

THE ELEPHANT

MAGAZINE

Issue 9 / Winter 2016

THIS ISSUE

A DECADE OF DANCE

Siobhan Davies Studios celebrates ten years in Elephant and Castle

AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE

The visionary Walworth artist commemorated in the neighbourhood's newest street

MERCATO METROPOLITANO

The new street food market brings fab flavours, films and fun to Newington Causeway

THIS IS THE ELEPHANT

This is the Elephant.
And this is the Elephant Magazine.

The Elephant Magazine is the publication dedicated to all things Elephant and Castle. We want to celebrate all that is fabulous about our neighbourhood and our community. We want to look back with fondness on the area's past and look forward with optimism to the future. The Elephant is changing and the Elephant Magazine will be following every step of the way.





Photography from left to right: East Street market sign; market trader; sportsman (Castle Centre); Metro Central Heights; elephant statue; Metropolitan Tabernacle; Elephant and Castles band; basketball player (Castle Centre); Elefest musician; Hotel Elephant, construction worker, LCC exhibition, Elefest musician, market trader, Castle Centre sign, Cinema Museum, historic East Street; Cinema Museum, City Hunt; Strata; Cuming collection vase; Jamyang food; Orbit beers; Imperial War Museum; Baldwins; Reuben Powell and Emily Woodhouse

MERCATO METROPOLITANO

Mercato Metropolitano is the vast new street food market causing a stir on Newington Causeway.



Mercato Metropolitano 42 Newington Causeway SE1 6DR
www.mercatometropolitano.co.uk | Open Tues - Sun 11am - 11pm



On a sunny Tuesday lunchtime, Mercato Metropolitano is bustling, with the bright yellow wooden tables taken up by mums with buggies, local workers enjoying a break from the office, friends having a meet up, and a smattering of tourists who've already discovered the Elephant's latest attraction.

It's a good advert for founder, Andrea Rasca's vision of regenerating areas and bringing people together through a love of food.

The economist, who has worked in the food business for 25 years, launched the first Mercato Metropolitano in his native Milan last year and now he's brought the idea to London. He's teamed up with Peabody to make temporary use of their Borough Triangle site (formerly an old paper factory) before it's redeveloped into new housing and a new HQ for the housing association.

When it comes to food, Andrea is a passionate believer in 'small is beautiful' and 'natural is good.'

"The western world has a growing dependence on industrialised food made in large volumes with an emphasis on sales over quality" he explains. "As a result, we've lost the sense of what our bodies really need. We don't need something just to fill our bellies, we need nutrients to make our bodies and minds work properly. And, on a social level, we need good, tasty food to share with our friends and family. That's what Mercato Metropolitano offers to its customers."

And there's certainly plenty of good, tasty food to choose from, with three large indoor warehouse spaces hosting a vast array of

small food producers from Italy and the UK, plus an outdoor area with a selection of street food trucks. One warehouse is given over wholly to Italian produce and includes an in-house bakery, coffee roasters, fresh pizza and pasta makers and a range of specialist stalls offering everything from tuna to calamari, mozzarella and Italian sausage to gelato and pastries.

There's also food and drink from around the world, from Argentine meats to the French outlet, Champagne et Fromage, and traditional British fish and chips. Vegetarians are well catered for too - Tiny Leaf, London's first organic, zero waste, vegetarian restaurant has taken up residence, turning surplus food into colourful, appetising dishes.

Local vendors include the Vietnamese stall, Annam, run by the Tran family who previously ran The William pub on Harper Road. There's also craft beer from Walworth brewers, Orbit. But there's much more to Mercato Metropolitano than food and drink. It's also a vibrant community space with people coming to shop, exercise, work and be entertained.

On the ground floor of the main, three-storey building there's Prezzemolo e Vitale, a large, independent, family run supermarket from Palermo. Whilst upstairs, Rooney's Boxing Gym has just relocated from their old premises near Tower Bridge. On the third floor there's MAX, a fun co-working space with views over London, which will double as a place for students and local residents to hang out at weekends.

Backyard Cinema, who specialise in putting on themed film screenings in unusual locations, has also transformed part of the site into

a pop-up cinema with beanbag seating, popcorn and cocktails. Initially they created a 'lost world' jungle complete with huge trees and tropical plants for a programme of action and adventure films and for Christmas they're turning it into a winter wonderland.

From time to time, the market clears space in the main warehouse to put on anything from swing dance and sing-along choirs to community performances. It recently played host to an over-60s seated dance group from the Peabody estate.

