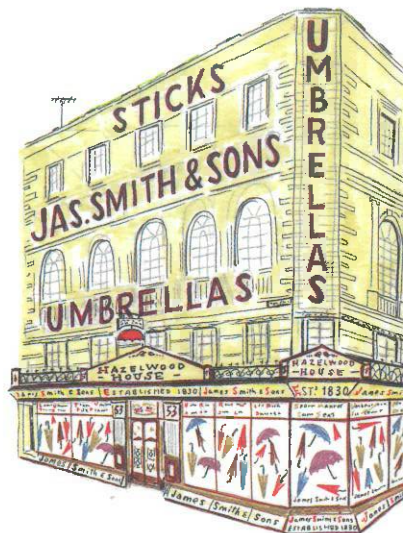
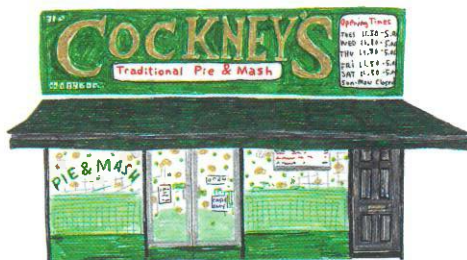


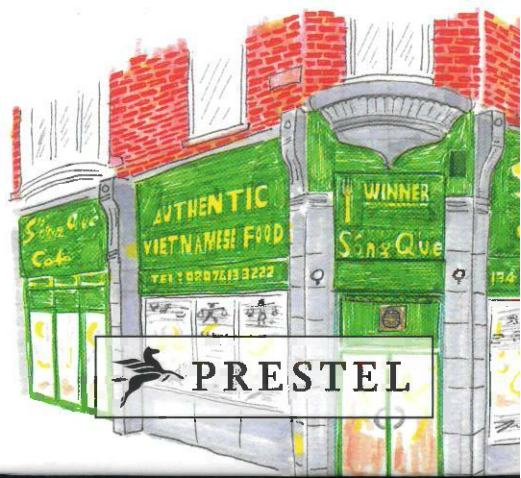
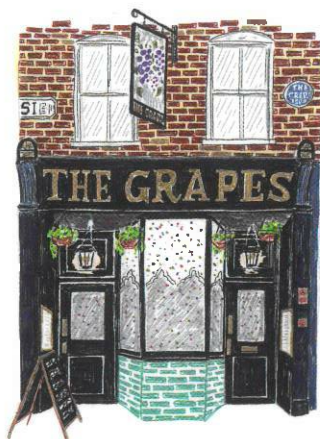
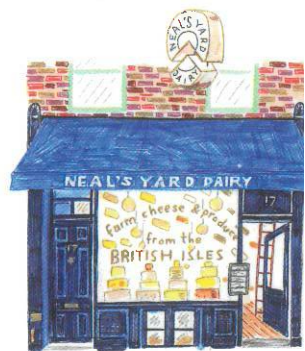
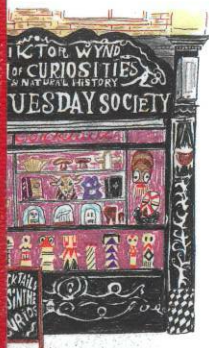


