

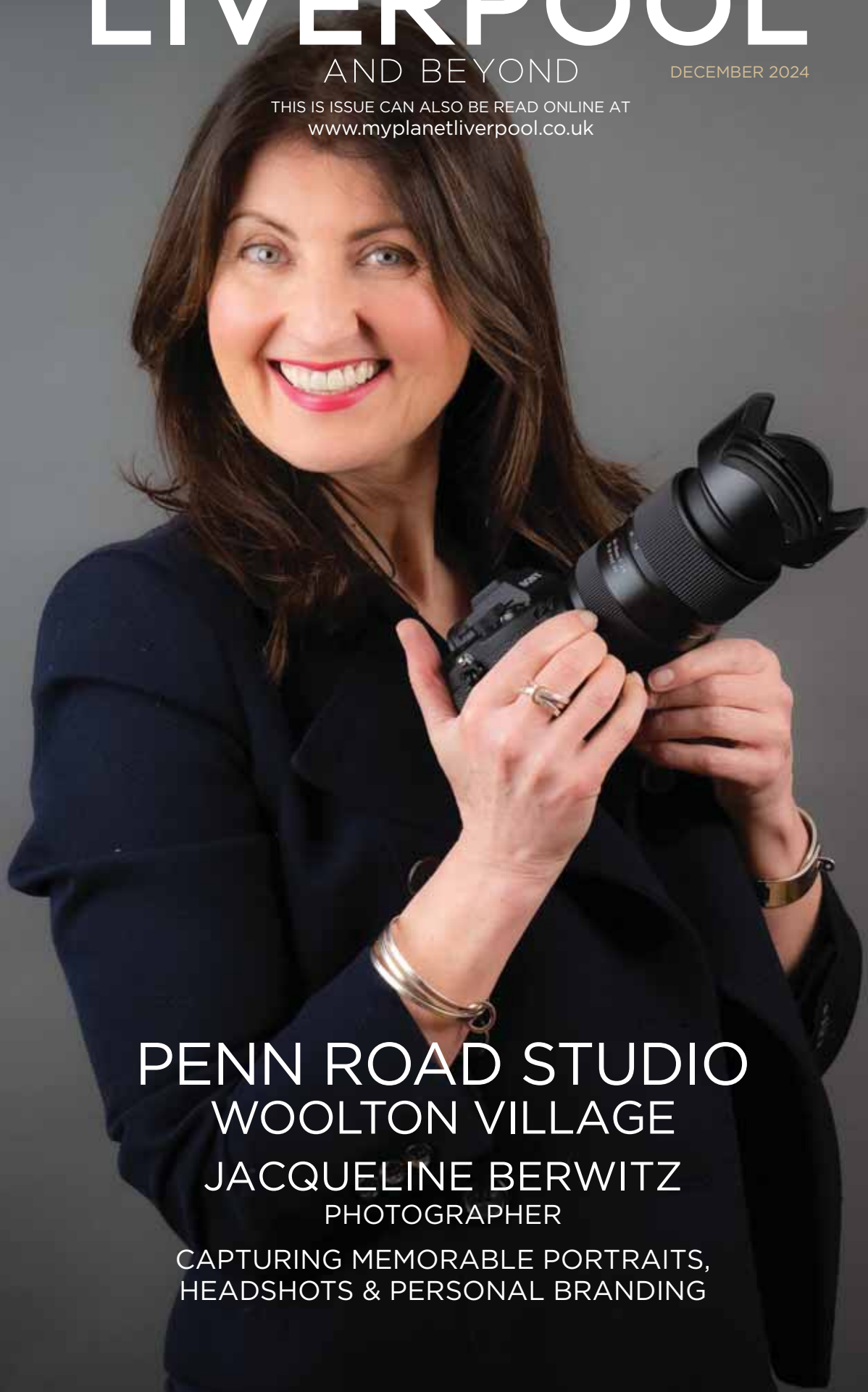
CELEBRATING OUR REGION THROUGH THE STORIES OF ITS PEOPLE

MY PLANET LIVERPOOL

AND BEYOND

DECEMBER 2024

THIS ISSUE CAN ALSO BE READ ONLINE AT
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MY PLANET
LIVERPOOL
AND BEYOND

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DECEMBER 2024

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SPECIAL FEATURE



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EVENTS



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WINE FEATURE



HEALTH & WELLBEING



SOCIAL



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LIVERPOOL SPORTSWOMAN'S LUNCH 2024 RAISES £38,000 FOR THE HIVE

LIVERPOOL SPORTSWOMAN'S LUNCH (LSL) 2024 HAS ONCE AGAIN EXCEEDED ITS PREVIOUS FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AND RAISED AN INCREDIBLE £38,000 FOR THE HIVE YOUTH ZONE (SEE OVERLEAF).

THE LSL was created in 2017 by Clare Brookfield of Primas Law, Marena Mondair of EMW Law LLP and Bathgate's Natalie Dye. The three founders have since been joined on the LSL Board by Natalie Dickson of Freeths LLP, Lucy Shotter of Bibby Financial Services, Lynne Pierce of Flavell Wealth Management, Ruth Kirby of NatWest, Louise Molloy of Metro Bank and Alice Gegan of Langtons.



It is the third consecutive year that the event has surpassed its previous year's fundraising total. Its inaugural year saw £7k raised for Alder Hey Children's Hospital, in year two it raised £11k for the Encephalitis Society, and year three saw almost £7k raised for NSPCC. In 2022 the event raised £20,250 for Marie Curie and last year it upped its game once again to raise more than £30,000 for LFC Foundation.

Natalie Dye from Bathgate Business Finance said: "We are overjoyed that we have once again smashed our previous year's fundraising efforts and grateful to our guests for their incredible generosity, which has allowed us to raise an amazing £38k for The Hive Youth Zone in Wirral.

"The work The Hive does is absolutely invaluable, providing a safe space and support for so many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. As Founder Patrons of The Hive nothing makes the team at Bathgate Business Finance happier than to know such a brilliant amount has been raised to help The Hive continue its vital work!"

The LSL's latest event took place on Thursday 12th September 2024 at Liverpool Football Club, and was hosted by radio personality, Darren Proctor. Guest speaker was Natalie Dowie, the former Liverpool and Everton player and England international. On retiring from playing in 2023, Natasha was appointed as Liverpool Football Club's first official female ambassador.

During the day, Charlotte, a young person who has used The Hive's services, shared her own experience of the invaluable work that the organisation does on a daily basis. Charlotte spoke from the heart, captivating the room of 360 guests.

For information about Liverpool Sportswoman's Lunch 2025, stay tuned to the website for updates:

<https://www.liverpoolsportswomanlunch.co.uk/>

Photographs by Arthur Gold Photography

DIANA AWARD JUDGING HONOUR FOR FRANCESCA



Francesca 'Fran' Darcy is the Fundraising and Communications Manager at SWAN Women's Centre in Litherland, Liverpool and is currently a trainee Blue Badge Tourist Guide for Liverpool City Region.

Well-known in our region for her many years of fundraising and work on behalf of a variety of charities and fundraising events, Fran applied earlier this year to be a judge for this year's prestigious Diana Awards.

The Diana Award is the most prestigious accolade a young person aged between 9-25 years can receive for their social action or humanitarian work. Established in 1999 in honour of the late Diana Princess of Wales by a board chaired by former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the Award was founded in tribute to Diana's belief that young people have the power to change their community, their country and the world.

This year celebrating its 25th anniversary, the Diana Award organisation has been working with hundreds of young people since its founding to do just that.

Applications to be a judge for the Diana Awards are received by the organisation from all around the world and this year saw more nominations than ever, with well in excess of 1,000 applicants. So it was a great feeling for Fran when, on the 23rd August, she received an email informing her that her application was successful and that she would be one of the 80 judges, chosen from 6 continents and 35 countries, for the awards, which will take place at a virtual ceremony on December 5th 2024.

Fran says, "I actually received a Diana Award in November 2003, when I was aged 15. I was a Year 11 pupil at St Edward's College, and received it for my fundraising efforts for local charities.

Fran, now 36 years of age, first began fundraising when she was just a young girl of 9 years of age. She adds, "I began fundraising for local charities such as Claire House Children's Hospice, Woodlands Hospice, Marie Curie Cancer Care (Woolton Hospice), Zoe's Place, Diabetes UK, to name but a few, and by the time I was 18 years old I had raised over £60,000 for local causes."

She started her professional fundraising career in 2011, becoming a community fundraiser at Alzheimer's Society. In 2012, she organised the first Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk at Aintree Racecourse and just one year later the walk raised £60,000. Since then, the Memory Walk has developed into a nationwide flagship event that still takes place every year.

As a fundraising officer for Nugent, in 2017 she helped devise, organise and host the charity's Strictly Nugent event, which raised £25,000, and twelve months later she worked as a community fundraising manager for Clatterbridge Cancer Charity, supporting the campaign to raise funds for the Clatterbridge Cancer Hospital Development in Liverpool. She managed corporate partnerships and worked on promoting the community build of a LEGO replica of the hospital.

Alongside her charitable fundraising work, Fran loves everything about her home city of Liverpool, especially our city's great history and architecture, and she is currently self-funding her application to complete the course that will see her become one of Liverpool's prestigious Blue Badge Tourist Guides



My Planet Liverpool wishes her every success in achieving her ambition and in all her future endeavours.

HAPPY 5TH ANNIVERSARY FOR HK INTERIORS



HELEN KAUFMAN IS THE PROUD OWNER OF HK INTERIORS, LIVERPOOL, AND ON WEDNESDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2024, HELEN AND HER TEAM CELEBRATED THE SUCCESS THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE SKILFUL INTERIOR DESIGNING OF A HOST OF HOMES SINCE OPENING THEIR SHOP/STUDIO 5 YEARS AGO TO THE DAY.

THE special anniversary evening was organised by Propel PR, with a guest list of 50 people enjoying an evening of cocktails, fizz and canapés, while hearing from Helen and special guest, Interior & Lifestyle content creator, Ellie Furlong, as the duo spoke about 'design trends versus longevity'.

This was followed by a live and informative Question and Answer session with Helen and Ellie, focusing on all things interior design, which went down a treat with all those in attendance at Helen's delightful Aigburth Road venue.

At the start of her career, Helen, who has a Fine Art degree and a Foundation degree in Visual Merchandising and Promotional Design, completed a work experience placement and 12 years later had worked her way up to Head Designer before making the decision to set up on her own and launch HK Interiors, whilst raising three wonderful children in between.

She said, "Owning my own business was such a huge achievement for me and so rewarding! It continues to be so for the talented designer. "I love designing and being creative and of course seeing the end result of our work and making my clients happy.

"Throughout these past five years I have always been grateful to be able to provide our design service for clients throughout the North West and help them to create a home that they truly love. I believe that a home should be a reflection of people's lifestyles and personalities and here at HK Interiors we strive to fit those traits to each of the rooms we design for our clients.

"To be able to mark the occasion of my first 5 years of owning my own business with tonight's celebration is so wonderful for me. I loved meeting the people, many new to me, who came along this evening to help me celebrate and I was also delighted to be able to give my own personal touch to the live questions Ellie and I faced.

"One of the most important things about working in a creative industry is passion! I believe you have to love what you do – and I certainly do."



“ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN A CREATIVE INDUSTRY IS PASSION! I BELIEVE YOU HAVE TO LOVE WHAT YOU DO - AND I CERTAINLY DO.”

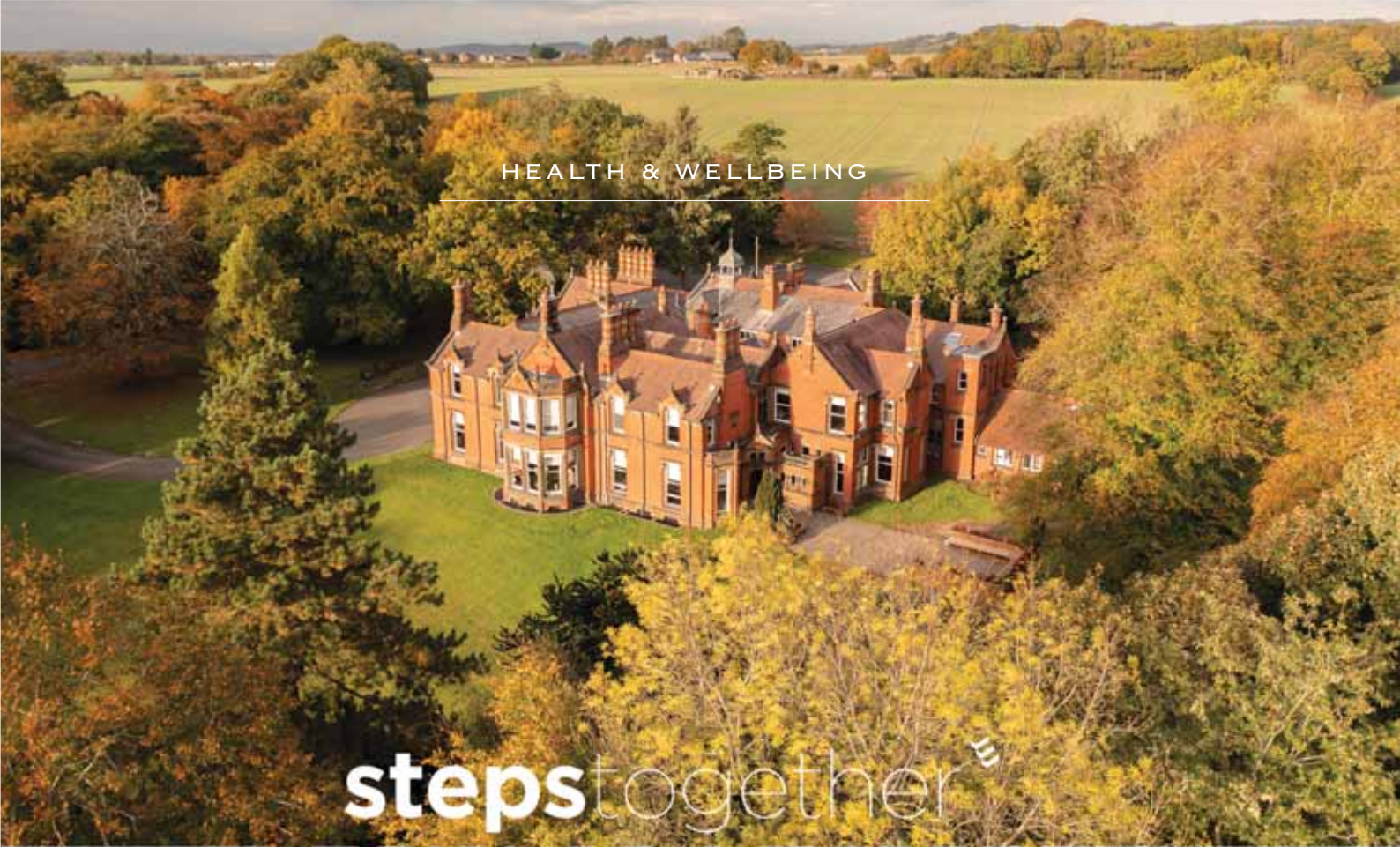
Are you looking to refurnish your home? Want to have a new look for your living room or bedroom or searching for that special piece to enhance one or more of your rooms?

VISIT HK INTERIORS AND CHAT WITH HELEN FOR HER EXPERT ADVICE.

HK INTERIORS • 390 AIGBURTH ROAD • AIGBURTH • LIVERPOOL L19 3QD • TEL: 0151 345 6944

Facebook: HK interiors Liverpool • Instagram: Helen Kaufman Creative Director at HK Interiors





steps together RAINFORD HALL

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION REHABILITATION CENTRE — MERSEYSIDE —

LOCATED on the outskirts of Lancashire and Merseyside, the historic Rainford Hall Estate, former home of the Pilkington (Glass) Family, is today managed and operated by the Steps Together organisation, with Rainford Hall providing a sanctuary for those looking to reset, reframe and recover from poor mental health or addiction.

The estate boast 600 acres of woodland and open countryside, creating the perfect haven for Steps Together to deliver a unique range of residential, outpatient and tailored retreat programmes.

During the global COVID Pandemic, Steps Together saw a 30% increase in demand for adults experiencing difficulty with their mental health or who had begun to develop an unhealthy relationship with alcohol or drugs (including prescribed medication) in the North West of England, and the company decided the time was right to invest in the development of a new facility within the North West.

In November 2021, Deputy CEO, Steve Jones embarked on the complex and ambitious restoration of The Hall, supported by primary contractors sourced from our region including AP Mitchell Group, James Roberts Interiors and TJM Projects. This collaboration worked tirelessly to create the perfect sanctuary for people to recover under the expert guidance and design from Azzurri Architects (Wirral).

Today, the Hall has been beautifully and sympathetically restored and now boasts 19 individual luxury bedroom suites; each with their own unique character, style and charm, with a choice of rooms to suit everyone, from classic standard, country deluxe, heritage suite and executive suites. All en-suite rooms are beautifully refurbished to provide the most comfortable and luxurious stay and each of the rooms are individually named and styled to ensure the heritage of Rainford Hall has been maintained. Dedicated clinical, therapy and hospitality spaces, combined

with a purpose built gym and SPA facility, make this property the perfect place for anyone suffering from poor mental health, stress, anxiety, burn-out or addiction to Reset – Reframe – Recover.

Each programme is carefully designed by Steps Together’s expert teams to ensure a winning combination that supports individuals, families and employers, achieve and secure sustained improvement and recovery from poor mental health and wellbeing or addictions.

Steps Together was established in 2017 by former addict Darren Rolfe, who for more than 24 years has been in long-term recovery. In 2016, Darren took the first steps on his journey to help others when he decided the time was right for him to create his life dream and set up his own private addiction service. The following year everything was in place for Darren to fulfil his personal ambition and he proudly opened his own rehabilitation centre, Bank House in Nottinghamshire. After two successful years, supporting over 400 clients each year, Darren and his team opened a second centre in 2019, The Chestnuts, in Leicestershire. Steps Together continues to grow and today has locations throughout the Midlands and the North West, including Rainford Hall, each centre aiming to change many people’s lives and secure freedom from addiction or poor mental health and wellbeing.

Darren said, “I was personally immersed for over 20 years in a community of my own addiction treatment journey. During that time I learned more and more about addiction disease, effective treatment programmes, therapy and poor mental health conditions. During the last 25 years I have stood alongside many families and addicts full of fear, anxiety and pain. I have heard first-hand the overwhelming sense of powerlessness, emotional guilt, poor physical health and feelings of worthless under the shadow and shame of addiction or mental health.”