"We want Mercato Metropolitano to be a place where people can come not only to enjoy good, quality food but also to get to know each other and to learn" explains Community Manager, Vicki Exall.

Every other Sunday, they offer free children's activities (next-up: Mozzarella making on 27 Nov and festive cookie making on 11 Dec). For younger children they've hosted book readings, most recently with the locally based Italian children's author, Francesca Lombardo, who shared stories from her popular Beatrice and The London Bus series.

They're currently working with the Dea Music Academy, who are located just around the corner on Scovell Crescent, and will provide space for music lessons as well as hosting the Academy's Christmas concerts on site. And, in keeping with Andrea's foodie philosophy, there are plans for a children's urban garden and cookery school where children will be taught to think about the food they eat, where it comes from and the best way to cook it too.

TRAINING OUR FUTURE HOUSE BUILDERS

Southwark's new Construction Skills Centre is up and running.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, officially opened the new training facility at Elephant Park in September. The skills centre has been set up by the council and its regeneration partner, Lendlease, to provide Londoners with the opportunity

to secure local construction jobs and to help tackle the industry's skills shortage.

Being based onsite at Lendlease's Elephant Park development means the students are training in the heart of one of the country's largest regeneration sites. With classrooms

for study, a workshop for practice plus an outdoor training yard, the trainees are getting practical, first-hand experience of the industry at a major, live construction site. Lendlease estimates that up to 1,000 people will be trained at the centre every year.



Johanna's story



Southwark resident Johanna Dorey was one of the first people to be trained at the centre. This is what she had to say:

"When visiting a job centre I noticed a poster promoting jobs in construction and Southwark's Construction Skills Centre.

I contacted John White at the Skills Centre who helped me get the training I needed to start a career in construction: a level 1 diploma and a Green CSCS card.

I was also introduced to Deepak Chavda, a Workplace Coordinator from St George. Deepak helped me get a two-week work experience placement with plumbing subcontractor Briggs and Forrester, who are working on St George's One Blackfriars development.

Briggs and Forrester were really happy with my work - so much so they offered me a job! I am now doing a plumbing apprenticeship and learning the trade at One Blackfriars."

If you're interested in a career in construction you can contact the Southwark Construction Skills Centre on **020 8004 6970** or email scsc@qtstraining.co.uk



LONDON COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

London College of Communication's spring season starts in January. LCC's Helen Carney picks the highlights to look out for.



LCC STUDIO: POP-UP PHOTOGRAPHY

LCC Studio is a space for College-run workshops and exhibitions on the first floor of the shopping centre. In the spring term, LCC will use the space for a pop-up photographic studio, which aims to recreate and commemorate the Free Photographic Studio movement that started in the 1960s when commercial portrait studios began to disappear.

With professional photographers offering free portraits to the public, the project will bring staff and students together with local residents to create a photographic archive documenting the changing landscape of Elephant and Castle. The photographers will also talk their subjects through the 'wet-collodion' process, in a celebration of analogue image making in the digital age.

KEN. TO BE DESTROYED

This exhibition, by LCC Research Fellow, Sara Davidmann, uses letters, photographs and other family archive materials to explore the life of her transgender uncle Ken (K). The title for the project was taken from the writing on an envelope that Davidmann found in her mother's possessions, containing letters and documents about K spanning a 50-year period up to 2003.

Family photographs depict K as male, and letters reveal how little was known about transgender people in the 1950s. Without Davidmann's work, the family would have erased the presence of a transgender family member, but this exhibition begins to tell the story that's missing from the photograph album.



REFUGEE JOURNALISM PROJECT

The Refugee Journalism Project is a collaboration between LCC and the Migrants Resource Centre.

Over the past year, the scheme has offered workshops, mentoring sessions and placements to experienced refugee journalists who faced significant barriers when they attempted to continue their work in the UK.

LCC will host a display of their work and a symposium that celebrates the achievements of the participants in restarting their careers in a very new environment.



MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

The creative skills of those with lived experience of mental health conditions will be the focus of a practical workshop run in collaboration with South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

Together, LCC graduate filmmakers and photographers will produce work in a two-day workshop, to be shared at a series of events held for local mental health community groups exploring the ideas of mental health and creativity.

For confirmed dates and more events to be announced, keep an eye on arts.ac.uk/lcc/events



Photo credit: Ana Escobar

REGENERATION UPDATE

The £3bn regeneration of Elephant and Castle has already delivered major improvements to the area, including more than 1,500 new homes, 500 jobs for local residents and a new public leisure centre. And there's still much more to come.