London Shopfronts

JOEL HOLLAND

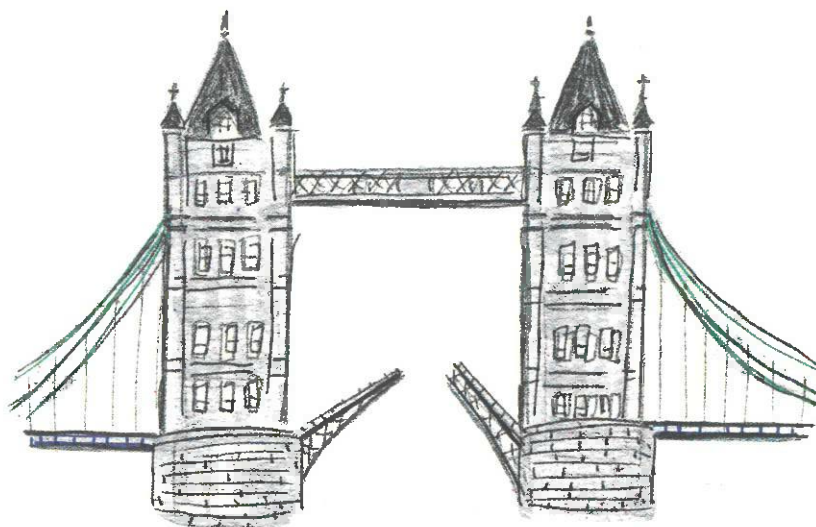
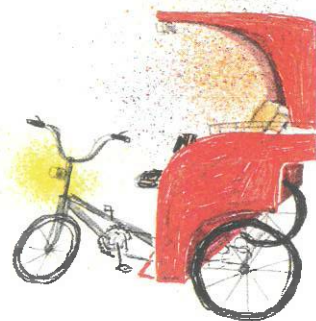
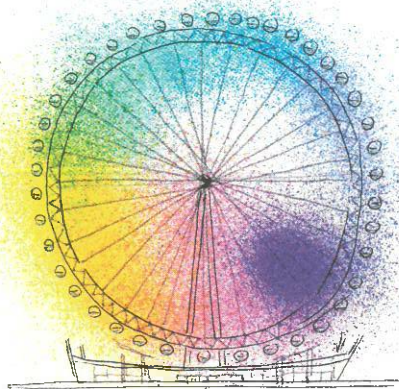
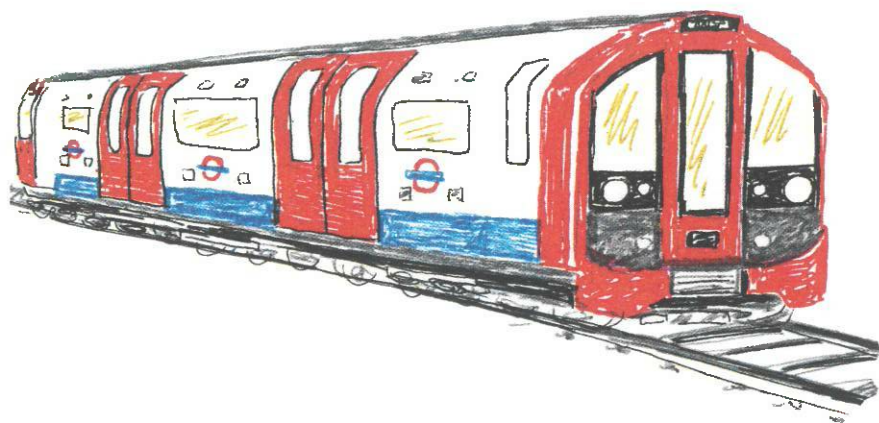
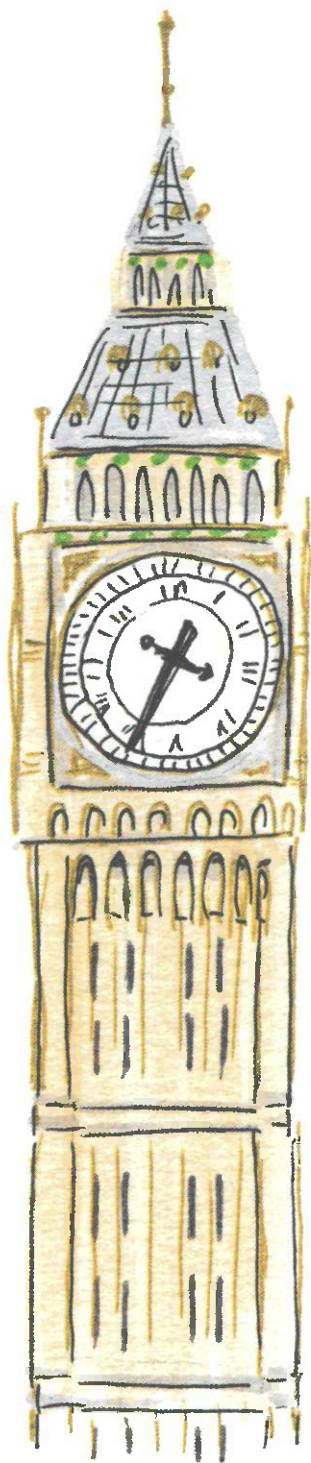
words by ROSIE HEWITSON

