

# *&London*

*A particular take on property* | SPRING 2015



26

ANIMAL MAGIC

Taxidermy has finally shaken off its dusty Victorian image to become a surprising new interiors trend

48

A FRESH INGREDIENT

Chefs are stepping out of the kitchen and on to the farm in their determination to source the very best ingredients



52

WORD ON THE STREET

Strutt & Parker experts give an insight into what is really happening in Fulham's property market



54

BEST IN SHOW

Meet the innovative sculptors who create eye-catching centrepieces for the Chelsea Flower Show

59

COMPENDIUM

Five trends that are shaping the future of London property, from new-build investors to downsizers

66

THE GREAT ESCAPE

We discover a charming country house that is the perfect antidote to the stresses of city living

04

FIRST & FOREMOST

An essential guide to the best shops, restaurants and exhibitions, plus the capital's most outstanding homes



10

NEXT GENERATION

Leading designers and entrepreneurs introduce a rising star and reveal why they are a name to watch



16

THE BIG PICTURE

Chinese couples are using London as a spectacular backdrop for their wedding photographs

18

PERFECT BALANCE

Step inside an elegantly designed home that seamlessly blends classic style with the latest technology

24

CHAPTER AND VERSE

We went in search of the city's most beautiful bookshops and found a world of colourful stories

30

BRIDGE THE GAP

There's much more to London's river crossings than a quick route across the Thames



35

STYLE & PROPERTY

Our exciting new section gives an exclusive insight into some of the capital's most sought-after homes



43

INTO THE WILD

Modern explorers are helping to transform the way we see the remotest places on the planet



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Cover illustration by Malika Favre



*First & foremost*  
Spring updates and property highlights

## Dressed to thrill

‘You’ve got to know the rules to break them,’ said the late Alexander McQueen. The legacy of this iconoclastic London fashion designer is brought into focus at the V&A’s Savage Beauty exhibition (14 March–2 August). It’s a rare chance to see his most memorable creations, from intricately embroidered jackets to a gown made out of razor clam shells. The exhibition, which attracted 660,000 visitors when it was originally staged at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, promises to be a blockbuster. [vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk)



Below: create your very own tea ceremony with the Black Dobin teapot by Akiko Hirai. £180, [thenewcraftsmen.com](http://thenewcraftsmen.com)



Above: a pretty, Asian-inspired paper fan by HAY is perfect for keeping cool. £7, [ifeelsmug.com](http://ifeelsmug.com)



WE LOVE

### JAPANESE STYLE



Above: delicate blossoms wrap around this pretty Evergreen jar. £154, [shanghaitang.com](http://shanghaitang.com)



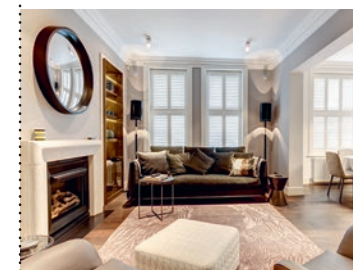
Above: Azumi's Ro armchair epitomises simple elegance. £573, [twentytwentyone.com](http://twentytwentyone.com)



### TROPHY BUY

#### How time flies

The impressive Cockpit B50 (from £4,800) continues Breitling's tradition for aviation-inspired watches. This is the first time that Breitling has created its own quartz movement. Said to be 10 times more accurate than standard quartz watches, the B50 combines a three-hand display with dual LCD screens. What's more, turn the watch towards your face at a 45-degree angle and it automatically activates its backlight. Very handy on a night flight. [breitling.com](http://breitling.com)



### LOOK SMART

#### SHEFFIELD TERRACE, W8

This beautifully designed two-bedroom apartment is located in the heart of Kensington. Residents have access to wonderful communal gardens. £1,650 per week. Furnished. Contact 020 7938 3866



### EATING OUT

#### A WALK IN THE PARK

It's a busy time for restaurateur Alan Yau. At the tail end of 2014 he opened the Turkish-themed Babaji Pide, which was swiftly followed this year by his Chinese gastropub Duck & Rice. But the one everyone's waiting for is the retro glam Park Chinois, which opens on the old site of Automat on Berkeley Street. Inspired by '40s and '50s Shanghai, the restaurant will serve an eclectic variety of pan-Chinese dishes and also feature live music during the afternoon and early evening. [alanyau.cn](http://alanyau.cn)





# Blue sky thinking

CADOGAN PLACE, SW1

A fabulous 'winter garden' is the jewel in the crown of this outstanding penthouse. The electronic sliding roof transforms the room from a light-filled conservatory to an open-air roof terrace. There are also five bedrooms and extensive entertaining space, set across three floors in an immaculate, white stucco building. £14,250,00. Freehold. Contact 020 7235 9959



## INTERIORS

### Take a seat

Christian Liaigre, architect, furniture designer and the master of minimal luxe, is expanding his presence in London with a new two-storey showroom on Conduit Street. His discreet style and exquisite materials have earned him an enviable client list, including Calvin Klein and Rupert Murdoch. What promises to be the capital's chicest showroom opens at the end of April. [christian-liaigre.us](http://christian-liaigre.us)



## TASTE OF SUCCESS

Jemma Wilson, popular star of Jamie Oliver's Food Tube network, might not be formally trained but that hasn't stopped her becoming a baking sensation. She co-founded her artisan online bakery in 2006 with business partner Sam Bishop and counts Google, Apple and Twitter among her corporate clients. Now she is opening a shop in Soho called Crumbs & Doilies. Here you can enjoy irresistible banoffie pie, buttered popcorn and Oreo cupcakes, as well as some impressive multilayered creations. The Neopolitan cake, inspired by the classic ice cream and featuring strawberry, vanilla and chocolate sponge, is a real showstopper. [crumbsanddoilies.co.uk](http://crumbsanddoilies.co.uk)

## IN STYLE

### Citizen Kane

Mount Street's pre-eminence in the luxury retail stakes – offering more exclusive, cooler fashion brands than Bond Street – shows no sign of waning. It has scored a major coup with the opening of the first flagship store of Scottish fashion talent Christopher Kane. Like his clothes, the interior of this listed Edwardian property juxtaposes the classical and the experimental. It is the perfect showcase for Christopher's collection of 'mechanical art nouveau' designs. Think pretty florals and structured, bubble-gum-pink mini-dresses. With a combination of directional fashion and a super-cool interior, it looks like Mayfair has a new style destination. [kering.com](http://kering.com)





ON SHOW

## Photo London

**What is it?** An ambitious new international photography fair that showcases work from 60 leading photography galleries.

**Where will it be held?** Somerset House, on 21–24 May.

**Who created it?** Arts company Candlestar, run by Michael Benson and Fariba Farshad, which curates innovative exhibitions and art fairs.

**What are the highlights?** ‘There will be a lively public programme of installations in the courtyard, an exhibition of unseen gems from the V&A Museum’s collection, and a music and photography programme that will feature musicians sharing some of the images that are important to them,’ says Michael Benson.

**What makes it unique?** Inspired by the success of Paris Photo, it’s the first time that the medium has been given such a platform in London. It could be the photography world’s answer to Frieze, so snap up tickets to see vintage greats and discover the next Cartier-Bresson or Juergen Teller.

[photolondon.org](http://photolondon.org)



### THE GLOBAL VIEW

Pippa Small has led the way in ethical jewellery, sourcing gems from Fairtrade mines around the world and commissioning artisan jewellers in India and Africa. To mark her 20th anniversary as a fine jeweller, she is transforming her Notting Hill store into a lifestyle boutique by opening The Pippa Small Upstairs Shop. It will sell clothing created by independent ethical designers and women’s co-operatives from across the globe, and is the ideal place to go for guilt-free retail therapy. [pippasmall.com](http://pippasmall.com)



### THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT

CATHCART ROAD, SW10

The entertaining space at this exceptional house flows seamlessly from the 36ft garden to the cleverly designed, interconnected living areas. Conveniently situated within easy walking distance of the Fulham Road, the house has five bedrooms, a wine room with capacity for up to 1,000 bottles and off-street parking.

£6,950,00. Freehold  
Contact 020 7373 1010



WORDS BETHAN RYDER

### MASTERPIECE

## The maestro

Lino Tagliapietra creates extraordinary forms in kaleidoscopic colours, all spun and blown from molten glass. Hailing from the island of Murano, the birthplace of artisan glass, Lino was an apprentice by the age of 12 and declared a ‘maestro’ (master blower) by the age of 25. He is now 80, but continues to innovate, working by hand in front of the furnace. His exquisite creations are on show in the UK for the first time at the Glass Ambition exhibition (26 May–4 July) in the grand surroundings of Ely House in Dover Street, the headquarters of Mallett Antiques.

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



MY STYLE

JO SAMPSON



*The designer, who has just launched Waterford Rebel, defines her London style*

### SECRET ADDRESS

Sir John Soane’s Museum – it’s an architectural delight. I see something different each time I go. The brilliant guides bring the collection alive.

### SPECIALIST SHOP

Thomas Goode on South Audley Street stocks beautiful china and crystal. It’s a treasure trove.

### CITY HIDEAWAY

I love working from the Little House Mayfair and always have successful meetings there – although that may be down to the Prosecco!



### BEST VIEW

From Tate Modern across the river. Every time you look, you see something different.

### FAMILY DAY

In the summer, I took my two young daughters to Buckingham Palace. They took the audio tour ‘narrated’ by one of the corgis. It was genius.

### NIGHT OUT

I love Spuntino on Rupert Street. There are only 27 seats around a bar. You queue with a bottle of wine and chat while waiting – it’s great.

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





*London's leading designers and entrepreneurs are mentoring a brilliant new generation of creative talent*

WORDS **CLAIRE COLEMAN** PHOTOGRAPHY **HARRY BORDEN**



## The ceramicist

*Mentor:* Robin Levien

*Protégé:* Billy Lloyd



Robin Levien is Britain's most successful and sought-after ceramics designer. His award-winning creative work for leading companies, such as Villeroy & Boch and John Lewis, means that most of us will have some of his designs in our homes. He is closely involved with the Royal College of Art's mentoring scheme.

'Someone said you have to give in order to get and I wouldn't mentor if I didn't get something back – even if it's just a warm glow!' says Robin. 'But it also keeps me in touch with what's going on and that's very valuable.'

One of his current protégés is Billy Lloyd, who is making the transition from hands-on ceramicist to designer. After studying for a degree in ceramics at Camberwell College of Arts, Billy worked as a potter, creating simple, elegant, white tableware, hand-thrown on a wheel. But he was beginning to feel restricted.

'I knew that if I wanted to throw everything myself, I could only produce one slowly evolving collection, rather than several collections,' he explains.

The next step was to develop his skills as a designer, which is where Robin could help. 'Billy has a very good eye and I can see how that could translate to designing for industry,' he says. 'He's got a really good sense of proportion, line and form.'

As well as offering practical support, Robin has played a crucial role in confirming Billy's career choices. 'I don't think he'd be making as much of an effort with me if he couldn't see my potential as a designer,' says Billy. 'That's given me confidence that I'm choosing the right path.'

