthly to the landlord (payments are fully insured by Client Money Protect).'

'Personal service is at the heart of what we do,' says Ellie. 'If you are thinking of a flexible short-term let and want to achieve the best result for the least hassle, I'd be delighted to explain more about our proven business model.'

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Christopher Barrow

RISK AND REGULATION

External scrutiny and stringent due diligence are key to every safe custody business

Delivering world-class security demands substantial investment. Metropolitan Safe Deposits' West London branch is a perfect case in point: the two basement vaults with a capacity of 7500 safe deposit boxes in 12 different sizes were designed and constructed by the industry's leading manufacturer.

The premises itself is equipped with 24/7 perimeter and interior CCTV, seismic and stress detectors, electronic and magnetic locks and bullet-resistant airlock doors. Complementing that proven level of physical protection are multi-layered alarm and biometric ID procedures that ensure back-up systems are always in place.

However, as Chief Executive Christopher Barrow emphasises, other fundamental factors must be considered when creating a successful safe custody operation. 'It's essential for us to maintain the highest standards of practice when it comes to following the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) anti-money laundering and terrorist financing regulations and complying with HM Treasury's sanctions regime.

'In particular, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there has been an even stronger emphasis on businesses in our sector having rigorous measures in place to check whether customers are subject to financial sanctions. If there is any doubt, it is our responsibility to seek legal advice on how to interpret the rules and then determine the potential consequences and actions to be taken. We believe that commitment to regulatory compliance instils confidence in the eyes of *bona fide* customers.

'Equally importantly, a safe deposit business should only be satisfied once it has been subjected to, and validated by, an independent risk review. Regular on-site assessment provides objective feedback on the quality of security systems, processes and staff training.

'In this industry, trust can take a long time to build, and it is very easy to destroy. We focus on every element of what we do with the same care and, by so doing, we offer the peace of mind that treasured possessions are in safe keeping. Besides which, I'm sure our clients don't want to mix with individuals involved in criminal activity.'

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a while the fashion was for muted shades, mostly beiges and greys. They are still popular, but now there's definitely a move towards stronger colours, even if that doesn't often go as far as animal print.

'We deal with 90% of industry manufacturers and so we're able to offer the widest possible selection of classic and contemporary carpets as well as made-to-measure bespoke rugs, stair runners and vinyl, tile and laminate flooring. Last year, we created extra space in our showroom and that has enabled us to display 100 ranges, and there are at least another 100 in stock in our basement should they be needed.'

Clay and Joe guarantee that all their carpets are moth-free, thanks to a chemical that is put on the yarn during the spinning process, and customers are always welcome to take samples home to check how colours and hues work in a domestic setting.

The Carpetstore use their own teams of highly experienced fitters, who will also lay hardboard, ply and latex sub-floors and trim doors. If you are investing in new carpet or flooring, whether for the home, office or a communal property, you'll receive excellent personal service and straightforward advice.



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ANIMAL MAGIC

'The Carpetstore transformed our house. Friendly, professional and brilliant results!' – Rick and Rachel Parfitt

Recently, Clay Miller and the Carpetstore team fitted a stair-runner and carpet for a well-known TV personality. To say the least, the design was a bold choice and, apparently, one in tune with the client's flamboyant style (Clay's lips are sealed when it comes to a name).

The Axminster carpet was Ocelot from the Safari range manufactured by Hugh Mackay. 'It's really lovely quality with 80% wool and also comes in Zebra and Leopard prints,' says Clay. 'Some people immediately love it. Others think, we'd never have that in our home. It's all down to personal taste!'

Clay and his brother Joe have been running the Carpetstore for over 25 years and, in that time, they have seen trends come and go. 'For quite



Maddy Alemayehu



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Being able to live safely at home in later life is a comfort. Home Instead's Care Professionals help make that happen...

'Everyone here is passionate about high quality care,' smiles Maddy Alemayehu, Director of Home Instead Hammersmith, Fulham and Chiswick. 'Our standards are exactly what we would expect for our loved ones. We want families to know that their relatives are safe because we are there for them.'

Inevitably, in later life daily tasks in the home become physically more challenging and social contact narrows. Hence many older people feel obliged to move from where they love living. However, there is an alternative. 'That's where we come in,' says Maddy. 'We've been working in West London for 10 years, providing sensitive relationship-led care that helps our clients to enjoy independent, fulfilling lives.'