foreword by CHEF ASMA KHAN
of Darjeeling Express



PRESTEL

London Shopfronts





London Shopfronts

Illustrations of the
City's Best-Loved Spots

JOEL HOLLAND

words by

ROSIE HEWITSON

foreword by

CHEF ASMA KHAN

of Darjeeling Express

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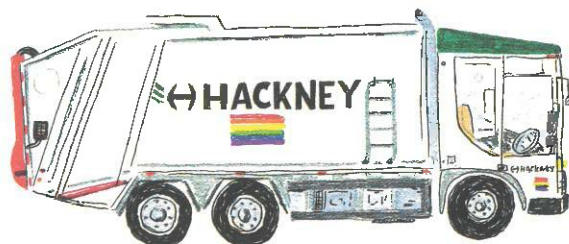
Contents

Foreword	7	Skoob Books	25	Fortnum & Mason	42	The World's End	64
Introduction	8	Neal's Yard Dairy	26	The French House	43	Feng Shang Princess	65
		Monmouth Coffee Company	27	Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club	45	New Beacon Books	67
CENTRAL	10	Admiral Duncan	28	Darjeeling Express	46	Electric Ballroom	68
100 Club	12	magCulture	29	Lina Stores	47	Little Mercies	68
The Fryer's Delight	13	Algerian Coffee Stores	30	St John	48	Goods Grocery	68
Daunt Books	14	Bob Bob Ricard	32	Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese	49	Crouch End Picturehouse	68
Gieves & Hawkes	15	Lazy Oaf	32	Hatchards	51	Primrose Hill Books	69
Bar Italia	17	Fox & Anchor	32	Foyles Charing Cross	52	Tbilisi	69
The Barbican Fruiterers & Greengrocers	18	Lock & Co. Hatters	32	Housmans	52	Sylvanian Families	69
fabric	18	Phonica	33	Dover Street Market	52	TopCuts	69
D.R. Harris & Co.	18	New Evaristo Club	33			Panadera	70
International Magic	18	Regency Cafe	33			Top Cuvée	71
G-A-Y	19	Wong Kei	33			The Spaniards Inn	72
sketch	19	Attendant Coffee Roasters	34			TFC Supermarkets	73
Noble Rot	19	Gay's The Word	35			Rowans Tenpin Bowl	75
The Old Curiosity Shop	19	James Smith & Sons Umbrellas	37			Flashback Records	76
BAO Soho	20	Coco de Mer	38			Intermission Coffee	76
The Comedy Store	21	London Review Bookshop	38			Everyman Muswell Hill	76
Liberty of London	22	Barbican News	38			The Southampton Arms	76
Bodega Rita's	24	Frequency	38			Paul A. Young Fine Chocolates	77
David Penton & Son	24	Ong Ong Buns	39			The Pineapple	77
Berry Bros. & Rudd	24	Regent Sounds	39			The Screen on the Green	77
Choosing Keeping	24	Paul Rothe & Son	39			Upper Street Hardware	77
Hamleys	25	Swift	39			Xi'an Impression	79
Japan Centre	25	Bradley's Spanish Bar	40				
Isco	25	Prince Charles Cinema	41				



