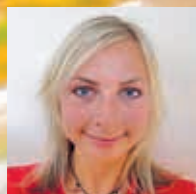
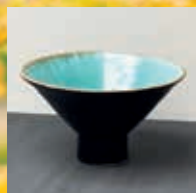
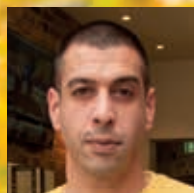
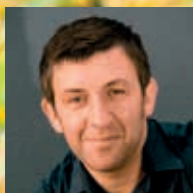
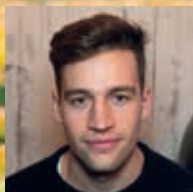
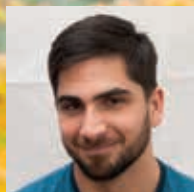


# HAMMERSMITH LOCALS

# SUMMER



# Stephanie Flanders



As the BBC's economics editor, Stephanie Flanders became a household name as she relayed to the nation the harrowing financial news following the 2008 recession.

Because reporting on such matters requires a certain gravitas, it came as a surprise to many that this serious journalist covering the minutiae of an economic storm was also the daughter of one half of a celebrated and world famous comedy duo.

Her father, actor and singer Michael Flanders, along with pianist Donald Swann wrote comical songs as Flanders and Swann that they performed around the world in the Fifties and Sixties.

Tragically, when Stephanie was just six her father died suddenly while on a family holiday in Wales. In a testimony to West London where he brought his family, his ashes were scattered in Chiswick House on Burlington Lane. Later, a day care centre in Acton – the Michael Flanders Centre – was named after him.

It is therefore little wonder that Stephanie and her husband have chosen the local area as the location of their family home with their two children.

**‘I like the fact that my kids are growing up in a mixed and diverse neighbourhood’**

‘I have always loved West London. I grew up near Turnham Green Tube station and went to St Paul’s Girl School in Brook Green. I’ve been in and around this neighbourhood most of my life,’ she says in between sips of coffee while sat in her garden.

‘I like the fact that my kids are growing up in a mixed and diverse neighbourhood. That’s the joy of London. But people worry how gentrification has pushed a lot of people out. I hope that doesn’t happen here.

‘When I was going to school Hammer-smith Broadway was just a black hole. Now in the morning there’s an equal number of people coming in as going out. And there are lots of restaurants there. It really lifts the area.’

Stephanie, who obtained a first class degree in philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford, left the BBC in 2013 and became chief marketing strategist for JP Morgan Asset Management. Despite her scholarly prowess and high powered career, her father's comic legacy is never far away.

'Flanders and Swann recordings are still selling. You couldn't live off the income but, it's nice that they are still valued. It's been wonderful to grow up with people sporadically coming up to you and saying, 'Gosh your dad was amazing,' and 'Oh, I love that song.'

'When I was at the BBC I was visible and people would contact me to tell me about their experience of him. I got some wonderful letters from people who had nursed him when he contracted polio during the war.

'I've met people who say that their entire family are big fans of Flanders and Swann. It's nice that new generations are having their music passed down to them.'

The death of her father was obviously a deeply painful experience for someone so young.

'I have quite a strong memory of the last holiday we had when he died suddenly in the night. We were in Wales and there was a beach that we drove the car on to with me sitting on my father's lap.

'Because he was in a wheelchair after contracting polio he had a specially

designed car where the acceleration was done by hand. I remember this was great fun for a six-year-old because there was no concern about trying to reach down to the pedals.

'I mainly grew up knowing him through his records. It's wonderful to have those. But, it's obviously the carefully rehearsed show rather than what he was actually like. But, it's better than nothing.'

He died from an aneurysm. Soon afterwards her mother, Claudia, campaigned tirelessly to improve disability access issues, among other things. 'I remember when I was 10 we did a tour around the UK to cinemas and theatres to promote access for disabled people. There are lots of photographs in local newspapers of me smiling in toilet doors showing how wide entrances should be so you could get wheelchairs in and out.