“TODAY I STAND PROUD IN REALISING WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED AT STEPS TOGETHER OVER THE LAST 7 YEARS. I AM BLESSED TO BE SURROUNDED BY THE MOST DEDICATED, PASSIONATE AND INSPIRING STAFF, AND I AM EVEN MORE BLESSED TO BE AN ACTIVE PART OF THE AMAZING WORK MY COLLEAGUES DO EVERY DAY TO SUPPORT OUR CLIENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR OWN RECOVERY FROM POOR MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTION, AND WATCH AS THEIR FAMILY LIVES ARE RE-BUILT - FREEDOM FOR EVERYONE!”

DARREN ROLFE



Steve Jones Deputy CEO (on left) and Darren Rolfe (Founder CEO Steps Together)

OUTPATIENT & RETREAT PROGRAMMES

The priority at Steps Together in the North West is to ensure that clients, their families and businesses can secure lasting recovery, improved health & wellbeing – psychological, physical and emotional – for those in difficulty with their own mental health or addiction.

Steps Together at the Rainford Hall Estate offers an extensive range of professional outpatient services which are perfect for those who may not need residential treatment. Their outpatient programmes offer a range of flexible packages that include clinical, therapy and assessment services for Mental Health & Wellbeing, Stress, Anxiety and Addiction. Physical Health Care or Specialist Psychiatric Conditions can also be arranged at a time that is right for you, your loved one or your colleague.

Rainford Hall Estate also boast a beautiful and private cottage, dating back to 1735 which provides Steps Together with an additional 4 bed facility to deliver bespoke health, wellbeing and trauma related therapy retreats – a unique offering that cannot be found anywhere in the UK and is the perfect solution for small specialist therapy groups and specialist residential training courses for employers concerned about mental health, wellbeing, stress or burnout for their workforce.

Steve Jones, Deputy CEO Steps Together, says, “Reinstating Rainford Hall back to its former glory, and creating a safe, homely sanctuary for people to get well, was key to our mission at Steps Together. The COVID Pandemic taught us a great deal, and we remain inundated to this day, with enquiries from people struggling with addiction or their mental health – grief, loss, stress, burnout, anxiety and trauma can often lead to an unhealthy relationship with alcohol, drugs or prescribed medication, and during the course of the next twelve months Steps Together are dedicated to developing a range of outpatient services across major cities within the North West, Midlands and beyond. This will be essential to ensure we can support and reach out to many more people, their families and our colleagues in business, to secure excellent recovery from addiction and improve the mental health and wellbeing for those struggling in our regions.”

“Today I stand proud in realising what we have achieved at Steps Together over the last 7 years. I am blessed to be surrounded by the most dedicated, passionate and inspiring staff, and I am even more blessed to be an active part of the amazing work my colleagues do every day to support our clients to achieve their own recovery from poor mental health or addiction, and watch as their family lives are re-built – freedom for everyone!”

The vision of Steps Together is clear – Steps Together Group provide a collection of Private Residential and Non Residential treatment services that support individuals, families, employers and communities in order to provide the best possible service to those experiencing difficulty with, or affected by, the devastating impact that addiction or poor mental health has on their lives and wellbeing. Across Steps Together’s range of therapy services at Rainford Hall, qualified clinical teams, therapists and addiction specialists use the very best evidenced-based techniques to deliver a diverse structured programme of treatment – either residential or outpatient based. These services are designed to adapt to the unique needs of clients, their families and their employers, using a variety of safe and effective clinical and therapy techniques built around the needs of each unique individual and their circumstances.

FEATURED OVERLEAF THE STEPS TOGETHER SHINE AWARDS 2024 ... ➔



For more information please visit www.rainfordhall.com or to make an enquiry call **0330 053 3962**



Darren Rolfe

Founder CEO – Steps Together Group said:

“At Steps Together we believe in celebrating recovery from addiction for everyone – the addict, their family and especially their children. We also believe in celebrating our employees and promoting a safe and inclusive environment. The launching of the SHINE Awards are a testament to our commitment to both professional excellence and employee wellbeing.”

A portion of the evening’s proceeds will be donated to Nacoa (The National Association for Children of Alcoholics). Nacoa was founded in 1990 to address the needs of children affected by a parent’s drinking or similar addictive problem. This includes children of all ages, many of whose problems only become apparent in adulthood. Many people are unaware that a total of 1 in 5 children in the UK are affected by their parents’ drinking. NACOA are there to help.

Darren added, “The SHINE Awards are not just about celebrating success, they are also about giving back to the community. This alcohol-free event allowed everyone to feel comfortable and enjoy the evening to the fullest. The holding of our SHINE awards enabled us to not only celebrate our own ‘Family of Colleagues’ at Steps Together, but also the amazing and life-changing work undertaken every day by Nacoa, work that helps children affected by an alcoholic parent, including many adults affected by their own parent’s alcoholism.”



Hilary Henriques MBE

Nacoa Founder and CEO commented:

“We are so proud to be the chosen charity by Steps Together for their Shine Awards. With its innovative alcohol-free take, this is what being the change looks like, all the while raising funds and awareness for Nacoa and some of the most vulnerable children we have in our society.

“Steps Together are creating a virtuous cycle which breaks down stigma and will lead to individuals affected feeling that they are being seen and know that they aren’t alone and that there are ways to protect themselves and feel better.

“We have started on a journey that will change the lives of people in need and celebrate the unsung heroes in our community who support them.”

“As Founder of NACOA I was so excited to be invited to this event that recognises the hard work of those making a difference at Steps Together.”

STEPS TOGETHER SHOWCASES THE FIRST-EVER UK CORPORATE ALCOHOL-FREE AWARDS CEREMONY WITH A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE & CHARITY FUNDRAISING

STEPS TOGETHER GROUP UK HAS BEEN PROVIDING A WINNING COMBINATION OF RESIDENTIAL AND OUTPATIENT ADDICTION AND REHABILITATION SERVICES SINCE 2017 AND TO CELEBRATE ITS SEVEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY, ALONG WITH THE SECOND YEAR SINCE THE OPENING OF THEIR RAINFORD HALL RETREAT HERE ON MERSEYSIDE, STEPS TOGETHER HOSTED ITS VERY FIRST STAFF AWARD CEREMONY.

PARTNERED with their chosen charity Nacoa, (The National Association for Children of Alcoholic parents) and Claritee Group, the ‘Sober Event’ organiser specialists, Steps Together titled this unique occasion as: **THE SHINE AWARDS**.

The night certainly SHINED on Liverpool as the event, the first-ever UK Corporate Alcohol Free Awards ceremony, took place at the iconic Titanic Hotel on Wednesday 11th September, recognising the hard work and achievements of Steps Together Group employees, who are the unsung team heroes in their dedication to addiction and mental health treatment.

The evening was also aimed at raising awareness and vital funding for Nacoa, a charity which has been supporting

children affected by alcoholic parents since ITS founding in 1990.

Hosted by ‘Greatest Hits’ Radio Presenter & National Broadcaster, **Simon Ross** aka “**Rossi**”, Steps Together Group UK were joined for the evening by an amazing line-up of special guests that included TV personality and entrepreneur, **Calum Best**, who is Patron of Nacoa Charity, **Paul Sculfor**, British model and actor, Liverpool boxing legend **Billy Moore**, TV Personality, **Chanita Stephenson**, Actor **Paul Denan**, musician **Chris O’Neil**, and Actress and Producer, **Terri Dwyer**,

It was a night of vibrant celebration, the highlights of which featured celebrity guests, alcohol-free drinks, high performance gymnastics from members of JD Aerial Fitness Academy, live music from New Power Soul Club, Viva Brasil Samba Dancers, and a variety of engaging arcade-style games, all combining to make for a unique and unforgettable experience, enjoyed in an atmosphere that was truly electric, with the evening finishing off with a wonderful set of after-party tunes from the renowned DJ, **Mark Armstrong**.

THE SHINE AWARDS | 2024

Celebrity, businessman, and son of footballing legend George Best, **Calum Best** has been a patron of Nacoa for over 16 years and is passionate about helping children who have experienced similar circumstances to him.

He believes that talking about his father’s addiction has helped him heal and that he can help others by sharing his journey.

Calum hopes that children and young people will feel comfortable asking him for help and know that things can be different for them if they talk about it. He says, “If I’d known there was someone that I could talk to, or even someone to listen, it would have helped me understand and cope with my dad’s illness.

“It is so important for me to be a patron of NACOA and I was very excited to be invited to this event, one that recognises the hard work of those making a difference at Steps Together.”



www.rainfordhall.com • www.stepstogether.co.uk





“I was so proud to attend the Shine Awards because it's a way of recognising the people and the community around us that support those striving to overcome alcoholism. Addiction causes separation from family, friends, community and ultimately yourself, which is why it's important to reach out for support from those that can help you to be yourself again, to be loved by others and to love. Someone with addiction can easily fall down that route again, which is why community is so important, providing support and understanding.”
Paul Sculfor, Founder of Stride Foundation

THE SHINE AWARDS CELEBS

- 1 Simon Ross 'Rossie' (National Radio Presenter)
- 2 Terri Dwyer (Actress and TV Presenter)
- 3 Paul Sculfor (Renowned Male Model and Actor and Founder of Stride Foundation)
- 4 Chris O'Neil (Musician)
- 5 Chanita Stephenson (Star of TV's Married at First Sight UK and Official Ambassador for Nacoo)
- 6 Paul Danan (Actor, TV Personality and CEO of Morning After Drama Workshops)
- 7 Billy Moore (Former Liverpool Boxer and Author of the acclaimed book 'A Prayer Before Dawn')
- 8 Lorri Haines (Emotion-focused therapy (EFT) practitioner and Ambassador for Nacoo and CEO at Shoorah Ltd)
- 9 Sarah Drage (Mental Health Advocate and Ambassador for Nacoo)
- 10 Ian Stringer (Sports Commentator and Event Host)
- 11 Bobby Goulding (Rugby League and England & Great Britain legend)
- 12 Anthony Sandle (Major, Second-in-Command, Unit 156 Royal Logistics Corps)
- 13 Steve Jones (Deputy CEO Steps Together), Lisa Brown (Business Development Lead Steps Together), Darren Rolfe (Founder CEO Steps Together), Paul Mudie (Operations Director Steps Together) and John Wilson (Director of Therapy Services, Steps Together)
- 14 Thomas Hartley (aka Pam Sandwich) Star of TV'S Married at First Sight)



VIVA BRASIL Samba Dancers



Mark Armstrong DJ



New Power Soul Club





- 1 CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**
WINNER: THE CHESTNUTS CLINICAL TEAM LEICESTERSHIRE
 SPONSORED BY: HEALTH ASSURED (PENINSULA GROUP)
 PRESENTED BY: BERTRAND STERN GILLET & BONNIE MILLER
 RUNNER-UP: RAINFORD HALL CLINICAL TEAM
- 2 BREAKING THROUGH ADVERSITY AWARD**
WINNER: MARIE TIMPSON (THE CHESTNUTS)
 SPONSORED BY: THE KATIE PIPER FOUNDATION
 PRESENTED BY: KATE NAISH & JOHANNE HARRISON
 RUNNER-UP: STACEY HAND (RAINFORD HALL)
- 3 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**
WINNER: KERRY DREW (GROUP HQ – SALES)
 SPONSORED BY: THE PILKINGTON FAMILY
 PRESENTED BY: BOBBY GOULDING AND DAVID AND JEREMY PILKINGTON
 RUNNER-UP: SUE COCKAYNE (BANK HOUSE)
- 4 PRIDE OF STEPS TOGETHER, LGBTQIA+ AWARD**
WINNER: DAVE SLATER (THE CHESTNUTS)
 SPONSORED BY: LCR PRIDE FOUNDATION
 PRESENTED BY: CABARET STAR PAM SANDWICH AKA THOMAS HARTLEY
 RUNNER-UP: TRACEY MANNIX (RAINFORD HALL)
- 5 THE RACHAEL PRYDDERCH RECOVERY OUTCOMES AWARD**
WINNER: RAINFORD HALL THERAPY TEAM
 SPONSORED BY: THE STRIDE FOUNDATION
 PRESENTED BY: PAUL SCULFOR
 RUNNER-UP: PAUL BROWN (GEORGE HALL)
- 6 STEPS OUTSTANDING MEDIA AWARD**
WINNER: CHANTELE BRADSHAW (GROUP HQ MARKETING)
 SPONSORED BY: HELLO WEB
 PRESENTED BY: IAN STRINGER (SPORTS COMMENTATOR & EVENT HOST)
 RUNNER-UP: AINSLEY MOORECROFT (RAINFORD HALL)
- 7 NACOA YOUNG TALENT AWARD**
WINNER: AINSLEY MOORECROFT (RAINFORD HALL)
 SPONSORED BY: NACOA
 PRESENTED BY: CALUM BEST (ENTREPRENEUR, TV PERSONALITY AND NACOA PATRON), AND HILARY HENRIQUES (CEO NACOA)
 RUNNER-UP: KIERAN EDWARDS (RAINFORD HALL)
- 8 STEPS TOGETHER – OUTSTANDING ESTATES & FACILITIES AWARD**
WINNER: RAINFORD HALL HOUSEKEEPING TEAM
 SPONSORED BY: SHOORAH
 PRESENTED BY: LORRI HAINES (TV PERSONALITY, CEO SHOORAH AND AMBASSADOR FOR NACOA)
 RUNNER-UP: DEBBIE KEEN (EAST MIDLANDS REGION)
- 9 OUTSTANDING SUPPORT AWARD**
WINNER: ELIZABETH HOUSE PROJECT TEAM
 SPONSORED BY: MORNING AFTER DRAMA
 PRESENTED BY: ALEX CLAPP (FOUNDER & CEO CLARITEE GROUP)
 RUNNER-UP: CHRIS NICHOLSON
- 10 STEPS TOGETHER – OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD**
WINNER: RYAN GEORGIU (RAINFORD HALL)
 SPONSORED BY: CIRCLE INSURANCE
 PRESENTED BY: BILLY MOORE (AUTHOR AND FORMER LIVERPOOL BOXER)
 RUNNER-UP: SAM WINNALL (GEORGE HALL)
- 11 OUTSTANDING CATERING & HOSPITALITY AWARD**
WINNER: GILL EDMONDSON (GROUP EXECUTIVE HEAD CHEF)
 SPONSORED BY: BIDFOOD UK
 PRESENTED BY: LOUISE GOULD (FOUNDER CITIZEN SPRITZ)
 RUNNER-UP: THE CHESTNUTS CATERING TEAM
- 12 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD**
WINNER: JACKIE WILKINSON (THE CHESTNUTS)
 SPONSORED BY: THE BRITISH ARMY ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS
 PRESENTED BY: TONY SANDLE, SECOND-IN-COMMAND 156 REGIMENT, THE ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS
 RUNNER-UP: TONI GREGORY (BANK HOUSE)
- 13 STEPS TOGETHER – ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY AWARD**
WINNER: JACKIE WILKINSON (THE CHESTNUTS)
 SPONSORED BY: BIDFOOD UK
 PRESENTED BY: CHANITA STEPHENSON (MARRIED AT FIRST SIGHT CELEBRITY AND NACOA AMBASSADOR)
 RUNNER-UP: FAITH CAINE (GROUP HQ FINANCE)



Bern Giam and Sarah Mapar (Claritee Group)



Steve Jones

Deputy CEO Steps Together commented:

“At Steps Together, we see first hand the impact that alcohol fuelled corporate events can have on the health and wellbeing of employees, and often the catastrophic HR results that can arise when it all goes wrong at the office party. The SHINE Awards event was a UK first as a totally Alcohol Free Corporate Award Ceremony and Fundraiser, and also a first for Steps Together Group. When we embarked on the idea of the SHINE Awards, we were committed to becoming a leading voice within the business community, demonstrating that Corporate events without booze can actually be a huge success, and (literally) a night to remember”

“The overwhelming feedback from our 250 guests on the night, has been nothing short of amazing, and we could not have done it without the help of Claritee Group, whose expertise in the planning and execution of Corporate Sober Events was beyond our dreams. Their energy, determination and commitment to sober fun, was remarkable, and combined with our carefully chosen range of Supporters and Sponsors, who are all dedicated to changing the narrative of alcohol filled corporate events, ensured we had the winning combination for a hugely successful event, raising excellent funds for our chosen charity NACOA.”



Alex Clapp

Founder CEO Claritee Group

(pictured with Hilary Henriques COE Nacoa) said:

“I’m absolutely thrilled with the success of the SHINE Awards and what excites me most is how we’re helping to normalise alcohol free corporate events. Creating spaces where people can connect, celebrate, and be fully present, without the need for alcohol, has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of attendees. The positive feedback from the night has been overwhelming, with so many guests embracing the concept of alcohol free events and realising that the energy and atmosphere is still vibrant, entertaining and fun, as you can see from the photographs on the previous pages.

This is just the beginning, and I’m incredibly proud of the headway Claritee has made, which wouldn’t be possible without the support and sponsorship of the team at Steps Together.”

Steve Jones added, “It was wonderful to be able to provide an amazing night for all our teams spread around the UK who enjoyed an overnight stay in Liverpool – a first time for many of them! I am sincerely grateful for the amazing support provided by the newly built Halyard & Holiday Inn Express Hotel in Duke Street, for their amazing hospitality and accommodation for our VIPs and all of our team members. The hotel not only provided first class accommodation, but also kindly donated £500 to support NACOA’s amazing work with the Children of Alcoholics.”

I would also like to say a big thank you to everyone who contributed to making the event such a successful one. To all our guests and celebrities, the Titanic Hotel staff, particularly the catering team, the acts who provided a wonderful night of entertainment for everyone, and, of course, the photographers and videographers, Lee Isserow at Vessel Studios, Dave the Pap, Activate Digital, and James Bartkiw Photography & Video, who combined to capture it all for posterity.

Thank you!”



EXPECT LTD REBRAND ADVENTURE

DELIVERING QUALITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LONG-LASTING SOCIAL IMPACT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER FOR LOCAL SOCIAL CARE CHARITY EXPECT LTD, WHO HAVE RECENTLY EMBARKED ON A TRANSFORMATIVE REBRANDING JOURNEY.



ESTABLISHED in 1989, Expect has been providing expert and engaging Adult Social Care services, including supported living, outreach and Day Centre activities ever since. Based in Bootle, Expect is a registered charity offering a range of services across Sefton, the North West of England, and North Wales. The charity offers down-to-earth active support to people with a learning disability, those who need Mental Health support, people with Dementia, Autism, acquired brain injury and other complex needs.

The recent rebranding effort is a strategic one and not just a cosmetic one. It is aimed at amplifying the charity's mission and values, broadening its reach and hopefully allowing for continued growth in order to be able to support more people. The rebranding initiative, which officially launched last month, marks a significant shift from the charity's traditional image.