[studiolevien.com](http://studiolevien.com) [billylloyd.co.uk](http://billylloyd.co.uk)



## The jeweller

*Mentor:* Alex Monroe

*Protégé:* Rosie Kent



Alex Monroe's delicate, nature-inspired jewellery has achieved iconic status, making him a favourite with fashion stores such as Liberty and Harrods. His handcrafted pieces, particularly his bumblebee and hummingbird necklaces, are snapped up by stylish Londoners and have previously won him the coveted Designer of the Year title at the UK Jewellery Awards.

Alex frequently employs design graduates in his workshop and was introduced to Central Saint Martin's graduate Rosie Kent by a mutual friend. For the past three years, Rosie has been working part-time for Alex while starting her own jewellery design business. She

creates bespoke engagement rings, inspired by Art Deco motifs, and has just launched her first collection – Palladio.

'Rosie has her own style that's very different to mine,' says Alex. 'In fact, my children all want her stuff instead of mine! She also has bags of energy and is really ambitious. And that's important. Making jewellery is lovely, but for it to work as a business you need a lot of drive.'

As for Rosie, having Alex as an informal mentor has been invaluable. 'He is very generous with his time and knowledge,' she says. 'He'll answer any question and even lets me use the workshop out of hours which, when you're starting out, is wonderful.'

[alexmonroe.com](http://alexmonroe.com) [rosiekent.com](http://rosiekent.com)



“MAKING JEWELLERY IS LOVELY, BUT FOR IT TO WORK AS A BUSINESS YOU NEED A LOT OF DRIVE ”

ALEX MONROE  
JEWELLER

## The entrepreneur

*Mentor:* Sophie Cornish

*Protégé:* Sophie Kirkpatrick



Sophie Cornish knows exactly what it takes to set up a successful, design-driven business. She's the co-founder of the hugely popular website Not On The High Street, which showcases original and inspiring products, and has an annual turnover of £83 million.

'Being able to support creative people is at the core of what we do,' says Sophie. 'It's fantastic to be in a position to spot the talent of a designer like Sophie Kirkpatrick and play a part in helping her realise her potential.'

Working under the name Atlas & I, Sophie designs leather accessories, stationery and prints based on reproductions of maps. She made some as Christmas gifts and discovered there was a market for her designs.

'Although I believed in what I was creating, it was difficult to establish myself as a designer,' explains Sophie. 'Especially as I was also working full-time.'

But then she had a stroke of luck – she was spotted by Not On The High Street when she took a small stand at a local fair. 'It was a wonderful opportunity for me,' she says. 'Although I have a creative mind, I know that you have to sell your products to survive. The support Sophie and the company gave me was crucial – I've learnt so much about photography and marketing. Without them, I wouldn't have been able to become a full-time designer and run my own business.'

Atlas & I now sells around 600 products a year through the site, something that delights Sophie Cornish. 'It's wonderful to see her doing so well,' she says. 'But that's a result of her hard work, commitment to creativity and genuinely unique products.' ● [notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com) [atlas-and-i.com](http://atlas-and-i.com)



## The designer

*Mentor:* Sir Terence Conran

*Protégé:* Felix Conran



In the world of design, Sir Terence Conran is, quite literally, a household name. As the founder of Habitat, he brought modern design into our homes, offering his own pieces alongside carefully curated items from around the world. He believes that good design should not just be for those who can afford it.

While Sir Terence admits he might be biased in tipping his grandson as a design talent to watch, he is adamant that Felix, who is in his second year at Central Saint Martin's studying product design, has what it takes.

'From a very early age he had that essential ingredient – the curious mind of a designer and an ability to solve problems,' says Sir Terence. 'He has a sharp and discerning eye. He is already creating great products that really stand out, which isn't easy in this day and age.'

In his first year at university, Felix teamed up with fellow students to form CLAM, a design collective that is on the verge of launching its first product, Lightly, an adjustable LED desk lamp made from a single piece of stainless steel.

'I've grown up in an environment where if you said you liked something, someone would always ask "why?" and "could you make it better?"' explains Felix. 'But it was never a foregone conclusion that I'd go into design.'

He believes a series of conversations he had with his grandfather in summer 2013, when Sir Terence was working on his latest book *Plain Simple Useful: The Essence of Conran Style*, were a turning point.

'The book shines a light on things that you wouldn't normally look twice at – like string and paperclips – and I was fascinated by the idea that everything around us is a designed object but we don't even notice it,' says Felix. 'It really taught me not to overlook anything.'

[conran.com](http://conran.com) [clamcollective.com](http://clamcollective.com)







1

# Made to entertain

*These beautifully designed homes are guaranteed to impress your guests*

## 1 Flood Street, SW3

This six-bedroom house has a home cinema and plenty of room to entertain.  
£9,500,000. Freehold  
Contact 020 7225 3866

## 2 Portobello Road, W11

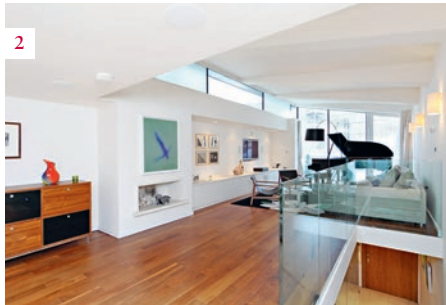
A modern house with great party space located in the heart of Notting Hill.  
£2,250 per week. Unfurnished  
Contact 020 7221 1111

## 3 Cottesmore Court, W8

Wow your guests with the spectacular views from this top-floor apartment.  
£3,500,000. Share of freehold  
Contact 020 7938 3666

## 4 Cadogan Square, SW1

This beautiful two-bedroom Knightsbridge apartment is perfect for entertaining.  
£2,250 per week. Furnished  
Contact 020 7235 9996



2



3



4



5



6

## 5 The Organ Factory, W11

The huge spaces of this former industrial building make it perfect for parties.  
£5,700,000. Freehold  
Contact 020 7221 1111

## 6 Cathcart Road, SW10

Guests at this stylish house can step out of the living area into the landscaped garden.  
£3,650 per week. Unfurnished  
Contact 020 7373 1010

## 7 Netherton Grove, SW10

The 45ft kitchen/dining room in this newly constructed home is ideal for entertaining.  
£6,950,000. Freehold  
Contact 020 7373 1010



7





## THE SCENE *stealers*

*Chinese couples are using London as a backdrop for eye-catching wedding photographs. Anna Selby reports*

**L**ondoners are used to seeing strange sights on the city's streets. But early risers are being treated to a spectacle that makes even world-weary commuters look twice. At around six o'clock on a weekday morning, it's not unusual to see Chinese couples in full wedding outfits posing for photographs in front of the capital's most famous landmarks.

But they are not in London to get married. These are pre-wedding pictures that will be used in China on the couple's big day – often as a backdrop or slide show. It's part of a growing fashion to commission overseas images.

'Some of my clients are students who are studying in London and plan to marry when they get back to China,' says Tao Wei, founder of VM Studios, based in Chinatown, and the photographer behind some of the most striking pre-wedding pictures. 'Then there are others who fly over specially.'

Business is booming, but it's about much more than turning up on the day to shoot the pictures. 'We spend a lot of time talking to couples about what they want, then we supply the make-up artist and designer wedding clothes and find them the right locations with the right look,' explains Tao Wei. 'English people tend to like informal wedding photos, but Chinese people prefer something more posed and dramatic.'

Given the eye-catching results, maybe it's time for Brits to swap their relaxed snaps for a dash of Beijing glamour. ●

VM-STUDIO





# THE *perfect* BALANCE

*Annabella Nassetti has designed a beautiful home that cleverly responds to the demands of modern living*

WORDS **DOMINIC LUTYENS** PHOTOGRAPHY **BEN ANDERS**

**D**ESIGNING A HOUSE that's both practical and stylish is a real challenge. But it's exactly what Annabella Nassetti has achieved at this remarkable home in Bolton Gardens. The chic interior combines luxurious finishes with smart thinking about how to make a space work for modern life. But the balanced result wasn't easy to achieve and required a transformation of the original house. While the property, with its arched windows and spacious first-floor terrace, immediately caught Annabella's eye, it was clear it would need significant work. 'The building was wide, so I could see the potential for improving the interior,' she explains. 'But it needed a complete overhaul.' Every single aspect of the house was redesigned and reconfigured. The ground floor, which was once four rooms, is now a glamorous, open-plan space, while a new lower-ground floor was excavated to create a stylish kitchen and dining area, along with an additional bedroom, en suite bathroom and cloakroom. >



Main picture: the interior has the look and feel of a luxurious Mediterranean villa. Top left: contemporary details include a chic recessed fireplace and sophisticated lighting



‘The original floors were removed throughout, allowing for a new, solid floor structure,’ Annabella explains. ‘We inserted steel beams and new timber joists at all levels. This gave me complete freedom to put walls wherever I wanted them.’

It also created impressively high ceilings in the reception room and, perhaps surprisingly, on the lower-ground floor. ‘The idea was to make it so high-ceilinged that it doesn’t feel like a basement,’ says Annabella. This impression is reinforced by a skylight cleverly placed in the floor of the living room above to let in additional light.

A dramatic staircase leads up through the house to two double bedrooms, a bathroom and utility room on the first floor, and a master bedroom, dressing room and black-and-bronze bathroom on the top floor. ‘I think it’s now a perfectly balanced house and also ideal as a family home,’ says Annabella.

SHOW AND TELL

Modern ways to display art and ornaments in your home

FORM A LINE

For a contemporary look, arrange identical objects in a row. Orchids that are the same colour or prints in matching frames are more striking in a single line.

A QUESTION OF COLOUR

A sharp contrast between the colour of an ornament and its background creates impact. Think white ornaments against dark walls or bright ceramics on a contrasting neutral surface.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Make the most of any existing lighting. Place art and ornaments directly under downlights to show them off at their best – it will add a touch of drama to your interior.

As you would expect in a modern home, the technology is state of the art, including a sophisticated lighting system. Discreet touch-screens allow the lights to be controlled throughout the house. The system can also be programmed with specific settings, for example when there is a party or if the owners want to enjoy a low-key evening at home. As for family entertainment, there’s a home theatre with a projection screen that lowers from the living room ceiling.