'My mother taught me how to treat people and gave me a good general attitude towards the world. I didn't really know my dad well enough to see whether I've picked up traits from him. But, I suspect it's like everyone, you end up a mixture of them both.

'Every so often I now catch myself in the mirror and think, 'Gosh that's my father.' It's nice, but it's funny the way we all grow into becoming our parents.'

**\* Read more online at [www.keeptingslocal.com](http://www.keeptingslocal.com)**

# EDITOR

As smoke from barbeques wafts across the borough and neighbours chat over garden fences, Hammersmith Locals would like to welcome you to our **Summer** issue. It features interviews with local people working in the arts, media, music and the world of economics.

So grab yourself a cold drink and find a sunny spot to find out what is happening in your neighbourhood, as well as discovering the many interesting people living in your community.

## CONTACT US

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Cover: South German close helmet for heavy field use. Nuremberg, circa 1550. Highly decorated chiselled iron dish-guard from a sword. 17th century.: 25 Blythe Road, W14 0PD. Auction 12noon 29th June.





# Leontine Hass

## The founder of Associated Studios, a West London arts academy, is on the hunt for talent

Tucked away on a residential road a few minutes walk from Barons Court tube is a small building named simply as 'The Hub'. To anyone strolling by they could be forgiven for thinking that nothing much happens in what appears to be an annex to a local redbrick church.

But this innocuous building is home to Associated Studios, a leading performing arts academy that has helped train and develop some of the country's top actors, singers and performers. In fact, some of the most popular West End shows and most acclaimed operas have been staged involving the studio's tutors and experts.

Leontine Hass, a mother of two, founded the studio in 2007 to help talented, aspiring performers work and train with some of the leading directors, vocal coaches, musical directors, conductors, agents, casting directors, producers and choreographers.

She says, 'We are lucky to have devoted, eminent patrons: Sir Tim Rice, Jeremy Irons, Rory Bremner, Jeremy Herrin, Timothy West, Joel Fram and Scott Alan. They are very hands-on. A lot of our singers have ended up in the West End.'

The philosophy at the studio is simple: students not only gain from the wealth of knowledge of their tutors, they also develop valuable professional contacts. And, it currently offers a 50 per cent bursary for one talented local student who comes from a less privileged background.

**'We have a 50% bursary discount for one talented local'**

But, Leontine, originally from Germany, says Associated Studios has ambitious plans for the future.

'We are currently working on university accreditation because we are developing a degree. As well as workshops and part-time courses, we offer one and two-year full-time courses. It's really exciting. We've got a lot of support from the industry. Our coaches are not academics, they are industry professionals.'

As a vocal coach herself (she is currently resident coach on Motown at The Shaftesbury Theatre), she understands better than most how good training and the right attitude is the key to success in the performing arts. Having trained singers for many shows including Lion King, Kinky Boots, Thriller and Mama Mia, as well as

The Voice UK and Gareth Malone show TV programmes, she should certainly know.

‘A lot of people I work with, and a lot of the great artists, actually lack confidence. This is not always a bad thing as it can spur us on to continuously strive to become better at what we do. I have never met a great artist or talent with a consistent level of self-confidence. Often, those who do have it in abundance, are not quite as good as they think they are.’

So, how does Leontine navigate her way through the emotional challenges facing the performing artist?

‘I have to get the actors vocally ready for the show. However, a lot of my work is also about dealing with the psychological aspect. I have to persuade the artists that they are good enough, which can take some doing. Quite a few established performers have weeks and even months where they decide they can’t do it anymore and want to give up. It’s about doing practical things to get them performance ready. Daily practice, technique, knowing the music and text inside out, doing more of what makes them feel centred and prepared and less of what does not.’