The decision to rebrand stemmed from a desire to modernise the organisation's identity, enhance its visibility, and better resonate with its diverse audience. The process involved a comprehensive review of the charity's visual identity, messaging, and overall strategy, all of which was conducted by staff, service users and stakeholders and led by brand strategy and design consultancy Housebrands.

The rebrand includes a new logo, updated colour schemes, and a

revised vision, 'To help create a world where disability has no limitations'

Marg Ollivier, the charity's CEO says; "Expect has been at the heart of the community since 1989. Our mission has always been the same, to deliver person-centred support to people with a disability, promoting and enabling their independent choice and integration into the community. At Expect, we Collaborate, we Challenge and we Care. We hope that our new rebrand helps us stand out and helps us to showcase more simply just what it is that the charity does."

"EXPECT HAS BEEN AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1989. OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE SAME, TO DELIVER PERSON-CENTRED SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY, PROMOTING AND ENABLING THEIR INDEPENDENT CHOICE AND INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY. AT EXPECT, WE COLLABORATE, WE CHALLENGE AND WE CARE. WE HOPE THAT OUR NEW REBRAND HELPS US STAND OUT AND HELPS US TO SHOWCASE MORE SIMPLY JUST WHAT IT IS THAT THE CHARITY DOES."

MARG OLLIVIER

Expect also has a new online presence. Its revamped website features a user-friendly interface designed to engage visitors more and provide clear information about the charity, including stories about its services and the people that it supports, along with information on accessing services and service user rights. The site's new design features online donation platforms and ongoing and new project information.

The charity's updated website and social channels has had positive feedback, with many feeling that the refreshed look and feel of the brand better captures the media profiles, reflect the new visual identity and are part of a broader digital campaign aimed at increasing engagement amongst service users, staff and supporters alike.



Right: An Abseil event
Below: Expect Service User Group Outing



RYAN'S STORY

Ryan has been supported by Expect for a number of years. He particularly enjoys fishing and has recently gained his fishing license, along with obtaining fishing rods, seats and other equipment, giving him all that he requires to start fishing regularly.

Ryan chooses what he wants to do with his days and staff discuss this with him, helping to organise his week. Fishing is a top priority for him! Expect staff have researched with him the fishing sites where he can fish and have directions on how to get him to them, while Ryan also knows where he can get his fishing bait from. He enjoys having competitions with his support staff as to who catches the most fish!

Karen, Ryan's sister, has some lovely words about Expect and the support that Ryan receives. She says:

"My brother is supported by Expect so that he can achieve his dreams and aspirations. The relationships and interactions he has with his team of Expect staff are incredible. He is also supported to maintain his family relationships, which is a real positive."

"The team around my brother are flexible and they each demonstrate kindness, empathy, calmness and have a very good understanding of his needs. Expect have been excellent. They are very much appreciated"



Feedback from supporters has been essential to the charity. It is hoped that the rebrand will help in the long term by attracting a wider more diverse audience across the region. Expect is also hopeful that the rebrand will enhance its strategic focus on partnerships and collaborations and maximise its connections and income streams.

The charity will soon be setting up a new Mental Health Project to address loneliness and isolation in adults in need of Mental Health support, with funding provided by a collaborative local partner, to work alongside their other services. By aligning with other charities, community organisations and local businesses with similar values, Expect hopes to further enhance its impact and expand its reach and offering.

Marg continues; **"This is the start of a new era for Expect and I am confident that our new branding will help the organisation to go from strength to strength and continue doing what it does best, which is empowering individuals to live their best life"**.



For more information on Expect, or how you can become more involved with the charity, please visit:

www.expect.org.uk

or

Telephone: **0151 284 0025** or email: enquiries@expect.org.uk

Expect registered charity number 701331.

For more information on **Housebrands**, please visit: <https://housebrands.co.uk/>



BATHGATE SUPPORTS THE HIVE INAUGURAL VOLUNTEERING DAY

WIRRAL-BASED BATHGATE BUSINESS FINANCE HAS CONTINUED ITS SUPPORT AS FOUNDER PATRONS FOR THE HIVE YOUTH ZONE IN BIRKENHEAD, WITH ITS TEAM ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES AND GETTING STUCK INTO REFRESHING THE FACILITY READY FOR THE START OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR.

REPORT BY NIKKI GIRVAN

EIGHT members of the Bathgate team attended the Hive's first ever volunteering day on Wednesday 4th September, joining other patrons and supporters, to clean, tidy, repaint and refresh the facility ready for an exciting season of activities and support sessions.

The Hive Youth Zone is a purpose-built space for Wirral's young people which opened on 8th April 2017, with the goal of giving every young person on the peninsular somewhere safe to go, something positive to do and someone trusted to talk to.

The state-of-the-art building on Bright Street in Birkenhead is open to all young people aged 8-19, and up to 25 for young people with disabilities or additional needs. Young people made more than 45,000 visits to The Hive last year.



Tasked with tackling the high-footfall stairwell that leads to The Hive's impressive rooftop kick pitch, the Bathgate team accepted the challenge with gusto. Hallways, the kitchen, art room, salon, communal areas and various other areas were also cleaned and painted to within an inch of their lives by volunteers from Bathgate and their sector peers, including DSG Accountants, Handelsbanken, Bridging Finance Solutions and Langtons.

During the day, the volunteers were also treated to a delicious lunch, prepared by The Hive team, and an informative tour of the building. During the tour the Bathgate members learned more on what The Hive offers to young people in the community and how the firm's annual donation helps support its work.

Bathgate has supported The Hive for the past four years with an unrestricted annual donation that the organisation uses to address its greatest needs.

Gordon Andrews, MD at Bathgate Business Finance said: "As founder patrons and members of the Hive 100 business club, we have long supported the fantastic work that The Hive does for young people in Wirral and we were all excited to be invited on site on its first ever group volunteering day to help provide some extra elbow grease in order to get it sparkling.

"We were blown away by the exceptional support that the team at The Hive offers for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with additional needs. Considering the fact that the building is now seven years old and feeling the daily wear-and-tear that comes with frequent use, we were also impressed by how well kept all the facilities were. It really shows how much the young people value and look after this excellent facility.

"As a local business we believe it is vital to embed ourselves in the community and support those organisations that are quietly changing lives and really making a difference. As well as providing financial support, it's also important to show up and provide practical help too.

"The team really got stuck in, so we hope our work was up to standard and that we get invited back for future volunteering days. We would like to thank all the team at Hive for making us feel so welcome and for all the amazing work they do all year round, and we would wholeheartedly encourage other local businesses to get involved and support them as much as they can."

The Hive's CEO, Jayne Wilson, said: "We really can't thank Bathgate Business Finance enough for all their hard work and for giving up their

time to help. This is a huge building and so to have all this incredible support to give it a deep clean and a fresh coat of paint is invaluable to us. The Bathgate team were unfazed and just got stuck in!

"We can't do what we do for Wirral's young people without the support of local businesses, our Hive 100 members and our incredible patrons. Bathgate truly understands the power of long-term support for our members – the next generation of workers, parents and community leaders here on the Wirral."

The Bathgate Charitable Trust is the charitable arm of Bathgate Group, the parent company of Bathgate Business Finance. Established in 1979 by Rod and Ann Walker, it supports charities through financial donations and volunteering not only locally but also across the UK and internationally.

"AS A LOCAL BUSINESS WE BELIEVE IT IS VITAL TO EMBED OURSELVES IN THE COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT THOSE ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE QUIETLY CHANGING LIVES AND REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE. AS WELL AS PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT, IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO SHOW UP AND PROVIDE PRACTICAL HELP TOO."

GORDON ANDREWS
MD AT BATHGATE BUSINESS FINANCE

Photographs by Andrew AB Photography

For more information about Bathgate Business Finance and how it can support your business visit:

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30TH ANNIVERSARY FOR CARPENTERS GROUP

CARPENTERS GROUP, ONE OF THE UK'S LEADING PROVIDERS OF INSURANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES, HAS BEEN CELEBRATING THEIR 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR.

DURING the past three decades the company has continuously utilised their expertise in managing claims for insurers and policyholders and provide a diverse variety of products and services that have been developed over time by working with all sectors of the insurance industry, each product and service designed and delivered with a customer focussed and ethical approach to claims handling at its core.

My Planet Liverpool was delighted to chat with the Group's Co-Owner and Director, Donna Scully, to discover more about the company and their ethos.

WHEN DID LIFE BEGIN FOR CARPENTERS?

The man who I would marry, John Carpenter, lived on the Wirral and for 17 years he was an Equity Partner with a large law firm on Merseyside who specialised in Corporate and Employment Law. The firm had offices in Liverpool and London and between 1992 and 1994 he was entrusted with the running of the London office, which is when I first met him, having joined the firm as a Legal Secretary.

When John decided that the time was right to set up on his own he left London and returned to Merseyside and in June 1994 launched his own niche commercial practice – J.D. Carpenter & Co.

A couple of years later I decided to join John and so moved to Merseyside. I had the intention of getting a job in a Personal Injury firm in Liverpool but John persuaded me to join his practice and set up a PI motor department within it.

And so it was that I started alongside John in 1997 and we settled on a new marketing approach, and changed the business name to Carpenters Group. We also, as the office was located in Birkenhead and close to the River Mersey, decided to use the blue colour branding that helps identify Carpenters today.

Thirty years on we have offices in seven locations throughout the UK. Here in Liverpool, two in Birkenhead (Leonard House and Priory House), Leeds, Manchester, Haywards Heath, and Glasgow. We employ 1500 people and collaborate closely with insurers, brokers, and MGAs (Managing General Agents), enabling us to deliver a wide range of fully outsourced claims solutions.



WHAT IS THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE BUSINESS?

Our comprehensive services include out-sourced motor claims, motor and home legal expenses insurance, claimant personal injury services. We have a 24/7 365 First Notification of Loss (FNOL) centre, provide legal defence services, have a specialist biker team, and a serious and catastrophic injury team, along with credit hire and subrogated recoveries.

We pride ourselves on our deep insurance and legal expertise, which enables us to forge successful partnerships with any insurer or broker.

Our numerous specialist teams are each led by industry-leading professionals who carefully tailor their services to meet our customers' needs. Our customers know that they can rely on us for exceptional service and support.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE ETHOS OF CARPENTERS GROUP?

Our focus is always on the customer and ensuring their claims journey consistently exceeds expectation. Our long-standing relationships with our clients are a testament to the high quality of our service and although we have a large workforce and manage more claims than many of our closest competitors we maintain the mindset and philosophy of a family firm.

We are driven by a commitment to excellence, mutual support, and community engagement, always striving to do the right thing.

FINALLY, I KNOW SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORK HERE AT CARPENTERS AND THEY ARE ALWAYS FULL OF PRAISE FOR THE SUPPORT THAT THE COMPANY GIVES THEM WHEN NEEDED AND REALLY ENJOY WORKING FOR YOU. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A GREAT CREDIT TO TO THE WAY CARPENTERS TREAT THEIR EMPLOYEES?

Our people are at the heart of what we do. We always refer to our workforce as "colleagues" not staff and employees' wellbeing is a hugely important and major priority for us. We offer a wide range of support and services targeted at enabling health and wellbeing to be the best it can be.

"WE ARE DRIVEN BY A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE, MUTUAL SUPPORT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, ALWAYS STRIVING TO DO THE RIGHT THING."

DONNA SCULLY



<https://www.carpentersgroup.co.uk/>

THE BLOOM APPEAL MERSEYSIDE AGAINST BLOOD CANCERS

THE GREAT AND THE GOOD OF THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION STEPPED OUT ON THE EVENING OF WEDNESDAY 9TH OCTOBER AT THE WONDERFUL LUNYA RESTAURANT ON HANOVER STREET. THEY WERE THERE IN SUPPORT OF MERSEYSIDE AGAINST BLOOD CANCERS - AKA THE BLOOM APPEAL

ORGANISED by Ubiquity Collective and supported by Wellness in the City, Peter and Elaine Kinsella, founders of the multi-award-winning Lunya restaurant and bar, played host to over 100 guests as they heard about the various types of Blood Cancers, including Elaine speaking of her own experience, having been diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma back in January 2021.

Those in attendance also discovered more about the The Bloom Appeal's forthcoming events, including their Winter in Bloom Festive Ball, and how they could donate to help the Charity, which invests all donations in a variety of ways that range from supporting research to help in finding a cure for Blood Cancers, the funding of training, purchasing equipment, and providing financial assistance for individuals who suffer from a Blood Cancer condition.

The Winter In Bloom Ball is the Charity's biggest event of the year and a great opportunity for people to support their cause. The Ball takes place at the Liner Hotel on Friday November 22nd and there will be a warm winter welcome from their wonderful patron, Roger Phillips, before guests sit down to a delicious three-course dinner, followed by a fundraising auction and raffle, the evening ending with live music and dancing until late.

*Pictured:
Top: (L-r) MABC Trustee Elaine Kinsella,
MABC Honorary President Professor Nagesh Kalakonda,
MABC Chair Abi Pointing MBE, MABC Trustee
Frank Donovan, and John Flanson OBE DL*

Right: Peter and Elaine Kinsella

*Bottom: David Connor (Founder 2030Hub),
MABC Trustee Howard Lewis (General Manager Novotel,
Liverpool), Lord Mayor of Liverpool Cllr Richard Kemp, and
Tris Brown (Founder and Director Northern Rose)*

Photographs by Ray Farley



FOR MORE ABOUT THE BALL AND MERSEYSIDE AGAINST BLOOD CANCERS
- THE BLOOM APPEAL - PLEASE VISIT:

www.thebloomappeal.org.uk



“SO MANY PEOPLE GET OFF THE PLANE AT MALAGA AIRPORT AND HEAD STRAIGHT OFF TO THE LIKES OF TORREMOLINOS, MIJAS, FUENGIROLA, AND, OF COURSE, MARBELLA, NOT REALISING WHAT A WONDERFUL PLACE MALAGA, AND SOME OF ITS BEAUTIFUL PROVINCES, IS TO VISIT.”

RAY FARLEY



RAY MEETS RONDA

INTREPID LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER, AND FRIEND TO MY PLANET LIVERPOOL, **RAY FARLEY**, RECENTLY TOOK A SHORT HOLIDAY BREAK TO MALAGA AND MARBELLA AND ON HIS RETURN HE WAS KEEN TO TELL US OF HIS VISIT TO RONDA, A BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN TOP CITY THAT IS ONE OF THE OLDEST IN SPAIN AND LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 100 KILOMETRES FROM MALAGA ITSELF.

RAY said, “So many people get off the plane at Malaga Airport and head straight off to the likes of Torremolinos, Mijas, Fuengirola, and, of course, Marbella, not realising what a wonderful place Malaga, and some of its beautiful provinces, is to visit.”

While the region has 16 beaches to enjoy, the Andalusian city of Malaga also has a fascinating cultural history and several museums to suit all tastes. It is also the birthplace, in 1881, of Pablo Picasso.

Ray discovered the city of Ronda perched dramatically (the city not Ray) above a deep gorge named El Tajo, meaning steep cliff or sheer drop in geographical terms. This gorge separates the city’s circa-15th-century new town from its old town, dating back to Moorish rule. Ray took his featured photo of El Tajo and its scenic views from Puente Nuevo, a 98-metre high stone bridge that spans the gorge and offers a lookout offering outstanding views and a visitors museum.

Ray was in his photographic element as views of the houses overhanging the Ronda gorge were more than just spectacular. Many people opt for walking up a path to get a wider view of the Puente Nuevo, which crosses over the Guadalquivir River, to take their photographs but transport is also available.



RAY FARLEY

Ray also took the time to visit the Moorish King’s Palace, with its lovely gardens and a former Arab mine that has a stairway cut into the rock. The stairway has over 200 steps (Ray didn’t count them or descend them) that go down to the river. Just a bit further on he came upon the Arab Baths, which date back to the 13th century, and are rated by many as being the best preserved on the whole of the Iberian coast.

A stroll through the historic quarter of the old quarter rewarded Ray with a variety of narrow cobbled streets decorated with geraniums, providing a charming place in which to slowly stroll around. Delightful shopping arcades filled with the city’s famous range of handicrafts, the Mondragon Palace, the Giant’s House, both of Moorish origin, and the Plaza Duques de Parcent, containing the church of Santa Maria, which sits next to a welcoming, friendly café, la Mayor and the Town Hall, all captured Ray’s attention, as did the new town’s Plaza de Torres, a legendary 18th century bullring and one of Ronda’s most recognisable landmarks.

Go see it all for yourself! – It will be worth it!

A RISE ROYAL HONOUR FOR SARA AND TEAM

ON THURSDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2024, RISE CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK WAS FORMALLY PRESENTED WITH THE KING'S AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE FOR PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL MOBILITY.

The King's Awards for Enterprise are the most prestigious business awards in the UK and recognises outstanding achievements of UK businesses across International Trade, Innovation, Sustainable Development and Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility.

Founder and Director of Rise Construction Framework, Sara Lawton, was informed of her company being named as one of the recipients of the 2024 honour a few months ago and the occasion of the official presentation of the award was such a proud moment for everyone at Rise, with Sara saying, "It is an honour to share this special occasion with friends, family, supporters, supply partners and special guests."

Award-winning Business Leader Sara founded Rise in 2016 and she has close to 30 years of experience in leading public and private sector enterprises. Rise Construction Framework is a purpose driven business providing procurement services to the public-sector across the Northwest.

Possessing a deep understanding of the impact poverty has on communities, Rise uses profits to directly fund the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to deliver vital community prevention and intervention services.

Throughout her career, Sara has been motivated by a desire to reach the most vulnerable and neglected members of society, raise their living standard, and see their dignity restored.

This year is the second year of The King's Awards for Enterprise, reflecting the desire of His Majesty King Charles III to continue the legacy of his late mother, HM Queen Elizabeth II, by recognising outstanding UK businesses. The awards were first established in 1965 by Royal warrant and were originally called The Queen's Award to Industry, with the first awards being presented in 1966.

This year's award was given to Rise Construction Framework in recognition of their work across communities and was presented to Sara and her team, on behalf of HRH King Charles III, by the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mark Blundell in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Liverpool Cllr Richard Kemp, Lady Mayoress Erica Kemp, Deputy Lieutenants Claire Dove CBE DL, Lesley Martin-Wright DL and Natalie Reeves Billing DL FRSA, plus stakeholders, mentors, customers, friends and proud families.

A huge well done to Sara Lawton (Pgcert), Framework manager Daniel Ross and the rest of the Rise Construction Framework team for being outstanding in their field.

Rise is able to proudly display The King's Award Emblem for the next five years.



Pictured below: (Left to right): Lady Mayoress Erica Kemp, Claire Dove CBE DL, Lord-Lieutenant Mark Blundell, Rise Framework Construction's founder Sara Lawton, Elliot Hassan, Connor Rooke, Dan Ross, Lesley Martin-Wright DL, and Lord Mayor of Liverpool Cllr Richard Kemp.