I. Camisa & Son	52	EAST	80
Piggys	53	Beyond Retro	82
J. Sheekey	53	Tayyabs	83
Look mum no hands!	53	Goodhood	84
Truefit & Hill	53	Labour and Wait	85
		E. Pellicci	87
		Alan's Vietnamese Supermarket	88
		Bleach	88

NORTH	54
The Faltering Fullback	56
Cold Steel	57
Jazz Cafe	58
Max's Sandwich Shop	59
Cyberdog	61
Sambal Shio	62
Koko	63



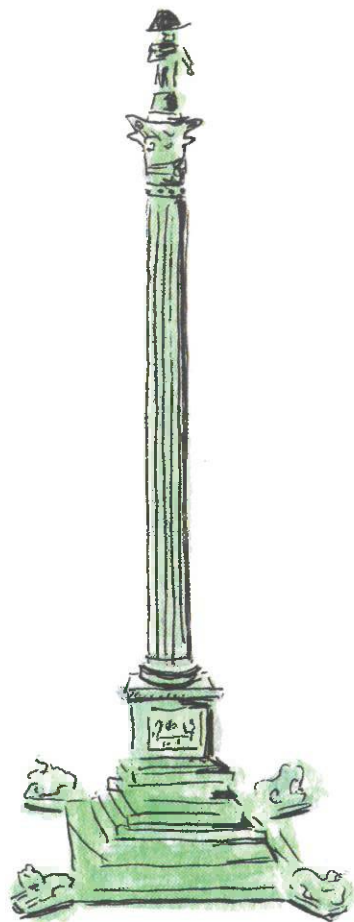
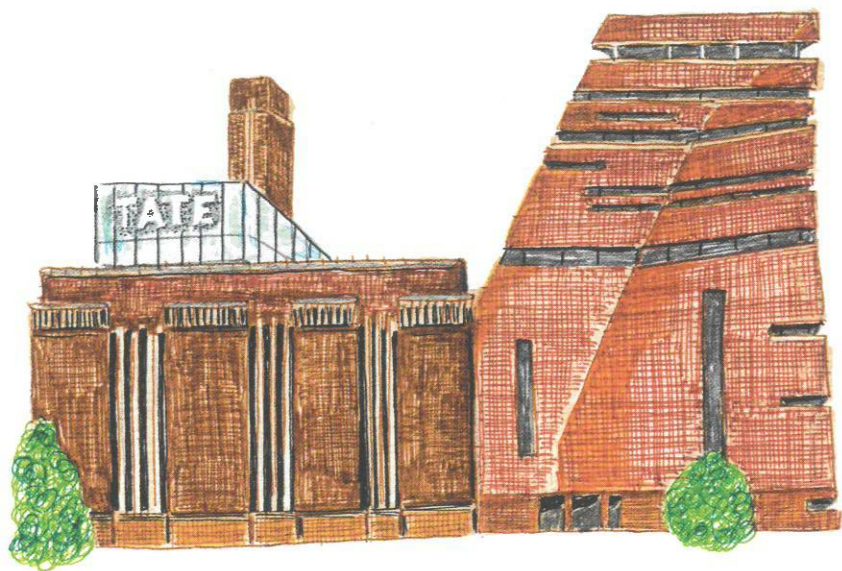
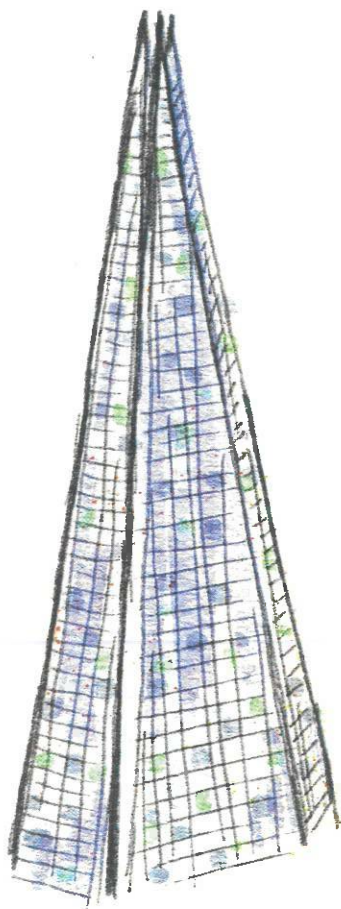
Artwords Bookshop	88
Jolene	88
Mediterranean Fish Shop	89
The Prospect of Whitby	89
Rasa N16	89
Voodoo Ray's	89
Bethnal Green Working Men's Club	90
The Viktor Wynd Museum of Curiosities, Fine Art & Natural History	91
Open Barbers	93
Be-Smart Dry Cleaners	94
Hoxton Street Monster Supplies	94
Angela Flanders	94
Donlon Books	94
Lahore One	95
Rough Trade East	95
P. Franco	95
Temple of Hackney	95
Singburi	96
The Grapes	97
Beigel Bake	99
Dom's Subs	100
Old Habits	100
Ararat Bread	100
Libreria	100
Passione Vino	101
The Ten Bells	101
Taste of India	101
The Yuppies Barbers	101
Cafe OTO	102
Dalston Superstore	103
Coupette	104
Genesis Cinema	105
Mangal II	107
Bangla Sweets	108
L. Manze	108
Dusty Knuckle	108