From the bespoke mosaics in the bathrooms to the handcrafted kitchen, Annabella has created a luxurious home with real personality. But she believes the look is still neutral enough to be customised by others. ‘It’s clean-lined and contemporary but very adaptable,’ she says. ‘I see it as an easy space to live in.’ ●

Bolton Gardens, SW5. £4,950,000. Contact 020 3773 7558



Main picture and top right: the lower-ground floor features a spacious dining area and light-filled kitchen. Centre right and right: the master bedroom and en suite bathroom, which has striking black and bronze tiling







1



5

#### 5 Earls Terrace, W8

An outstanding six-bedroom house with swimming pool and underground parking.  
£9,750,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7938 3666

#### 6 Radipole Road, SW6

This impressively refurbished six-bedroom house has a south west-facing garden.  
£2,800,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7731 7100



6

#### 7 Moore Street, SW3

An immaculate five-bedroom house with well-balanced accommodation.  
£4,250,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7225 3866

## It's a family affair

*These elegant homes are perfectly designed to accommodate family life*

#### 1 Elvaston Mews, SW7

A refurbished four-bedroom mews house with open-plan living area and kitchen.  
£5,250,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7373 1010



2



3

#### 2 Launceston Place, W8

An exceptional family house in the highly sought-after De Vere Conservation Area.  
£7,750,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7938 3666

#### 3 Parsons Green Lane, SW6

A fantastic family house that offers great entertaining and storage space.  
£1,300 per week. *Unfurnished*  
Contact 020 7731 7100



4

#### 4 Abingdon Villas, W8

A beautifully presented five-bedroom house with an impressive family room.  
£5,900,000. *Freehold*  
Contact 020 7938 3666



7





G HEYWOOD HILL, W1

A blue plaque commemorates the fact that Nancy Mitford spent the Second World War working behind the counter at this Curzon Street bookshop, which now belongs to her nephew, the Duke of Devonshire. As well as selling individual books, they'll curate an entire private library. But the service comes at a price: one client recently spent close to £500,000 on 3,000 carefully chosen art books – enough to fill 10m of shelving. [heywoodhill.com](http://heywoodhill.com)



**BEST FOR:** *Serious collectors with room to spare*

# CHAPTER AND VERSE

WE WENT IN SEARCH OF LONDON'S  
MOST BEAUTIFUL INDEPENDENT  
BOOKSHOPS AND DISCOVERED  
A WORLD OF COLOURFUL STORIES

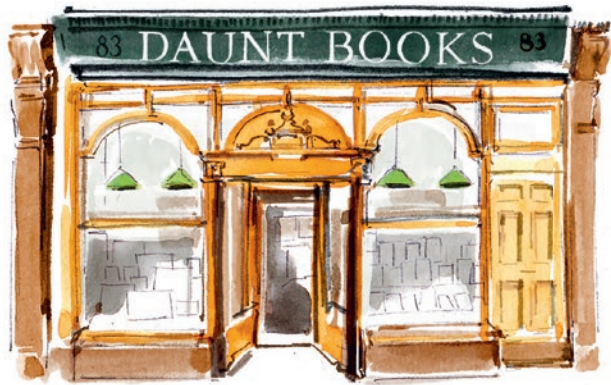


LUTYENS & RUBINSTEIN, W11

This is perhaps the world's only bookshop with a literary agency attached. The connection with authors means it has arguably London's most stimulating programme of talks and readings. It is also unusual in that it only stocks books recommended by people known to the well-read staff. In addition, the shop sells stationery, paperweights and anything else owners Sarah Lutyens and Felicity Rubinstein happen to like. [lutyensrubinstein.co.uk](http://lutyensrubinstein.co.uk)



**BEST FOR:** *Readers with an eye for the unexpected*



DAUNT BOOKS, W1

James Daunt may be Chief Executive of Waterstones and the proprietor of six eponymous bookshops, but this – his first emporium – remains among the best anywhere. The Edwardian interior has balustraded galleries and carries a wide general stock. But its special subject is travel. The shelves at the back are arranged by country and feature guidebooks alongside fiction and non-fiction, all grouped together by location. [dauntbooks.co.uk](http://dauntbooks.co.uk)



**BEST FOR:** *People on the move*



PERSEPHONE BOOKS, WC1

This Grade II Listed shop on Lambs Conduit Street owes its existence to a single book: Winifred Watson's *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*. The long-forgotten novel was published by an imprint, also called Persephone Books, which Nicola Beauman founded in 1999 to give new life to out-of-print books by women. It became a surprise bestseller (as well as a film starring Amy Adams), enabling Nicola to set up this enchanting bookshop. [persephonebooks.co.uk](http://persephonebooks.co.uk)



**BEST FOR:** *Readers seeking original book-club ideas*



LONDON REVIEW BOOKSHOP, WC2

This rarefied Bloomsbury bookshop, run by the highbrow literary paper after which it's named, has a stock of over 20,000 titles and runs popular, twice-weekly events where readers can meet leading authors. But books aren't the only reason to visit this charming venue, because the excellent Cake Shop takes its fragrant tea, coffee and delicious cakes just as seriously as the literary endeavours on its shelves. [londonreviewbookshop.co.uk](http://londonreviewbookshop.co.uk)



**BEST FOR:** *Refuelling after a British Museum visit*



JOHN SANDOE BOOKS, SW3

Founded by the late John Sandoe and Elizabeth David's sister Felicité Gwynn, the building had previously served as a poodle parlour and junk shop. Under its new owners, it soon established itself as the fashionable place to buy books, attracting a stellar cast of browsers that included Lucian Freud, Mary Quant and Keith Richards. Now owned by its staff, it has 25,000 titles crammed on its shelves and tables. [johnsandoe.com](http://johnsandoe.com)



**BEST FOR:** *Dedicated browsers*



SLIGHTLY FOXED, SW7

Slightly Foxed is a literary quarterly, a publisher of memoirs (in beautifully produced cloth-bound editions) and a purveyor of both second-hand and antiquarian books, as well as a selection of new titles. The bookshop, located on the corner of Gloucester Road and Stanhope Mews South, has an especially engaging children's section that features popular books alongside the toys they've inspired. [foxedbooks.com](http://foxedbooks.com)



**BEST FOR:** *The young at heart*

WORDS CLAIRE WRATHALL ILLUSTRATIONS HEATHER GATLEY





BEAUTY  
AND THE *beast*

*Taxidermy has sprung back to life, shaking off its dusty Victorian image to become a surprising interiors trend*

WORDS DOMINIC LUTYENS PHOTOGRAPHY ROWAN FEE



**IT'S NOT OFTEN** that Victorian style stages a comeback. But, in one of interior design's most unlikely trends, taxidermy has started to grace the walls of the capital's fashionable homes.

Once a byword for dusty drawing rooms and dark corridors, modern taxidermy appeals to Londoners who want eye-catching pieces that bring a touch of originality to their minimal interiors.

Like many of London's design trends, this one started in the East End – specifically at Les Trois Garçons, a cult restaurant that has gone on to become something of an institution.

When the restaurant first opened, diners were surprised to see a stuffed tiger prowling the bar, accompanied by a bulldog wearing fairy wings – just part of an eclectic display of animals. It was a bold design statement and the owners knew they were taking a risk.

'Taxidermy was unfashionable – people had an aversion to it,' recalls co-founder Hassan Abdullah, who is also an antique dealer. 'My friends advised me against having it in the restaurant. But I persisted, hoping that our customers would see the beauty of our Regency, Victorian and Edwardian animals.'

It took a little while, but Hassan was vindicated when taxidermy finally broke into the mainstream and started appearing in hip fashion boutiques, such as Dover Street Market, and featuring in the work of leading artists, such as Polly Morgan and Damien Hirst. Taxidermy now reaches exorbitant prices at auction. In 2012, at a Christie's South Kensington sale of stock from the Pimlico shop Jamb, a stuffed bulldog sold for £15,500, while two chihuahuas fetched £12,000.

One of the reasons taxidermy is back in fashion with designers is that it has finally managed to shed its un-PC image. The best modern taxidermists now keep detailed information on the specimens used in their work to confirm they were aquired legally.

Alannah Currie, formerly of '80s pop band the Thompson Twins, has created armchairs incorporating sleeping foxes.

“PEOPLE LIKE THE FACT THAT THEY CAN STAND OUT BY OWNING SOMETHING THAT’S QUIRKY”

ALEXIS TURNER,  
LONDON TAXIDERMY



Although conceived as a homage to Victorian memento mori, all of these pieces were made ethically. 'I'm a vegetarian, so I did a lot of research to find a taxidermist who uses animals that die naturally or accidentally,' she says.

Lighting designer Alex Randall is equally driven by ethics. Her first taxidermy piece was an ultra-theatrical chandelier incorporating stuffed pigeons for the Ted Baker shop in Cheapside. She recycles animals that have died of natural causes.

'I particularly like animals that most people don't think of as traditionally beautiful,' says Alex, whose striking work includes a wall light featuring a squirrel. 'Pigeons are a prime example as they are normally considered to be vermin, but seen close up, they're beautiful and delicate.'

The change in perception of taxidermy is something Alexis Turner has seen at first hand. He is a taxidermy dealer and owner of prop-hire business London Taxidermy.

'It used to be popular with collectors, but most people were concerned it wasn't ethical,' he recalls about the start of his taxidermy business. 'It still had the feel of dusty specimens in an attic or a nicotine-stained pub. But that perception has changed. Now magazines like *Tatler* and *Vogue* constantly use it to promote luxury merchandise, from jewellery to handbags.'

Along with fashion, taxidermy has moved into our houses. 'People like the fact that they can stand out by owning something that's quirky,' explains Alexis. 'British wildlife is popular, but recently there's been a trend for more colour and more tropical specimens.'

When it comes to incorporating these eye-catching pieces into your home, giving them space is the key to maximising their impact. 'Just one piece – say, a pair of antlers – on a large wall and spot-lit has great impact,' explains Alexis. 'If you're displaying taxidermy on a table, always place it, size permitting, under vintage glass domes as these make anything look like an artwork. If you have uncased

taxidermy, it's not a good idea to put it in carpeted rooms as you risk moth infestation. And don't have any in bathrooms because of the damp and condensation.'

If you are attracted by the look of taxidermy, but would rather not use real animals, don't worry – there are lots of alternatives. For example, artist Shauna Richardson crochets extraordinary, often giant animals (a technique she dubs 'crochetdermy'), while Abigail Brown handcrafts naturalistic birds out of new and vintage fabrics.

But if Hassan of Les Trois Garçons is to be believed, the taxidermy trend still has a long way to go. 'It has longevity because people are still finding new, clever ways to incorporate it into their work,' he says. 'And humans are always fascinated by animals.' ●



## Looking smart

*Chic and sleek, these modern homes epitomise contemporary style*

### 1 Paultons Square, SW3

A wonderful house with a fantastic modern extension and large garden. £4,500 per week. Unfurnished  
Contact 020 7589 9966

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A beautifully presented four-bedroom penthouse apartment with two terraces. £1,300 per week. Unfurnished  
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A meticulously designed contemporary mews house with a stylish roof terrace. £6,450,000. Freehold  
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### 4 Queensdale Place, W11

A striking, modern three/four-bedroom house in a quiet Holland Park street. £1,850 per week. Unfurnished  
Contact 020 7221 1111





THE

# SECRET LIFE OF LONDON'S BRIDGES

*There's much more to the capital's bridges than a quick route across the Thames. We tell the extraordinary stories of four riverbank icons*

WORDS PAUL CLEMENTS

## HUNGERFORD BRIDGE

### THE BRIDGE THAT DIDN'T BLOW UP

In its long and chequered history, Hungerford Bridge has been neglected, demolished and bombed, before being transformed in one of London's most spectacular makeovers.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel built the original suspension bridge to connect the South Bank with Hungerford Market, a competitor to Covent Garden Market located at Charing Cross. At the time, it was one of the longest suspension bridges ever built.

The innovative design attracted the attention of pioneering photographers. A fragile snap taken shortly after the bridge's opening in 1845 by William Henry Fox Talbot – who invented the 'calotype' technique that dominated photography until the 20th century – is among the earliest photographs still in existence. But despite its photogenic appeal, the bridge was not a success. Even Brunel wasn't a fan, writing in his diary that he had 'condescended to be the engineer of this, but I shan't give myself much trouble about it'.

