

# RICHMOND LOCALS

# SPRING





John Bartram



# DEER JOHN

*In a fascinating memoir John Bartram recalls his extraordinary career as guardian of Richmond Park's world-famous deer herd*

In his final year as Senior Wildlife Officer for Richmond Park, John Bartram received what he considered to be the ultimate professional accolade. 'Peter Green, the British Deer Society's Advisory Vet, told me: "You have the finest captive red herd in the country." Well, that was like being knighted by the Queen. I thought to myself, I must have been doing something right for three decades.'

Having retired in 2016, John set to work writing *Park Life*, a vivid memoir chronicling the last 12 months of his remarkable – he would undoubtedly say 'charmed' – professional life ensuring the safety and welfare of Richmond Park's herd of deer.

Born and raised in Ham, John's childhood playground was Richmond Park. He has fond

memories of swimming in Pen Ponds – not that he had any inkling that he would end up working there for 30 years. After leaving school he became an apprentice blacksmith, then joined the Council Tree Unit and began his career as a gamekeeper in 1980 at Kew Gardens. He moved to the same role at Richmond Park in 1986, setting up home at Kingston Gate Lodge with his wife, Maggie.

The Park was a different place back then. 'I used to leave the Lodge at 5.30am and zigzag about shooting squirrels and rabbits as I went,' he recalls. 'In those days, there would hardly be another soul around. Now, it's totally different with so many people everywhere. That's why essential pest control at the Park is now always done after hours during the annual deer culls.'

Read online: [www.keepthingslocal.com](http://www.keepthingslocal.com)

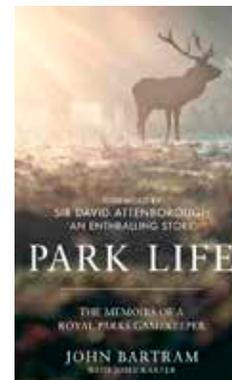
Talking of pests, the worst offenders were... human beings and their dogs. 'In 1986 we had 1.25 million visitors; in my last year it was 5.5 million and the number of dogs has soared. They can cause absolute havoc,' says John. 'During the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001 we closed for seven weeks and, I must admit, it was brilliant. Suddenly, you could see what the Park would be like without people! I loved it, and so did the herd; in the mornings I would find 60 red hinds milling around the Lodge.'

When it comes to culling, John doesn't pull any punches in the book. 'Many people don't realise that it goes on. It happens at night and it's an intense process. You see sad scenes, but you can't be sentimental. The numbers have to be controlled for the health of the herd; the deer will reproduce by a third every year and the optimum number for the Park is 600.'

*Park Life* is a compelling account of the reality of caring for the herd and the bond that John built with his animals. It is also packed with anecdotes and memories, both funny and poignant: among them, encounters with TV personalities (notably, Sir David Attenborough,

who has written the foreword), rounding up deer escapees after the 1987 'hurricane', the mysterious appearance of a six-foot orange snake and the rescue of an abandoned goat.

Now living in Walton-on-Thames, John is still in demand at the Park. 'I go back and help out whenever I'm asked and I lead tours and give talks. I love the place. It gave me a unique way of life. I was a very lucky man.'



***Park Life* by John Bartram.**  
RRP £16.99  
(John Blake Publishing).

**John is kindly donating all his proceeds from this book to the Richmond Park Trust Fund.**

Email your story: [connect@keepthingslocal.com](mailto:connect@keepthingslocal.com)



Holly Tucker

# MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

*By living and working in St Margarets and Richmond, Holly Tucker has achieved the perfect work-life balance*

It often turns out that successful entrepreneurs cut their business teeth at a precocious age. So, was that the case with Holly Tucker MBE, co-founder of notonthehighstreet.com, driving force behind Holly & Co, UK Ambassador for Creative Small Businesses and proud St Margarets resident?

‘Oh, it’s true,’ Holly admits, laughing. ‘Mind you, I would have called it “just wanting to get on with things!” My school didn’t have a tuck shop, so I started one, I got a job cleaning a pub when I was way under-age and later, when my friends were out partying, I spent three summers on work experience at an advertising

agency. In fact, rather than go on to university, the day I got my A-Level results, I started work there permanently.’