**Rory Bremner - Leontine Hass - Sir Tim Rice**

**Visit [www.associatedstudios.co.uk](http://www.associatedstudios.co.uk) and use the contact form to apply for an audition for the 50% Bursary Discount Competition (T&Cs apply).**

**Information on Workshops and Courses in Musical Theatre, Opera, and Acting is also available on the website.**

### **The Associated Studios**

*Performing Arts Academy*

The Hub St Alban's Fulham

Margravine Road, W6 8HJ

020 7385 2038

[info@associatedstudios.co.uk](mailto:info@associatedstudios.co.uk)

[www.associatedstudios.co.uk](http://www.associatedstudios.co.uk)



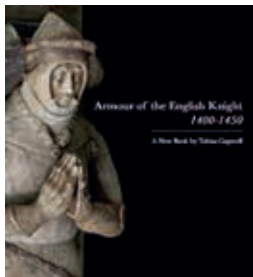
# 25 Blythe Road

## Antique Arms and Armour

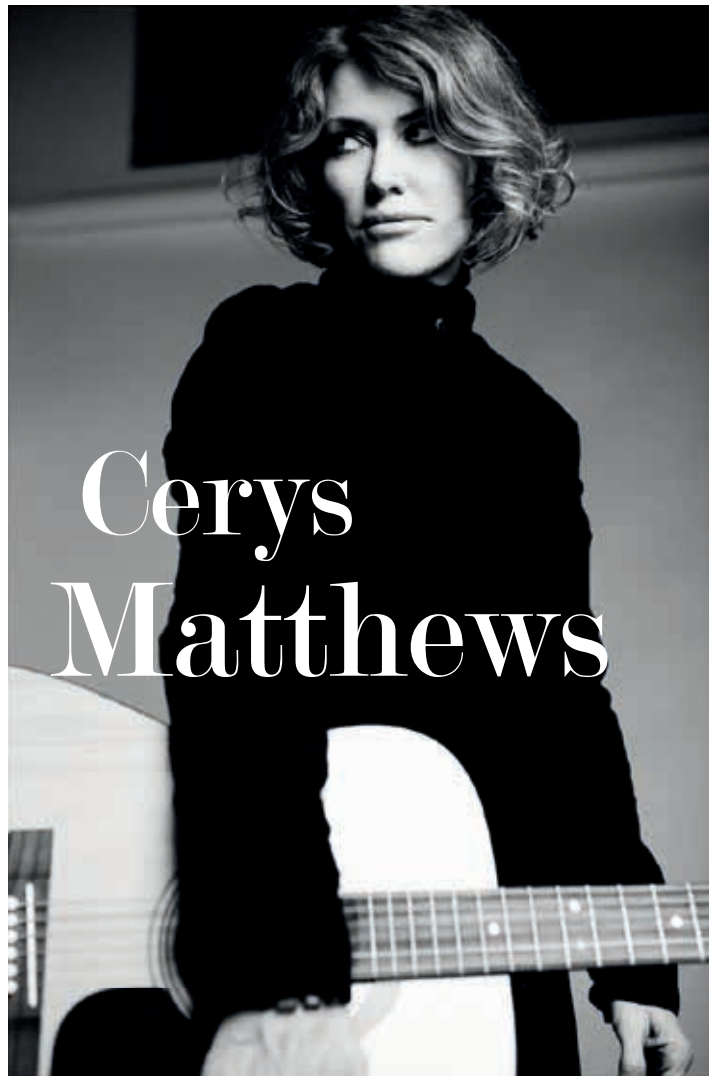
Thomas Del Mar has been living locally with his family for eight years. Having run the Antique Arms, Armour and Militaria department at Sotheby's for 10 years, he started his own company in 2005. Two years later, he discovered in Olympia an old post office that had been closed down which he then converted and so founded 25 Blythe Road, the specialist auctioneer house.