Papo's Bagels	108	Hootananny	132
Prick	109	Chishuru	133
Sutton and Sons	109	The Ritzy	134
Ridley Road Market Bar	109	Soul Brother Records	135
Umut 2000	109	Padella	136
SliderCuts Studios	110	Cummin' Up	137
Sông Quê Café	111	The Rivoli Ballroom	139
Rio Cinema	113	Original Tasty Jerk	140
		Peckhamplex	141
SOUTH	114	Puppet Planet	142
Silk Road	116	Royal Vauxhall Tavern	143
O2 Academy Brixton	117	The Ivy House	144
Bramble & Moss	118	805 Restaurant	146
Goddards at Greenwich	119	Camberwell Superstores	146
Khan's Bargains	120	B & B Glaziers	146
Rat Records	122	Fish, Wings & Tings	146
Kanpai	123	Funkidory	147
The Ginger Pig	124	Taste of Caribbean	147
Shakespeare's Globe	125	Kiss The Hippo	147
Morley's Sydenham	126	Terry's Cafe	147
Wilson's Cycles	128	Skehans FreeHouse	148
Four Quarters	128	Persepolis	149
40 Maltby Street	128	Zeret Kitchen	150
Tapas Brindisa	128	HD Cutz	151
Giggling Sausage Café	129		
Round Table Books	129	WEST	152
Michael's Shoe Repairs	129	Harrods	154
Wang Jia Supermarket	129	Harvey Nichols	155
Cruson	130	Four Seasons	156
Battersea Arts Centre	131	The Churchill Arms	157

Café Diana	159
Luigi's Delicatessen	160
Honest Jon's	161
My Old Dutch	162
Pak's Cosmetics	163
People's Sound Records	164
Asher's Africana	166
Foubert's	166
Al Farawlah Supermarket	166
Cockney's Pie and Mash	166
Harper & Tom's Flowers	167
Lisboa Patisserie	167
John Sandoe Books	167
Maharaja	167
Ochi	168
Hammersmith Apollo	169
Ottolenghi	170
Queens Skate Dine Bowl	171
Index	172
Biographies	174
Acknowledgements	175





Foreword

The phrase '*une nation de boutiquiers*' ('a nation of shopkeepers'), often inaccurately attributed to Napoleon, was used by the French in the eighteenth century to dismiss the enterprising Britons!