It was at the agency that Holly met Sophie Cornish, with whom she would later conceive and launch notonthehighstreet.com. In the meantime, Holly’s entrepreneurial streak saw her leave advertising, start making Christmas wreaths and, when she couldn’t find anywhere to sell them, set up Your Local Fair. That business was the precursor to notonthehighstreet.com; instead of stalls in a Town Hall, the internet became the 24/7 marketplace for products not sold in shops.

Read online: [www.keepthingslocal.com](http://www.keepthingslocal.com)

Given that notonthehighstreet.com is based at Richmond Circus and Holly & Co in St Margarets, TW1 has proved to be the perfect home for Holly and her family. They moved from Chiswick in 2010 and, typically, she has thrown herself into local life.

‘I’ve really enjoyed becoming actively involved in such a wonderful community. In particular, I’m proud to be Chair of the St Margarets Trade Association. We run two popular annual events, the Summer and Christmas Crown Road parties (on 24 June and 9 December this year); we do our best to get independent businesses to occupy empty premises; and, last year, we organised the first ever Christmas lights for St Margarets.’

In 2017, after a decade focusing on notonthehighstreet.com, Holly founded Holly & Co, her own creative brand consultancy and retail outlet. It is clearly a project that is close to her heart. ‘It’s a unique concept, the first of its kind,’ she explains. ‘Our aim is to be a place of knowledge and inspiration for the small businesses that are the backbone of our society.

‘We provide hands-on practical advice and mentoring on brand creation, finance and funding, scaling, recruiting, selling – not to mention what it is like to experience the emotional rollercoaster of setting up a company. Also, we have a shop that showcases the products made by the ventures – 200 at the last count – that we support. I feel that I have found my purpose in life; I’ve been there, done it and learned the hard way and I’m passionate about helping others follow in my footsteps while avoiding the pitfalls.’

Naturally, for such a champion of independent businesses, Holly likes to keep it local when it comes to shopping and eating out: among her favourites are Vintage & Velvet, Dolly Rocks, Le Salon Privé, The Crown and, on comedy nights, The Turk’s Head. ‘I’m so lucky to live and work in St Margarets and Richmond,’ she says. ‘I love the cafés and shops and being close to the river. I can’t see myself ever leaving.’

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# KEEP IT LOCAL!

Welcome to the launch issue of Richmond Locals, the new quarterly magazine dedicated to meeting the local people and showcasing the independent small businesses that do so much to give the area its vibrant character.

John Bartram is one of the most fascinating individuals I've met in a long time. For 30 years John was Senior Wildlife Officer for Richmond Park and in *Park Life*, his memoir of the last 12 months of his career, he provides an amusing and poignant insight into looking after Richmond's historic herd of deer.

The co-founder of [notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com) and owner of Holly & Co, Holly Tucker MBE is an enthusiastic St Margarets resident. She told me why she loves living and working in the area and how she has become actively involved in the community.

Also in this issue, we meet Fred and Judith of La Crêperie Cinq Maisons, who explain the art of making authentic French crêpes, Imogen Bond, Education Director of the Orange Tree Theatre, and we catch up with three generations of the carpet-selling Herdman family from St Margarets.

We welcome all feedback about Richmond Locals and if you'd like to be included in the next issue, do get in touch.

Neil

Neil McKelvie, Editor

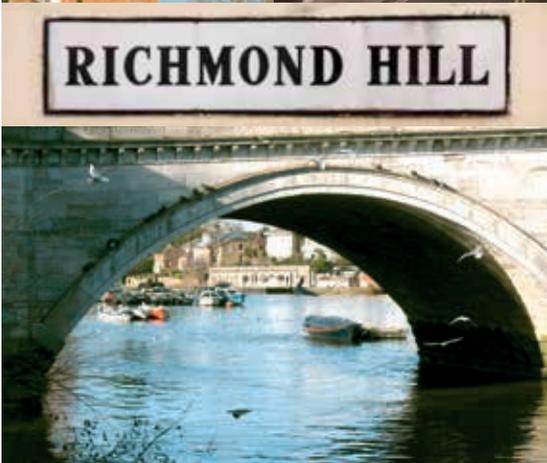
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Judith Cizeikaite and Fred Mokrani

## TRÈS CLASSIQUES CRÊPES!

*Bringing an authentic taste of France to Richmond*

Before meeting Fred Mokrani, who runs La Crêperie Cinq Maisons on Brewers Lane with his business partner, Judith Cizeikaite, I knew all about his track record in the hospitality business at the popular Café de Fred in Kensington. However, it turns out that Fred's background is even more celebrated than that!