His next auction is on the 29th June which will include objects spanning 3,500 years, and will include armour from Warwick Castle, a spear from the Vienna arsenal, partisans carried by the Yeoman Guard of our Kings and Queens William & Mary, Anne, George III and Victoria, the contents of a European Princely Armoury and related items such as gun powder flasks, saddles, caparisons, stirrups, and a spectacular display of miniature to life size cannon and other artillery.

Thomas Del Mar Ltd has recently published the book 'Armour of the English Knight 1400 - 1450' written by Tobias Capwell, curator of arms and armour at the Wallace Collection.



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[www.25BlytheRoad.com](http://www.25BlytheRoad.com)



# Cerys Matthews

**'The Good Life Experience is about reconnecting with nature and acknowledging the joys of the simpler things in life'**

As the front woman for one of Britain's most iconic 90's bands, Cerys Matthews secured hit after hit with Catatonia that captured the public's imagination. In recent years, as a roving reporter for the BBC One Show and presenter of her own radio programme, the musician has again become a household name.

Not content with her already hectic schedule, she has also helped co-found a music festival for families in her home

country of Wales. It is amazing how she manages to make time.

'Modern life is full of temptations and pressing commitments,' she says from her home in West London. 'Work, for instance; mine has totally erratic and irregular hours and often entails a lot of travel. I'm also a full time mother of a five, 10 and 12 year old. I run the house and I'm also a wife.'

'But, the Good Life Experience is about reconnecting with nature and acknowledging the joys of the simpler things in life. We live in an increasingly hectic and digitally connected world, so the festival is a real breath of fresh air. It's a great opportunity for all the family to log off and get together, try some new experiences and enjoy 'real-world' adventures in the great outdoors.'

The festival, in its third year, is held on an estate in Flintshire in mid September. The event is geared towards families with an emphasis on enjoying the outdoors as much as the bands, bushcraft, camp-fire cooking and fairground.

Born in Cardiff, Cerys learned to play the guitar at the age of eight and sang Welsh folk songs, as well as traditional music including blues and Irish folk.

In 1992, she co-founded Catatonia and her unique vocal style and catchy tunes were instant hits. Anyone who lived through the 90's cannot have failed to have heard songs like You've Got a Lot to Answer For, Mulder and Scully, Dead From the Waist Down, and Road Rage. But, how does she write hit songs?

'Nowadays if a melody comes into my head I just put it straight away down on an iPhone. If any lyrics come into my head or if I hear something said around me and like it I



simply write it down.

'I like writing cross-legged on my bed with my guitar. I just let my ideas take me away. You may take an idea and then take it down different roads, then you can end up with different songs. You might have 10 different ideas. Some may be good but you may have to pull back to be actually comfortable in a single idea. You may have to apply some discipline if you need to be true to that original idea.

'It's a good thing, the whole thought process, getting so deep down and getting lost a little in your writing. Yes, it's indulgent. But, it's the ultimate solitude. And I love it. I could be anywhere.'

But, what inspires her most?

'I have a sense of the wonders that life presents, the wonder of the miracle of life. The enormity of life on this planet sometimes freaks me out. I am astonished just how amazing life is. Even if you are a city dweller you should open your eyes and remind yourself of how amazing everything is.

'I just don't get how we are a part of an infinite number of universes, and there should be this one universe, this one planet, that is teeming with life.'

It is little wonder that the festival she helped co-found is in a rural idyll in Wales.



'Growing up in the wilds of Pembrokeshire a lot of my family were farmers which has given me a great love of the outdoors, which I still have today. For that reason I helped start the Good Life Experience festival. We wanted to help create a friendly and family-orientated platform for like-minded people and ask them to come to enjoy the wonders of the world.'

Despite her successes involving so many different skills, Cerys is at pains to remain level-headed.

'I had a guest on my BBC Radio 6 Music show who talked about 'talent terror'. He said beware when your brain starts telling

you how good you are. As soon as your brain starts telling how good you are you have to calm yourself right down. You can't be motivated by success.