The bridge was demolished just 15 years after it had been built and was replaced with a crossing made of wrought-iron lattice girders sufficiently strong to bear the steam trains that served the newly opened Charing Cross station.

Hungerford Bridge remained a workaday railway bridge until 2002 when it underwent a dramatic conversion. A pair of elegant suspension footbridges were added – named the Golden Jubilee Bridges in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Queen's accession – and suddenly it became one of the Thames's most visually striking and popular crossings.

It was a remarkable turnaround, but not the first piece of luck that the bridge has enjoyed – Hungerford is the only Thames bridge to take a direct hit during the Second World War. Fortunately, the bomb didn't detonate.

*Illustrated by Ben the Illustrator*

*"I have always liked Hungerford Bridge. Squirrelling one's way over with pedestrians heading to and from the Festival Hall or Hayward Gallery sometimes feels illicit. It is our nearest equivalent to the Pont des Arts"*

**CHARLES SAUMAREZ SMITH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS**



“ When Tower Bridge was completed, a morgue was built at its north end. Evidently brisk business was anticipated. Yet it, more than any structure, has come to define London – to be its icon and enshrine its sense of identity”

DAN CRUICKSHANK, HISTORIAN

TOWER BRIDGE

WHERE BUSES GO TO JUMP

Queen Victoria's influence is alive and well in many of London's landmarks – and the city's bridges are no exception. Take the iconic Tower Bridge. The final design was chosen from 50 submissions by the Queen, who thought it would look best next to the Tower of London. It was also painted in Victoria's favourite colour – chocolate brown – until it received a cheery blue and cream update in 1977.

Built using a giant steel skeleton, artfully concealed behind Portland stone and Cornish granite, it's the only London bridge that swings open. Its twin bascules (French for 'seesaw') were so popular that a public walkway, which allowed pedestrians to cross the bridge even when it was raised, was eventually abandoned due to lack of use. Apparently, people preferred to stand and watch the bridge open and close, which it did 6,000 times in its first year. Now it averages three times a day.

The bridge has long attracted its share of stunts. In 1912, a biplane had to fly right through the centre to avoid crashing into it. But the most curious incident occurred in December 1952. The bridge's traffic lights were late to turn red as it began to open – just as a packed double-decker bus was driving across. Albert Gunton, driver of the number 78 from Shoreditch to Dulwich, put his foot down and the bus managed to jump the gap, an impressive feat described by the *Daily Mail* as a '1 in 150,000' incident.

Illustrated by Malika Favre

“Albert Bridge was originally painted green – the fairy lights and cupcake colours are recent, a fine example of history being reinvented. I see it almost every day and it always makes me smile”

STEPHEN BAYLEY, DESIGN GURU

ALBERT BRIDGE

THE FIRST WOBBLY BRIDGE

The Millennium Bridge wasn't the first London crossing to unsettle pedestrians. Albert Bridge was widely thought to be unsafe when it was opened to the paying public in 1873, thanks to a pronounced 'mechanical resonance' when a large number of people walked over it. As a result, the suspension bridge earned the nickname 'the Trembling Lady'. Two concrete piers were later added to help stabilise the bridge, but it still has signs at both ends stating: 'All troops must break step when marching over this bridge.'

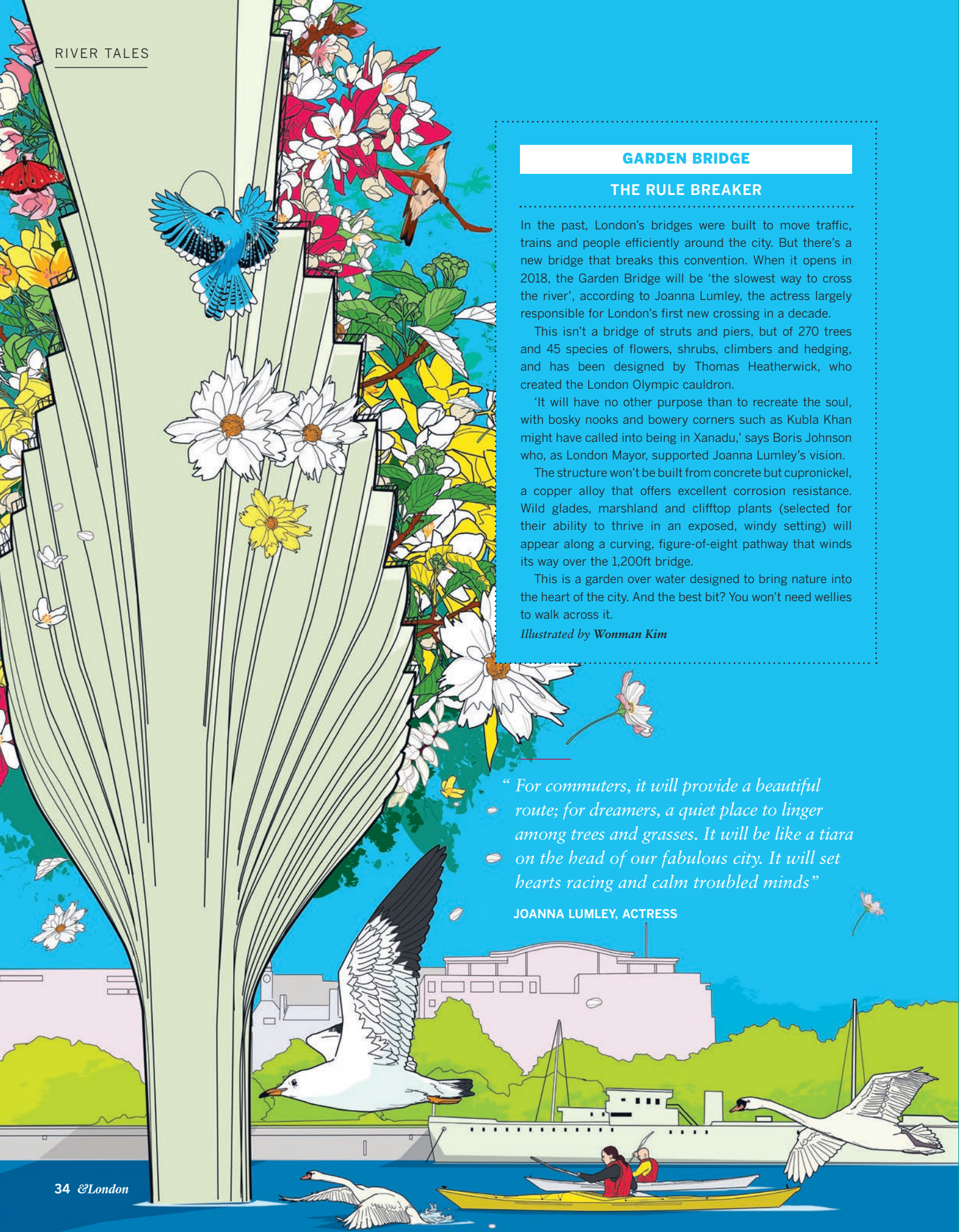
Although conceived as a pedestrian toll bridge (the fee was scrapped after six years), it proved ill-equipped to cope with London traffic and was expensive to maintain. Dog walkers using it as a route to nearby Battersea Park were blamed for the timber decking rotting away.

In the 1970s, it was proposed that it should be torn down. Sir John Betjeman lent his name to a campaign to have the bridge preserved, while the *Architectural Review* suggested that it should be turned into a park, predating Thomas Heatherwick's vision for a garden bridge by some 40 years.

Luckily, Albert Bridge has survived intact and, thanks to thousands of low-energy LEDs that light up the night, has become London's most magical river crossing.

Illustrated by Romain Trystram





GARDEN BRIDGE

THE RULE BREAKER

In the past, London's bridges were built to move traffic, trains and people efficiently around the city. But there's a new bridge that breaks this convention. When it opens in 2018, the Garden Bridge will be 'the slowest way to cross the river', according to Joanna Lumley, the actress largely responsible for London's first new crossing in a decade.

This isn't a bridge of struts and piers, but of 270 trees and 45 species of flowers, shrubs, climbers and hedging, and has been designed by Thomas Heatherwick, who created the London Olympic cauldron.

'It will have no other purpose than to recreate the soul, with bosky nooks and bowery corners such as Kubla Khan might have called into being in Xanadu,' says Boris Johnson who, as London Mayor, supported Joanna Lumley's vision.

The structure won't be built from concrete but cupronickel, a copper alloy that offers excellent corrosion resistance. Wild glades, marshland and clifftop plants (selected for their ability to thrive in an exposed, windy setting) will appear along a curving, figure-of-eight pathway that winds its way over the 1,200ft bridge.

This is a garden over water designed to bring nature into the heart of the city. And the best bit? You won't need wellies to walk across it.

Illustrated by Wonman Kim

“ For commuters, it will provide a beautiful route; for dreamers, a quiet place to linger among trees and grasses. It will be like a tiara on the head of our fabulous city. It will set hearts racing and calm troubled minds”

JOANNA LUMLEY, ACTRESS



## *Welcome*

Whether it's a penthouse with breathtaking views or a beautiful townhouse, we all have our own idea of the ideal London residence. In the following pages, we showcase outstanding properties, from new builds to classic family houses, to help you find your perfect home.



*Style & Property*

A COLLECTION OF LONDON'S  
MOST DESIRABLE HOMES

### SOUTH EATON PLACE, SW1

A beautifully refurbished Grade II Listed house, part of a central group of the six grandest properties in South Eaton Place, with five bedrooms and a mews house.  
£18,500,000. Freehold. Contact 020 7235 9959





1



2



3



4

**1 ONE HYDE PARK, SW1**

A one-bedroom apartment, designed by Candy & Candy to their highest specification, that offers access to all the amenities at this landmark residential development. £5,250 per week. Furnished. Contact 020 7235 9996

**2 TEN TRINITY SQUARE, EC3**

An outstanding residence in a remarkable development that will see this beautiful, historic building become one of the capital's most sought-after addresses. PAO. Leasehold. Contact 020 7318 4677

**3 LOWNDES SQUARE, SW1**

An immaculate, newly refurbished lateral penthouse overlooking the communal gardens with a double-height reception hall, four bedrooms, study and cinema. £14,250,000. Leasehold. Contact 020 7235 9959

**4 KINGS GATE, SW1**

A truly sensational penthouse in an exceptionally well-designed building with fabulous views of the royal parks and Buckingham Palace. POA. Leasehold. Contact 020 7318 4677





**1 THE NORTH PENTHOUSE, SW7**

An exceptional four-bedroom penthouse with direct lift access, a double-height glass atrium and a fabulous open-plan reception area with a wraparound balcony. £8,250,000. Long leasehold. Contact 020 7373 1010

**2 OVINGTON STREET, SW3**

An immaculately presented three-bedroom, Grade II Listed house on a sought-after Chelsea street, with a study area and a beautifully designed garden. £4,650,000. Freehold. Contact 020 7225 3866



**3 BROOKVILLE ROAD, SW6**

A newly refurbished four-bedroom house that has been fully extended and has wonderful entertaining space. Located close to Parsons Green and Fulham Broadway. £1,895,000. Freehold. Contact 020 7731 7100

