



### REASON(S) TO BE CHEERFUL

It has to be said that there aren't that many of them at the moment. The terrible war in Ukraine is still raging as I write, while the continuing threat from Covid remains an unsettling constant in the background. But not for the first time our wonderful garden is able to provide us with moments of calm & consolation. Since I last wrote in January it's been lovely to see crocuses & daffodils bursting out as harbingers of Spring.



### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE: PLEASE STAY VIGILANT AND SAFE

I'm sorry to have to report that there have been two criminal incidents around the Garden of recent weeks. A young boy was mugged on his doorstep in Warrington Crescent & more recently there was a burglary in the same street, with the perpetrators apparently entering via the Garden. The Board & Westbourne are busy checking that the Garden perimeter is secure at all points & investigating other ways in which our security can be strengthened. In addition, Westbourne will soon be re-coding the fobs for access to the Castellain Road gate – keep an eye on the website for an announcement on the date. Meanwhile please be sure that your own property is secure & if you have any information which may be

linked to these two crimes or notice anyone acting suspiciously in the neighbourhood, please call the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Alternatively, Crime-stoppers can be contacted in confidence on 0800 555 111.

### ANOTHER TOOL IN THE WAR ON CRIME

As you may have noticed the police have been intermittently active in the Garden since the end of February, using it as a base for the taking of drone footage as part of an anti-crime initiative. The operation is likely to last for another month or so.

They have requested that no photos be taken of them or their equipment but a bonus for us is that they have let us have some of their aerial footage of the garden.



*QUESTION: What is one of the most photographed sights in Little Venice during early Spring? Clue: for once we're not talking about the Regent's Canal.*

*Answer on page 4*

## TIME TO RAISE A GLASS!

Preparations are now well in hand for a repeat of last year's highly successful wine-tasting which marked Formosa's emergence from lockdown. As it turns out our chosen date of **Saturday 4th June** is in the middle of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday, so there's even more of an excuse to raise a glass if one were needed. The event is being kindly sponsored by the Winery on Clifton Road & runs from 4 to 6 pm. A jazz quartet will be playing & residents are welcome to bring picnics & blankets to enjoy the afternoon at their leisure.



## OPEN GARDENS

As the social calendar gathers pace the following week sees the return of the London Gardens weekend, back in physical form for the first time since 2019. As a long-time participant we plan to open Formosa to the public from 2—5 pm on **Sunday June 12th**. For more information check out the Garden Squares website at <https://londongardenstrust.org>.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE SQUARES

Moving into **July**, the touring theatre company Shakespeare in the Squares will be performing *The Tempest* in our garden at 7 pm on **Friday 1st**. Tickets will go on sale on April 8th -- to Formosa residents only for the first two weeks, & then to neighbouring gardens. Check out the company's website at <https://shakespeareinthesquares.co.uk/>.

## FORMOSA SUMMER PARTY

Another favourite is our traditional Summer Party, due to return on **Saturday July 9th** after a two-year hiatus caused by COVID.



We are now in the middle of planning but anticipate that all the regular favourites will be back and likely to include pony rides, bouncy castles & face-painting for kids during the afternoon, with a band and dancing for adults in the evening. This year we are pleased to announce that the event is kindly being sponsored by local property consultants Harding Green. Partner Jack Graham Lindsey has lived on the garden since he was a child and says he is delighted to be able to contribute to the life of community in this way.



## CHANGES AT THE TOP



The Board has a new Chairman -- or Chairperson if you will -- Sandy David, who takes over from Peter Cross. Sandy, who will be well-known to all who use the garden & in particular to fellow dog-lovers, has been the driving

force behind the maintenance of the garden & her energy & commitment have helped make it the glorious space it is today. She first joined the Board through her involvement with the 30-year Garden Master Plan agreed with Westminster Council in 2016.

Peter Cross did admirable work as Chairman, offering a not-always-to-found combination of enthusiasm & diplomacy. Luckily for us he has agreed to remain on the Board for the time being, helping with Garden matters & Events. Peter says: "It's been an honour and a privilege to serve as your Chair for the past seven years. I'm pleased to report that things have been relatively calm in that time, with our wonderful garden coming into its own in recent years as a tranquil refuge from the pandemic. A heartfelt *Thank You* to Directors past and present and the best of luck to Sandy who has now taken the reins. Those of you who know her passion for the garden will be reassured that things are in safe hands"

Emily Midwood (planning) has now resigned from the Board & we would like to thank her for her conscientiousness & hard work dealing with what can sometimes be a bit of a hot potato. Her role has been taken over by Susanne Labbett.

## PLANNING DO'S & DON'T'S

As residents will know the neighbourhood around Formosa is fantastic place to live but there are a few ground rules governing proposed alterations to properties & gardens to ensure it stays that way. These haven't always been easy to navigate on the Formosa website but they've now been up-dated by our Chairman & given a separate section to make them more accessible – check them out at <https://www.formosagarden.co.uk/>.

## SOUND...LIGHTS...ACTION!



On a cheerless day back in February a sharp-eyed passer-by might have spotted some changes to the renowned Warrington pub at the top of Sutherland Avenue. It appeared to have a new name – The Hungry Manchester – not to mention a dusting of snow around the outside lamps of the kind not seen in the capital for several years. It turned out that not for the first time there was filming going on there, for an American-made rom-com entitled "Christmas in London". But my query to a member of the crew as to whether Bradley Cooper was in it -- & therefore worth my while to camp outside – was met with a snort of derision & a dismissive "Nah – it's going straight to DVD!"