'Success is waking up each morning and starting afresh, that's the biggest gift to be given.'

## THE GOOD LIFE EXPERIENCE

16-17-18 September 2016

Hawarden Estate, Flintshire, Wales, CH5 3FB

Info & sales Mon-Fri: 01244 784122

Info & sales Sat-Sun: 020 7727 7799

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www.thegoodlifeexperience.co.uk

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# The Carpet Store



*Joe and Fiona Miller*  
This local family has you covered.

**Q. How many years have you been here?**  
Coming up to 25 years. People are coming back to the smaller shops because they realise they get a more personal and professional service, which everybody wants. One of our mottos is support the local businesses, not just our own.

**Q. Sometimes I feel under pressure from sales people in big carpet shops.**

We're very relaxed on that. I'm not a pushy salesman. We're a friendly family business.

**Q. So can I hang about all day looking at carpets. Will that drive you nuts?**

People sometimes visit the store three or four times before they make a decision and find exactly what they want. Some people will come in with their samples of paint. Some often come and sit with their samples on their own, throw down their wall paper samples and sit for a couple of hours and try and get a good idea. Then they'll borrow the samples and come back the next day after looking at it overnight at home.

**Q. What do you offer for stairs and special fittings?**

For stairs we actually custom-cut them to size. We finish the edges with either a binding tape or a whipping in your choice of colours. We make individual bespoke runners for individual staircases.

**Q. What about floor panelling?**

We've got a new type of flooring called Luxury Vinyl Tiles. Laminate flooring is a photograph with a protection layer and the base of it is high density fibre boards, like a wood. With the new one we've got the base of it is vinyl and it's extremely hard wearing and water proof. We've been using it in shops, hair salons. It's also brilliant for homes, kitchens, bathrooms.

## The Carpetstore

020 8749 9340  
156 Goldhawk Road, W12 8HJ  
carpetstoresb@aol.com  
www.thecarpetstore.info

# Chartered Practice Architects



*Warren Hagues*

**'Architects are trained to consider a project holistically'**

**Q. I see a lot of building work to people's homes at the moment. What value does an architect bring to this type of project?**

Some people think that an architect's job is either in the capacity of a designer or someone who produces drawings. The reality is that an architect does much more than just draw buildings, why else would the training take seven years? Whilst there are other professions who can undertake partial services of what an architect can provide, architects are the only profession who are trained and qualified to consider a project holistically in terms of aesthetics, psychology, practicality, buildability, technical and legislative requirements, context, cost, legal matters and contract administration (to name just a few). Architects are also required to carry professional indemnity insurance and are held to very high standards by our Registration body (A.R.B.), which is not always the case with non-architects.

We believe that any project, large or small, will benefit from this holistic approach, whether in determining what the brief is initially, right through to furniture placement and finishes towards the end of a project. The skills of an architect are best employed when a client presents a series of problems or required outcomes, rather than providing the architect with a design to draw up on the client's behalf. The architect can then use their training and experience to integrate solutions creatively and thoughtfully in order to exceed the client's expectations.

## Chartered Practice Architects

159 Askew Road, W12 9AU  
0208 743 9535  
warrenhagues@cparchitects.com  
www.cparchitects.com



# The Stonemasons Arms

## Jack Davis - General Manager

Anyone driving round Hogarth Roundabout in Chiswick recently cannot have failed to notice the intense stare of a giant-sized chef perched on the advertising hoarding. The man glaring down on the thousands of cars passing beneath is Gavin Sinden, the Fuller's award winning Chef of the Year (awarded by Pierre Koffmann) who recently drew up a new menu for The Stonemasons Arms.

Both Jack Davis, the manager of the pub, and Gavin, have been enjoying the new found fame.

'It is fantastic to see the hoarding and it's a great achievement for Gavin,' Jack, originally from North Devon, says, grinning. 'We get people saying they have seen him up there which is superb. And, there are even more going up over the next month or so!'