TOWN CENTRE

Delancey is close to finalising the planning application for the proposed new town centre development. The developer has held a number of workshops, meetings and exhibitions over the last two years to arrive at their current proposal to redevelop the shopping centre and the London College of Communication (LCC) site.

The idea is to restore the reputation that the area once enjoyed as the 'Piccadilly of the South'. Alongside a new cutting-edge campus for LCC, the plan includes a 1,000 seat multi-screen cinema and a grass-roots music venue for an audience of 500. There will be more than 1,000 homes for Londoners to rent, which will be priced to match a wide-range of local earning levels for single, shared and family occupants. There will also be a new entrance and ticket hall for the Northern Line Tube station.

Delancey want to create a 'must-visit' destination for London, with an impressive combination of national and independent shops, bars, cafes and restaurants, interspersed between 108,000 sq ft of new and accessible public space including better pedestrian routes through the area.



ELEPHANT PARK

Currently under construction, Lendlease's Elephant Park is a major development that will supply almost 2,500 new homes by 2025, including a minimum of 25% affordable housing. It includes 50 new shops, restaurants and cafes and the largest new park to be built in central London for 70 years.

The first part of the scheme, Trafalgar Place, which was nominated for this year's Stirling

prize for architecture, is already complete. The next two phases are West Grove and South Gardens. Lendlease is committed to ensuring the development is environmentally sustainable and, in addition to retaining over 100 mature trees and planting hundreds more, the scheme includes a combined heat and power plant to enable the delivery of net zero-carbon heating and hot water to all the new housing.



ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

Work is almost finished to improve St Mary's Churchyard - the park next to the council's new Castle Centre and Lendlease's recently completed One The Elephant tower. A first phase of improvements, which introduced a new playground and under 5s play area in 2015, is being followed up with new planting, a plaza and two water features.

The improvements include new trees and wildlife planting, an ornamental pond and a paved plaza with seating set around a multi-jet fountain. The final touches are expected to be complete in December, with the fountain switched on in the spring.



CROSSWAY CHRISTIAN CENTRE

The new Crossway Christian Centre on Hampton Street is set to open in time for Christmas.

The two-storey centre has been built as a replacement for the United Reformed Church on New Kent Road, which is due for demolition. Like its predecessor, the new Crossway will be more than just a place of worship and will include space for community groups to meet as well as a day centre for asylum seekers and homeless people and a community kitchen service. The whole building has been built with these flexible uses in mind and it meets the highest accessibility standards, marking a significant improvement on the old 70s centre.

The building is currently being fitted-out and there will be a ceremony to celebrate its completion when the last piece in the jigsaw - a large copper cross - is put on the front of the building in late November.

Fittingly, the first service to be held at the new Crossway will be a midnight carol service commencing at 11.30pm on 24 December followed by a Christmas Day service at 10.30am.

Reverend Peter Stevenson from the United Reformed Church told the Elephant Magazine "I'm delighted with the new building and want to send out an open invitation to everyone in the community to come and join us for our two inaugural services this Christmas and to help celebrate the opening of our new centre."

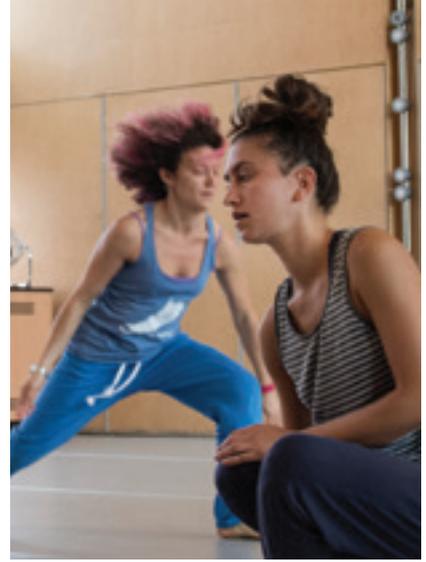
Crossway will start to operate on a regular basis from 7 January and will have an official opening ceremony, to which Sir Michael Caine has accepted an invitation as guest of honour, at the end of April.

The Crossway Christian Centre can be found at 18 Hampton Street, SE1 5SN.

For more information visit www.crosswaychurch.org.uk

A DECADE OF DANCE





Siobhan Davies Studios celebrates its tenth anniversary.

"The 'eureka' moment came after I'd been rehearsing in freezing church halls with only a couple of old gas heaters for warmth and thought to myself 'is this really the best we can do?'" explains Siobhan Davies.