BUSINESS



RISE CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK KING'S AWARD

- ① Lord-Lieutenant Mark Blundell and Sara Lawton.
- ② Team Rise (Elliot Hassan, Daniel Ross, Sara Lawton, and Connor Rooke)
- ③ Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan and Sara Lawton.
- ④ Claire Dove CBE DL, Sara Lawton, and Lorna Rogers.
- ⑤ Rise Director Sara Lawton meeting HRH King Charles III at Windsor Castle.



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WONGS IS THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN AT **MIB AWARDS 2024**

THE MERSEYSIDE INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (MIB) AWARDS WERE CREATED BY MORECROFTS SOLICITORS IN 2013 AS PART OF THE MARKING OF THEIR 200 YEARS SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN ORDER TO RECOGNISE AND CELEBRATE OTHER INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES AND LEADING ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS THE CITY.

At this year's ceremony, hosted as usual by Roger Phillips and his daughter Ellie, it was Wongs Jewellers who were named Merseyside Independent Business of the Year. The family-run Liverpool jeweller took the overall winner's crown at the event, which saw an incredible 500 people gather at The Titanic Hotel for a wonderful night of celebration, culminating in guests enjoying the after-party dancing to the sounds of the talented New Power Soul Club.

Alison Lobb, Managing Partner at Morecrofts Solicitors, said: "Independent businesses are the backbone of Merseyside's economy, and it's incredibly important to recognise the resilience and innovation these businesses bring to our region. We are thrilled to celebrate their successes, and it is incredible to see the strong community spirit which unites these diverse enterprises."

The headline sponsor of the MIB Awards is The Liverpool BID Company, and announcing Wongs as the winner, Katie Bentley, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Communications at BID, said, "Judges said this business encapsulated everything on the checklist for an amazing independent."

"Their entry demonstrated excellent client care, approachability, engaging marketing campaigns and commitment to investment in the city region. The judges noted that the business in question

has built a recognisable brand, while remaining local and offering its clients exceptional service."

Founded in 1979, Wongs Jewellers, who also collected the **MIB Retailer of the Year** award, is considered the go-to place for engagement rings, wedding rings and bespoke jewellery. Specialising in creating bespoke pieces and remodelling sentimental items into something brand new, Wongs also offer a comprehensive repair and maintenance service at their onsite workshop where customers can get to view and chat to the award-winning workshop team.

Wongs say, "With a 4.9 average Google rating and more than 350 five-star reviews, we are praised for our artistry, quality, friendly atmosphere, and exceptional customer service."

With a reputation for providing special pieces of jewellery to celebrate life's big moments, Wongs say they aim to be the place "Where Liverpool gets engaged."

Morecrofts is delighted to announce that on the night the event raised the sum of £6,230 for their chosen charity for 2024, Love, Jasmine, and would like to say a big thank you to everybody who attended for their kind generosity.

*Pictured: Members of Wongs Jewellers staff, with Katie Bentley (far right), collect the Merseyside Independent Business of the Year Award
Alison Lobb managing partner Morecrofts Solicitors. • Event hosts Roger and Ellie Phillips
Photographs by Adam Kenrick*

Continued overleaf...



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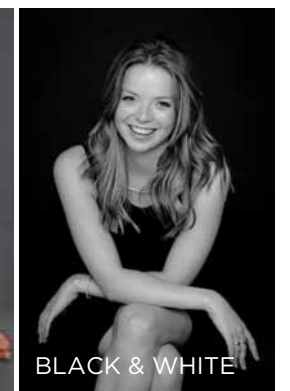


MIB AWARDS • LIST OF WINNERS

Aside from the overall success of Wongs Jewellers the other winners on the night were:

- 1 TRADES OR MANUFACTURING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by JEC Business Finance Ltd
WINNER: Kimpton
- 2 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by Butterworth Spengler
WINNER: Sutcliffe
- 3 CULTURE AND TOURISM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by Merseyrail
WINNER: Hope Street Hotel
Commended: Blackstock Market **4**
- 5 BEST CREATIVE BUSINESS**
Sponsored by Forresters IP
WINNER: MyCardium AI
- 6 CHILDREN FOCUSED BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by One Knowsley
WINNER: Evolving Mindset
Commended: Forget Me Knot **7**
- 8 RETAILER OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by The Guide, Liverpool
WINNER: Wongs Jewellers
- 9 BEST START-UP**
Sponsored by Bruntwood
WINNER: Unity Lives
- 10 BAR OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by Everton Stadium
WINNER: Arts Bar
- 11 FOOD VENUE OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by B & L
WINNER: Squash
Commended: The Watering Can **12**
- 13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by Titanic Hotel Liverpool
WINNER: Katumba Drumming & Movement
- 14 EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by Handelsbanken
WINNER: Caring Connections
- 15 DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by DSG Chtd Accountants
WINNER: MyCardium AI
- 16 BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**
Sponsored by FPC
WINNER: Kiera Vogel – Senate Group

All photographs by Adam Kenrick Photography



WELCOME TO PENN ROAD STUDIO

JACQUELINE BERWITZ
PHOTOGRAPHER



As a London portrait photographer and proud owner of Penn Road Studio, I'm excited to bring my passion for photography and years of experience to the vibrant, friendly city of Liverpool. With a background in capturing people from all walks of life, I'm thrilled to offer Liverpool a fresh, welcoming approach to portrait photography – where each session is not only professional but also genuinely enjoyable.

I've had the honour of photographing some truly remarkable individuals, including Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, His late Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Her Majesty Queen Camilla, and other notable society figures and celebrities

I hope that knowing you are in trusted hands with someone who has had the privilege to work with Royals and high-profile clients will

assure you that you've made the right choice when booking me.

My journey in photography has inspired me to create an experience at Penn Road Studio that's welcoming, memorable, and uniquely tailored to every client. My spacious, modern Liverpool studio is equipped with the latest photography and lighting equipment, allowing me to create beautiful, timeless portraits using either studio lights or natural light, whichever suits you best.

Whilst I do most of my work in-studio, I'm always happy to travel for special events and on-location shoots.

At Penn Road Studio, I combine my love for photography with a dedication to making everyone feel comfortable and confident, ensuring you leave with images you truly love.

To discover more on Penn Road Studio or to make a booking please visit:
www.pennroadstudio.co.uk

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WHY BOOK A BOUDOIR DIVA PHOTOGRAPHY EXPERIENCE?

Helping women feel beautiful and proud of themselves is at the heart of what I do at Penn Road Studio. My luxury boudoir photoshoot is a wonderful way for you to reconnect with your confidence and self-love, and it's the ultimate treat for yourself or a loved one.

I help you find your confidence. No matter your age or size, step into being the most confident, most care-free version of yourself. Over the years, I've helped thousands of women rediscover their confidence. In fact, 96% of the women I've photographed said their Boudoir session had a lasting, positive impact on how they see themselves.

A boudoir photoshoot at my Woolton Village, Liverpool studio is the perfect way for you to feel sexy and confident in your own skin. Your experience will include professional hair and makeup, a custom photoshoot with me as your experienced female photographer, and a private viewing session to admire your images.

You'll get all glammed up with my help, ensuring you feel sexy and sassy in your gorgeous outfits.

£99 Boudoir Diva Photoshoot

The £99 boudoir photoshoot includes:

champagne reception, hair styling, professional makeup, photoshoot with an expert female photographer, 3 outfit changes, personal viewing session and a complimentary 10x8 mounted print worth £99 to get you started.

At this stage, all you need to do is secure your £99 photoshoot. You'll have the opportunity to explore and choose from our packages during your viewing session.

However, if you'd prefer, you can also select and purchase your package before the shoot.

After your session, you will have the option to choose from a variety of add-ons to enhance your collection. These range from extra digital files and a personalised slideshow to beautifully crafted albums and custom wall art, allowing you to display your memories in the way that best suits your style.

ADDITIONAL PRINTS · SLIDESHOW · DIGITALS · ALBUMS
ARE ALL AVAILABLE, PLEASE ASK FOR DETAILS

Contact Jacqueline for a confidential no obligation consultation to discuss your Boudoir Diva Photography experience

THE CULTURAL WINE COMPANY WAS FOUNDED IN 2010 BY MIKE WYNN AND HIS TWO COLLEAGUES PAUL MALKIN AND IAN CLARKE, AND MY PLANET LIVERPOOL IS FORTUNATE THAT OVER THE PAST 12 YEARS MIKE HAS CONTRIBUTED A WINE FEATURE FOR OUR READERS IN EACH ISSUE.

WYNN'S
WORLD OF

WINE

“A DAY WITHOUT WINE
IS LIKE A DAY WITHOUT SUNSHINE!”

Taking a slight change of direction, in this issue Mike features a variety of sherries, following Ian, Paul and he recently attending a Morgenrot Group (the oldest established importers of wines and beers in Manchester), sherry tasting at Lunya, Liverpool.

SHERRY of course is a fortified wine from the Andalusia region of Spain, and the name comes from the English translation of the Spanish word Jerez. Sherry wines are made from white grapes grown near Jerez de la Frontera, and is produced using a solera system, which involves stacking barrels in a triangle shape, with the oldest wines at the bottom and newer wines on top. The wines are periodically removed from the casks and replaced with newer wine, which creates a consistent flavour profile

At Lunya, Mike, Ian, Paul and the other guests were introduced to, and of course had the opportunity to sample, sherries produced by the Bodegas Barón, which is located in the historic city of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Southern Spain. The Bodegas was represented at Lunya by their Head of Marketing & Publicity Enrique Perez Rodriguez.

Sanlúcar is a summer tourist destination known for its sherry cellars and its cuisine, especially manzanilla (a variety of fino sherry) and prawns and is just a convenient 40-minute drive from Cádiz, the oldest city in Western Europe.

Bodegas Barón was founded by Manuel Barón Fernández in 1895 who acquired some old

soleras from Anselmo Paz, an almacenista, a type of store selling sherries and wines wine to shippers. Manuel's wife actually had a much older family history in sherry though, so you could say the Bodegas Barón has a heritage that goes back almost 400 years to 1631.

Today, the company is owned by Jose Rodriguez Jiménez and his sons Juan Luis and Jose and owns three vineyards (around 140 ha), all on albariza soil: Finca, Finca Martín Miguel and Finca Poedo.

Mike says, "The classic match to tapas is sherry and we were delighted to be treated to an accompaniment of superb tapas, produced by the chefs at Lunya, with the entire range of sherry produced at Bodegas Barón, as featured in this article:-

"You can see that the art of Sherry making produces a range of wines from the bone dry Fino and Manzanillas, luscious Creams and amber coloured Amontillado Moscatel and Palo Cortado to the sweet thick Mahogany-hued Oloroso, along with the rich and satisfying raisin-sweet Pedro Ximenez.

"The white Palomino grape accounts for around 90% of the vines and Moscatel and Pedro Ximenez make up the balance."



BODEGAS BARÓN



Micaela Fino
Fino is the finest and most delicate wines style of sherry and Micaela offers a first rate, entry level example. This sherry has spent 3-4 years in the Solera and is best served at 6°C – 8°C. It is produced from the Palomino grape and has an alcohol volume of 15%. Golden yellow, featuring copper notes and a nutty aroma, this is as dry and expressive sherry, with plenty of dried fruit character on the palate and some saline and iodine notes.



Micaela Amontillado
Micaela Amontillado is a dry version, with noticeably more character than the ubiquitous medium-sweet commercial offerings. Amontillado is created from the more robust Fino wines, further fortified and allowed to undergo oxidative ageing – Micaela - for 4-5 years. Best served at 12°C -14°C, this is a sherry produced using the Palomino grape and has an alcohol volume of 18.5% and possesses a rich golden colour, with a nose that bursts of chocolate, almonds and wood. The palate is silky and the flavour reveals a resurface of almonds with a touch of spice.



Micaela Cortado
Palo Cortado is a lesser know sherry style – unusual and rare – sitting between amontillado and oloroso. It has an alcohol volume of 18.5% and a slightly pale amber colour with coppery reflections. Possesses a caramel dominant nose with plenty of toasted hazelnuts and toffee, hints of honey and orange peels. The aroma has a great complexity, wherein the delicate salty, fino-like, sea breeze is discerned behind the intensity of oxidative ageing. The palate is full and rounded and again toasted nuts are to the fore, along with fruit cake and herbal notes. It signs off with hints of saline in a long, dry finish of smooth oak.



Xiarito Oloroso
A soft and complex dry Oloroso that has spent more than 15 years in the solera and has been specially selected for the Xiarito range. Produced from the Palomino grape, it has an alcohol volume of 19.5% verging towards a mahogany colour with pronounced aromas of walnuts and balsam plus truffles and leather. The taste is powerful, round and full-bodied; the finish long and complex.

Xiarita Moscatel
Aged for almost 10 years, Moscatel is a naturally sweet wine, produced in a similar way to the Pedro Ximénez. Produced from Moscatel grapes it has an alcohol volume of 17.5% and is dark mahogany in colour, with rich aromas of fig and raisin. Thick and lush on the palate, aromatic, floral and sun kissed with a jolt of acidity ends with perfect balance. Moscatel is velvety and smooth and has a great body and structure, long and persistent.



Xiarito Pedro Ximenez
This is an extraordinarily concentrated sweet wine of intense raisiny fruit. The natural sugars from the PX grape undergo partial fermentation and alcohol fortification before ageing for 15 years in the solera. It has an alcohol volume of 15% and Ebony coloured with great viscosity. The nose is dominated by dried fruits – raisins, figs, dates – plus chocolate and coffee. It has a velvety and creamy palate and a rich, balanced sweetness.



Xiarito Manzanilla
An aged Manzanilla 'Pasada' and bottled 'en Rama' (unfiltered). Great complexity is achieved from its 10 years in the solera, and rates as a perfect aperitif and accompaniment to a wide variety of foods. Xiarito represents the second tier of wines from Bodegas Barón. Made from the Palomino grape, it has an alcohol volume of 15%, with a bright straw colour and a delicate bouquet reminiscent of camomile, almonds and brioche. The palate is dry and refreshing with a smooth, lingering after taste. Half bottles are also available.



For more on the above and all wines supplied by Cultural Wine please contact:



Mike Wynn: 07747 052 890 E: mike@culturalwine.co.uk
Paul Malkin: 07747 803 041 E: paul@culturalwine.co.uk
Ian Clarke: 07841 248 758 E: iggy4wine@gmail.com
www.culturalwine.co.uk

BATHGATE BUSINESS FINANCE CELEBRATE
**10TH ANNIVERSARY
OF ANNUAL GOLF DAY**



Above Left: Nearest-the-Pin Winner, Lee Parry (with Ping cap)
Centre: Winning foursome (holding Titleist Caps) with (l-r) Bathgate's Ian Adams, Chris McLoughlin and Gordon Andrews
Right: Longest Drive Winner Jeff Cummins (in red top with Ping Cap)

THURSDAY 19th September saw the weather gods shining on the Wirral Riviera once again, as the superb Caldy Golf Club course, in great condition as usual, hosted the 10th anniversary of the annual Bathgate Business Finance Golf Day.

Gordon Andrews, MD at Bathgate Business Finance, said: "Able supported and assisted by Mary Wilson, Esther Rigby, and Natalie Dye from our Bathgate team, the tenth anniversary of our Annual Golf Day certainly did not disappoint."

Following the day's exertions on the golf course, the trophy-winning team turned out to be the foursome of Jim Forshaw, Alistair Pike, Chris Dhenin and Daniel Hicks, (pictured above) while the Longest Drive was won by Jeff Cummins (again!!!), with Lee Parry picking up the Nearest-the-Pin prize.

Gordon added, "Congratulations to Jim, Alistair, Chris and Daniel on their team victory and congratulations also to Jeff and Lee for their respective wins courtesy of their driving prowess. A big thank you goes to Caldy Golf Club and to everyone who came along and helped to ensure a wonderful day was enjoyed by all."

"WE WERE BLESSED WITH GREAT WEATHER, A FANTASTIC TURNOUT OF TEAMS THAT PROVIDED FOR A VERY COMPETITIVE DAY, AND THE PROVISION OF A MUCH NEEDED BEER GARDEN TO AID EACH OF THE TEAM MEMBERS AS THEY PLOTTED, DROVE AND PUTTED, SOME BETTER THAN OTHERS, THEIR WAY AROUND THE CALDY CLUB'S TESTING 18 HOLES."

GORDON ANDREWS



**AUTEUR MEDIA
CLIMBS ABOARD
NEWLY LAUNCHED
'GOODSHIP' AGENCY**

GAVIN SHERRATT, FORMER CO-FOUNDER OF MULTI-AWARD-WINNING AGENCY MASHBO, HAS SET SAIL WITH HIS NEW VENTURE, GOODSHIP AND IS CREATING A NETWORK OF SKILLED "SHIPMATES", INCLUDING GHOSTWRITING & PR CONSULTANCY, AUTEUR MEDIA.

GOODSHIP is a new collaboration agency focused on building creative and tech teams and developing solutions to service growth ambitions for partner clients.

In a shift away from the traditional agency model, goodship will enhance its development services and collaborative consultancy through bringing the expertise of a broad network of business, creative, and tech talent to its partner clients.

One such partner is Ghostwriting and PR consultancy, Auteur Media, led by director Nikki Croft-Girvan, who brings 20 years' experience across journalism, public relations and publishing goodship's crew.

Nikki said: "Gavin's collaborative approach to projects and growing the local economy has always aligned strongly with my belief that there is a wealth of opportunities for tech creative businesses across the city region to work together effectively.

"Through Auteur Media, I have focused on offering my skills as a writer, journalist, communicator and storyteller. Working with goodship connects me both with clients who need my specialist support, and other specialists in a host of different areas – from strategy development, business growth and social media, to design, motion graphics and web app and software development – who I can work alongside.

"I'm excited to be 'aboard' goodship and look forward to working collaboratively with clients and businesses from across the city region."

Gavin added: "goodship dovetails individual experts in their field to form agile teams. Working with collaborative partners like Nikki and Auteur Media increases the impact of goodship, helping us to curate partnerships that allow us to deliver full service projects from strategy, creative and development, through to marketing and communications."

Goodship will build on Gavin's 27-years in the tech and digital sector and work with tech, business development, creative and development teams to identify and deliver effective solutions and business-boosting strategies and ideas. It will also feature its own community brand, KinShip, which will run relaxed networking and knowledge sharing events across the region.