'I was a butler for 10 years. I worked in hotels such as Claridges and the Savoy,' he recalls. 'After that, I became an Events Manager – and for three years I was responsible for organising the Queen's Summer Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.'

Inspired by Fred's French heritage – he grew up in Lyon – he and Judith began planning their crêperie venture two years ago. Having chosen

Richmond as the ideal location, they eventually found a suitable premises and opened last June. 'We love being here, the shop is cosy and we have lovely neighbours,' says Judith.

The pair are proud that their recipes are authentically French. 'Judith spent time in Brittany, learning from the locals,' explains Fred. 'Our batter is homemade and mixed with love and passion on the premises, the savoury *galettes* are made with buckwheat flour and are gluten-free and Judith has devised her own vegan options. Personally, I would recommend the Cinq Maisons *galette* – that has ham or chicken, cheese, spinach, tomato and mushroom – and our signature sweet crêpe is *La salade de fruit* with banana, honey, berries and fresh mint.'

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As well as traditional crêpes, Fred and Judith also serve excellent Drury coffee, milkshakes, pastries, fresh juices, salads, soups, *panini*, cakes and, their own creation, waffles on sticks. 'You can have them with salted caramel, chocolate or peanut butter. They're so much easier to eat on a stick,' smiles Judith.

'We're also developing other sides of the business,' adds Fred. 'We cater for outside events and host birthday party workshops at the shop. The birthday boy or girl invites their friends and we teach them how to make crêpes – it's great fun.'

With such delicious food and delightful service, the Cinq Maisons is a fantastic addition to Richmond's dining scene. *A bientôt!*

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12 Brewers Lane, TW9 1HH  
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Jason Wilkinson

# A BUSINESS BUILT ON EXCELLENCE

*Whitehall Construction has the expertise and experience to take any building project from design to completion*

‘I’m hands-on – that’s how I work. I’m on site every day and I always like to be a point of contact for clients.’ Jason Wilkinson, Build Director of Whitehall Construction, is explaining his business philosophy – and the passion is shining through.

‘I think my approach stems from the fact that I started at the bottom of the trade as an apprentice bricklayer and worked my way up,’ Jason continues. ‘I’ve learned how important it is to be available

– there’s no better way to create a positive relationship and find solutions to issues.’

Jason co-founded Whitehall Construction three years ago and, since then, it has grown rapidly through word-of-mouth recommendation.

Focusing on the West London area, the company specialises in whole house renovation, loft conversion, kitchen and side return extension, basement excavation and bathroom re-design.

Advertorial

‘We have the knowledge to take any job from Planning and Design through to Build,’ Jason tells me. ‘We’re used to liaising with architects and structural engineers and, when it comes to construction, we have a permanent team of high quality, reliable craftsmen.’ He is convinced that clear project management is the key to every successful build. ‘It’s crucial to explain the process – why something will work and why it won’t.

‘It’s all about being open and honest. In my opinion many builders today have become more like salesmen. They get jobs in and then farm them out. So you lose that line of communication and individual contact.’

Jason is equally emphatic about pricing and delivery. ‘I always give a realistic quote – not a deliberately cheap price to secure a contract – and our fees are fixed from the beginning, so there are no nasty surprises. Also, we deliver what we promise and on time. I like to think that 30 years’ experience enables me to anticipate most problems and come up with practical answers.’

With many satisfied clients, Jason encourages potential clients to check out his previous work. ‘We’re proud of what we do,’ he says. ‘Whatever the project, we stick to what we say, we don’t cut corners and craftsmanship means everything to us.’

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Emma Rowlatt

# MIND, BODY AND SOUL

*Emma Rowlatt has brought together a team of readers and complementary health practitioners*

I’ve just asked Emma Rowlatt how she became proprietor of Organic Mind, Richmond’s one-stop shop for holistic treatments, tarot and mediumistic readings and ‘alternative’ retail therapy. Her answer is moving and honest.

‘My sister Clare passed away 10 years ago. The impact of her loss was huge, I simply couldn’t believe that was “it”. So, I began investigating life after death

and that prompted me to visit Clare and I shared – and that gave me such peace of mind.’