**4 TALISMAN BUILDING, SW6**

A unique, 5,000 sq ft penthouse with direct lift access, private terrace and views over Eel Brook Common. £6,500 per week. Furnished/unfurnished. Contact 020 7731 7100







**1 LANSDOWNE ROAD, W11**

A six-bedroom end-of-terrace house on one of Notting Hill's finest roads. Presented in immaculate condition with views overlooking the communal gardens. £11,500,00. Freehold. Contact 020 7221 1111

**2 RUTLAND GATE, SW7**

A superb, exquisitely refurbished three-bedroom apartment with direct lift access. Filled with light and offering uninterrupted views across Hyde Park. £3,250 per week. Furnished. Contact 020 7235 9996

**3 ENNISMORE STREET, SW7**

Park Lodge has been completely rebuilt behind the elegant original façade to create a beautifully designed modern residence in the heart of Knightsbridge Village. £16,500,000. Freehold. Contact 020 7235 9959

**4 CAMBRIDGE PLACE, W8**

An exceptional five-bedroom, stucco-fronted house, which has been renovated to the highest standard, on one of Kensington's most sought-after streets. £4,750 per week. Unfurnished. Contact 020 7938 3866





**1 THE LANDAU, SW6**  
An exclusive collection of apartments set within this prestigious boutique development, which offers peace and serenity in a thriving London neighbourhood.  
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**2 55 VICTORIA STREET, SW1**  
Breathtaking penthouses in one of Victoria's most exciting developments. The attention to detail makes these some of London's most desirable residences.  
*From £2,500,000. Leasehold. Contact 020 7318 4677*

# INTO THE WILD

MODERN EXPLORERS ARE HELPING TO TRANSFORM THE WAY WE SEE THE REMOTEST PARTS OF OUR PLANET

WORDS **CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON**  
PORTRAITS **DEAN BELCHER**

CORBIS IMAGES





## GLOBAL REACH

From its origins as a dining club, the Royal Geographical Society has grown to become the spiritual home of British exploration. The 16,500-strong members and fellows, including Anna Ford, Ben Fogle and Nick Crane, support ground-breaking explorations and field research. The headquarters in South Kensington holds one of the world's pre-eminent geographical collections, covering 500 years of discovery, and including rare artefacts, ranging from Inuit boots to ceremonial leopards' claws.



© ROBERT JOHNS



**THE TITLES ALONE** will get your heart racing: Bear-Dodging in Spitsbergen, The High Snows of Ladakh and, perhaps most worrying of all, Snakes of the Congo.

These aren't the names of the latest bestsellers but just some of the expeditions supported by the Royal Geographical Society. Perhaps the world's most famous centre for exploration, the headquarters in South Kensington has been associated with some legendary names: Ernest Shackleton, Sir Edmund Hillary, David Livingstone and Captain Scott have either passed through its doors or had at least part of their expedition financed by the society.

It's a tradition that's alive and well. Last year the society supported 70 expeditions, from a survey of glaciers in the Northern Pamirs to an exploration of Cerros del Sira,



## WILL MILLARD

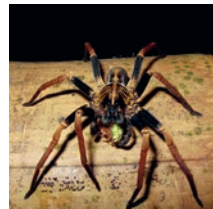
Whether he's travelling the ancient tribal trade routes of West Papua or meeting the isolated communities of the South Pacific's Coral Triangle, Will is a truly modern explorer who uses magazines, blogs and TV documentaries to record his extraordinary adventures. He received the Royal Geographical Society's Journey of a Lifetime Award for his solo descent of the Morro and Mano rivers in West Africa.

the most isolated area of the Peruvian Andes. 'We fund every kind of expedition, including those with a bit of a "gosh" factor,' says Shane Winsor, who runs the society's Geography Outdoors programme. 'For us, the word "geography" covers a huge range of subjects – everything from anthropology to zoology. We like to ensure that if we provide a grant to an expedition, it has a bit of depth to it.'

This was exactly the type of journey made by explorer Will Millard when he rafted 100 miles down the remote Morro and Mano rivers, travelling through the Gola Forest that straddles Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was the first attempt to descend the river border between the two countries. En route, Will met local people and ecologists – not to mention illegal diamond miners – and encountered large numbers of the wildlife population that inhabits this frontline of African conservation.

But expeditions like these are not without significant risk. In this case, Will had to deal with a life-threatening bout of malaria.

'Halfway through the journey, I realised that I was in the middle of nowhere, utterly alone and getting sicker from malaria by the minute,' recalls Will. 'I could barely keep my eyes open, the pain in my joints was bordering on the spectacular and I had developed a massive abscess on my finger. I needed to find my way to a hospital and get proper treatment.'



Will had exit routes for every section of the descent if he encountered serious difficulties. Fortunately, he had a satellite phone, which had been paid for by crowdsourcing site Kickstarter, which he used to reach contacts in the Gola Rainforest National Park. He was taken through the forest to the nearest village with a motorbike and then on to the road.

'I didn't die in the forest because I had a planned evacuation procedure and it couldn't have been executed better,' he says. 'Two days later, I was recovering from malaria and surgery on my finger in a Freetown hospital.'

As well as providing kit such as satellite phones for emergencies, technology has also transformed the way explorers share their

experiences. In the past, explorers such as Shackleton were often great raconteurs and speakers, who would talk enthusiastically on the lecture circuit about their discoveries. These days, adventurers don't have to wait until their return to share their findings. All the time they are trudging through the depths of the jungle or scrambling across a glacier, they can be filming their experience for those of us sitting at home in our armchairs.

'Explorers are no longer restricted to journals and letters,' says Shane Winsor. 'Now they have film.'

When it comes to larger expeditions, television can have a significant impact on publicity and funding. It played a key role

## LEVISON WOOD

Writer, photographer and explorer Levison Wood sprang to the British public's attention during his epic nine-month walk along the River Nile, which was filmed for a popular Channel 4 documentary. After serving as an officer in the British Parachute Regiment, Levison has gone on to climb mountains in Iraq and lead the first-ever successful coast-to-coast walk across Madagascar.



in the recent expedition of former Parachute Regiment officer Levison Wood. He became the first man to walk the length of the River Nile – an extraordinary feat that was recorded in a Channel 4 series.

During the nine-month trip, Levison did not just write about the problems he had with everything from rapacious parasites to threatening crocodiles – he was also able to show us raw and frightening footage.

'I saw shocking sights and incredible animals. I shared laughter and tears,' he says. 'I felt fear, anger, excitement and joy.'

Those who saw his documentary will not forget the dreadful moment when US journalist Matthew Power, who had joined >



the walk in Uganda for a week, collapsed and died in the middle of the bush. ‘It was a terrible tragedy and really brought home the reality of the risks involved in undertaking a journey like this,’ says Levison.

Television has become an essential part of 21st-century exploring. But there are plenty of explorers who can’t secure a television tie-in. For them, the Royal Geographical Society remains a key source of funding.

The society distributes around £180,000 annually in grants. ‘The larger amounts are given to projects that have serious geographic and scientific aims,’ explains Shane Winsor. A third of the money comes from Royal Geographical Society fellows, a third from private donations and another third from the society’s commercial activities, such as renting out its headquarters for corporate events.

But modern explorers don’t only need financing – expert support and advice are just as important. Which is why the society holds an annual Explore weekend in London



**LUCY ENGLEHEART AND ANNE-LAURE CARRUTH**

During the Shifting Sands expedition, Lucy and Anne-Laure travelled around the southern and eastern Mediterranean documenting the everyday lives of the people they encountered. Lucy, who worked for two years in Africa as an expedition leader, and Anne-Laure, a painter and architect, will use the personal stories they collected to create an original set of maps that will give a fresh insight into the region.

where explorers can share their adventures, and those planning expeditions can meet companies and other individuals offering practical assistance and inspiration.

The event helped Lucy Engleheart and Anne-Laure Carruth turn their dream into a reality. They were planning a 174-day expedition to 22 different European and North African countries, but were finding it hard to get their trip off the ground.

‘The Explorer weekend draws amazing people and is a great place to meet experts,’ says Lucy, who was also part of the first team to raft down the Rio Grande in Bolivia. ‘For us, it was inspirational – the next day, we quit our jobs to concentrate on getting the expedition up and running.’

So what is the best way for budding Livingstones and Scotts to get started? As well as the networking opportunities of the Explore weekend, the Geography Outdoors unit at the society’s headquarters offers advice on planning an expedition and developing the skills you will need when out in the field – everything from data collection and sound recording to map reading and medical aid.

It’s not that far to go, but a visit to SW7 could be the first step on a life-changing journey that will take you one day not just to South Kensington, but to the South Pole.



**TRAVELLERS’ TALES**

*Three British explorers who have earned a place in history*

**DAVID LIVINGSTONE**

His near-mythical status has inspired generations of adventurers. Livingstone was the first Westerner to see Mosi-oa-Tunya (which he renamed Victoria Falls) and reach Lake Malawi in East Africa.

**JOHN HANNING SPEKE**

Explorer Speke is remembered for correctly identifying Lake Victoria as the source of the Nile. But the discovery was widely queried during Speke’s lifetime and only finally confirmed after he died.

**ROBERT SCOTT**

The story of Scott’s doomed race to the South Pole against Roald Amundsen, followed by his death from exhaustion 150 miles from base camp, has made him Britain’s most famous polar explorer.

**THE RUSH HOUR**

YOU DON’T NEED TO LEAVE LONDON TO GO ON AN ADVENTURE



**KITEBOARDING**

Richmond Park isn’t just about looking at the cute deer – it’s also the ideal place to learn to kiteboard. From sitting in a kite buggy to riding a landboard, Kitevibe’s qualified instructors can show you the ropes. Courses held every day, weather permitting. [kitevibe.com](http://kitevibe.com)

**ICE CLIMBING**

Spend an hour climbing a sheer ice wall right in the heart of Covent Garden – handy if you want to do a spot of shopping afterwards. The 8m-wall is located in a refrigerated unit in the Ellis Brigham store and options include the hire of instructors and equipment. [vertical-chill.com](http://vertical-chill.com)



**BUNGEE JUMPING**

Why go halfway around the world in search of thrills when you can bungee jump by a famous London landmark? The O2 Arena Bungee Jump is 160ft high and offers spectacular views of the capital and the Thames – if you can keep your eyes open. [ukbungee.co.uk](http://ukbungee.co.uk)



**KAYAKING**

It might have been invented by the Inuit, but there’s no need to trek to the Arctic to get paddling in a kayak. Based in Chelsea, Kayaking London runs trips along iconic stretches of the Thames. Expert guides and specialist equipment are provided. [kayakinglondon.com](http://kayakinglondon.com)







## A FRESH *ingredient*

*London's creative chefs are making a bold move to source the best ingredients – they are setting up and running their own farms*

WORDS OLIVIA COOPER ILLUSTRATION EMMA RIOS

**W**EST END OPENINGS by Michelin-starred chefs are guaranteed to make the headlines. But away from the glitz of celebrities and paparazzi, a new trend is set to transform London's restaurants as innovative chefs add a fresh ingredient to their menus: their own farms.