## HAVE YOUR SAY AT THE AGM

The General Meeting of Formosa Amenity Limited will take place at St Saviour's Church on Warrington Crescent on **Tuesday 5th July** from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm. As well as financial & budgetary matters there will be an update on work currently going on in the Garden. Other topics will include up-coming social events & Formosa's planning guidelines, particularly as they relate to property alterations.

## SEASONAL HAIR-CUT



The bi-annual removal of the epicormic shoots on the plane trees at the perimeter of the garden took place in February. It was all part of a long-established maintenance cycle which aims to control the growth of the trees to

minimise the risk of subsidence. The tree surgeons also removed some dead branches from the oak in the middle of the garden as well as checking the connections on the festive lights which malfunctioned over Xmas & the New Year during heavy rain. They have now been sealed against water seepage and restored to full working order.

## FLOODING: THE FIGHT GOES ON



In February residents got their first chance to quiz the newly appointed Chair of the independent review into last summer's floods, Mike Woolgar. Yet again the biggest criticism was over the perceived lack of communication from Thames Water. Mike urged anyone who'd been affected by the flooding to fill in the Thames Water questionnaire at <https://www.thameswater.co.uk> if they have not already done so.

Among the questions the review would be asking, he said, was whether the pumping stations & Maida Vale tanks had operated as they should have done & why the Thames Barrier had not been deployed. Several

people at the meeting also expressed concern that gullies appeared not to have been functioning properly in the run-up to the flooding which could have contributed to its impact. Mike said damaged drains or gullies should be reported to Westminster Council on <https://report.westminster.gov.uk>.

There was also some discussion of whether overflow storage could be increased locally: according to initial estimates 2.6 million cubic metres of water fell on the area on July 12th whereas the current storage in the existing sewers is estimated at around 450,000 cubic metres.

The review hopes to report by the middle of this year & anyone with information to contribute to it should email: [londonfloodreview@consultation-online.co.uk](mailto:londonfloodreview@consultation-online.co.uk).

## LITTLE VENICE'S MOST PHOTOGRAPHED.....

Recognise this? It's the cherry tree in the garden of the big house at the corner of Clifton Gardens & Castellain Road, right next to the bus stop. Every



Spring it blossoms spectacularly, to the clear delight of the many tourists & possibly even residents who stop to record it on their camera phones.

## A FORMOSA FOODIE WRITES

Darcie & May Green

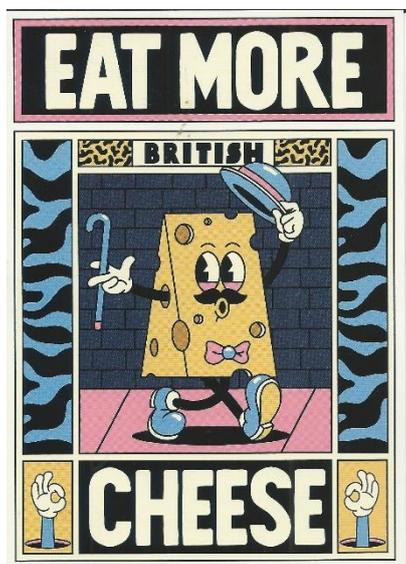
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This Aussie-themed duo of barges on the Paddington Basin offers both drinking and dining opportunities. The bar hasn't reopened since Covid but the restaurant is in full swing. I had two starters: the halloumi fries garnished with pomegranate and served with a lemon and mint yoghurt, complemented by the spiced aubergine - shaped by a mould and served with muhamarra (peppers, walnut, chilli), tamarind and tomato. Delicious - and well complemented by a glass of merlot.

Emboldened I came back with friends - and between us we had all the starters which got five stars from the group. For mains we had the slow roasted lamb shoulder and 45-day aged rib-eye. Sounded great on the page but failed to live up to their press, so we cut our losses and moved on to dessert. We all had the Tiramisui Lamington which was nothing like Italian tiramisu and inedible. Our plates went back to the kitchen untouched! Moving on ...

The Cheese Barge

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On the same stretch of water but the other side of the Bishops Bridge Road, this restaurant specialises in British Cheese. Open for lunch, dinner and "afternoon cheese" from Tues. to Sun. (times vary, so check their website) for

me this is more a lunch venue or chat and snack.

On separate occasions I had the Three Cheese and Winter Vegetable pasty with Onion Compote and tried the Green's Fior di Latte Mozzarella, Smoked Bacon & Chilli Honey toasted sandwich. Both delicious and satisfyingly greasy although the pasty had been a little vigorously over-heated. As they are advertising for a chef I will let them off this time. Dessert included a rice pudding with mascarpone, pistachios and pears poached in red wine - served for two but they do take home containers if your companion will not indulge.

On balance, both worth supporting. Start and Darcie & May Green and have a selection of starters, then move on to the Cheese Barge for cheese and desserts and you can't go wrong.

### 2022 Events for your diary ..

- *Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup>, Wine Tasting*
- *Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup>, London Gardens Weekend*
- *Friday July 1<sup>st</sup>, Shakespeare in the Gardens – The Tempest*
  - *Tuesday July 5<sup>th</sup>, Formosa AGM*
  - *Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup>, Summer Party*
- *Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup>, Bonfire and Fireworks party*

*Would you like to contribute a restaurant review or anything else you think might be of interest to other residents? The Summer Newsletter will appear towards the end of May so material needs to reach me by May 2nd please at [vivvy.robins@gmail.com](mailto:vivvy.robins@gmail.com). And don't forget that to receive the Newsletter by email you need to sign up with our agents, Westbourne Management, at [info@WB19.co.uk](mailto:info@WB19.co.uk).*