To find out more visit: <https://www.goodship.agency/>



NIKKI AND GAVIN



GOODSHIP LAUNCH

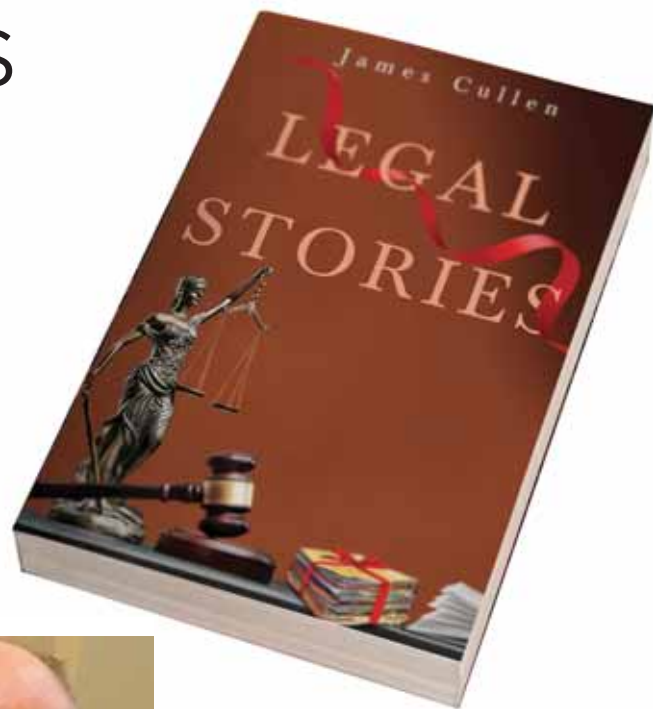
"GAVIN'S COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PROJECTS AND GROWING THE LOCAL ECONOMY HAS ALWAYS ALIGNED STRONGLY WITH MY BELIEF THAT THERE IS A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECH CREATIVE BUSINESSES ACROSS THE CITY REGION TO WORK TOGETHER EFFECTIVELY."

NIKKI CROFT-GIRVAN
DIRECTOR, AUTEUR MEDIA

AUTEUR MEDIA REVIEWS...

LEGAL STORIES

BY JAMES CULLEN



LEGAL STORIES was published in July of this year and is a book that takes a look behind the scenes of criminal law in Liverpool through the eyes of a retired solicitor.

Following brief stints as an apprentice joiner and office jobs with several Liverpool shipping agents, James Cullen entered the legal profession one week before his twenty-first birthday in 1968.

He then spent almost forty years involved in criminal law, having conducted a host of serious cases, including murder, some of which are mentioned in this book, and a variety of petty cases such as shoplifting.

All of the stories and incidents described in his book are true to the best of James' recollections, and involve real people that include criminals, police officers, members of the public and some of those in the legal profession. He has written about what happened behind the scenes in some cases and a variety of other incidents which took place throughout his career,

Legal Stories recalls a childhood spent growing up around Liverpool's infamous Scotland Road, before charting James' rise from humble beginnings, working in the city centre offices of Canter, Levin & Manneheim, where he would be sending out 'letters before action' on behalf of clients with a host of tripping claims, to his conducting of hundreds of criminal cases at the crown court.

It is a memoir filled with nostalgic anecdotes about life growing up and working in Liverpool in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and



JAMES CULLEN

packed with behind-the-scenes stories about the city and the criminal justice system. James' stories cover everything from cases of kiting (forging cheques) and shoplifting, to bomb threats, rape and murder.

Providing readers with a fascinating perspective on how the legal system operated in the past and how it changed throughout his career, James also shares his recollections of working with Rose Heilbron

Q.C., one of the first two women to take 'silk' and become a Queen's Counsel, and his experiences with Liverpool's tough and notorious underworld during his 40-years in the profession.

James retired from practice and his role as law lecturer at the Open University in 2006 following heart surgery. He still lives in Liverpool and when he isn't writing he spends time with his wife, daughter, son, and six grandchildren.

"I WAS ENCOURAGED TO WRITE AND PUBLISH THIS SET OF STORIES BY A HOST OF RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. REVISITING FORTY YEARS' WORTH OF CONDUCTING CRIMINAL CASES - AND THE STORIES AND INCIDENTS THAT CAME ALONG WITH IT - WAS A WONDERFUL AND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR ME AND I HOPE THAT OTHERS WILL FIND THEM AN INTERESTING, INFORMATIVE AND ENJOYABLE READ".

JAMES CULLEN
SPEAKING OF HIS MEMOIR

...

Legal Stories by James Cullen (£13.99) is published by Olympia Publishers and is available from Olympia or on Amazon.

<https://olympiapublishers.com/book/legal-stories>

BASKETS OF HEALING AND HOPE

AFTER UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER - THE MOST AGGRESSIVE FORM OF THE DISEASE - IN 2020, **ADELE CONNAH** TOOK WHAT SHE LEARNED FROM HER JOURNEY TO OFFER HEALING AND HOPE TO OTHERS, EARNING HERSELF A PLACE AS A FINALIST AT THE MERSEYSIDE WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2024.

WHEN she started receiving treatment for breast cancer in 2020, Adele, aside from knowing she would lose the hair on her head, had no idea what to expect, or what the various other side effects would be.

During six months of chemotherapy, an operation to remove the tumour, and three weeks of radiotherapy, Adele lost her eyebrows and eyelashes, experienced nausea and unpleasant tastes due to the treatments, along with many more side effects. Keen to manage her journey as best she could, the mum-of-two took advice from nurses at Clatterbridge Centre and other patients.

She explained: "Getting advice as I went along was so helpful but I just wished that I'd had the products that I found before the side effects started. Rather than having to search for them as it was happening it would have been better for me if, for example, I could have had fake eyelashes and brows to wear as soon as mine disappeared. It would have stopped the awkwardness of people staring at me, trying to work out what was missing.

"After I finished my treatment I started thinking about how useful it would have been to have had everything together in one place from day one. I went online to see what was available but nothing was quite right and everything was so expensive too, which would just be an added stress for cancer patients. In the end, I decided to make things I needed myself and then find a way to get them to other breast cancer patients starting out on their journey."

Adele started creating her own "Healing Baskets". She began filling the baskets by purchasing all the things she had used herself, including a range of pamper products, false eyelashes and eyebrows, ginger tea to combat nausea, mint humbugs to help with taste, black nail varnish to protect her nails from UV rays in radiotherapy and stop them



Adele Connah

being damaged or falling off, and a medicine organiser for medications.

She raised money to create her baskets and donated them to the Linda McCartney Centre, Alder Hey, and the Bloom Appeal, a Merseyside charity that supports the well-being of patients with blood cancers. Later, the Clatterbridge Centre also got involved and invited Adele in to make baskets for their patients.

To date she has helped more than 100 women by providing her healing baskets. Every time a person receives one of Adele's baskets, they receive what they need to support them through their treatment, and they receive a message of hope. They hear her story and know that they can fight and win too.

Adele said: "I swore I would arm as many people as possible to enable them to start their chemotherapy treatment with something that would most definitely help them. Working in partnership with so many organisations has been great, but I do also still make some baskets out of my own pocket, as it's so important to me that people have access to this help.

"I know these baskets have given a lot of people some sort of comfort and prepared them for every step of their journey and I feel especially grateful that I can help women going through one of the most difficult times of their lives."



Adele Connah Ladies Network Baskets



HELP ADELE MAKE MORE HEALING BASKETS

Adele is raising funds to create even more healing baskets for women starting chemotherapy treatment, with £45 needed to create each basket.

If you would like to donate to Adele's latest fundraiser, contact her direct via: Email: adeleconnah9@gmail.com

To find out more about Adele's Healing Baskets, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/adeleshealingbaskets>



LIVERPOOL HEARTBEAT

FOUNDED IN 2002 BY **ROBIN BAYNES MBE**, LIVERPOOL HEARTBEAT HAS BEEN INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NORTHWEST & MERSEYSIDE TO PURSUE HEALTHY, EXCITING, FULFILLED LIFESTYLES SINCE ITS FORMATION.

In this issue of My Planet Liverpool we feature just a few of the many recent events that Liverpool Heartbeat has been involved in.

ON Friday 18th and Saturday 19th October, three volunteers from Liverpool Heartbeat set out on a sponsored bike ride from Liverpool Town Hall to Leeds to raise funds for the Charity and highlight the message of peace from our city.

The cycle ride was named as, 'The Northern Peace Ride' and Phil Davies, a first-class film and videographer who plays a vital volunteer marketing role for the charity, set the pedals in motion for the ride by contacting Leeds Town Hall and The Chair of Leeds Peace Poetry, Rehana Minhas, to tell them of the proposed fundraiser.

Rehana had sent Liverpool Heartbeat the three winning poems from this year's Leeds Poetry competition (the topic was 'Fire') for the trio to read out and video during their ride.

At 8-30am on a sunny Friday morning, Phil joined Ossie Omar, a regular fund-raiser and volunteer for the Charity, and Garth Dallas, Chair of Liverpool Commonwealth Association, as they set off from Liverpool Town Hall, encouraged by words from the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Richard Kemp, who is very supportive of Liverpool Heartbeat, to begin their challenging 127-mile journey to Leeds, cycling along the Liverpool/Leeds Canal.

Robin Baynes MBE, founder of Liverpool Heartbeat, was making the journey by car and would be in regular touch with Phil, Ossie and Garth, meeting up with the trio at various points along the route.

However, the ride started badly when a previous leg injury that Phil had been suffering from flared up. Despite his best efforts to continue he was forced to retire from the ride and had return to Liverpool via Wigan.

Ossie and Garth continued with the ride but another setback occurred when leaving Wigan, as Garth suffered the first of three punctures he would endure during the ride. This meant the pair did not arrive at their scheduled overnight stop at the Premier Inn, Burnley, until 9.45pm, three hours later than planned and having had to cycle in the dark along the canal. To their relief, Robin was waiting at the hotel with what were very welcome drinks and meals, aiding the duo's recovery from the rigours of the day's cycling.

Saturday saw another sunshine day and after a hearty breakfast and a quick MOT of Garth's Bike the pair were on the way to Leeds to finish their journey, hoping there would be no more breakdowns or punctures.

Robin went ahead to meet up with them at Skipton, but another unforeseen setback occurred when, despite the sunshine, the



path along the canal had become a quagmire as a result of all the rain the previous week. The duo were forced to ride slowly, almost to a crawl at times, so the decision was made for Robin to go ahead to meet Rehana as arranged.

Robin met Rehana at the Leeds Craft Centre for coffee before she took him on a tour of the town centre, pointing out some of the city's iconic buildings.

Ossie and Garth eventually completed the Peace Ride, the exhausted pair arriving in Leeds with just 15 minutes left to catch the 6pm train back to Liverpool.

Robin said, "We currently live in turbulent times but amongst all the chaos we feel passionately that peace should always be a continued theme and that children should remain a priority and be inspired, encouraged and allowed to live the life they desire in peace."

"I am really grateful for the efforts of Ossie and Garth in completing their ride and carrying the Peace Message to Leeds, while raising welcome funds for Liverpool Heartbeat."

"A special thank you to Phil Davies for putting the video of the event together for Liverpool Heartbeat."

"WE CURRENTLY LIVE IN TURBULENT TIMES BUT AMONGST ALL THE CHAOS WE FEEL PASSIONATELY THAT PEACE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A CONTINUED THEME AND THAT CHILDREN SHOULD REMAIN A PRIORITY AND BE INSPIRED, ENCOURAGED AND ALLOWED TO LIVE THE LIFE THEY DESIRE IN PEACE."

ROBIN BAYNES MBE

*Pictured above: Top: Robin and Rehana Minhas
Left: (L-r) Phil Davies, Garth Dallas and Ossie Omar
Right: Robin Baynes MBE and Ossie Omar*



DONATION FROM HOLIDAY INN LIME STREET

Liverpool Heartbeat was delighted to receive a cheque in October from the Holiday Inn, Lime Street, for £1,736.68.

Headed by the hotel's General Manager, Matt Knight, and Sue Hughes, the hotel's HR Administrator, the hotel has a number of teams who fund raise for the benefit of a charity of the hotel's choosing – this time for Liverpool Heartbeat.

Robin Baynes MBE said of the donation "It was a pleasure to not only receive this fantastic amount of money, which will help the charity immensely towards the Peace Poster Project that has been linked up with the Beatles Museum in Matthew Street

"It was nice to meet the Holiday Inn Staff in person, each of who have put in this magnificent effort to help Liverpool Heartbeat. The Charity truly appreciates all of their efforts. I would like to make special mentions of Joan Renshaw, along with the team from the Hotels' Revenue and Admin office.

"Joan raised the most funds individually, collecting over £400 by doing massages for staff and visitors to the hotel, while the team from the Revenue and Admin office raised the highest contribution of funds overall.



"I AM THANKFUL FOR ALL OF THE HOLIDAY INN TEAMS' EFFORTS IN RAISING THESE FUNDS AND TO MATT FOR HIS TIME AND FOR INVITING ME TO THE HOTEL AND INTRODUCING ME TO THE INCREDIBLE STAFF MEMBERS WHOSE EFFORTS AND KINDNESS HAVE BEEN OF GREAT BENEFIT TO LIVERPOOL HEARTBEAT. THANK YOU ALL."

ROBIN BAYNES MBE

PREPARE FOR PEACE

With violence and war breaking out across our planet over the last decade, PREPARE FOR PEACE is a campaign created by the Liverpool Beatles Museum and Liverpool Heartbeat Charity to give hope to the children of the world.

As so-called world leaders gathered in Washington in July to talk about war, Year 7 children from St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican School in Wrexham travelled to Liverpool to talk about peace. The children were instigating a global Peace campaign, following in the footsteps of John and Yoko's Give Peace A Chance message of 1969, and had created Peace Posters suggesting that the way ahead is through communication rather than bombs.

The joint campaign is asking schools and young people from every country across the Earth to create posters promoting Peace rather than bloodshed. Through the work of Tim Quinn, of Marvel Comic fame, and friend and supporter of Liverpool Heartbeat, these posters will be put on exhibition at the Liverpool Beatles Museum before being compiled into book form.

Once the books have been compiled, copies will be sent to every world leader during 2025 as 'the voice of the young people of the world' who say no to war and do not accept that bombs and bullets can be a rational solution to world problems.

Posters have already been received from children who live in countries such as Iran, Russia, China and North Korea

Entries for the posters should be created on A4/International paper size with the name, age and school of the artist written on the back.

Deadline for entries is 12th December 2024

and should be sent via email to quillpublications@btinternet.com

Or by post to: Tim Quinn, 54 Forest Road, Southport PR8 6HZ, United Kingdom





ACROSS MERSEY SWIM 2024

Liverpool Heartbeat proudly celebrated the 31st anniversary of the Across Mersey Swim, an iconic annual event which this year saw 173 brave participants swim from Cockle Inlet, close to Liverpool Marina, in Liverpool to Monks Ferry slipway in Birkenhead.

Large crowds gathered to cheer the swimmers at the finish as they each emerged from the River Mersey at the end of their extraordinary journey. This historic swim, first recorded as part of the Liverpool Olympic Festival in 1863, was reintroduced in 1994 by Robin Baynes MBE, Jimmy Tinsley, and Bob Jones, following a successful English Channel Relay Swim that raised £35,000 for The Royal Liverpool University Hospital's Forget Me Not Cancer Appeal, in memory of Robin's sister-in-law, Barbara Marshall.

Since then, the swim, organised by Tri-4Life Wirral Event Director Liam Hanlon since Robin handed over the reins in 2007, with co-founder Jimmy Tinsley continuing to work alongside Liam, has grown in significance, welcoming swimmers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to take part in support of numerous charities.

This year's swim was a testament to the power of the local community, with safety teams, volunteers, and sponsors all coming together to make the event a great success. Swimmers were waved off from Liverpool by the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mr. Mark Blundell, and Miss Liverpool City Region, Charlotte Grant, as they swam the Mersey in teams, or PODs, for safety, guided by Kayakers led by Colin and supported by fifteen volunteer RIB safety boats from local clubs. Special thanks go to New Brighton Lifeboat, the RNLI, and Marine Fire1 for their constant support throughout the swim.

The event concluded with the swimmers being warmly welcomed ashore by the Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Cherry Povall, who praised the participants for their courage, dedication, and the immense charitable contributions made through their efforts. This year, the swim supported a wide range of charities, including Liverpool Heartbeat, Split Perspectivz, Sam Jalloh Motivate Africa, Stick n' Step, Special Boat Service Association, Wallasey Amateur Boxing Club, Maggie's Cancer Support, The HIVE Birkenhead, The Paul Lavelle Foundation, tri-4-life, and the respective Lord Mayor Charities.

Special mentions go to swimmers Barbara Rigby, the oldest female swimmer, and 86-year-old Joe Kerrigan, the oldest male swimmer. The youngest swimmer, ten-year-old Florence Millward, completed the swim alongside her father, Tom.

The event culminated in a medal ceremony led by 'King of the Mersey' Liam Hanlon, who was joined by the Lord-Lieutenant, the Mayor, and the various POD Captains. Special recognition was also given to Chris Shaw from Wallasey REDCAPS, whose selfless dedication to helping others in their quest to conquer the our mighty river earned him a standing ovation.

A huge thank you goes to all the participants, safety teams, and sponsors, especially Glen Affric Brewery, who provided their signature beer "Bevie Across the Mersey" to all swimmers and support crews. Their efforts have helped raise substantial funds for countless charities, ensuring that the Across Mersey Swim remains a lasting legacy of community spirit and generosity.

Liverpool Heartbeat is proud to be part of such a remarkable tradition and thanks everyone, especially Liam, for all of their continued hard work and support!



Above: L-R: Liam Hanlon (Event Director), Sheila Clarke MBE (Lord Mayor's Consort), Robin Baynes MBE, Jimmy Tinsley (Swimmers Welfare & Safety), Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside Mark Blundell, Cherry Povall (Lord Mayor of Wirral), Miss Liverpool City Region 2024 Charlotte Grant and Olivia Byrne (Flight Sergeant Air Training Corps)

Picture: Pete Carr Photography



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AWARD

Liverpool Heartbeat was delighted to be announced as the winner of the 2024 Youth Engagement Organisation of the Year by Corporate Livewire

Robin Baynes MBE said on receiving the award, "During the awards process Corporate Livewire explained that they invited over 90,000 businesses and corporate professionals, magazine contributors and their subscribers to nominate companies and individuals based on factors such as quality of service, innovation, experience, sustainability and other areas, so be named as the winner of the Youth Engagement Organisation of the Year 2024 is a real honour for everyone involved in Liverpool Heartbeat Charity."

Pictured above: Robin and his wife Brenda with the award.



JOHN HULLEY 'OLYMPIC' PLANTERS

Robin Baynes MBE and Omer Motiwala of Reboot Earth, who met in 2021, formed a collaboration this year to embark on a partnership signifying a commitment to leveraging the power of storytelling and creative media to inspire positive environmental action. One commitment is to the engagement in local history preservation while promoting environmental awareness.