Describing the genesis of her dance company's stunning, light-filled, three-storey home on St George's Road, the pioneering choreographer told the *Elephant Magazine* "I wanted to open a space that would care for dancers and help to grow contemporary dance as an art form." But it was going to take some time.

For years, Siobhan searched for a suitable space, including sites in King's Cross, Camden and Shoreditch, but they all fell through. It was only when Southwark Council's regeneration team approached her about an annex next to Charlotte Sharman Primary School that things started to look up. She teamed up with Sarah Wigglesworth, the architect behind the nearby regeneration developments, Wardroper House and Muro Court, but it was clear that the building was in need of some serious TLC.

"It was bad!" recalls Siobhan "it had asbestos, there had been a fire and it had been abandoned for some time when Sarah and I first saw it. I remember walking in - it was very cold, damp and grungy but, nonetheless, something in Sarah's eyes lit up. She loved the fact that it was a Victorian building and, as you can see, we've been able to combine its past with something very contemporary. In the entrance you can still see the original bricks and tiles, along with the outline of

the central staircase, which we removed to make the reception area."

Ten years on and the building is a hive of activity, with dancers developing performances in their first-floor research studio or visiting the therapy rooms for massage treatments. Elsewhere, there are people taking a range of classes or rehearsing in their magnificent dance studio on the top floor, with its unusual undulating wooden roof and wonderful views across the city.

The ground-floor meeting room is often booked by local companies and organisations, including a local residents association who use it for their monthly meeting. And visitors are still wowed by the unique building, which won a prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects award in 2006.

"I love that when anyone new comes in, it takes their breath away, especially when they see the roof studio - right at the top of the building. It's a wonderful place for dancers preparing for a performance but also for local people who are just coming in for a yoga class. To be able to lie down and look up at that magnificent timber ceiling is very special and, on a sunny day, the light is amazing."

Siobhan stresses that anyone is welcome to visit. "It's a working building but people are free to come in, look around and find out what's going on." There's a programme of free exhibitions, talks and events and the company is also involved in a whole range of other projects, beyond the studios, aimed at pushing the boundaries of dance.

The organisation recently hosted three performance lectures with choreographers and neuroscientists at the Wellcome Trust, exploring the connection between mind and body and are currently collaborating in *Dancing Museums*, which brings together European dance organisations and museums to explore new ways to interact with audiences (with a residency at the National Gallery this November).

In the new year, they will exhibit an ambitious new performance installation titled *material/rearranged/to/be*, which will feature contributions by choreographers, visual artists, scientists and designers. It starts at the Barbican (20 to 28 January) and then tours Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool.

They also run an education programme. It started out as a local project with pupils from the school next door and now involves teaching teachers to use dance thinking in learning across the country, and includes a year-long choreography programme for 14 to 21 years olds.

"It's been a busy ten years" says Siobhan "and we're looking forward to an exciting time ahead and welcoming even more people through our doors."

Siobhan Davies Studios

85 St George's Road,
London SE1 6ER

020 7091 9650

Open Mon - Fri 10am - 8pm,
Fri & Sat 10am - 5pm
Sun 10am - 8pm

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE WEBSITE GOES LIVE

The Elephant and Castle Partnership has launched a new website to keep people informed about the area's regeneration.

For the first time, this new website brings together, in one place, information from all the partners involved in the Elephant and Castle regeneration programme. Now you can get a succinct overview of what's happening at more than a dozen projects throughout the neighbourhood - all at the swipe of a finger or the click of a mouse.

The website has been put together by the Elephant and Castle Partnership, which consists of the main public and private

organisations either representing or active in the area and its regeneration. This includes developers, such as Lendlease and Delancey, alongside housing associations and public bodies including Southwark Council, Transport for London and the two universities.