The provenance of food, often sourced from specialist suppliers, has become increasingly important to cooks and their customers. But these restaurateurs have taken a big step forward by trying to grow as much of their own produce as possible. Their motivations vary, from improving quality to concerns about sustainability, but the end result is the same: London's most creative chefs are running their own farms and urban gardens.

The trend started with The Shed in Notting Hill, which is owned by the three Gladwin brothers. The youngest, Gregory, farms in Nutbourne, West Sussex, while chef Oliver and manager Richard look after the day-to-day running of the restaurant.

'When we opened The Shed, the farm was right at the forefront of the concept,' says Richard. 'We know exactly where our food comes from and we can really control the flavour before it even gets to the cooking stage.'

The close link between food growing and cooking means the farm produces the specific ingredients that the restaurant needs. Gregory keeps breeds specially selected for their flavour and quality, such as pedigree Simmental beef cattle and Gloucestershire Old Spot x Tamworth pigs. >



The concept has been so successful that the brothers have now opened a new restaurant, called Rabbit, in Chelsea. As well as produce from the farm, they have added another ingredient: foraged food.

‘We found that we were particularly good at foraging and serving wild food – so that’s what Rabbit is all about,’ says Richard. ‘We farm, we forage, we cook.’

Behind all of this, of course, is good business sense. The restaurants provide the farm with regular cash flow, while producing their own ingredients helps to keep costs

down. Even foraging is good for the bottom line: substituting foraged meadowsweet for imported almond and vanilla, for example, is both cheaper and more sustainable.

Owning your own farm is one thing, but growing food in London is perhaps an even greater challenge. But that’s exactly what Robin Gill has done with The Dairy in Clapham.

Having trained at Raymond Blanc’s Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons, with its two-acre kitchen garden, and a restaurant on the Amalfi coast that had its own farm, Robin was a passionate supporter of the farm-to-fork ethos. ‘When The Dairy opened, my main goal was to create a farm feel,’ he says. ‘We had lots of roof space, so I made a roof garden to grow our own herbs and vegetables, and people love it.’

Robin also built beehives so he can supply home-produced honey to The Dairy and his newly opened bistro, The Manor. In fact, he is keen on making as much produce on site as possible. ‘We cure our own meat and make our own cheeses,’ he says. ‘More restaurants are going back to making things in-house because the flavour is so much better.’

Robin believes this growing trend will fundamentally change the way restaurants create menus and cook food. ‘I disagree with buying from around the globe whatever the season,’ he says. ‘Also, people’s expectations are getting much higher and they want to know where their food has come from.’

It’s a trend that Guy Watson has turned into a highly successful business. He owns Riverford Organic Farms, famous for its vegetable boxes, and has identified London as a key growth area for his company. It is one of the reasons why Riverford recently bought The Duke of Cambridge in Islington, the world’s only certified organic pub. The other reason? Last year, Guy married the pub’s founder, Geetie Singh.

THE EDIBLE GARDEN

Guy Watson, owner of Riverford Organic Farms, on creating a garden that looks good and tastes great

BRIGHT IDEAS

Edible flowers provide colour as well as flavour – consider nasturtiums and pansies. It’s wonderful just to be able to go out, pick some flowers and scatter them on a salad.

PICK AND MIX

Plant ‘pick and come again’ varieties of rocket, spinach and mustard. They are good for urban gardens as you can get a lot from a small space. The same applies to vegetables such as chard and kale – you just plant them once and then keep picking.

THINKING BIG

If you have a little bit more space, climbing beans look and taste lovely, courgettes are also climbers that have attractive flowers that can be eaten, and pumpkins are colourful and good fun for the kids.

‘London has become the most rapidly growing part of our business,’ explains Guy. ‘We can now do cooking demonstrations and get closer to our customers. We’ve run a successful restaurant on the farm in Devon for eight years and it was just logical to link it all up.’

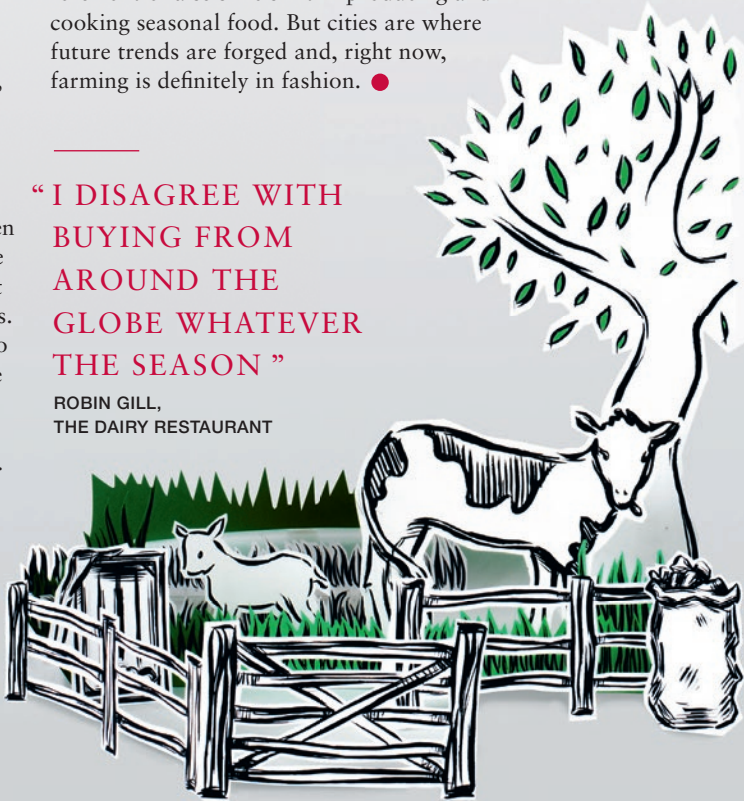
Riverford supplies The Duke of Cambridge with much of its seasonal produce. As with all of London’s food-producing restaurateurs, Guy and Geetie are driven by a combination of business sense, a passion for quality and an acute understanding of people’s changing expectations.

‘The public’s understanding of food and farming has come so far,’ says Geetie, who was awarded an MBE in 2009. ‘They really do “get” organic and sustainable sourcing now, and young people’s engagement with food is really superb.’

It might seem ironic that urban London is at the forefront of a seismic shift in producing and cooking seasonal food. But cities are where future trends are forged and, right now, farming is definitely in fashion. ●

“I DISAGREE WITH BUYING FROM AROUND THE GLOBE WHATEVER THE SEASON ”

ROBIN GILL,  
THE DAIRY RESTAURANT



# The great outdoors

These spacious homes offer a breath of fresh air in the heart of the city



**1 Upper Cheyne Row, SW3**  
A double-fronted house with a beautiful garden, including an oval swimming pool.  
£8,500,000. Freehold  
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*Strutt & Parker's*

# WORD ON THE STREET

*Fulham & Parsons Green*

*Barclay Macfarlane and Stephanie Nash reveal what is really happening in their local property market*

**F**ulham was designed for families. Largely built in the 19th century, its mix of substantial terraced houses and charming cottages puts it at the top of the wish list for affluent property buyers.

'Most of our buyers tend to be families who are after good living space and a sizeable garden or close proximity to a park,' explains Barclay Macfarlane, Head of Strutt & Parker's Fulham office. 'They want a minimum of four or five bedrooms.'

Purchasers are drawn by a combination of good housing stock, lots of green space, including Bishops Park, Eel Brook Common and Parsons Green, and a choice of excellent local schools.

'When people move here, they tend to stay,' explains Barclay. 'As a result, the area has a real sense of community.'

But Fulham's property market is changing. The overspill of buyers from Chelsea looking for more space for their money, and London's ability to attract highly qualified, international workers, are bringing new types of purchasers to the market.

'We are now seeing an influx of European buyers who are looking for nicely appointed, turnkey properties,' says Barclay, adding that City workers are very active in the market, drawn by the lifestyle and transport links.

'The rentals market also attracts a wide variety of tenants,' says Stephanie Nash, Head of Lettings. 'We continue to see strong interest from families, but young professionals are increasingly focused on living in the area. They are typically looking for a centrally located property close to transport and the best restaurants and bars.'

Famous for being home to two football clubs – Chelsea FC at Stamford Bridge and Fulham FC at Craven Cottage – the area also plays host to the exclusive Hurlingham Club, which is set in 42 acres of grounds, as well as some great foodie destinations.

'Locals tend to head for the Michelin-starred Harwood Arms in Fulham Broadway, offering excellent food at great value for money, and The White Horse in Parsons Green, which has a vibrant atmosphere,' says Stephanie. 'Less well known, but a favourite of mine, is Chairs and Coffee – an independent coffee shop that transforms into a tapas bar and restaurant at night.'

From hidden gems to sporting icons, it's no wonder that Fulham is one of London's most desirable places to live. ●

*For all enquiries, please call 020 7731 7100*

WORDS CLARE DOWDY PHOTOGRAPHY TIM E WHITE, ALAMY

**A SELECTION OF  
PROPERTIES TO BUY  
AND RENT IN SW6**



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A fully renovated four-bedroom house.  
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£650 per week. *Unfurnished*
- 3 Hurlingham Road, SW6**  
A spacious and elegant family home.  
£3,250,000. *Freehold*

**“THE RENTALS  
MARKET  
ATTRACTS A  
WIDE VARIETY  
OF TENANTS”**

STEPHANIE NASH,  
HEAD OF LETTINGS





**T**HE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW is the most important gardening event of the year. For one week in May, a small part of SW3 becomes a magnet for the country's keenest gardeners as they seek out the latest trends in planting and design.

Most visitors make a beeline for the big-budget show gardens, which famously feature the best plants and most innovative landscaping. But there is a third, often overlooked element that makes these gardens truly eye-catching – the use of original sculpture.

'Show gardens have to be theatrical in order to catch people's attention,' says Cleve West, a multiple award-winning Chelsea designer. 'Sculpture is a good pull into a garden and can be a fantastic focal point. But getting it right at Chelsea can be nerve-racking. You have to know what you want and trust your gut feeling.'

The technical challenges can be considerable as sculptors push the boundaries in an attempt to present new and intriguing work. That's why The Retreat, a woodland garden with a natural swimming pond by designer Jo Thompson, will feature not one but two pieces by highly regarded sculptor Tom Stogdon. The sculptures will be carved from Gloucestershire limestone, taking inspiration from ammonite fossils, and will each take around three weeks to make.

'One appears to float above the pond and one will be on the land,' says Tom. 'You won't see them both immediately – you'll pick up on one, then look across the garden and see the other.'

The garden is being created for show sponsor M&G Investments, so the pressure is on for the finished design to win a gold medal, or even >

Left and far left: Tom Stogdon at work on one of the stone sculptures that will appear in designer Jo Thompson's garden at this year's Chelsea Flower Show. The pieces are inspired by ammonite fossils



Best in Show. Tom admits that this level of expectation is stressful and drives designers and sculptors to create work that is unique to the requirements of the Chelsea Flower Show.

‘Chelsea is make-believe,’ he says. ‘A little village appears, then it disappears. The gardens are not gardens you would live with all the year round.’

Tom is not the only sculptor who will be creating ambitious work for the show gardens. The Living Legacy Garden, which commemorates the 200th anniversary of the Duke of Wellington’s victory at the Battle of Waterloo, will feature an abstract sculpture of a figure on a battlefield, including the path of a cannon ball shooting towards the sky.