The obvious question is whether Gavin is now a 'celebrity chef?'

'I wouldn't say that, he certainly doesn't shout and swear like some of them do! And, being seen by so many people has not gone to his head. He is very grounded, and working hard to achieve his goals is still his aim in life.'

The giant chef aside, his new 'Modern British' menu is proving a tremendous hit with punters.

'It's great to have people talking about us and see people making the effort to come to try the food here,' he adds. 'We just have to make sure we live up to the hype.'

Gavin's winning dishes are on the evening menu and include these tasty temptations:

- Cornish Orchard cured & torched trout, grapefruit pearls, cucumber textures, wasabi cream.
- White Texal Dorset lamb, potato crisp, broad beans, anchovies, red wine jus.
- Lemon cheese cake, poached rhubarb, meringue

### The Stonemasons Arms

54 Cambridge Grove, W6 0LA

020 8748 1397

stonemasonsarms@london-gastros.co.uk

www.stonemasons-arms.co.uk

PROMOTION



## José Carvalho

'I am a potter from Portugal and have been living in London for 10 years. My work covers a broad spectrum of both decorative and functional pieces. I use stoneware, earthenware, and Porcelain Clay. Recently I have been producing "V" and "U" shaped pieces with a volcanic textured glaze which I created. I enjoy the challenge of reproducing a glaze that would blend well with the pots I throw. I am pleased to say I am now set up in my new studio by Ravenscourt Park and taking bookings for pottery lessons and courses:

**'Introduction to Pottery'** - topics include: Throwing, Pinch Pots, Coiling, Slab Technique, Tile Technique, Slip-casting Technique, and Pottery Decoration.

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'The extent of what I cover depends on the ability of the students. Students can develop their chosen techniques in further courses. Prices are per student and include reading materials, clay and glazes. Your work can be taken home.

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**To see my new work please visit me at: ARTISTS AT HOME 17-19 June**



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# Life Coaching

*Olivia Read*

## Top Tips to Lighten your load

‘Summer is round the corner and change is in the air. It’s time for us to stop running around like headless chickens and to add a spring back to our step. Here are some top tips to lighten your load:

**1. To-do list** - Identify the chunky task on your to-do list that’s causing you the most angst and then block out a 1-2 hour slot in your diary when you can commit to tackling it. The time might be spent reviewing and researching what needs to be done but you’ll have made a start, rather than fearing it.

**2. Environment** - Have a full tidy up at work and at home, chucking or filing papers and going through your cupboards. Fill a bin liner with clothes and tat that can be taken to a charity shop. It’ll clear your mind and give you a boost.

**3. Emotional** - If there’s something bothering you, get it off your chest by talking to a friend. Sharing it will lighten your load, make you feel connected and less anxious.

**4. Energy** - Identify one thing that’s currently draining your energy - something within your control to change. What could you do to change it or remove it? Now think of something that you love, that boosts your energy. How could you incorporate more of it into your life?

‘I am a Coaching Academy accredited Life Coach. I have coached a wide range of brilliantly smart and inspiring clients, each with a unique story. Please get in touch if you would like me to help your life story.

### Olivia Read Life Coaching

07714 280 486  
olivia@oliviaread.com  
www.oliviaread.com

PROMOTION

## Grove Neighbourhood Centre

*Janis Cammell OBE*  
Committee member

Janis Cammell has a special link to the Grove. It has provided her with help when she needed it most. Now, she helps ensure it can do the same for others.

“My father lived on Godolphin Road. He met my mother when she was over from Ireland and was eating chips on Goldhawk Road. My father’s chat-up line was ‘Give us a chip!’. He looked like Gregory Peck and she was like Maureen O’Hara. And that is why I’m here today!