From that point, Emma was inspired to take her research further, exploring a wide range of complementary and psychic therapies. Then, two years ago, she noticed the lease was available on a shop in Brewers Lane. ‘I thought, wouldn’t it be

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fantastic to bring together and share everything I’d learned.’

Emma, who previously worked in the corporate world, has recruited an experienced team of therapists specialising in reflexology, reiki, osteopathy, Cranio-Sacral holistic massage and hypnotherapy as well as tarot readers and psychic mediums. ‘There are 12 of us – we have six rooms on four floors, so everything is done in-house – and I vet everyone who practises here. At the moment, I have rooms available for rent.’

Organic Mind stocks crystals, candles, incense, sage and CDs and is equipped with a state-of-the-art Aquavibe waterbed. ‘It delivers the ultimate in blissful relaxation. Also, we have a Kirlian aura imaging machine that reveals when and where someone is emotionally out of balance.’

Of all the therapies and treatments available, tarot and psychic readings have seen the most noticeable growth in popularity. ‘We don’t predict anything, the sessions are for guidance,’ explains Emma. ‘There’s such a curiosity about the future, whether that’s personal or professional. We’re now seeing many clients returning – people are much more inclined to follow their spiritual path.’

A three-minute documentary Emma made about her sister for *Sky Real Lives* can be viewed on Youtube “Clare Louise Rowlatt”.

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Imogen Bond



## WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

*The Orange Tree Theatre encourages young and old to get involved with its work. Education Director Imogen Bond explains more...*

Under founder Sam Walters and current Artistic Director Paul Miller, the Orange Tree Theatre has been rightly acclaimed for the consistent high quality of its work. Whether presenting ground-breaking new writing or breathing life into long-lost gems, it is a shining light in Richmond's cultural landscape.

But, while the Main House shows inevitably attract the headlines, the theatre is also committed to playing a significant role in the wider community. 'All of us want the Orange Tree to be rooted in and reflect Richmond,' explains Education Director Imogen Bond. 'Through our participation projects we try to encourage everyone, whether or not they have any experience of theatre, to discover what we do on stage and behind the scenes. We'd like all ages to feel completely at home here, have their

curiosity sparked, learn valuable new skills, meet people and just have fun.'

Imogen joined the Orange Tree as a Trainee Director with Sam Walters and took on her current role in 2013. Every year she and her team puts together a broad range of workshops, productions, discovery visits, residency weeks and summer schools all designed to introduce locals – primarily, but not exclusively, the young – to the theatre.

'It's electric when we have a young audience in our wonderful in-the-round space,' says Imogen. 'They're so close to the action and they see and feed off each other. And, of course, we hope some will be inspired to join us. Our thriving Youth Theatre (ages 7-19) and Young Company (ages 16-19) offer a fantastic

opportunity to get involved with design, directing and producing as well as acting. Often someone will come as a seven year-old and stay all the way through.'

Imogen is particularly excited about one relatively new Orange Tree venture called Community. 'We don't want to focus solely on the young, so now we have an over-60s group that meets weekly. The participants are devising their own play, which they'll perform in the theatre, and the directors and writers working in the Main House often run sessions with them. This year, since the Community director also leads our youngest members, we'll be staging our first cross-generational show with the two age groups acting together. That will be lovely to see.'

### Orange Tree participation projects include:

**Primary Shakespeare:** An actor from The Orange Tree company visits a local primary school to work with pupils on a Shakespeare play. Children step into the characters' shoes, learn the story and then visit the theatre to see an abridged, interactive performance.

**Shakespeare Up Close:** Clear language makes this 90-minute Shakespeare production accessible for older students. The show, which also tours local schools, is followed by a workshop that analyses the production ideas.

**Explore and Discover:** Students can take a backstage tour and take part in a workshop on stage or attend a pre-show workshop in the rehearsal room which explores key themes in the play they attend that evening.

**Shakespeare Residency:** Actors from the company hold a week-long residency in a school. They focus on a Shakespeare play and, through workshops, a story is created and scenes performed by the actors and audience.

**Summer Schools:** The Orange Tree runs two week-long summer schools. Ideas are workshopped and the participants collaborate, share ideas and rehearse as a group to create a piece that is then staged in the theatre.