But perhaps the most monumental work will be seen in the Brewin Dolphin garden. Inspired by the work of sculptors Barbara Hepworth and James Turrell, it will be based around huge horizontal and vertical blocks made from 40,000 pieces of hand-cut slate. Unusually, the designer of the garden, Darren Hawkes, will be making these himself, with the help of a small team.

‘The pieces, which weigh a tonne, will give a different perspective as the viewer walks around the garden and will contrast with the foliage that unfolds in May, which is so fresh, delicate and pristine,’ says Darren. ‘At Chelsea, you are trying to create a wonderful garden, filled with the most wonderful plants. But it has to have a sense of drama, and sculpture brings that.’

While Chelsea is a place where designers are keen to push ideas to extremes, many use original sculpture in their work for more conservative private clients.

‘A lot of my clients will have selected a sculpture already, but if they haven’t, I’ll encourage them to commission one,’ says Jo Thompson. ‘Sculpture in



**TOM STODDON**

A frequent Chelsea exhibitor, Tom is one of Britain’s most accomplished sculptors. Born into a fourth generation of Bloomsbury greengrocers, his first forays into sculpture, perhaps not surprisingly, were elaborate pieces created using fruit and vegetables. He has since moved on to stone, slate and metal. From his studio in Oxfordshire, he creates striking work ideal for outdoor display.



private gardens works in the same way as in my Chelsea gardens. There will be different angles and effects. If a sculpture is abstract, it’s something to look on and think about.’

David Harber, who creates beautiful modern pieces, believes the tastes of clients have changed significantly in the 20 years he has exhibited at Chelsea.

‘Sculpture used to be figurative and classical, in materials like cast bronze,’ he explains. ‘Now it has a much more contemporary feel – it’s cleaner and more sophisticated, and uses different materials, such as stainless steel.’

When it comes to buying or commissioning a piece for a garden, David believes it’s important to take your time and choose carefully.

‘You’ve got to like a sculptor’s work and have a rapport with them,’ he says. ‘A good sculptor will come to your house and tweak the sculpture so that it means something to you. They will also advise on where to place it, which isn’t always where a client



might think it should go. It has to respect the garden and it has to be in harmony with it.’

Of course, buying an original work for your outside space is a significant extra expense, especially if you have already commissioned a garden designer. But if you are looking for something that is truly unique to your home, it’s difficult to beat a sculpture.

‘You’ve got nature in all its manicured – or unkempt – glory and the sculpture is a foil,’ explains David. ‘It reflects and enhances, and acts as a focal point. It’s an emotional destination.’

Darren Hawkes believes that sculpture often adds a reflective quality to a London garden. ‘It brings that slow, thoughtful tempo that you get when you walk around a gallery,’ he says. ‘It’s something that’s often missed in a garden, where there are children playing, adults working, people eating. A sculpture is a full stop, or an exclamation mark. It makes you consider not just the artwork, but the space it sits in. Nothing else does that.’ ●

**TREASURE HUNT**

Where to track down the perfect sculpture for your garden

**BEATRICE HOFFMAN**

Beatrice’s beautifully conceived figures are both figurative and abstract. Her sculptures are cast in bronze and bronze resin, and vary in size between 25cm and 100cm – making them perfect for smaller London gardens.

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

**PAUL MARGETTS**

Paul designs and forges contemporary, quirky metal sculptures that are suitable for gardens of any size. He also creates highly original, large-scale ornamental gates, as well as eye-catching wind sculptures, modern sundials, railings and weather vanes.

[forging-ahead.co.uk](http://forging-ahead.co.uk)

**SCULPT GALLERY**

This is one of just a small number of galleries in the UK that specialise in contemporary British sculpture. The gallery represents several sculptors whose work is suitable for gardens and outdoor environments. It can advise on appropriate pieces or on a commission, in materials such as cast bronze, aluminium, stone and glass.

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



**DAVID HARBER**

With its innovative design and modern, handcrafted materials, it’s not surprising that David Harber’s work has a global following. His sculptures often appear to interact with their surroundings, using highly polished surfaces and lighting effects to reflect and illuminate the natural world. As well as sculptures, David designs garden sundials and custom-built water features. Each year, he takes on a limited number of bespoke commissions, where he will personally oversee the entire process for a piece, from site visits to the final installation.





1

# On the level

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An exquisitely designed three-bedroom apartment in the heart of Knightsbridge. £18,750,000. Leasehold  
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2



3



4

# Compendium

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LONDON PROPERTY



## HOW THE MARKET WILL PERFORM IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

**T**he most common question at any dinner party is: what is going to happen to the property market?

This is no surprise as many people's future plans and fortunes depend on it. London's prime property has grown relentlessly in value for over three decades. With average annual growth rates of 10% or so, property as an investment has outstripped all others, and by some margin.

Over that time, the market has often thrived despite adverse circumstances. Since the 2007 economic downturn, prices have risen by 40%. It's as if London is ring-fenced by an impenetrable wall that makes it behave differently from other markets.

There are, of course, still risks. London's fortunes rely almost entirely on confidence rather than fact. The threat of a mansion tax has affected that confidence by introducing an element of uncertainty to the cost of ownership. But the overwhelming likelihood

is that the property market will regain its pace. London continues to attract global wealth as it is seen as a safe haven, and this will ensure prices remain progressive.

We all know the arguments for the city's success, from its close European connections to a growing population. But there is another, perhaps more important reason why London is what it is: the capital is a wonderful place to live. It's a vibrant 'city of villages', each special and each a home. As Samuel Johnson famously said: 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.'

*Andrew Scott*  
ANDREW SCOTT  
Founder and Head  
of London Residential



# 1. The family factor

Homeowners who have benefited from the property boom are giving a helping hand to their children, as **Chris Alden** discovers

**T**hey are the lucky generation. The London homeowners now approaching retirement bought property when it was more affordable and have watched the value of their investment soar during their working lives. But those same high prices are making it increasingly difficult for their children to get a foot on the property ladder.

Little wonder the older generation is looking to make the most of their equity by downsizing and freeing up funds to help their children. In fact, the older you are, the more likely you are to be a downsizer. Strutt & Parker's Housing Futures survey found that 39% of homeowners in their sixties and 52% in their seventies think a smaller home will be a 'key factor' for a move in the next five years.

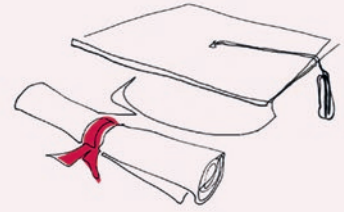
'I have just done a deal for exactly that purpose in Kensington,' says Charlotte de Silva of Private Property Search, which advises property buyers. 'The clients had been living in the family home in Kensington for 30 years and were selling to downsize to

make sure all three of their children have got enough to reinvest in London.'

The downsizing trend is most prominent in Kensington and Notting Hill, where some 18.2% of Strutt & Parker clients were looking to downsize, compared with 5.9% in Chelsea and Fulham.

Downsizers are often attracted by new-build flats, according to Jonathan Harris, director of Mayfair-based mortgage brokers Anderson Harris. 'Clients who had £10-million family homes in central London are downsizing to a £2.5-million flat by the river with porterage, which makes sense if you're in your seventies.'

Jonathan points out that downsizing to help the next generation can have tax advantages. Unlike other assets, profit on your main home is not subject to capital gains tax. By selling and gifting cash to children for a deposit, you can also start the clock ticking on inheritance tax as gifts given more than seven years before your death are exempt. ●



## A HOME OR A DEGREE?

Recent research shows how student debt could become a drag on the affordability of London property. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, students who began degrees under the 2012 student loan regime will graduate with an estimated £44,035 of student debt. If they manage to pay it off, it will cost more than £66,000 in cash terms during their lifetime.

Yet data from the Council of Mortgage Lenders shows that nearly two-thirds of first-time purchases in London are for more than £250,000. With London buyers typically needing a deposit of 24%, it puts the average deposit at upwards of £60,000 – very close to the amount needed to fund a degree.

Student debt could even contribute to the rise of a rent-for-life generation. A Zoopla survey last year estimated that buying in London with a 10% deposit takes 18 years to become more cost-effective than renting, which is a sobering thought for first-time buyers.

Graduates may soon be divided into those who can turn to the bank of mum and dad to buy a home and those who spend much of their adult life as tenants.

**“THE CLIENTS WERE SELLING TO MAKE SURE THEIR CHILDREN COULD REINVEST IN LONDON”**

CHARLOTTE DE SILVA,  
PRIVATE PROPERTY SEARCH



# £14 billion

The potential annual investment in buy-to-let property if retirees decide to take their entire pension pot as a lump sum, according to Capital Economics.



# 2. A rental dividend

The pension revolution could create a new generation of landlords. **Lawrie Holmes** reveals the implications for the buy-to-let market

**T**he 2014 Budget announced sweeping changes to the pension system. From this April, anyone wishing to take more than the standard 25% tax-free lump sum as cash on retirement will be charged their marginal rate of tax, rather than the current rate of 55%. That could lead to a sharp rise in new retirees using the funds to invest in property rather than buying an annuity.

'If everybody takes their entire pension pot as a lump sum, about £14 billion of new funds could find its way into residential property each year,' says Matthew Pointon, an economist at Capital Economics.

It is likely the new rules will have a direct impact on London's buy-to-let market. 'Along with the capital growth we've seen over the past few years, this development will generate more interest in an already buoyant property market,' says Marios Gregori, who is a Real Estate Partner at accountancy firm BDO.

However, some experts sound a note of caution. Rents have been rising more slowly

in London and the amount that retirees are able to invest might be less than first appears. Josh Miller, Senior Economist at the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, points out that releasing more than 25% of a pension pot would incur a standard-rate tax demand of £53,600 on £200,000.

Even so, for those with the funds to invest there is a straightforward case for acquiring a central London property, according to Jane Kola, Partner in the pensions team at lawyers Wragge & Co. 'The logic is that you still have an income every month and a property at the end, whereas current annuity rates don't match up,' she says. 'You need around £20,000 to buy every £1,000 of a pension for life, and then end up with nothing to pass on when you die.'

An increase in pension-funded investment could change the dynamic of the prime London market. 'Traditionally, people have invested in smaller units with one or two bedrooms,' says Zoë Rose, Head of London Lettings at Strutt & Parker. 'But with this new injection of cash into the residential

market, I'd expect to see more investment in three-bedroom properties, reflecting the greater number of professionals renting into their thirties and forties, who often have young families.'

The advice from Zoë for those looking to invest in buy-to-let property, especially in the prime London market, is to remain as objective as possible.

'People can get quite emotional about property if they are from a generation that has always lived in a home they have purchased,' she explains. 'I would advise these buyers to think carefully about the purchase and approach it like any other investment asset class.'

There have been calls to allow retirees to invest in property on the same tax basis as other investments. 'Retirees would be able to use their entire pension pot to buy a home with no upfront tax liability,' says Capital Economics' Matthew Pointon. 'If that change were to be made, the numbers of those entering the buy-to-let market as a pension vehicle could rise dramatically.' ●



### 3. On the money

Cash purchasers are dominating the top end of the market as buyers compete for the best homes. **Graham Norwood** reports

**C**ash is king when it comes to buying a home in central London. Mortgage-free buyers now account for 60.4% of property purchases in prime central London, rising to an astonishing 91.7% in Knightsbridge and Belgravia.