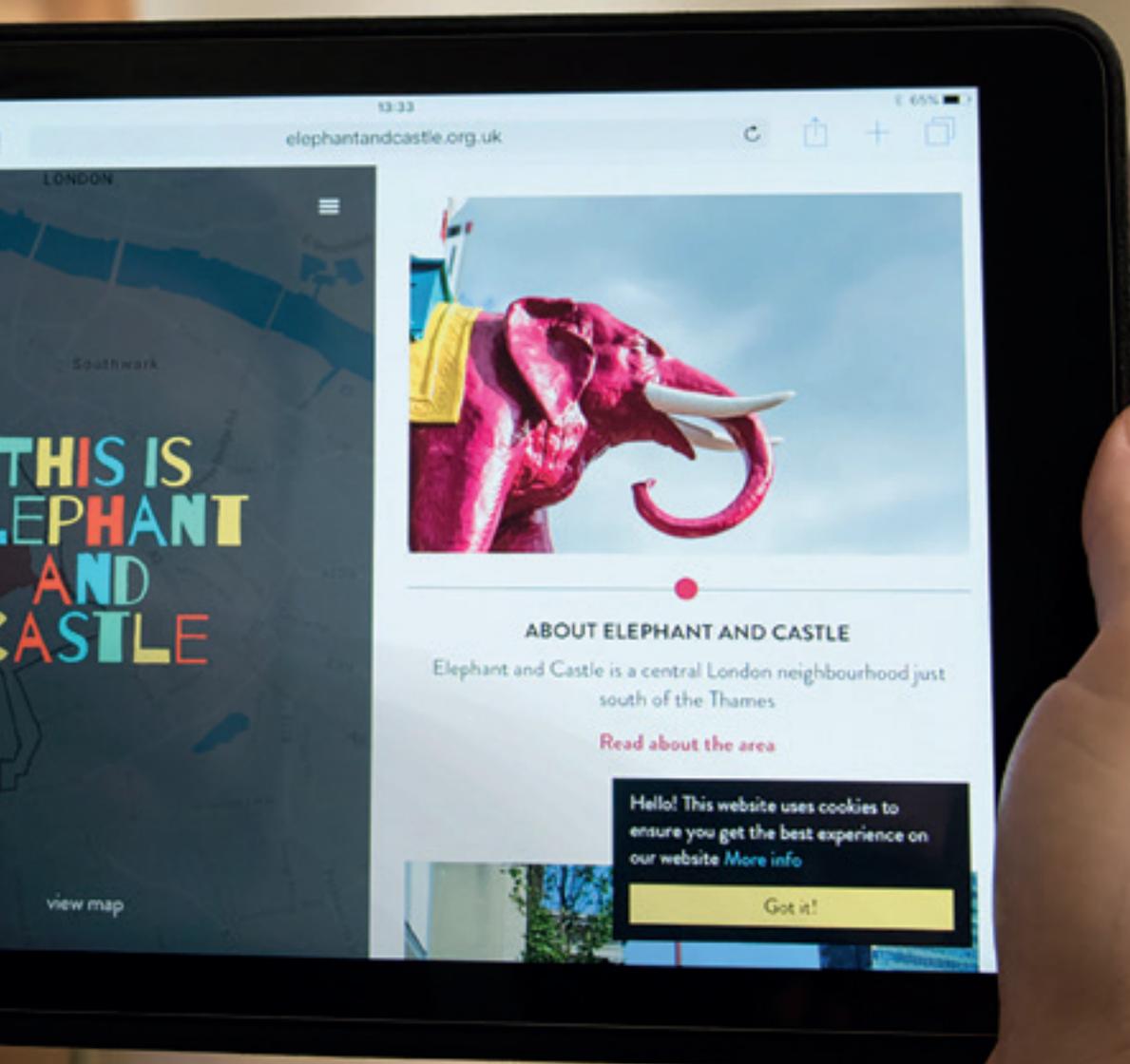
The site includes an interactive map that plots around 30 regeneration locations. It includes all the main developments in the Opportunity Area, which stretches from St George's Circus in the north to Burgess Park in the south. The map includes schemes

that are already complete, alongside those under construction, those in planning and those that are just proposals at this stage.

The site also provides an online presence for the Elephant and Castle Partnership itself, which was formed to steward the regeneration and help achieve the best outcomes for the area and its people. At present, the site just covers the essentials but it provides plenty of links through to more detailed information about each of the projects as well as the organisations behind them.

Take a look for yourself at

www.elephantandcastle.org.uk





THE BEST OF THE ELEPHANT: THE ELEPHANT AND CASTLE PUB

The historic Elephant and Castle pub has re-opened with funky 60s décor, local ales, freshly cooked food and a warm welcome.

"The Elephant and Castle pub has a proud history and everyone seems very glad to see it open again" says Jack Stones who manages the pub for the London Antic collective. "Our first night in July was insanely busy and we haven't really had a quiet day since.

"What I love is that the pub has a real community feel and you get a great mix of people here" explains Jack. "There are guys in suits and ties, students from LCC and South Bank, builders from local construction sites, then maybe there'll be a table of older ladies from Sierra Leone. At any time you can hear a whole variety of languages being spoken here that reflect the area."