In 2019, Robin and his wife Brenda commissioned a statue of a Liverpool man who was born in Kensington in 1832. Hulley became a talented gymnast and went on to be a seminal figure in the founding of the modern Olympic Games. To bring his work to the attention of the general public and to honour his enduring legacy to the young people of Merseyside and beyond, Robin and Brenda gifted the statue, which is located on Liverpool waterfront at Mariners Wharf/Coburg Wharf, to the people of Liverpool. The statue was sculptured by Tom Murphy and unveiled by Anne HRH Princess Royal on 14th June 2019.

With 2024 having been an Olympic year, Robin initiated a tribute to John Hulley's legacy prior to the start of the 2024 Across Mersey Swim, arranging a ceremonial event that saw planters in the colours of the five Olympic Rings being laid in formation around the base of the statue.

The statue and planters stand as a testament to Hulley's significant contributions to the health and fitness of young people and serves as an inspiring symbol for future generations, embodying the values of sportsmanship and community cherished by Liverpool Heartbeat and Reboot Earth.

Pictured far left: Robin Baynes MBE and Omer Motiwala with volunteers from the Canal River Trust, led by Harbour Master for South Liverpool Docks area Andy Goudie, (fourth from left) who will be maintaining and watering the planters throughout the year.

Left: L-R: Garth Dallas (Chair of Liverpool Commonwealth Association), Robin Baynes MBE (Founder Liverpool Heartbeat), Olivia Byrne (Flight Sergeant Air Training Corps), Liam Hanlon (Across Mersey Swim organiser & Tri-4 Life Event Director), Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside Mark Blundell, Miss Liverpool City Region 2024 Charlotte Grant, and Omer Motiwala (Reboot Earth)

LIVERPOOL HEARTBEAT JOHN HULLEY CUP 2024

By Barry Fairfield

Kirkby Valley Golf Club was the venue for this year's John Hulley Cup. The course was in excellent condition and a credit to the club's green staff. The day was made even more enjoyable thanks to the welcome and hospitality provided by all the Kirkby Valley staff.

In wonderful weather conditions the event proved to be a great success and was enjoyed by all the participants. The day's judges also deserve a big thank you for their hard work and helping everything to go so seamlessly for all.

Some excellent scores were returned, none more so than those golfers who filled the first three places.

The John Hulley Cup was won by Gavin Hughes, a 24-handicap player who returned to the clubhouse with an amazing 49 points, the highest total in the event's history.

Phil Woollam, who played off 21, came a close second with a very creditable score of 47 points, and last year's runner-up Colin Adams (19 handicap) took third place with a fine score of 46 points.

Colin also picked up both of the Nearest-the-Pin awards (on holes 6 and 17) following two excellent tee shots. David Davies collected the Longest Drive award, on hole 9, thanks to his excellent drive.

Raffle prize winners were: Ian Jeremy, Craig Baxter, Mike Moustaka, and Kevin Bennett.



On behalf of Robin Baynes MBE, a big thank you to all those who took part on the day for their supporting of this year's John Hulley Cup Golf Day and helping to raise the magnificent sum of £1,006 in support of Liverpool Heartbeat, which will go a long way in helping us promote health and wellbeing for young people in our community.

MICHELLE O'DWYER

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE POWER OF FOOD!



CHRISTMAS DAY 2024 COMMUNITY LUNCH

MICHELLE O'DWYER IS THE BUSINESS OWNER AT BAY TREE EVENTS & BAY TREE COOKERY ACADEMY C.I.C. MICHELLE IS A GREAT BELIEVER IN THE POWER OF FOOD TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, BUILD SKILLS AND IMPROVE LIVES OVERALL.



PASSIONATE about inclusion, diversity and providing opportunities that matter to our communities, Baytree, through the organising of FREE community events and inter-generational activities, strive to reduce inequalities and help individuals and families thrive.

Their programmes focus on reducing isolation and loneliness, helping families connect through cooking and the tackling of food poverty. The programmes offered by Bay Tree include vocational training in hospitality and catering, along with volunteering and work experience opportunities to support the most deprived of communities.

It truly is a reality to say that Michelle is an amazing and selfless lady. Since 2016 she has made time during her hectic business schedule to organise a Christmas Day Community Lunch for those who might otherwise not be able to afford a proper Christmas Dinner or, simply through life circumstances, find themselves alone at what is such a special time for us all.

This special Christmas Day Community Lunch will be serving 200 plus people from across the community, from different religions and different backgrounds, providing a 2-course festive meal, soft drinks, a Santa's Grotto, entertainment, music and dancing, the singing of carols, crafts and board games areas, and a selection of presents, so that those in our community who otherwise would not have the opportunity to enjoy Christmas Day are able to have an extra special day. Michelle and the team also provides 'Boxing Day' food hampers for people to take home with them to enjoy the following day.

Michelle's preparations and fund raising for the Free Christmas Day Community Lunch start early in the year, and in October this year she undertook a gruelling 300-mile sponsored bike ride across Vietnam to help raise funds for the event. "One of the hardest, mentally and physically, but loveliest things I have ever done" she says.

Of course Michelle cannot do it all without the help and support of others and she expresses her thanks

to everyone who has supported her this year, either through donations or the providing of services, to ensure the Lunch is a successful and special occasion for all those attending.

"The Christmas Day community dinner is a magical time and, as it has been every year, myself and my fabulous volunteers would like to make this year extra special.

"I am completely blown away by the generosity of everyone who has once again given of their time, energy and hard-earned money in support of this year's Christmas Community Day Lunch. I cannot fit all your names into this feature and sorry if I have missed anyone out but here goes: "

"Vauxhall Neighbourhood Centre for providing the venue, as they have done since 2022, The GYM, Great Homer Street, for their packing of the hampers and their attendance on the day, John Lewis for their generous donations to the day, Tom Harrison House, whose team come along and peel all the veg, chop it all and prepare everything before turning up on Christmas Day to help me serve it to the guests, Maritime Reserves (HMS Eaglet) Liverpool, the fantastic James Smethurst who's raising funds for the Lunch at his Liverpool Dinner Club Christmas event at the Novotel in Paddington Village on 12th December. (see www.liverpooldinnerclub.com/Novotel)

"Lord Derby, who has donated the turkey each year since 2019, Julie Lawson Events, One Vision Housing, St Andrew's Community Network, Sway with Ray – the man with all the moves, Robin Baynes MBE, Arthur Gold - the day's photographer, and two extra special people and dear friends Clare Ellis (Wellness In The City) and her partner – and our loveable Santa – George Egginton of Infinity Apartments and Party Pads fame.

"There are so many more and my thanks go to each and everyone of you."



UNFORTUNATELY ONLY PRE-BOOKINGS ARE ABLE TO COME ALONG TO THE CHRISTMAS DAY COMMUNITY LUNCH

CAN YOU HELP AND SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER THIS YEAR?

While still welcoming presents for children of both sexes, Michelle is also looking for gifts suitable for male and female adults. If you can help please contact her at: michelleann10@yahoo.co.uk

To make a donation of funds please visit:
<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/community-christmas-dinner-2024>

ON THURSDAY 17TH OCTOBER, THE 2024 BRITISH CITIZEN YOUTH AWARDS HONOURED 21 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE UK THAT HAVE MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR COMMUNITIES AND WIDER SOCIETY.

THE British Citizen Youth Award, (BCyA) in partnership with Specsavers, is widely viewed as the nation's way of recognising extraordinary, everyday young people for exceptional endeavour and is open to any person under the age of 18 who has been nominated for their commitment to helping others.

These selfless young people have each shown kindness and commitment to a multitude of causes, raising funds and awareness on behalf of their chosen cause(s), with each youngster being dedicated to 'making a difference'.

The BCyA do not have 'Winners' they have 'Medallists' and each recipient is selected to receive the BCyA, or have a 'BCyA bestowed upon them, in recognition of their positive impact on community and the wider society.

The youngsters were presented with their BCyA Medal of Honour, inscribed with the words 'For the Good of the Country', at a Formal Medal Presentation ceremony held at The Palace of Westminster. The day was Hosted by Singer and Actress Kimberly Wyatt, a Patron of The British Citizen Youth Award, who said "Many of these kids have faced turmoil in their own lives yet still choose to be selfless and help others. I applaud you and your families for your hard work and dedication. You are the future, and your brilliant endeavours will make a difference!"

■ BCyA 2024 Roll of Honour – House of Lords



Claire Cathcart is the founder of Team 1c, a St Helens based charity that is committed to supporting cardiac families within the North West. They also support the work of selected charities overseas who provide funds and care for children and families not lucky enough to have a national health service in their countries. Thanks to Claire, My Planet Liverpool is delighted to be able to feature the four local youngsters, two from Team 1c, who were presented with a BCyA in recognition of their selfless endeavours.

All four were nominated by Claire, who is an Ambassador for the awards, and whose own son Jake is a previous recipient of a BCyA (in 2018), with Claire herself also receiving what she calls "a grown-up" version of the award in 2022.

BRITISH CITIZEN YOUTH AWARDS



PRESENTED TO LOCAL CHILDREN

AVA HUGHES

Ava, who lives in West Derby, Liverpool, was born with the congenital heart condition hypoplastic left heart syndrome, meaning she has half a working heart, the left hand side of her heart not having formed properly at birth. She had three open heart surgeries before she was four years of age, her next surgery being a full heart transplant.

Despite her condition, Ava, a member of Team 1c, committed to raising enough funds for her own heart surgeon to perform surgeries that saved the lives of 15 young children in India.

While recovering from her last surgery, Ava, described by her mum Vicky as a "tough cookie" decided to raise money by doing 500 laps of the cardiac ward on her trike. Her exceptional effort raised over £1,000 and her involvement with Team 1c's Annual 1K walk regularly raises a further £5,000.



Kimberly Wyatt, Ava and Nicky Cox
(Editor of First News and Patron of BCyA)

KAI SAINT

Another Team 1c member, Kai is aged 10 and hails from Preston, Lancashire. He was presented with his BCyA Medal of Honour by James Cathcart, BCyA Ambassador.

Although Kai is living with a lifelong cardiac condition, he doesn't consider himself as being poorly and just wants to help other families and children. Kai was born with a complex cardiac condition and had three open heart surgeries as a baby, suffering from two cardiac arrests. Now 10-years-old, he lives life to the fullest despite a leaking heart valve and a hole in his heart.

Each year, Kai takes part in Team 1c's Annual Sponsored 1k Walk, raising funds for cardiac charities in order to help other cardiac condition sufferers. In 2022 he was unable to take part in the walk so set himself a personal challenge of completing a triathlon for Ronald McDonald House at Alder Hey and in doing so raised over £1700 for the charity. To manage a triathlon with such a life-threatening condition is a huge achievement and it should not be underestimated how much strength this takes to overcome.

Most recently, Kai abseiled 100ft off Anfield's main stand for Team 1c to raise money for Liverpool Women's Hospital, which heralded a further group total of over £3,000. He attends all Team 1c's events and has done since its launch in 2017, always getting involved and helping where he can. Kai is a true hero.



Claire with Kai and Ava

JESS WEAVER

Sixteen-year old Jess, from Neston, was aged just 6 when her sister Georgina 'Georgie' died in May 2014 from tracheal agenesis, a rare condition in which the windpipe fails to develop. Georgie lived for just five days after being born and received care at Alder Hey Children's Hospital before her parents Emma and Leigh took the heartbreaking decision to withdraw her life support.

Jess, the eldest daughter, decided she wanted to raise money in memory of her little sister and began her fundraising efforts riding on her pink tricycle. On the first anniversary of Georgie's passing she did her first tricycle ride, over 11 miles, and since then she has continued to raise awareness of Georgie's condition, raising more than £35,000 for Alder Hey over the years, with her last bike ride taking place in 2023.

The funds have contributed to various different projects within the hospital with some earmarked specifically to the Alder Centre, the first dedicated bereavement centre in the UK.

Mum Emma said. "We are all so very proud of Jess. When Georgie was in hospital Jess made her a promise that she would raise money and awareness and she has continued to keep that promise 10 years on and that is testament to the incredible, inspiring young lady that Jess is."



Jess Weaver

ALFIE FITZSIMMONS

In May 2017, a then 8-year old Alfie's life was changed irreversibly when he lost his dad to suicide. Remarkably, dedicated support for children bereaved by suicide is not available anywhere in the UK and so, motivated by his own harrowing experience, Alfie decided to do something about this.

Six months after losing his dad, Alfie wrote a letter to Everton Football Club to ask for their help in raising funds for those less fortunate than himself. Everton's immediate response, and subsequent important meetings with Alfie and his mum Allison Furlong, laid the foundation for what would become Alfie's Squad. Alfie himself raised £30,000 towards making his idea become a reality.

The core mission of Alfie's Squad is to support children who have been bereaved by suicide, helping these children to rebuild their lives. Alfie's Squad is committed to providing children bereaved by suicide with a safe space to make friends and find solace and support in the company of understanding peers who share similar experiences.

Thanks To Alfie's efforts, the commitment is now available to other children in Alfie's situation to offer a unique service that utilises team activities in the 'squads' to reduce the feeling of isolation, make friends and improve self worth.



Alfie Fitzsimmons

If any reader knows of a youngster who deserves to be recognised for a BCyA then nominations are now being accepted for the 2025 medal presentation

You can register online at: www.britishcitizenyouthawards.co.uk



Fighting to be Heard launches #3YearsOn7AreGone Campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

In September 2021, following the loss of two of her close friends in a matter of months, Kathryn Gordon Orr, from Maghull, gathered together 20 women in solidarity to create an awareness campaign, uniting women from across the UK who were strangers to each other through their diagnosis of incurable secondary breast cancer.

The bond between the women involved in the campaign developed into real-life friendships and Kathryn (Kate), a mum-of-one, alongside Gill Cory, from Southport, and Kate Rackham, a teacher from Urmston, Greater Manchester, launched the **Fighting to be Heard Foundation**.



Kate, who was named as Inspirational Woman of the Year at the MWOTY Awards 2024, reflects on the three years since the campaign's launch.

“The photograph above was taken in Liverpool at the Golden Gloves Gym in Liverpool by Sane of Sane Seven, and showcases the group of twenty courageous ladies, all standing together to fight for their voices to be heard and to raise awareness for the often-overlooked community of secondary breast cancer patients – the underdogs who are not represented by the traditional pink associated with breast cancer awareness.

Last month (October) was Breast Cancer Awareness month and Fighting to be Heard launched the poignant campaign **#3YearsOn7AreGone**, marking three years since the original photo shoot and the fact that seven of the women in the photograph have sadly passed away since the picture was taken, including the loss this year of my co-founders and trustees Gill Cory and Kate Rackham, both of whom were integral to Fighting To Be Heard's mission.

The imagery, expertly crafted by Sane, from the original campaign has now been revised to honour the memories of these incredible seven women. The power of this image evokes deep reflection among those who participated, leading to profound discussions about the friendships formed and the impactful work of the charity.

Throughout October, our participants shared their experiences, reflecting on the significance of being part of our campaign and the emotional journey that has unfolded over the past three years.

Despite the challenges and sadness faced by the secondary breast cancer community, Fighting to be Heard also celebrated many highs.

The campaign's youngest trustee, Kate Enell, from Crosby, along with Nikki Williams from Warrington, joined myself and renowned Positive Psychology Coach, Liz Folan, on Roy Basnett's Liverpool Live Radio programme, as they shared their remarkable stories.

Kate, who went straight to Stage 4 secondary breast cancer without a primary diagnosis, discussed her current treatment with the drug ENHERTU, which is now receiving UK-wide attention for its effectiveness in treating secondary breast cancer and has successfully reduced the

size of Kate's brain tumours, where her cancer has metastasised, along with her liver and bones.

Nikki also shared her experiences, highlighting the limited treatment options she faced in England due to NICE's (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) recent policy changes and being unable to have the life-extending ENHERTU drug.

In addition to the radio experience, our Liverpool trustee, Laura Shutt and her husband Rob, our finance lead, organised a Halloween Welly Walk in Sefton Park on Sunday, October 20, to raise vital funds for the Winter Grant Appeal. This initiative provides financial support to families during the festive season, and this year marked our second round of grants, following our first awards in 2023.



With the rising cost of living and many secondary patients unable to work, the need for support has never been greater. We appealed to the community for help. Feedback from previous grant recipients underscored the impact of our work: Two people, who both wished to remain anonymous, sent messages of support saying, (1) "I just wanted to say thank you so much for the winter grant. I can't tell you what a difference this has made to us. This will likely be the final Christmas I have with my children, and it has meant I can make it a good one without worrying about how to pay for the extra treats to enjoy our Christmas break."

(2) "This winter grant is such a help. Firstly, to keep warm. I've been terrified to make the house comfortable because of the cost of gas, so cold days have been restricted to my being under a blanket. Thank you for making winter and Christmas so much better. I truly cannot thank you enough."

Fighting to be Heard remains committed to supporting those affected by secondary breast cancer and advocates for greater awareness and accessibility in treatment. We encourage everyone to join us in spreading awareness and supporting our mission.

For more information on the campaign or to support Fighting to be Heard Foundation and their efforts please visit: www.fightingtobeheard.co.uk or contact: admin@fightingtobeheardfoundation.co.uk



OWCH!

A REVOLUTIONARY HEALTH & WELLBEING MARKETPLACE

On October 25th 2024, Kate proudly unveiled OWCH, a marketplace dedicated to health and wellbeing.

OWCH has a mission to create affordable, plant-based products while fostering a sense of community. OWCH aims to lift spirits and energize lives.

At the heart of OWCH lies its core philosophy, which provides the acronym OWCH:

- O **Outstanding** products and people involved in this marketplace.
- W **WE** because we're all in this together – there is no 'I' in team.
- C **Community**, where individuals unite for a common cause.
- H **Health & Happiness**, the ultimate goal for everyone who connects with us.

Kate said, "I'm bringing together talented experts to create affordable, high-quality products. Health should never come at a steep price. "My vision extends beyond a single brand; I aspire to create a family of brands that encourage people to come together, share their stories, and find joy. My hope is that you leave feeling better than when you arrived, knowing you're part of something meaningful. We want to take the sting out of life."

OUR MISSION

In a world where consumers increasingly seek connections and shared values, OWCH promises to be a platform that embodies purpose. "We are powered by plants and people energy," Katie explained. "United by a common cause, we bring our expertise together to help people feel better and make a difference in our beautiful world. We balance profit with purpose, creating plant-based products at affordable price points while developing them based on your desires."

To celebrate the launch of OWCH, the first product available will be the Polyphenol Power Face Oil. Consumers can purchase one and donate another to a breast cancer patient, thereby creating a direct impact within the community.

Furthermore, customers can support OWCH's mission with the wonderful "Give Glow and Grow" initiative, where buying ten or more facial oils allows them to donate to their chosen charity or one selected by the platform. These people are called 'planters,' and they are recognised in our 'Belief Garden.' We also have the 'Calendar of Care,' filled with events incorporating inspirational shares such as yoga, nutritional advice, and motivational speakers. These people are known as our 'believers' and are in place to lift you.