The reason is simple: successful buyers need to be able to act quickly if they want to secure a home in the capital's most sought-after addresses, especially as they are often competing against wealthy global purchasers keen to buy a London property.

According to Jonathan Inglis, a Partner in Strutt & Parker's Chelsea office, cash buyers are typically looking for property that is the best in class and this inevitably attracts the most committed bidders.

'While mortgaged purchasers may get into the same street or the same building, the cash buyer is more likely to have the best central position in the crescent with a fine aspect, or that grand first-floor apartment with high ceilings,' he says.

Success is down to the ability of the cash buyer to offer the best chance of a smooth sale. By contrast borrowers, even for prime properties, face numerous obstacles.

'The Mortgage Market Review implemented last year was timed to check the housing market and avoid it being carried away by talk of recovery,' says Richard Donnell, Head of Research at Hometrack. 'But it inevitably means some buyers, even at the higher end, now take longer to secure mortgages and sometimes can even fail to meet the more stringent borrowing requirements.'

As a result, there has been an increase in 'fall-throughs' – deals collapsing after sellers accept provisional offers – among purchases where buyers require mortgages. A Conveyancing Association survey claims up to 23% of deals collapsed in the second half of 2014.

Vendors at the higher end have limited patience for protracted transactions created

# 35%

of all house and apartment purchases across the UK are now cash buys, compared with just 15% in 2007, according to Hometrack.

by mortgage delays. In a market where there is restricted stock and keen buyers, it's the sellers who benefit most from dealing with a cash purchaser.

'It is flexibility that frequently seals the deal,' says Jonathan Inglis. 'Cash buyers can often give vendors a chain-free completion date, which allows an outgoing family to finish a school term, for example, without the worry of losing the sale.'

There is also less risk when it comes to finance as the buyer has the funds available, rather than being subject to third-party mortgage approval. In addition, cash buyers are able to sidestep some time-consuming requirements, such as bank valuation surveys, which can delay a sale.

'The benefits of dealing with a cash buyer inevitably put them at the top of a vendor's list,' says Jonathan. 'As they have the required funds in place, they are in the best position to take advantage of a competitive market.' ●

### Borrowed time

The Council of Mortgage Lenders says that cash purchases may become less popular as lending constraints begin to ease. It forecasts gross mortgage advances of £222 billion and £240 billion in 2015 and 2016, compared with an estimated £208 billion in 2014.

**"CASH BUYERS ARE TYPICALLY LOOKING FOR PROPERTY THAT IS BEST IN CLASS"**

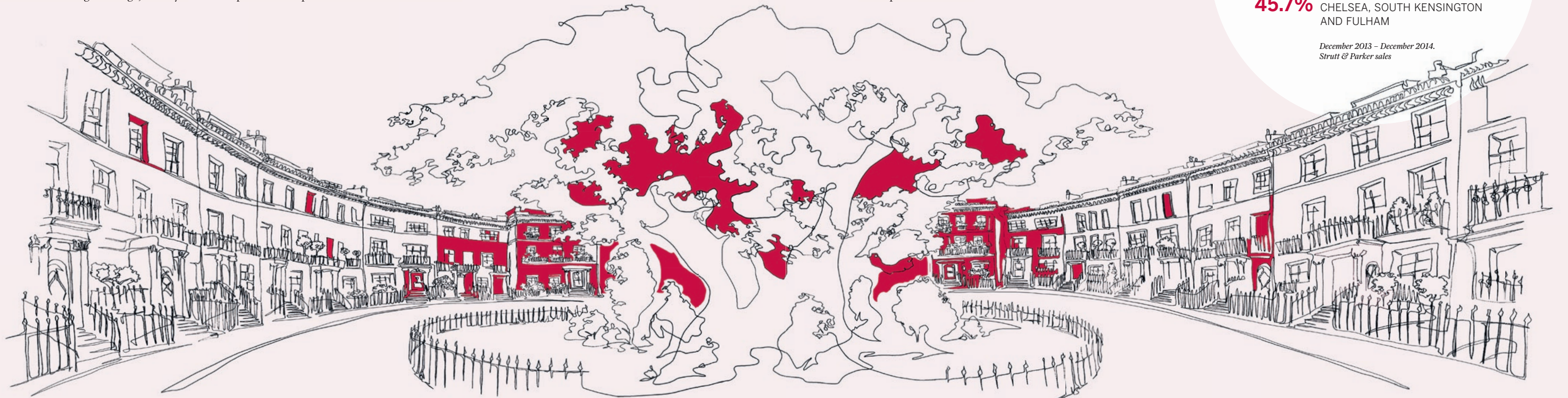
JONATHAN INGLIS,  
PARTNER, CHELSEA

### The cash register

Percentage of cash purchases  
of prime London property

- 91.7%** KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND BELGRAVIA
- 74%** KENSINGTON AND NOTTING HILL
- 60.4%** PRIME CENTRAL LONDON
- 45.7%** CHELSEA, SOUTH KENSINGTON AND FULHAM

December 2013 – December 2014.  
Strutt & Parker sales





## 4. Made in China

As China's wealthy developers turn their attention to London, **Katie Puckett** explains how they are set to transform the market

**C**hinese buyers have already had a significant impact on the capital's new-build residential market, but now the country's cash-rich developers are turning their attention to London. They are building some of the city's tallest and most expensive new homes.

The soaring One Nine Elms in Vauxhall and the super-prime residences at Ten Trinity Square near Tower Bridge, where prices start at £5 million, are just two projects being delivered by Chinese developers.

The floodgates opened in 2013, when China's government relaxed regulations on outward investment, kicking off a global shopping spree among its giant insurance funds. As its own housing market faltered, developers went in search of higher returns elsewhere. London is always an obvious port of call for international investors because it is a stable, transparent and familiar market. But as there's a very limited supply of prime assets, would-be investors are now embracing development, according to Simon Hardwick, Head of Real Estate at PwC Legal.

'London is the primary global gateway city in Europe and a key entry point to the European market for most Chinese developers,' he says. 'They have a strong

understanding of residential development in their local territories and they also know there's a market among investors at home. This is a significant long-term trend.'

But don't expect a glut of super-prime housing. 'The Chinese are very cautious, astute investors,' says Matt Tack, Partner in London Residential Development & Investment at Strutt & Parker. 'Generally, they are more comfortable developing in the mid-market.'

However, there is one very notable exception – Ten Trinity Square, where Reignwood Investments has spared no expense. 'It's at the absolute top of the market in quality, finish and specification, but that's not what Chinese developers

would usually lean towards,' says Matt. More representative is One Nine Elms, by conglomerate Dalian Wanda, where one-bedroom apartments start at £795,000.

Height is the other characteristic of many Chinese-backed schemes – One Nine Elms' towers will be 42 and 57 storeys tall. 'As developers in China, they are more used to high-rise rather than low-rise projects and naturally apply the same principles in London,' explains Matt.

There's no sign that the Chinese have finished investing in London. Dalian Wanda continues to explore opportunities and there are many other potential entrants waiting in the wings, well capitalised and emboldened by the success of their competitors. ●



## 5. Small is beautiful

Micro Mansions could be the answer to the rising cost of central London living. **Peter Buhlmann** reports

**W**ith the appetite for London property remaining as strong as ever, it is increasingly only the super-rich who can afford the pleasure of living in the centre of town. But research from Strutt & Parker suggests that the emerging trend of Micro Mansions could provide an affordable solution for anyone who wants to set up home in the heart of London.

Defined as properties between 100 and 250 sq ft, Micro Mansions first appeared in Tokyo when the famous Nakagin Capsule Tower was built in 1972. Now they are cropping up elsewhere, such as in central Seattle, where city workers are renting them for \$737 a month – considerably cheaper than the average of \$1,223 for a one-bedroom apartment. In New York, a competition to design a pilot programme of micro units was won by a plan for prefabricated modules. It will join other Micro Mansion projects already under way in Oregon, San Francisco and New Jersey.

London has never been one of the world's densest cities, so there is significant potential for housing growth. 'London has lots of awkward plots that really are an opportunity for those who want to build,' says Stephanie McMahon, Head of Research at Strutt & Parker. 'Well-designed homes that have clever storage are perfect for those who don't need so much space but want to live in a vibrant urban area.'

London is the cultural capital of the world, according to a recent report from consultants A.T. Kearney, so living in the heart of the city is an attractive proposition. 'With a centrally placed property, London becomes your living room,' says Simon Goode, who is Founder and Partner at Lyndon Goode architects. 'But when you do return home, it's important that the common areas are well crafted. Instead of an anonymous lobby, there should be a small library or a bar area. A rooftop garden would provide extra space, encouraging interaction and building a sense of community.'

Shared bike storage and laundry rooms in a Micro Mansion can help take the pressure

off personal living space, allowing a more creative approach to making the dwelling comfortable. 'By thinking about volume instead of just floor space, you can use mezzanine levels and raised areas,' explains Simon. 'Using high-quality fittings and bespoke storage can make the whole space pleasurable.'

It's easy to see how the properties could appeal to a wide range of buyers from downsizers to young professionals, and, of course, commuters. A study by the Office for National Statistics found that every minute spent commuting increases anxiety and dissatisfaction. Proof for any doubting spouse or bank manager that giving up the commute and buying a property in London will make you happy. ●

### Making room

Average floor space of new builds across Europe

**76 sq m** UK

**87.7 sq m** IRELAND

**109.2 sq m** GERMANY

**115.5 sq m** HOLLAND

**137 sq m** DENMARK

*Source: Cambridge University*

**“LONDON HAS LOTS OF AWKWARD PLOTS THAT REALLY ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD”**

**STEPHANIE MCMAHON,**  
HEAD OF RESEARCH



ILLUSTRATIONS RACHEL ANN LINDSAY



# WHEN ONE *tires* OF LONDON...

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ideally situated in unspoilt countryside

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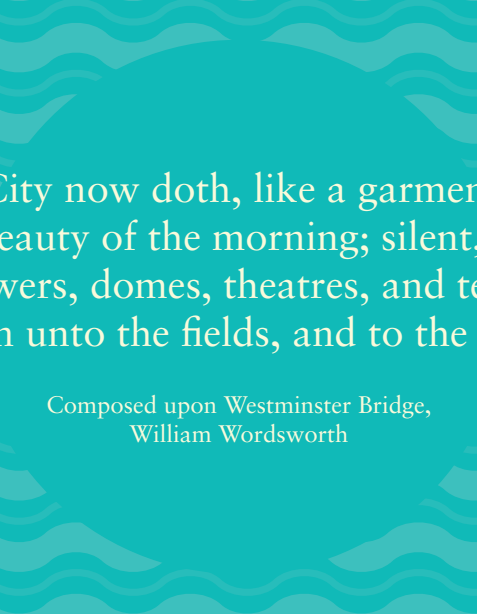
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“This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky”

Composed upon Westminster Bridge,  
William Wordsworth