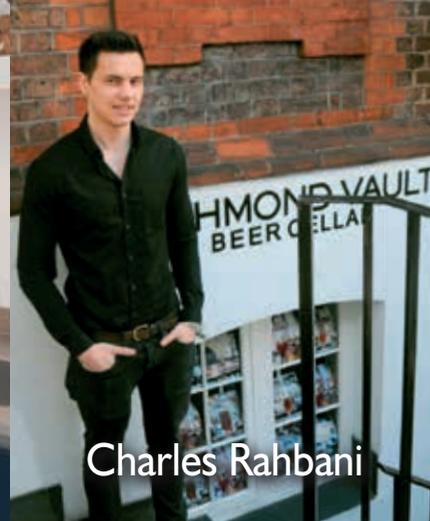
**To learn about the education programme, call 020 8940 0141 or email [education@orangetreetheatre.co.uk](mailto:education@orangetreetheatre.co.uk) [www.orangetreetheatre.co.uk](http://www.orangetreetheatre.co.uk)**

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Keith Patterson



Charles Rahbani



## COOL KITCHENS

*Whether your taste is Shaker or modern minimalist, West London Kitchens can design a bespoke solution for your budget and lifestyle*

The contemporary kitchen needs to be a perfect mix of stylish design and flexible practicality, with enough space for cooking and eating, hosting dinner parties and simply socialising with friends and family.

It is also, as Keith Patterson, owner of West London Kitchens, recognises, a major investment. 'It's a big-ticket purchase, and we're well aware of that. That's why we take such care to achieve the best design in terms of looking good, fitting seamlessly with the client's needs and, of course, meeting the budget.

'When they come to us, some people have done extensive research; they know exactly what they want, even down to where the appliances will be

placed. Others have no pre-conceived ideas, so we work with them to pinpoint what is required. The design process takes as long as it takes – but it's worth it in the end.'

Keith founded West London Kitchens in 2008, since when his team has won a reputation for craftsmanship and outstanding customer service. All the kitchens are designed and made bespoke for each client; the company specialises in German (Schuller), Italian (Aster) and English (built to order in the UK) ranges in every material, colour or finish. All come with the latest storage options and accessories as well as a five-year guarantee.

The recently launched 2018 product list has some exciting  
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additions. 'Through Schuller we can provide specialist utility room furniture, such as units for washing machine dryer stacks,' explains Keith. 'And our Italian kitchens now feature superb wood veneers – they are very special.'

Keith himself project manages the design and build process (he uses an experienced installation team) and is available as a point of contact. New clients can visit his showroom to see displays and make worktop, splashback and lighting decisions and they are welcome to view kitchens *in situ* in homes in the local area.

'We're a small operation and we take great pride in our kitchens,' says Keith. 'We always go the extra mile – that's why so much of our business comes from word-of-mouth recommendation from previous clients.'

**West London Kitchens**  
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## THE UNDERGROUND HOME OF CRAFT ALES

*One of the area's best-kept secrets, Richmond Vault offers high quality dining and an amazing array of local and international beers*

If you've never ventured down the exterior stairs of Richmond Vault, you'll probably be very surprised. Located under two Georgian buildings, it is far from the gloomy cellar dive that you might expect to find. Rather, it's a spacious multi-level labyrinth full of cosy nooks and crannies.

Charles Rahbani, the young entrepreneur who co-runs the friendly family business, is a man who really knows his beers – both local and international – and he's always on the look-out for unique, seasonal ales. The Vault's bar currently stocks over 80 bottled craft beers and 12 rotational cask or keg ales on tap; customers are always welcome to sample the tap beers before making a final decision on their drink of choice.

Charles is fortunate to have the support of his father, John, in managing the Vault. John himself is a successful restaurateur with many years experience and he's always on-hand to guide and advise and maintain standards.

In particular, John has focused on improving and refining the dining experience, adding new dishes to the menu and making sure that all the ingredients are the very best quality. He particularly recommends the mouthwatering Lamb Shank, the BBQ ribs – they are always a favourite – and the Mussels in Four Flavours.

All of these dishes perfectly accompany the huge range of beers; indeed, matching food and beer has become something of a sport among the Vault's regulars. As well as  
Advertorial

the excellent food and beers, a superb selection of fine wines and a wide range of tempting cocktails are also always available.