Maddy, who worked for many years as an Intensive Care nurse, and her team deliver a wide range of services, all of which are overseen by experienced nurses: they include Dementia, Respite and 24/7 Live-in Care, Home Help and Companionship, bespoke care for conditions such as Parkinson's and free consultations on the practical aspects of care.

'Family or friends usually get in touch with us,' explains Maddy. 'A Home Instead Care Manager then visits the potential client to discuss their needs and explain what we do. If all goes well, we then match the client with one of our specially trained Care Professionals: we place great emphasis on finding points of contact between the two based on background and interests. That's important because many people just like to have a cup of tea and a good chat.'

With many of Home Instead's clients shielding, the Care Professionals played a particularly important role during the pandemic. 'They filled in all the daily gaps – shopping, cleaning, cooking – and reassured families that their relatives weren't isolated,' says Maddy.

'Whatever role we play, we never forget that everyone is different; we're there to be a trustworthy, friendly face. We want to change the face of ageing for the better.'

Home Instead – Home Care & Live-in Care
186 Sutton Court Road, W4 3HR
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The Boat Race, 1866



Hammersmith Bridge looking north, 1961

BUILDING BRIDGES

Hammersmith Bridge is one of the most elegant on the Thames. It has also had a rather chequered history...

The river crossing between Hammersmith and Barnes made history when, in October 1827, it became the site of one of the world's earliest suspension bridges – and the first across the Thames.

Designed by local resident William Tierney Clark (there is a memorial to him in St Paul's church), the bridge cost £80,000 to build. It was an impressive stone construction with two brick piers and two towers with arched entrances in the fashionable Tuscan style. Eight chains slung between the towers held the bridge in place and there were two octagonal toll houses at either end.

Clark's bridge was held in great affection despite its rapidly evident unsuitability for the

increasingly large volume of traffic using it. The low clearance level at high tide was lampooned in an 1842 edition of *Punch*: *'A vessel passing under it is compelled to lower her chimney onto the heads, or into the laps, of the passengers, besides rendering it incumbent on all on board to bend to circumstances, by placing their heads between their knees, during the time occupied in passing under the elegant and commodious structure.'*

In 1870 the bridge was barely able to sustain the pressure created by the presence of over 11,000 enthusiastic spectators who came to Hammersmith to watch the annual University Boat Race and, eventually, practicality prevailed. It was demolished and work started on a stronger construction

designed by the renowned civil engineer, Sir Joseph Bazalgette.

The new bridge cost £82,117. It stood on the existing piers and incorporated a wrought-iron framework with ornamental cast-iron casings to give the impression of arches. It was formally opened by the then Prince of Wales in June 1887.

The architectural historian Nicholas Pevsner wasn't impressed, describing the *'atrocious, portly gilt pylons crowned by little Frenchy pavilion tops with elephantine ornaments on its approaches.'* The public, however, disagreed; the bridge soon became one of West London's most distinctive landmarks, a popularity only enhanced by its stubborn survival of three terrorist attacks.

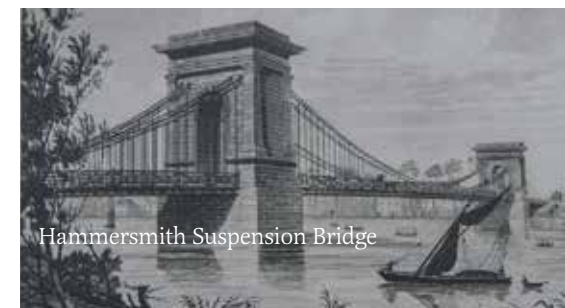
The IRA claimed responsibility for all three. The first, in March 1939, could have caused extensive damage had it not been for a quick-witted Chiswick resident. Hairdresser Maurice Childs was walking home across the bridge in the early morning when he noticed smoke and sparks coming from a suitcase.

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Astonishingly, he opened it, saw a bomb and lobbed the bag into the Thames where it exploded, sending up a 60 ft column of water. Childs was awarded an MBE for his bravery.

Luck again played its part in 1996, when two Semtex devices failed to go off. The third attack, in June 2000, was more successful, but the blast actually resulted in little damage; in fact, it emphasised the need for urgent further strengthening to withstand the demands of modern traffic. When Sir Joseph Bazalgette's elegant Grade II-listed bridge finally re-opened, it was with weight restrictions.

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Hammersmith Suspension Bridge

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