"We believe everything can have purpose," Kate added. "Join us on this journey, surround yourself with positive people who lift you, and let's spread good vibes only."

OWCH is poised to make a significant impact on the health and wellbeing landscape and invites everyone to join in this transformative experience.

For more information, visit: www.owch.uk or follow us on: Instagram at @owch.uk.

GIRLFANS GET YOUR KITS OUT FESTIVAL

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN IN FOOTBALL,
FASHION, AND CULTURE



Jacqui McAssey



JACQUI McASSEY is a designer and image maker who is a Senior Lecturer at John Moores University School of Art & Design. She is also a Fashion Communication/Creative Direction professional for football and fashion.

Liverpool fan Jacqui founded GIRLFANS fanzine in 2013 to give female football supporters visibility and a sense of belonging in football culture. In 2019, she introduced a sister publication titled GIRLFANS UNTOLD, which features the experiences and recollections of older supporters in their own words, along with photographs taken from their personal archives.

Jacqui used photography and traditional football fanzines to create the GIRLFANS platform, which features the diverse range of female fans that follow clubs in the English and Scottish Leagues. Through the use of photography, print and social media, she is giving female football supporters a greater visibility and a sense of belonging in the culture of the football world, developing a football merchandise and memorabilia concept which reclaims and feminises the phrases, chants and songs that are belted down from our male-dominated football terraces.

From young girls to pensioners, each proudly wearing scarves and shirts of the clubs they fervently support, the creativity of the female fans is amazing, and Jacqui is playing a large part in giving these fans a greater visibility in the world of footballing culture.

On Saturday 28th September this year, Jacqui, whose efforts saw her being named as the winner of the Arts, Culture & Media category at this year's Merseyside Women of the Year Awards, held GIRLFANS latest event, the 'Get Your Kits Out Festival', a dedicated Grassroots Football-Fashion Market of up-cycled football fashion and accessories, unique collaborations, resale shirts for adults and children from Football Shirts 101, along

with selected football pieces from Liverpool retailer Full Time Fits, plus accessories, artwork, homeware and lots more.

She says, "When Girlfans began, its purpose was quite simply to create a sense of belonging amongst female fans of the men's game. We used photography, fanzines, curating, casting, exhibitions, interviews, to contribute to the discourse around women who watch football, with the support of Mike Holmes, Kira Courtney, and right-hand woman Zoë H.

"To celebrate 10 years since the first fanzine was published, I wanted to create that same sense of belonging through the Get Your Kits Out Festival. The Festival was, in part, homage to the Lionesses and also to women's football as a whole, especially the women's grassroots scene, where football, socials and style intersect."

The festival took place at Liverpool 8's iconic 'The Florrie' Community Centre, and brought together many of the brightest and best creators, makers, and voices, to our city for a one-day celebration of football, design and fashion.

Aside from the Football-Fashion market, the day featured a 'Team Talks' session given by Sophie Benson of Dazed, Simi Iluyomade from the football platform, Versus, and Caoimhe O'Neil from The Athletic, who unpicked the cultural influences of football fashion, from the Lionesses to #Blokecore, and beyond.

There was also an exhibition displaying the work of photographers of international female football, an up-cycling workshop, and indoor and outdoor bar and food areas, along with a vibrant DJ stage in the outdoor courtyard.

The day was a great success and a wonderful celebration of what has taken place on and off the pitch since Jacqui's first GIRLFANS publication 11 years ago and how the culture surrounding the roles of women in football has gained positive footholds, along with a fast growing grassroots scene in the female game.

www.girlfans.co.uk



Photographs by Kate Davies



MWOTY LEADERS LUNCH
—2024—

WINNERS, FINALISTS, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS FROM THE MERSEYSIDE WOMEN OF THE YEAR (MWOTY), GOING BACK AS FAR AS THE 2013 AWARDS CEREMONY, CAME TOGETHER AT THE ICONIC HOPE STREET HOTEL ON TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER FOR THE MWOTY LEADERS LUNCH 2024.

THE afternoon event began with an introduction from Moira O'Shaughnessy, Managing Partner at FPC, who announced to guests that FPC would return in 2025 as headline sponsor for the third consecutive year.

Maintaining MWOTY's ethos of collaboration and creating supportive networks, Moira then introduced special guest Gina Earnshaw, Senior Corporate and Major Donor Fundraiser at Zoe's Place, to talk about the recent challenges faced by the hospice and the fight to keep its doors open.

Appealing for support from the MWOTY network, Gina said: "I think they thought we might take the news sitting down, but the city of Liverpool didn't allow that. We need £6.5 million to progress our Hayman's Green site, with £2 million already raised. We will fight to the very end for our families."

There was also an update on the Southport Strong Together Fund, managed by the Community Foundation for Merseyside, with Chief Executive Rae Brooke highlighting how the £279,000+ raised is being used to support the 29 families affected by the horrific attack in Southport on 29th July 2024, which was followed by an outbreak of rioting in the region.

Rae also explained how, through continued community consultation, the funds will be distributed to support healing and community cohesion in the run up to Christmas and then to the first anniversary of the attack.

The guests listened to a fascinating Q&A session with Dr Eliza Morgan, along with MWOTY 2024 Entrepreneur winner, Amanda Unsworth, and 2024 Social Impact winner, Lynne Akwei-Howe, as they shared stories from their early working life, challenges faced in their careers and the advice they would share with young women just starting out in their careers.

Pictured right (L-R): Moira O'Shaughnessy (Managing Partner FPC), Ellie Kerr (Founding Director MWOTY), Jan Morris (Sales Director Hope Street Hotel), Nikki Croft-Givan (Director Auteur Media), and Bernice Blundell (FPC)

Centre: Donna Scully (Joint Owner and Director of Carpenters Group), Amanda Unsworth (MD Trinity Logistics), Dr Eliza Morgan and Lynne Akwei-Howe (Founder CEO Crea8ing Community)

Bottom: Rae Brook addresses MWOTY Lunch guests

Photographs by CM Digital Collective



SPECIAL FEATURE



MWOTY LEADERS LUNCH
—2024—

AFTER a delicious lunch of Celeriac Velouté and homemade Scouse, followed by coffee and a delightful cupcake, Dr Morgan welcomed current 'Woman of the Year', Donna Scully, Joint Owner and Director of Carpenters Group, to the stage for an after-lunch conversation.

Speaking of her own career journey in coming from a tough working-class background and referencing Ellie Kerr's (MWOTY Founding Director) statement that women's networks are their net worth, Donna highlighted the importance of supporting other women, particularly those who might not have the same opportunities.

Donna said: "Sending the ladder back down and getting more Donnas – young women like me – climbing up has always been important. It's the way to ensure a fairer, more equitable society."

Speaking of the Girls Network, Donna also shared her joy in mentoring young women and encouraged members of the MWOTY network to also get involved, invoking her favourite catchphrase: "Kindness is free, spread that sh*t everywhere."

An enjoyable afternoon was closed out by Ellie, who announced that nominations for MWOTY 2025 – which will be the awards' fifteenth year – would open again in January 2025.

Speaking after the event, Ellie added: "Our amazing network of winners, finalists and supporters from across the years are what set us apart from other awards. Their collaboration, dedication and

ongoing support are what make us a movement not a moment.

"This is what enables us to make magic. I can't wait to see what 2025 brings and I would like to extend a huge thank you to Moira and the team at FPC for supporting us as Headline Sponsor for the third year running."

Moira commented: "Supporting MWOTY as headline sponsor for a third year is genuinely a privilege. Over the past three years, as connections have multiplied and the reach of this community has extended further across our region, we have seen its momentum and impact increase. Looking ahead to the 2025 awards and beyond, we are excited to see what else MWOTY has in store, who else will join the movement, and where it might go next!"

Photographs by CM Digital Collective



"OUR AMAZING NETWORK OF WINNERS, FINALISTS AND SUPPORTERS FROM ACROSS THE YEARS ARE WHAT SET US APART FROM OTHER AWARDS. THEIR COLLABORATION, DEDICATION AND ONGOING SUPPORT ARE WHAT MAKE US A MOVEMENT NOT A MOMENT".

ELLIE KERR
(MWOTY FOUNDING DIRECTOR)

MWOTY 2025 NOMINATIONS OPEN IN JANUARY 2025.

For more information visit:
<https://merseysidewomenoftheyear.co.uk/>

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

MERSEYSIDE WOMEN OF THE YEAR (MWOTY) ALUMNI

LAURA HUGHES

#kNOwKnifeCrime

LAURA HUGHES WAS RECOGNISED AS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AT MWOTY 2019 FOR A CAMPAIGN THAT STARTED OUT AS A WAY TO RAISE SOME MONEY TO MARK WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HER BROTHER COLIN'S 40TH BIRTHDAY - SINCE THEN SHE'S SEEN 500 'BLEEDING CONTROL' KITS INSTALLED IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NORTH WEST.

LAURA led the 'In memory of Colin McGinty' running team to raise cash and awareness for their anti-knife crime campaign in 2019, when Colin should have turned 40. Tragically, Colin was stabbed to death in a shocking case of mistaken identity in 2001.

Organising a team of more than 100 people to run the Liverpool Half Marathon in May in his memory, the campaign raised more than £10,000, with Laura donating the money to Radio City's 'Cash for Kids' charity. Little did she know that this was only the beginning.

Laura said: "Initially, we just wanted to do something to mark what would have been Colin's birthday, to raise some money that would do something good that we could dedicate to his memory. When Cash for Kids said that Merseyside Police wanted to do a knife crime campaign and that they needed funding, it was perfect. We were so happy that the funds would be used to educate kids on the dangers of carrying a knife or being involved with people who do.

"There were education sessions in schools and the children made commercials based on what they had learned. It was brilliant to see how effective it was, so we just carried on fundraising."

As the campaign developed, Laura became aware of experienced trauma surgeon Nikhil Misra, the founder of Knifesavers, a charity primarily educating young people about the dangers of knife violence as well as providing bleeding control kits and basic clinical skills to help save lives in the event of someone being stabbed.

Laura said: "I saw Nikhil on television, talking about the charity and the Bleeding Control kits and I said to my husband 'this is who we need to get involved with'. Like us he - and many other NHS



Laura with her MWOTY award in 2019

workers with him - were working to promote prevention."

After hatching a plan to fundraise to buy Knifesavers Bleeding Control kits and have them installed in schools and communities in the North West where they were needed to most, they renamed the campaign #kNOwKnifeCrime.

Then, Laura turned to Cash for Kids and Everton in the Community, who she was working with at the time, and asked them how they could make the campaign even bigger.

Laura said: "One of the team members from Cash for Kids called me and asked, 'Do you fancy the London Marathon?' I'd hated the Liverpool half marathon, so I said no, thanks, I don't at all. Ever. But somehow, I got talked into it.

Everton in the Community ran a competition for children to create a costume for Laura and her fellow runners to run the marathon in, with a giant foam heart replicating the campaign's logo being selected as the winner and made for the race.

Laura said: "Then, COVID hit and everything shut down. The London Marathon didn't happen that year. We couldn't engage with schools as teaching had gone online, and I

was home-schooling myself. We even had to cancel our running club as we didn't want to risk being part of the problem and spreading the virus. It was a really difficult time."

Eighteen months later, in October 2021, the first London Marathon open to non-elite athletes since the pandemic took place, and the #kNOwKnifeCrime team took on the course, running a mile each wearing the giant foam heart costume.

Laura said: "It was tough running in the costume, but we did it and raised around £20k for the campaign. Then, a week after the race, I received a letter from Hugh Brasher, the Event Director, giving us the



London Marathon 2024

Spirit of the London Marathon prize for that year. I was stunned, out of the 67,000 people who ran that race, they chose to support what we were doing."

The Spirit of the Marathon prize is a prestigious award recognising participants, volunteers, supporters, and champions who demonstrate the spirit of the world's largest marathon, elevating winners to a global platform - and providing a place for life in the London Marathon.

Laura added: "I couldn't believe it. I've done the marathon three times now and regardless of having a place for life, I won't be doing it again - no more!"

Laura's third London Marathon happened this year as part of a mammoth challenge to generate more funds for #kNOwKnifeCrime. A few days ahead of the TCS London Marathon 2024, 35,000 children from across Sefton took part in a 2.6-mile mini marathon, while another 1,640 took part in a relay race event, using a Bleed Control kit as a baton, passing it along from school to school, to show the borough's commitment to work together to look after its communities.

Then on Sunday 21st April, six campaigners from #kNOwKnifeCrime, including Laura, took on the full marathon. The campaign raised an enormous £23,000 and educated 35,000 students from 82 schools on the dangers of knife crime.

Laura said: "It was the best thing I have ever been a part of. Having the opportunity to work with so many young people and educating them about our campaign, I knew it had the power to save lives. It was such a fantastic, lasting and positive legacy in Colin's memory."

This most recent campaign and all of Laura's cumulative efforts to take preventative action against knife crime last month earned her another prestigious accolade, being named Pride of Britain 2024's regional winner for the North West.

Laura said: "Being named the regional winner for the North West in the Pride of Britain awards was amazing too. Not because it's a nice shiny accolade, but because it gives us a national platform, so more people know about our message and campaign. It gives us credibility, visibility and more people want to work with us. Similarly, on a regional level, being part of the MWOTY movement isn't about the award you got on the day, it is about the networks, the support and the connections that you make through it."



This commitment to the cause is still very much needed, with a 78 per cent increase in police-recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the last 10 years (up to March 2024) - and Laura still has one final campaign up her sleeve for 2024.

On 15th November, in partnership with LFC Foundation, Cash for Kids and Knifesavers, #kNOwKnifeCrime will be launching a campaign to ensure that Bleeding Control equipment is available in every single secondary school in the Liverpool City Region.

Laura said: "I think on 31st December this year, if I can say that every secondary school in the city region has this vital equipment, I'll be very happy.

Until, of course, I come up with the next big idea that will help even more people and create an even more incredible legacy for Colin."

Reflecting on everything that she and the campaign have achieved since 2019, we asked Laura what advice she would have given herself back then, and indeed what advice she would give to others championing an important cause. She said: "Just keep going. When someone reaches out to you it's an opportunity. Even if you think you're at capacity, even if you think you can't possibly fit it all in, embrace it and go with it, as it's an opportunity to impact someone's life positively."



Laura with Bleeding Control kit



For more information on #kNOwKnifeCrime, visit: <https://knowknifecrime.wordpress.com/>

To learn more about MWOTY, visit: <https://merseysidewomenoftheyear.co.uk/>

Nominations for MWOTY 2025 open in January 2025.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

MERSEYSIDE WOMEN OF THE YEAR (MWOTY) ALUMNI

EMMA ABBASI DEARBUMP

EMMA ABBASI (FORMERLY JARVIS) WAS NAMED WINNER OF THE ENTREPRENEUR CATEGORY AT THE 2023 MERSEYSIDE WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS, FOR HER WORK DEVELOPING PARENT PROMISE - A COLLECTIVE CAMPAIGNING FOR BUSINESSES TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES THROUGHOUT PREGNANCY AND PARENTHOOD - AND HER PREGNANCY SUBSCRIPTION BOX, DEARBUMP.

EIGHTEEN months on, a lot has changed for Emma and her businesses. She has merged the Parent Promise campaign with Dearbump, and in September 2024 she launched the Dearbump pregnancy app to a packed audience at Liverpool Slush'd.

Emma said: "Since the 2023 awards, we've made some incredible progress at Dearbump, with our most significant milestone being the launch of our pregnancy app. The app is designed to support expectant mothers with real-time access to midwives, personalised tracking tools, and educational resources. We've also continued expanding our reach, working with corporate clients to integrate the Dearbump app into their employee benefits programs, bringing the Parent Promise mission under the umbrella of the Dearbump brand."

The launch of the app, which is available on iOS and Android, was bolstered by Emma's win at the 2024 Baltic Ventures Launchpad, which secured £25,000 of funding and has been essential in growing the team and preparing for our next stage of growth.

Emma said: "Winning the Baltic Ventures Launchpad and releasing the Dearbump app have definitely been a standout highlight. Having it live is a huge step forward in delivering accessible and continuous support to women during and after pregnancy. Also announcing the app at Liverpool Slush'd, with my 9-year-old son in the audience, was a huge moment. He looked super proud."

There have also been challenges along the way, but not ones that Emma has been willing to back down easily from. After Innovate UK only handed out 25 out of a promised 50 grants to female founders as part of its Women in Innovation award, Emma took to social media to challenge the decision.

She said: "I spoke with many of the incredible women who applied for the award. They received outstanding scores and positive feedback yet were still left without the funding to move their ideas forward. Almost 1,500 female founders applied, yet only 25 received funding. Not even the full amount promised. Women led businesses are consistently underfunded, so I felt I had to speak up and urge Innovate UK to honour its promise."

Within a couple of days Emma's post gained more than 800 likes and 111 reposts and as a result of the uproar that followed, Innovate UK agreed to fund the full 50 grants.

Commented Emma. "This moment not only validated the power of our community but also demonstrated the importance of speaking up for equity and change."



With the challenges faced by female founders being numerous, there might not be one simple answer to overcoming them. However, recognising access to money being a key challenge for women business leaders, Emma believes that this may be alleviated by greater diversity inside firms that deliver funding.

She said: "We need to continue increasing the representation of women within venture capital (VC) firms. Right now, most investors are men, with women making up only 15-20%. This lack of women in decision-making roles means fewer women-led businesses get backed."

Emma added: "We need to encourage more women to become investors because they are more likely to support other women. For example, a study by Harvard Business Review found that firms with female partners were twice as likely to invest in female founders compared to all-male firms. The more diversity you have within VCs, the more diverse the pipeline of start-ups that go through to Investment Committees are. By adding more women and diversity to these firms, more different types of start-ups can get a chance at funding."

Women supporting women and a commitment to diversity is core to the MWOTY ethos. Speaking of her experience of being a MWOTY winner, Emma said: "Being part of the MWOTY movement has been an amazing experience for both me and Dearbump. Winning the Entrepreneur Category at the 2023 awards was such an honour, I feel like a different person now to who I was then. My confidence has definitely grown."

"Being recognised through MWOTY has brought new attention to Dearbump, helping us connect with people who care about maternal health and innovation. It's opened doors to new partnerships, clients, and people who want to support our mission."

"The community has been another big benefit. I've had the chance to meet and connect with other inspiring women who are also working hard to make a difference. It's been great to be part of a group where we can share ideas, challenges, and celebrate each other's successes."

Emma said: "Currently our focus is on the app and growing our user base. We are also continuing to work with our corporate clients and will be offering



our app to more businesses to support their employees, and we're in the process of raising a seed round to help us grow the team and scale."