At the weekend (starting on Friday nights) the Vault hosts popular live music sessions that add to the wonderful atmosphere, whether you're having a drink at the bar, enjoying a meal or hosting a big party. 'We often find that even long-time Richmond residents don't know about us,' says Charles. 'So, we'd love them to come for a drink, a meal or just for a pre-theatre or Filmhouse stop-off.'

**Richmond Vault Beer Cellar & Restaurant**  
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www.richmondvault.co.uk



Dave Halpin



Ravinder Menon

## THE GASMAN COMETH...

*Spring and summer are the perfect opportunity to service, maintain and install boilers and central heating systems*

Inevitably, with warmer weather on the horizon, any nagging worries about the lifespan or energy efficiency of domestic boilers and gas central heating systems get pushed onto the backburner. And that's exactly the wrong way to think!

'Boilers should be serviced annually and spring and summer are the time to do it,' confirms Dave Halpin, owner of Gasworks London. 'In winter, Gas Safe registered engineers like us get very busy. So, acting now could avoid expensive emergency call-outs – and we're offering a special 20% spring and summer discount on servicing if this article is mentioned.'

Dave founded his company in 2006 and he provides a 24-hour service throughout West London, focusing in

particular on Richmond and Chiswick. Prior to that he spent 15 years with British Gas. 'I felt the time was right to set up on my own; I had the experience and expertise and I wanted to be in charge of my own destiny.'

Intentionally, Gasworks London is a small operation. 'I'm a bit of a control freak and I enjoy getting my hands dirty on repairs and installations,' admits Dave. 'I have a two-man team (James and Manveer), but I always like to be involved with every job. That way I can ensure everything is done to the standard I'd expect in my own home.'

'We take pride in both our work – there's great satisfaction when a problem is resolved quickly and efficiently – and offering a

friendly service. We don't charge an upfront fee and, if a job only takes two minutes, we never charge for the full hour.'

Dave likes to get to know his clients and he estimates that 90% live within 15 minutes of his house in Poet's Corner. 'We want them to be able to trust us in their homes. That's why so much of our business comes from repeat customers and word-of-mouth referrals.'

### Services provided by Gasworks London include:

- \* Boiler repair and installation
- \* Boiler servicing \* Landlord gas safety checks \* Central heating \* Boiler exchange \* Power Flushing \* Unvented Megafluo Cylinders

### Gasworks London

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Advertorial

## KEEP IT CLEAN!

*Elite Textile Care provides eco-friendly wet cleaning, expert tailoring and the opportunity to sell clothing*

Go behind the scenes at Elite Textile Care and you're struck by the Tardis-like nature of the premises. Behind the counter there's a huge room – and that's exactly what prompted owners, Ravinder and Menon, to expand their dry cleaning operation to include bespoke tailoring, alterations and even a retail area in which the public can sell their pre-used clothes.

Strictly speaking, Elite Textile Care isn't a dry cleaners at all: it is a wet cleaning business. 'We've taken a conscious decision to pursue the eco-friendly wet cleaning route,' Ravinder emphasises. 'That means no solvents and no toxins. Traditional dry cleaners use

a strong liquid solvent called perchloroethylene (perc) which, while it's an effective stain remover, changes the texture of fabrics and leaves a smell. Wet cleaning is good for clothing, good for the wearer and environmentally aware; in fact, we achieve better results with a wet clean because we can work with sequins, beads, lace, silk and delicate fabrics.'

The second string to Elite Textile Care's bow is a comprehensive repair, restoration and alteration service for garments, sofa covers, rugs, shoes, boots and handbags. 'We can handle most things in-house – shortening trousers, tapering jackets, taking in a suit, altering the shape of a gown, wool and cashmere darning,'

Advertorial

explains Ravinder. 'And when we have suede and leather items, which seem popular just now, we liaise with a local company with the necessary specialist machinery.'

To make the most of their space, the husband and wife team has started allowing clients to sell clothing – it must be in good condition – that has been gathering dust in the wardrobe. 'It's a 50:50 arrangement and we keep items on the rails for three months,' says Ravinder. 'And if someone finds a dress in a size 12 but needs it in size 10, we can do the alteration.'

'Whichever of our services customers want to use, we're happy to give practical advice and set out all the options so they can make the best decision.'