The buzzy, energetic bar is a stark contrast to how things were 18 months ago when what had been a somewhat run-down boozier and Argentine grill lost its licence and there was a bid to turn the premises into an estate agents office. A community campaign, led by the Walworth Society, enabled the council to give the pub protected status as an asset of community value and bring Antic on board to give the pub a new lease of life.

Although the current building only dates back to the 60s, there's been an Elephant and Castle pub at this junction since at

least 1765. Indeed, the whole area is named after the pub.

"The Elephant was badly damaged during the Blitz and in 1959 the Victorian incarnation of the pub was demolished as part of the rebuilding of the area" explains

**" EVERYONE SEEMS
VERY GLAD TO SEE IT
OPEN AGAIN "**

Jack. "This version of the pub was built as a replacement and it's clear that people still feel a huge connection to it."

Pub collective, Antic took over the building in May this year and set about transforming it in keeping with its more recent 60s history. They replaced the sticky carpets with reclaimed wooden floors and stripped back the ceiling to expose the concrete waffle slabs.

They put up patterned wallpaper, installed airport style seating and red velour banquettes and added chintzy table lamps and retro telephones. The shoes mounted on the walls are a reference to Rabbits & Sons, the famous local shoemakers.

As part of the refurbishment, the old kitchen was ripped out and replaced with an open kitchen, which now serves food from 5pm during the week and from noon at the weekends. "We offer modern British pub grub that is all cooked from scratch and our Sunday lunches and Saturday brunches are especially popular" says Jack.

The pub is a free house, which means Jack, who is a trained beer sommelier, gets to choose what they stock. This includes beers from local Walworth brewers, Orbit as well as Fourpure from

Bermondsey. They also sell locally made Jensen's gin.

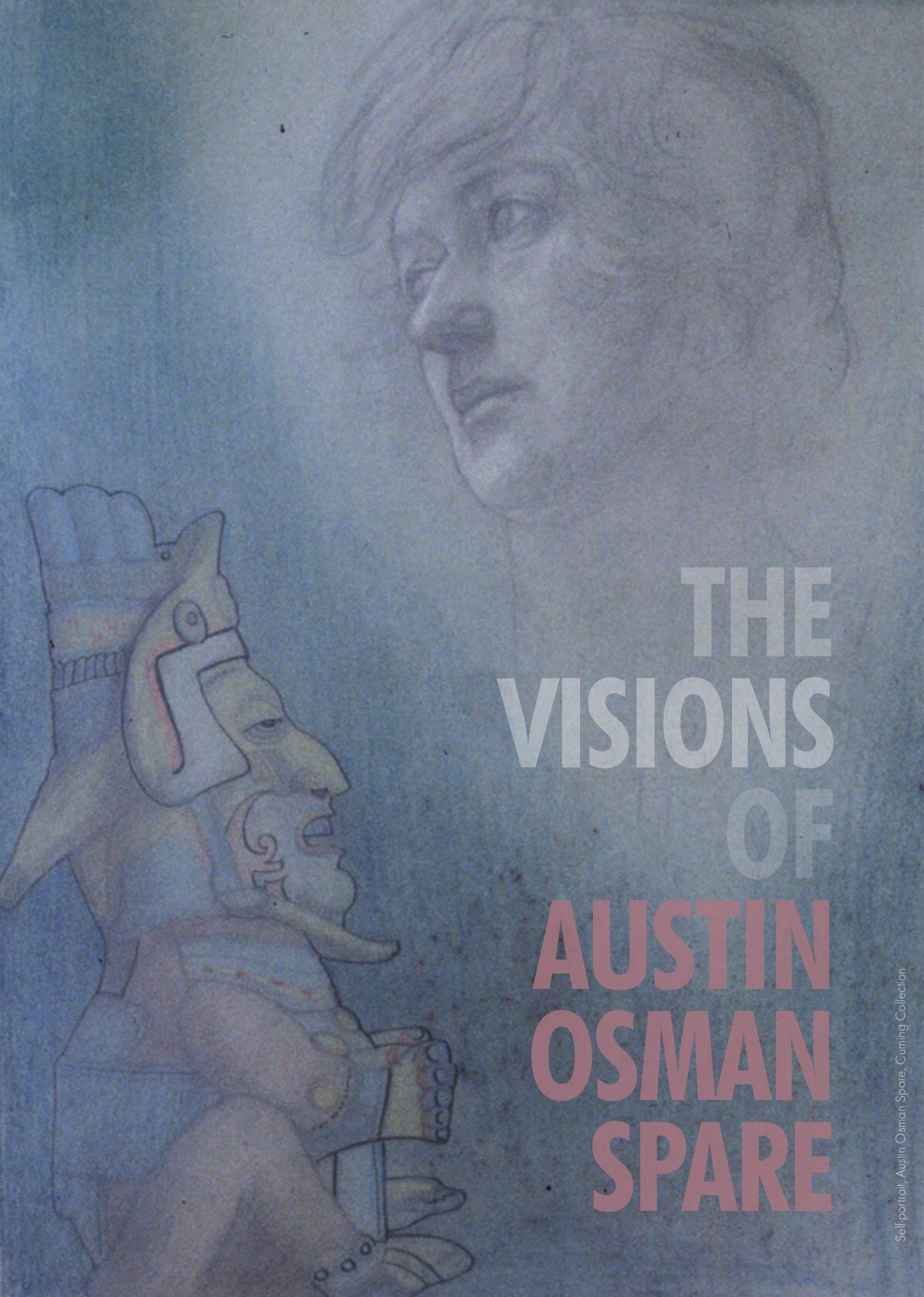
Downstairs, there's a large area that the team are planning to turn into an events space. "It could be used for open mic nights or exhibitions" says Jack. And, true to the community spirit of the place, he adds "it all depends on what local people want to do with it."