Looking forward to the new year, Dearbump has also recently been selected to join the Baltic Ventures Accelerator 2024, connecting Emma to world-class mentors, masterclasses, expert coaching, and lots of opportunities for learning to help her take Dearbump to the next level.



To find out more visit: <https://www.dearbump.com/>

To learn more about MWOTY, visit: <https://merseysidewomenoftheyear.co.uk/>

Nominations for MWOTY 2025 open in January 2025.

WELCOME TO
AZURE

.....
YOUR DREAMS AWAIT...

MY PLANET LIVERPOOL IS DELIGHTED
TO INTRODUCE TO READERS

AZURE

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There is plenty to entice you in 2025, including exclusive cruises, lush private islands with intriguing histories, dreamy barefoot chic retreats and plenty of romance and adventure for couples, families and groups of friends. At AZURE you will also discover exciting new options to own your own slice of paradise, with a permanent villa to call home.

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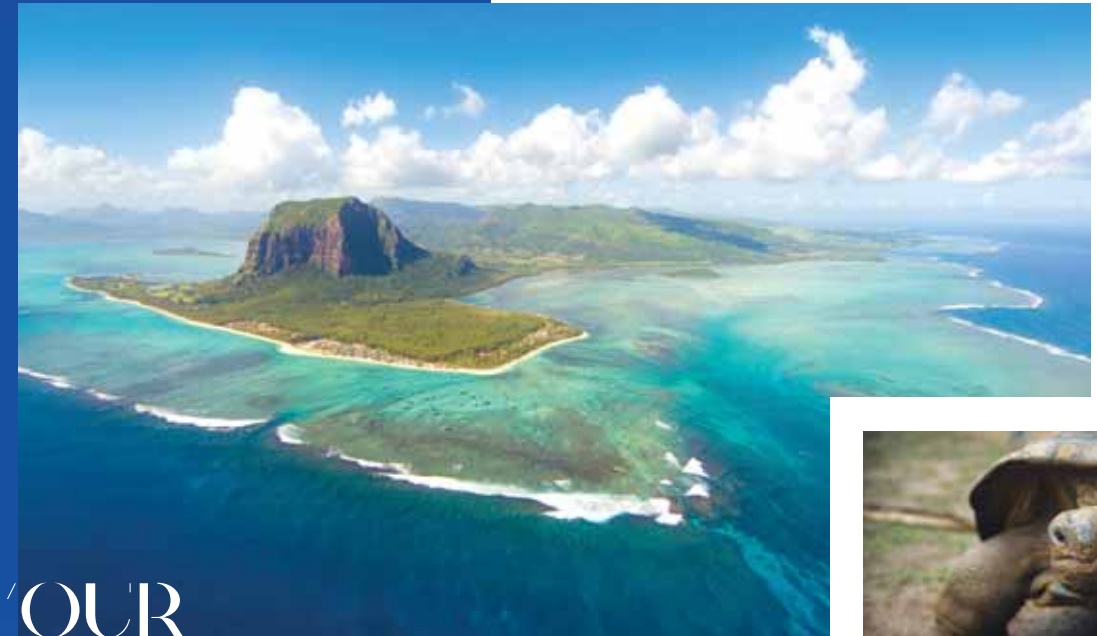
MARVELLOUS... MAGICAL...

Mauritius

MAURITIUS IS FAMED FOR ITS SAFE, WHITE SANDY BEACHES, CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS AND YEAR-ROUND WARM WEATHER. THEY ALSO KNOW ALL ABOUT IDYLIC ACCOMMODATION, WITH AN ARRAY OF STUNNING HOTELS AND TROPICAL BEACH RESORTS OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.



YOUR
DREAMS
AWAIT ...



THE island may well appear on a map as just a dot in the Indian Ocean but it certainly sets new standards for tropical beach resorts. Almost without exception they manage to be both delightfully exotic and reassuringly luxurious, having taken the best aspects of their Indian, French and Creole heritage and turned them into something quite their own through their architecture, service and cuisine.

You will discover friendly locals, relaxing, enchanting spas, and the island is well-known for its golf, with over 12 golf courses, including championship courses designed by the likes of Ernie Els and Bernhard Langer. Mauritius is small enough to reach any of the golf courses during your stay, so golfers are able to take their pick.

The island is a truly tropical playground of adventure for families. There are plenty of family-friendly accommodation options to pick from, including interconnecting rooms, divine villas and spacious family suites and apartments.

This magical destination is also perfect for couples looking for a romantic retreat, or a wedding/honeymoon, filled as it is with dreamy beachfront locations.

If you want to just relax on the beach, Mauritius is the perfect choice for a beach holiday – and on Sundays the beaches come to life when locals meet up with family and friends for a fun-filled day of picnicking. There are also beautiful stretches of sand edged by palm trees, plus little-known bays waiting to be found!

Yet it would be a pity to come all this way and not take the time to explore the island itself. Scenically the island offers anything from tranquil lakes to mountain ranges, and boasts a coastline dotted with quaint fishing villages and an interior studded with lush tropical gardens, nature reserves and bird parks.

Away from the coastal resorts there are mountains and Le Morne Brabant peninsula, with its basaltic monolith of the same name. For the less energetic there are also mansions and shopping malls to discover inland. You can learn about the island's history at Eureka House in Moka, which was built around 1836 and is now a museum. Take time to wander around the grounds and admire the wonderful gardens and mini waterfalls.

Calming, euphoric, curious, adventurous. Mauritius is a place to experience and embrace all of those senses. Enjoy!

AZURE

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MARVELLOUS... MAGICAL...

Mauritius



THE OBEROI BEACH RESORT

The Oberoi Beach Resort, Mauritius, is a serene oasis that perfectly captures the essence of island relaxation. Set along a stunning stretch of pristine beach, this resort invites guests to unwind in a picturesque setting where azure waters meet golden sands. The sound of gentle waves lapping at the shore creates a soothing backdrop, ideal for escaping the everyday hustle.

Accommodations at The Oberoi are designed with comfort in mind, many offering breathtaking views of the ocean. Guests can immerse themselves in the lush tropical gardens that enhance the feeling of seclusion and peace. Stroll along the beach, where soft sands and warm breezes provide a perfect escape, or simply relax by the water's edge.

Dining at The Oberoi Beach Resort is a culinary delight, featuring options that celebrate local flavours and fresh ingredients. Relish exquisite meals while overlooking the stunning ocean, creating unforgettable dining experiences. The attentive staff ensure that your every need is met, fostering an atmosphere of comfort and relaxation.

For those seeking rejuvenation, the world-class spa offers a range of treatments designed to nurture both body and mind. At The Oberoi Beach Resort, Mauritius, every detail is crafted to enhance your stay, making it an idyllic sanctuary where unforgettable memories are made.



SHANGRI-LA LE TOUESSROK

One of the hottest spots in the country, Shangri-La Le Touessrok is a luxurious retreat that redefines relaxation, offering an idyllic escape on the breathtaking east coast of Mauritius. The property has recently undergone a complete redesign of all accommodations, introducing ten new Beach Suites that elevate the luxurious experience. These exclusive suites seamlessly blend comfort and sophistication, each featuring a private pool for the ultimate in privacy and seclusion.

In addition to the redesigned spaces, the resort has unveiled two new dining concepts, alongside a refresh of three much-loved restaurants and bars, enhancing the culinary journey for guests. Every room is thoughtfully crafted with an emphasis on understated elegance, adorned in neutral tones that beautifully reflect the natural surroundings. Most accommodations are nestled amidst lush gardens and offer stunning ocean views, creating a welcoming atmosphere.

Guests are invited to savour the moment, whether lounging by the pool or enjoying a sunset cocktail on their private terrace. For those seeking adventure, the resort presents a variety of water sports and activities, ensuring an exciting balance alongside relaxation.

With world-class dining options and a comprehensive range of wellness activities, Shangri-La Le Touessrok promises an unforgettable experience that soothes the mind and rejuvenates the spirit. Here, every detail is meticulously curated to create an oasis of calm where guests can genuinely disconnect and recharge. This remarkable destination captures the essence of tropical elegance, providing a unique opportunity to experience the unparalleled beauty of Mauritius like never before.

AZURE MAURITIUS



ONE&ONLY LE SAINT GÉRAN

One&Only Le Saint Géran in Mauritius is poised to unveil an exciting addition to its luxury offerings with the opening of new villas and private homes in April. Set within the resort's lush tropical landscape, these exquisite accommodations are set to redefine luxury living in this idyllic paradise.

The new villas are designed to provide guests with unparalleled privacy and space, featuring elegant interiors that blend contemporary design with local Mauritian influences. Each villa is equipped with state-of-the-art amenities, including expansive living areas, private pools, and stunning ocean views, ensuring a level of comfort and tranquillity that is hard to match.

In addition to the villas, the private homes offer a unique opportunity for families and groups seeking an exclusive getaway. These residences are thoughtfully designed to cater to the needs of discerning travellers, with ample space for relaxation and entertainment. Guests will benefit from personalised services, including private chefs and dedicated butlers, which enhance the overall experience.

Already renowned for its exceptional service, One&Only Le Saint Géran also boasts a sophisticated spa partnership with Guerlain. This collaboration allows guests to indulge in bespoke treatments that utilise luxurious Guerlain products, creating a rejuvenating experience that complements the serene environment of the resort.

With pristine beaches, world-class dining, and a wealth of activities at their fingertips, guests can expect an unforgettable experience. As the opening date approaches, anticipation continues to grow for what promises to be a remarkable addition to this legendary resort.



YOUR DREAMS AWAIT...

MARADIVA VILLAS RESORT & SPA

Discover unparalleled luxury at Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa, where each beautifully appointed villa features its own private pool, offering an exclusive retreat. Surrounded by lush tropical gardens, these accommodations provide a serene atmosphere perfect for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Every villa is designed to create an intimate escape, allowing guests to unwind in complete privacy. Enjoy a refreshing dip in your pool or lounge in the soothing sounds of nature. The attentive staff are dedicated to ensuring your stay is personalised and memorable, catering to your every need.

In addition to the tranquil setting, Maradiva offers exquisite dining options that highlight both local and international cuisine, enhancing your overall experience. Whether you're enjoying a quiet evening by your pool or exploring the rich cultural heritage of Mauritius through various activities, the villas serve as the perfect sanctuary.

Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa is the ultimate destination for those seeking a luxurious getaway, where each moment is crafted to provide peace, comfort, and unforgettable memories.

AZURE

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THE SIMPSON FOUNTAIN

My Planet Liverpool took a walk down Chapel Street to George's Dock Gates and Liverpool's waterfront. On our walk we were drawn to the ornate drinking fountain memorial that is set against the retaining wall of the churchyard.

It is named as SIMPSON'S FOUNTAIN and thanks to the kind assistance of local author **Graham Jones** and his wonderful book, **'Walking on Water Street'** we were able to discover the story of the man that the drinking fountain is dedicated to and why.

WILLIAM SHAW SIMPSON

BORN in Skerton, Lancaster, in 1829, William was brought to live in Liverpool at a young age by his parents, as his father, who was a joiner, had found long term work here.

He grew up an ardent teetotaler, no doubt due to his mother's influence, as she was fervent in her 'no-alcohol' belief and played a big part in the 'Teetotal Movement' that took place in Liverpool around 1840. Indeed, such was her avid involvement in teetotal campaigns she became known as the "Teetotal Queen"!

William was noted for his love of reading and regarded by many as having a marked individuality and the possessor of an eloquent tongue, along with a mind full of information and great generosity. Despite these admirable traits he was not trained in any particular trade and his career was initially a varied one. His first recorded place of work was his appointment as Manager of the Old Zoological Gardens on West Derby Road before later becoming Manager of the Rhyl Steampacket Company and subsequently the New Steamtug Company Ltd.

William became best known in the latter years of the 19th century for his time as the Refreshment Confectioner who owned a café called the 'Refreshment and Luggage Rooms' on Liverpool Landing-stage.

He ran the business, which did not sell alcohol, on his own from 1857/58 and was very successful, with his café becoming a well-known landmark on Merseyside. Tragically, this was destroyed by the great fire that broke out on Liverpool's waterfront in July 1874, reducing the whole of the landing-stage to ashes. William was not to be defeated by this misfortune however and continued to trade from a vacant shed provided by The Mersey Docks & Harbour Board until a new landing-stage was constructed.

A very generous man who was always happy to help others, William had started putting a brass bowl outside his café during the Indian famine of 1877-78, requesting that passers-by may like to place a few of their spare pennies in it to help raise funds for the stricken country. Within a month, the bowl had received over £200 (around £12,000 today). A variety of other charitable purposes, including the Haydock Colliery and Abercarn Colliery



accident funds, and the Irish Distress Fund, also benefitted from Simpson's bowl, with donations totalling over £3,500, along with gifts of food, clothing and flowers for distribution among the poor and patients of the town's hospitals.

On 5th February 1881, the *Illustrated London News* provided an artist's sketch and an account of 'Liverpool During the Frost' during which time the bowl was put out to collect monies for relief of the poor, together with a second bowl containing food for the birds.

William entered the Liverpool world of politics and in 1879, he stood for the West Derby ward at the municipal election. Although he won, he lost his seat on the council shortly afterwards following a claim by the Conservatives which stated that because he lived over his café on the landing-stage, which was on the River Mersey, he was not therefore either a ratepayer or an actual legal resident in Liverpool! Their claim was upheld.

William's unexpected death on the 16th June 1883, the cause recorded as being 'stoppage of the bowels', at the young age of 53, prompted a detailed obituary in the *Liverpool Mercury* on 18th June 1883, which included the opening words. "In the sudden and unexpected death of Mr William Simpson at his residence on Princes Liverpool landing-stage, ... Liverpool has lost a citizen who for many years played an active and not unimportant part in its political and social life, and to the poor and distressed a kind-hearted friend."

William was laid to rest at Toxteth Park (Smithdown Road) Cemetery on 17th June 1883 and preceding his funeral the Town Hall flag floated half-mast as an acknowledgement of his former connection with the Corporation. Such was his general popularity, thousands gathered along the route to the cemetery. A cortège of 8 carriages, including the Lord Mayor's, followed by 18 cabs containing friends of this wonderful man and a large contingent of people on foot or in their own modes of transport, with the crowds growing in number along the route, accompanied William on his final journey from his landing-stage home to the cemetery.



Mrs Simpson survived William by nearly 40 years, passing away in 1921 at the age of 91. Daughters Bonnie and Violet later, and regrettably, left their floating home, where they were both born.

William Simpson was a much-loved man. A great supporter of the poor and down-trodden and a true promoter of charity and kindness to others. He fully deserves the respect and worthiness of having his name remembered by future generations of our city.

This drinking fountain named in his memory will help to do just that.



- Pictured:**
- ① Simpson Fountain (sadly no longer working). Graham Jones photograph, June 2010.
 - ② From a Bartholomew's Town Plan circa.1900 (immediately prior to the closing of George's Dock), marking the Refreshment Rooms on the Princes Stage and the routes of nine ferry services. Courtesy Harper Collins. Graham Jones collection.
 - ③ William Simpson (rear, facing, in white hat) with his collecting bowl. From *The Graphic*, 12th October 1878. Graham Jones collection.
 - ④ Lithograph by John McGahey, titled 'Disastrous Fire on the Mersey. Destruction of the Great Landing-stage, on Tuesday, 28th July, 1874. Upwards of £250,000 worth of Property destroyed'. Courtesy Liverpool Record Office, ref. H 386.6 DAI (press cuttings).
 - ⑤ 1908 postcard printed for Mrs Simpson. Courtesy Graham Jones collection.
 - ⑥ Detail from the 1908 postcard. Courtesy Graham Jones collection.

THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE

TRADITIONAL PUB FOOD, SPORT ON TV & LIVE MUSIC,
PLUS HOME TO THE LAUGHTERHOUSE COMEDY CLUB



ONE of Liverpool's oldest and most popular pub venues, The Slaughter House is ideally situated at the heart of the city centre's bustling restaurant and business quarter. It is a family-friendly venue and is located on Fenwick Street, just a couple of minutes walk from Merseyrail's James Street station and around the corner from Castle Street and its selection of quality restaurants.

The Bennett's Building in which the Slaughter House is located has a long history as a drinking venue and is mentioned in a 1927 issue of the Daily Post, which notes that the building once housed the business known as 'George Bennett & Sons Wine Merchants, Established in the Reign of George III and is the "Oldest House in town." King George III reigned from 1751 until 1820, so you have a fair idea of how far back the Bennett's building goes.

The Slaughter House attracts a varied and friendly clientele and is renowned for its live music and extensive range of drinks, including their award-winning pints of Guinness.

The food menu features a wide variety of traditional and very tasty home-cooked meals, including a wonderful all-day breakfast that is served seven days a week from 8.30am until late.

For your entertainment, there is always a band performing each weekend, with different performers chosen from a variety of talented local bands and singers. For the sports fans, all the major sporting events can be watched on several large screen televisions that are placed conveniently throughout the bar and which are in use daily.

The staff are extremely attentive, friendly and helpful, with nothing being too much of a problem for them and they always make all customers feel very welcome.

The pub has also recently added a 15-bedroom hotel, the Fenwick Sunrise Hotel, to its venue, giving an added facility and a base for customers wishing to spend some time in Liverpool.



LAUGHTERHOUSE
COMEDY



LAUGHTERHOUSE
COMEDY CLUB

Aside from its history and atmospheric feel, the Slaughter House is also unique in having the downstairs area of the pub as home to Liverpool's number one comedy club; The Laughterhouse Comedy Club.

It is the perfect setting and atmosphere for live comedy and the club has its own entrance. The stage and seating area are situated in the intimate surroundings that are created by its low ceilings, narrow walls and the 'on top of the stage' audience.

The Laughter House is a real comedian's comedy club and since opening its doors in 2004 it has played host to some of the comedy circuit's biggest names, including John Bishop, Sarah Millican, Stewart Lee, Mark Thomas, Dara O'Briain, Alan Carr, Tommy Tiernan, Justin Moorhouse and Jason Manford.

Voted the number one comedy club in Liverpool on the independent review site Trip Advisor, Laughterhouse consistently receives five-star reviews from their audiences, with many of the top comedians who have graced the stage here citing the low ceilings and the close proximity to the audience as reasons why the venue's stock has been so high over the past two decades.

Live music, televised sports, food & drink and comedy – there is no better night out for visitors to our city and locals alike than here at The Slaughter House.

The Laughterhouse comedy starts from 8.00-10.00pm every Friday and Saturday night, followed by live music upstairs in the pub itself until late.

For all upcoming Laughterhouse shows at The Slaughter House, visit: www.laughterhousecomedy.com or call: Laughterhouse enquiries: 0151 227 5946

All photographs by Dave 'The Pap' (Activate Digital)

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