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Stephanie Villalba

# IT'S ALL IN THE METHOD

*Artist Stephanie Villalba and her team of tutors are providing all ages with the chance to learn classical artistic skills and be creative in an inspiring studio space*

I'd say that the omens are promising for Chelsea Fine Arts. Recently opened in Ravenscourt Park, this exciting venture, which is the brainchild of artist Stephanie Villalba, provides fine arts classes for children and adults (and much more besides).

My snap judgement is based purely on how hard Stephanie and I found it to grab a few moments peace and quiet for a chat. Even though it was 'out of hours', a stream of aspiring artists kept appearing at the light teaching studio-cum-exhibition space-cum-art shop to enquire about classes.

Stephanie is convinced that everyone – whether naturally gifted or a complete beginner –

can learn to draw and paint if they follow a proven teaching method and receive personal attention. 'The students at our Chelsea studio have produced amazing results,' she says. 'We'll be using the same approach here, so it's lovely that we're already attracting interest.'

The Chelsea Fine Arts method is founded on the belief that latent artistic talent can only be discovered once the basics have been learned. 'We're not teaching talent: that cannot be taught. We're teaching classical skills; without mastering them, the ability to create will always be limited,' explains Stephanie.

'Look at early works by Picasso and Pollock and you see how technically adept they were.

Advertorial

Fundamentally, our method is based on showing students how to observe and then critically analyse what they see. Focusing on tone and line, we prompt them to break down the way they view objects; from these building blocks, they can develop an original vision.'

Term-time, half-term and holiday classes for 8-18 year olds are mixed, with each child taught on an individualised basis and a ratio of four students to a tutor. All materials are provided (including art and photography reference books and framing service) and the tutors, who are artists themselves, have been trained to follow the method. The still-life set-ups are composed to concentrate on a specific skill, such as perspective, composition or using complementary colours.

'We also teach in every media, because each is relevant to a particular technique,' adds Stephanie. 'For example, charcoal is excellent for encouraging students to see big shapes and bold tones while ink and pencil helps identify textures and line work.'

When she started Chelsea Fine Arts, Stephanie only intended to teach children. That soon changed when parents saw how much fun was being had and how much progress made. 'At Chelsea, I kept being asked for an adult programme, so that's how that began. Here at Ravenscourt Park we hold two adult drop-in classes (Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings) for complete novices and those who want to refresh long-forgotten skills.'

Stephanie is delighted with the new space. 'We're so lucky to have north-facing light here and, because it's a street-front location, we'll also be holding quarterly exhibitions.' She is also keen to stress that absolutely no experience is needed to make the most of the classes. 'Yesterday two young children came for the first time; they were nervous, but they loved it. Those students are so satisfying to teach. Often the ones that progress fastest are those who arrive knowing nothing.'

## Chelsea Fine Arts

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Peter Hughes

– which complement our existing stock,’ he explains.

When Peter is away sourcing new products, his colleague Pauline Singh, who coincidentally grew up in Homefield Road opposite the showroom, looks after the business. Both are happy to provide expert advice, including recommendations for reliable local craftsman to fit tiles. ‘One of the most popular current trends is to bring the outside in,’ says Pauline. ‘That’s why there’s such a strong demand for stone and cement-effect tiles.’

Whichever room you want to refresh and refurbish, at Hugo Ceramics you’ll receive friendly customer service and be able to choose from a whole host of tile options to suit all tastes.



Pauline Singh

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## TILE INSPIRATION

*Whatever the tile – decorative or practical – you’ll be spoilt for choice at Hugo Ceramics*

In September last year Peter Hughes opened a stylish new Chiswick showroom for Hugo Ceramics (Intceram Ltd), his bespoke tile business. Peter co-owns the operation with Darryl Shaw, who runs the Leeds office and warehouse, and it’s fair to say that, just over six months on, it has proved to be a wise decision.

‘We feel settled on the High Road, we’re enjoying being here and, encouragingly, we seem to have made a positive impression,’ says Peter. ‘Footfall in the showroom is coming along nicely and we’ve secured some good local corporate contracts. At the moment, we’re focusing on fine-tuning what we offer; for example, following customer enquiries we now stock a selection of anti-slip tiles

which are ideal for exterior areas and we’ve also expanded our range of kitchen tiles.’