“My mother died from a stroke, and my father, who suffered emphysema, got worse. Towards the end of his life he couldn’t walk so I ended up nursing him. It became quite draining. When I would get home from work he often wanted me to sit with him. With emphysema you can feel like you’re drowning so you’re frightened of being alone because you can’t breathe.

“The doctor was reluctant to give him oxygen because he said it would blow him up because he still smoked, the little so-and-so. At that time, the Grove Neighbour Centre was home to a charity offering respite care to carers. They looked after dad Friday nights which meant I could have a break and go out with friends. It kept me sane. Years after dad died I went with a friend to the centre to learn ballroom dancing. My friend put me forward for the Grove committee. I worked for ‘Invest.Uk’ (now UK Trade and Investment) which is the Government body attracting overseas investment to the UK, so I hold skills and experience that could help.

### Grove Neighbourhood Centre

7 Bradmore Park Road, W6 0DT  
020 8741 3321  
www.groveneighbours.org.uk



**Ian McCarroll - Tool Chest**  
68 Iffley Road, W6 0PF  
020 8748 7912  
ian@toolchesthire.co.uk  
www.toolchesthire.co.uk



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# Evolve Fitness Training



*Hanif Mayet*

## **Q. What do you like about the area?**

The variety of people and the energy.

## **Q. Where does your surname, Mayet, originate?**

It's Arabic. My dad is South African. His great-grandparents were Indian born and moved to South Africa. My mum's side are English and Norwegian. I'm quarter South African, Indian, English, and Norwegian.

## **Q. What led you to work in knee rehabilitation?**

I was a medic in the RAF and have always been interested in science and medicine, the real nitty-gritty stuff about how the body works. I have to explain to clients what their body is doing when recovering from an injury so they understand what the body needs and the process involved.

## **Q. Where do you train clients?**

I usually train people in the gym. We may even go to a park if it's a nice day. Medical teams, surgeons, physios and nurses working at BUPA Cromwell Hospital, The Lister Hospital, and Charing Cross Hospital send me clients. After they've undergone treatment one of their medical teams will say, 'Now you need the next stage, the follow up, the strengthening.' That's when they refer the patient to me.

I worked with a footballer who had an anterior cruciate ligament knee re-construction - the ligament that runs through the middle of the knee. The surgeon told him he would never run or play professional football again. But, his goal in life was to play football with his son in his garden. We got down to work and he was running after eight weeks. His surgeon said he was amazed by the speed of his recovery and wanted to know how I had done it and asked me to I talk to his physios. Learnt a lot from that surgeon and his team.

**Evolve Fitness Training - 07814 298 064**

hanif@evolvefitnesstraining.com  
www.evolvefitnesstraining.com

PROMOTION

# Alexander Barbers HQ

## *Stav's Style Tips*

*Stavros Christoudolakis - Barber*

'Summer is almost here and the world's trendiest fashion show featuring YOU is about to begin. We are going to see the latest hairstyle, clothing, and accessory trends being strutted up and down London's high streets.

'During Summer traditionally most men cut their hair a little shorter and more frequently thanks to the great British sunshine. Here is a list of my top 3 coolest summer haircuts:

### **1 The Textured Quiff**

### **2 Short Sides with Choppy Top**

### **3 Textured Cop**

'Gentlemen, less in most cases equals more, especially when applying gels and waxes to your hair. Remember you are styling your hair and not cementing together a three-storey house.

'You will find creating a style easier if you first wash your hair which will help to relax it making it more manoeuvrable.

1 - A good tip if you have lots of product buildup slapped on your head is to apply shampoo straight onto your hair before wetting it so the shampoo gets straight to work on the product buildup. Now rinse out, then shampoo and rinse again as normal.

2 - A common mistake is applying hair product straight onto wet hair. Once washed you should lightly towel dry then use your hands to gently ruffle your hair into shape as close to the style you are looking to create.