**Open Mon - Thurs
4pm - midnight, Fri 4pm - 2am,
Sat 12 - 2am, Sun 12 - midnight**

The Elephant and Castle
119 Newington Causeway
London SE1 6BN

020 7403 8124

www.elephantandcastlepub.com



THE
VISIONS
OF
AUSTIN
OSMAN
SPARE

The Elephant has always attracted charismatic characters. None more so than Austin Osman Spare. Judy Aiken looks back at the mystical artist who could have been a star but ended his life in obscurity and poverty.

Born in 1886 in Smithfield, Spare's precocious talent for drawing was noticed at an early age by his policeman father. The boy was unusually good and his father encouraged him.

In 1894, the family moved south of the river to Kennington Park Gardens. After leaving school, aged 13, Spare enrolled in evening classes at Lambeth School of Art where he began to win awards in recognition of his talent. At the same time, he started an apprenticeship at Whitefriars Glass before moving on to Caustons printers in Clapham, and it wouldn't be long before he began his career as an illustrator and artist in his own right.

In 1904, aged just 17, he got his first big break with an exhibition at the Newington Public Library on Walworth Road. This was quickly followed by a second when his proud father sent two of his works to the Royal Academy. They accepted one of the pieces and Austin became the Academy's youngest ever exhibitor.

This could have been his passport to artistic fame and success. The newspapers loved the idea of this unusual youth and hailed him as a young genius. Spare himself appears to have cultivated a suitable public persona to match and a wild haired 'artistic' appearance. Whether this was intentional or not, he began a long career of courting the press and was always able to supply journalists with a good quote, even in his darker days. But Spare claimed to reject the conventional art world and was already exploring the fantastical fringes of his imagination.

His best 'conventional' talent was as a figurative artist and draughtsman. His surviving portraits, especially those done during his time as a war artist during the First World War, are finely done and often moving.

However, he much preferred to follow what he saw as the road-less-travelled. He developed his own coded language, signs and symbols based on the ancient mystical world, paganism, death cults and

magic. His abstract, dream-like style was full of hidden meaning and he explored 'automatic drawing' whereby he created his work in a trance-like state. His art mapped a journey through his own mind and internal landscape long before it became an acceptable part of being an artist.

Unsurprisingly, his work wasn't to everyone's taste and he refused to pander to the ordinary art-buying market. As a consequence, Spare began to lose his fame almost as fast as he'd found it.

Undeterred by his increasing obscurity, he started to throw his energy into putting on his own exhibitions and publishing self-illustrated books, mixing art, myth and philosophy based on his vision (and visions). He became acquainted with the occultist, Aleister Crowley, but eventually rejected both the man and his ideas to pursue his own, unique Spare view of the world.

In 1936, after years of moving around South London, he settled at 56a Walworth Road; creating a studio above the loading bay of Woolworths. He drew portraits of his neighbours and also taught many of them art in his evening drawing classes at the studio. His local portraits remain some of his most fresh and engaging work. He hung his art in pubs such as the Temple Bar on Walworth Road and believed that art should be available to people cheaply.