The Hugo Ceramics portfolio covers a huge array of inspirational designs in exciting formats and effects – polished, stone, cement, marble, wood and many more – in both porcelain and ceramic tiles.

Over the years, Peter has built relationships with major factories worldwide but, most importantly, he is the exclusive UK representative for Yurtbay Seramik, the prestigious Turkish manufacturer. In addition, he has recently signed a contract with the Brazilian company, Incepa. ‘They offer different sizes – 90 x 90cm, 75 x 75cm and 120 x 120cm

Advertorial



Matt Goslett

## THE HOUSE HUNTER

*Whether you are upsizing, downsizing or putting a first foot on the housing ladder, Matt Goslett is the property detective*

‘Recently, an artist asked me to find him a Studio. For the last 15 years he’d been using the upstairs reception of his house as a workspace; originally, he’d promised his wife that it would only ever be a temporary arrangement. I searched the market, saw plenty of options and, eventually, discovered an old 1500 square foot recording studio in Acton. He loved it – and bought it. And now his wife has got her room back.’

Independent Property Consultant Matt Goslett is recalling one of his more unusual commissions. Most of his work, however, focuses on residential homes. ‘I only represent the purchaser, whereas an estate agent is always obliged to act for the

vendor,’ he explains. ‘And where an agent can only show what’s on their books, I cover the entire market.’

Matt takes a very detailed brief from each client. ‘No two are ever the same and I need to have a clear idea of exactly what is required. That’s why I drill down beyond the fundamentals of budget, location and number of rooms; for example, does the client need to be near a school or good transport links? Or an open space or shops? Do they want a garden, a garage or a parking space?’

Of course, if someone is unrealistic about what their budget can achieve, I have to be honest and say so.’

Advertorial

Armed with the relevant information, Matt then scours the market for properties that match the search criteria. ‘I will go and see as many places as it takes for as long as it takes. Then I present the most promising prospects and arrange viewings. I also conduct all the price negotiations, can put clients in touch with a solicitor or mortgage broker and, if minor cosmetic work is needed, I know reputable contractors.’

Matt, who grew up in Kew and went to school in Richmond, has worked in the property sector for over 10 years. ‘I provide my clients with a completely bespoke, capital-wide service,’ he says. ‘And I always take great pride and pleasure in finding them their dream homes.’

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Martin, Jake and Josh Herdman

# IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

*Investing in new carpet or flooring? Whether you know an Axminster from a Saxony, the Herdmans will give excellent personal service*

When Martin Herdman says that his carpet business is family owned and operated, he means it. Established in 1987 on Crown Road, St Margarets (the showroom moved from No 24 to No 35 in 2006), it is run by three generations: there's Martin Snr, his brother Stuart and sister Sarah, Martin's sons Jake, Josh, Martin Jnr and Luke and Martin Jnr's sons, Harry and Martin III.

So, the inevitable question: how do they get along? Martin smiles: 'Like any family, we have the odd drama. But we're honest with each other, and that works well. Also, when a customer comes to us – whether for advice in the showroom, to get an estimate or to have a carpet fitted –

they'll always deal with a family member. We never use sub-contractors, everything is done by one of us.'

The Herdmans are an interesting bunch. A carpet fitter by trade, Martin is an ex-professional Rugby League player and also an actor with credits in TV and stage productions. Son Josh has followed in his footsteps by appearing in the Harry Potter films while Jake is a former Royal Marine commando.

What the family shares is a passion for the business and a pride in their professionalism. 'Anything that goes on the floor, whatever the style or budget, we can do it,' explains Martin. 'We supply and fit all carpets and natural flooring,

Advertorial

every type of hard floor, vinyl, linoleum, Karndean, laminate, bamboo, you name it...

'We also provide a shop-at-home service for the elderly, lift and dispose of old flooring and move and replace furniture. We carry out sub-floor work, repair floorboards, sand and varnish, trim doors and we're happy to disconnect and reconnect kitchen equipment.'

Personal service is the watchword for the Herdmans. 'We're members of the Guild of Master Craftsmen and proud of our reputation for being friendly and reliable,' says Martin. 'With us, you can have complete peace of mind that the job will be done properly from start to finish by a family member.'

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## **The Herdman Family Carpet Shop**

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