'A few Derek Zoolander Blue Steel looks into the mirror and you are ready to apply your hair product and hit the glamour that is Hammer-smith's King Street. It is well worth investing in a good shampoo to throw in your gym bag alongside your favourite wax.'

## **Alexander Barbers HQ**

38 Hammersmith Broadway, W6 7AB

020 8741 1801

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www.alexanderbarbershq.com

PROMOTION

EST. 1982

# BRACKENBURY

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Alexia Lescure



Daniel Rollins



Laura Maidment



Fátima Cardelus

## Meet the Osteopaths

### What exactly is Osteopathy?

Osteopathy is a holistic health-care system, which can diagnose and treat a wide range of complaints. It is best known for the successful drug-free treatment of problems in the joints and muscles of the body.

### How do I know if it is the right treatment for me?

If you suffer from joint or muscle pain, sports or other injury, stiffness, headaches or backache, you will probably benefit from visiting the osteopath. If you are in doubt, you are welcome to book a free 15 minute preliminary consultation. Call the clinic on 020 8741 9264.

### Do you treat children and babies?

Yes, we do. Cranial osteopathy is especially suitable for the young, and we regularly see babies, including newborns, for problems such as colic, sleep and feeding problems, sickness and wind, ear infections etc. Osteopathy is also very beneficial in pregnancy.

### How many sessions will I need?

That very much depends on the nature and severity of your complaint. The osteopath will be able to assess that during your first visit. You may also be given some exercises to do at home. Follow the advice and you will not only speed up your recovery, but feel empowered and in tune with your body and overall health.

**Free 15 Minute Consultation**

### Brackenbury Natural Health Clinic

30 Brackenbury Road, W6 OBA

020 8741 9264

info@brackenburyclinic.com

www.brackenburyclinic.com

PROMOTION

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PROMOTION

# Robert Dyrga

Are you sitting comfortably?  
Then, the boss of  
Sofa Fox, will begin...

**Robert Dyrga, his partner, Goska, and their son, Julian, are a family that has fallen in love with Hammersmith and the English countryside.**

**Q. When did you move to the UK?**

I came from my native Poland just after it joined the EU. I'm from a small city called Zywiec in the mountains in the South of Poland. I was 25 and came here looking for adventure and also to get away from my parents! I'm the youngest of three children and the only one to leave Poland. I'm the black sheep of the family for leaving. At first there was lots of crying, 'Come back, come back, oh no... you are on your own there in the UK. Come back to Poland'. They were crying at the beginning but now they are fine. They are used to it. My plan was to come here for three months then go back. I've now been here 11 years.

**Q. Why did you choose Hammersmith?**

It's really friendly. Especially here in Brackenbury Village. It's a quiet spot outside of the mainstream of London. I don't like crowds. We've got a hairdresser next door and a butcher. I like the demographic. If you go to other parts of London it's not as nice. Everybody talks to everyone else here. We love it.

**What is Sofa Fox?**

I buy top quality sofas and sofa beds from across Europe. I spend months visiting and

researching factories to ensure the quality is consistent throughout. All our sofas are made with high-density foam that keeps its shape. If we have what you are looking for in stock we can deliver in three days. If it isn't stocked then it takes up to four weeks to get to your home. Many sofas are modular, offering many possibilities. Installation is free. I am currently introducing stain resistant fabrics.

**Q. So, what do you and your family do in your spare time?**

We like camping, and tents. We go to Wales and the Lake District, as well as exploring other parts of Britain. Living in Hammersmith means it is easy to visit the West of England, and Wales and get away. We have the M4 and the M25 very nearby. We love it here in Britain. It's beautiful. Summer is nearly here and we can't wait to go camping. We also love skiing together in France in the winter.

**Q. If you had to leave the UK what would you miss the most?**

Our friends mainly, and camping. We love camping in Wales and the Lake District, and exploring other parts of Britain. It's beautiful.

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**Sofa Fox - Robert Dyrga**

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