The studio suffered a direct hit during the Blitz of 1941. Spare was injured, which led to temporary paralysis of his hands. But his mind also suffered a blow. He became depressed and, having lost his home and studio and seen his neighbourhood flattened by bombs, he hit a low point. After a period of desperation he got a basement room in Brixton and, although battered and penniless, he put on a stoic face and began to work again. His visitors all reported that he remained a charismatic man, with real presence, charm, humour and self-assurance - something he'd only lost temporarily, during the war.

Curious art world contacts began to venture to the run-down area he now called home, to encourage him to publish and exhibit once more. In 1953 he was getting ready for his new show at the White Bear in Kennington and things were looking up. However, due to a mix up over publicity, it flopped. He was disappointed and started to give interviews wherever he could to drum up business, including for BBC radio in 1955. His talk of magic proved controversial and complaints poured in from the listeners. This new notoriety might have revived his fortunes but in May 1956 Spare died after a burst appendix and other ailments had taken their toll.

His art has rarely been exhibited since, yet he is widely collected and his work retains a somewhat underground appeal, fuelled by the interest of famous rock stars, performers and artists.

The Atlantis bookshop (near the British Museum) occasionally shows his work and the Morley Gallery has also put on exhibitions. In 2010, Southwark's Cuming Museum used a number of pieces from its own collection as the basis for a show. The art curator at the time, Chris Jordan, assisted by guest curator, Stephen Pochin and the Cuming team, designed the exhibition, featuring 80 works mostly from private collectors. With television coverage presented by graphic novelist, Alan Moore it went on to become the museum's most popular show to date.

Now the council has created a new street, named in his honour, from a series of refurbished railway arches. Spare Street is the new permanent home of local arts organisation Hotel Elephant. He would have approved - both of the practicality and of the fact that his name would echo around his beloved Elephant and Castle once more.

Judy Aiken is Heritage Manager for Southwark Council. For more about the Cuming Collection and Southwark's local history visit heritage.southwark.gov.uk

MY ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

Locals tell us
what they
love about
the Elephant



Blaise

Artworks is great, with all the colourful shipping containers. It's a good place to get something to eat and drink and they do the most amazing coffee. I always try and support small local businesses when I can and there are lots to choose from around here. It's much better than going to one of the big chains.



Georgie

The swimming pool at the new Castle Centre is excellent. We're on our way to take the kids swimming now but I also like to go there in the evening as it's open till 10pm. It's really exciting to see the area change and especially to see Mercato Metropolitano popping up. It's a great place to meet up and there's lots of space for the kids. We used to go to Borough Market but now it's good to have something on our doorstep.



Papy

Elephant and Castle, especially the shopping centre, needed a big lift and now it's starting to happen which is good. We could do with more nice places to go out though.



Francesca

Three years ago, if someone had suggested that I should spend much time in Elephant and Castle, I'd have said 'no way' but now it's 'wow'. I like what they've done to the area and things have improved loads. The only disappointing thing - as far as my four year-old son is concerned - is the lack of elephants. There's a statue but he wants real elephants!



Kirsty

I first worked here about ten years ago and it's changed hugely since then. One place I really like is the South American restaurant El Vergel. It's a really colourful canteen style place and they do great salads and the best steak sandwiches.



Sean

It's a nice mixture of the old and the new. I love Terry's Café on Great Suffolk Street, it's like stepping back in time. It's an old style café with checked tablecloths and black and white photos on the walls. They do daily specials and you can get a sausage sandwich and a cuppa for only £4.



Mayowa

I heard about Mercato Metropolitano from a colleague in the office and it's my third time here. It's good for lunch and for meeting friends after work. I also like the new gym at the Castle Centre which is only five minutes away.



Donovan

I was born and bred around here. Some things have changed for the better, like there are more jobs and the area looks nicer, but the bad thing is that rents have gone up. I love Costa Azul, which is an Ecuadorian restaurant under the arches in Rockingham Street. It's hidden away but well worth seeking out. Before 3pm you can get a steak, starter and a drink for £7. We had a staff party there and it was great. I also like the Artworks as the food is good and they do craft beer too.



Susie

I've lived here for 17 years and I like it because, in amongst all the new developments and businesses, there are still lovely little neighbourhoods where people still chat to you in the street. Although it probably helps that I have a dog. I cycle a lot and the one thing we do need is more options for cyclists. It's got better but there is only one back route that avoids the roundabout and we need more provision. We should be more like Amsterdam.

The Elephant Magazine is produced by Southwark Council. We would love to hear your feedback and welcome suggestions for future features. Drop us a line at councilnews@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark
Council
southwark.gov.uk