The transformation of Britain from a naval and commercial force to an industrial power beginning in the 1790s fuelled the growth of small businesses and shops in the capital. Fast-forward a couple of centuries and more, and present-day London is still the city of shopkeepers and fascinating shopfronts.

I feel really honoured to write the Foreword for this book, which celebrates the diversity and creativity of what is undoubtedly the greatest city in the world. From the grandeur of Fortnum & Mason to my favourite local Italian deli, Luigi's on Fulham Road, the book includes shopfronts of the great and the good, and also iconic places like Beigel Bake – the legendary bagel shop in Brick Lane which is frequented by Londoners out late at night as well as taxi drivers.

I am incredibly humbled and grateful that our restaurant Darjeeling Express is also featured. Like many of the shopfronts included in this book, we are an immigrant business celebrating the food of our homeland. Darjeeling Express pays homage to

our heritage and nostalgia, much like the vintage steam train that inspired its name. Our all-female kitchen of home cooks exemplifies the feminine energy that is inherent in South Asian cuisine. It is always women who cook at home, but it is nearly always men who cook our food in restaurants. We began our journey in 2012 with supper clubs hosted in my home, and the path to our new Soho location has been full of twists and turns!

I absolutely adore the layering in Joel Holland's illustrations featured in *London Shopfronts*. The intricate details within each drawing perfectly capture the essence of those who own, work and shop in the stores. I am left with an insatiable desire to walk through each door and experience all that they have to offer.

This book beautifully captures the essence of one of my favourite quotes about the city: 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life' (Samuel Johnson). Thank you, Joel Holland, for celebrating all that is vibrant and beautiful in London.

Asma Khan is a chef, restaurateur and cookbook author. She runs the acclaimed Indian restaurant Darjeeling Express and was profiled on the sixth season of Netflix's documentary series Chef's Table.

Introduction

The first time I visited London, from my home in New York City, was in 2006; I was there to prep for an exhibition of my drawings in Clerkenwell. I stayed at the posh Zetter Hotel for a few days and walked for miles (and kilometers) by myself, and with my friends Dan and Helen, checking out the city. I remember going to The Fryer's Delight, International Magic, the Columbia Road Flower Market, The Old Curiosity Shop, walking through Holland Park, and more. I loved it all: the tube rides, going to Lahore One on Commercial Road, hearing the cab drivers swear up a storm. It was so much fun seeing the parks, the signage, the food, the shoes, the energy of the history, and the people from all around the world.

One night after a drink at Bar Italia and a set at Ronnie Scott's, I ended up downstairs at Trisha's bar, aka the New Evaristo Club. Amy Winehouse's album *Back to Black* was playing. The whole album. On repeat. I felt like I was playing catch-up with the world that night, on that trip. And I loved it. London felt like this immense list of places to see and drink and dance and soak up culture.

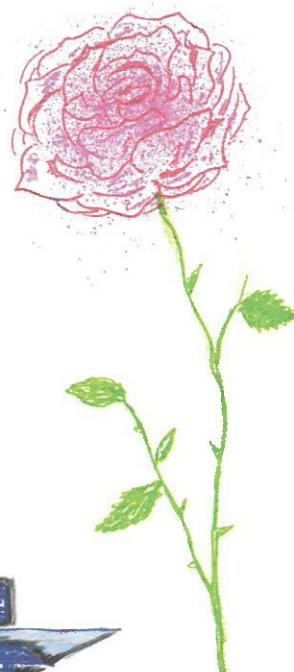
I've been back several times since, and it's practically a different town during every visit. There are new neighborhoods to explore and old ones to check in on. There's so much on offer—like a café in an old men's room below ground, and another one that roasts their own coffee plus serves delicious wines (and also has five of my paintings on the wall!).

From world-class cheese emporia to pubs, and pie and mash shops to specialty record stores, London's shops are run by people hailing from all over the globe who work so hard every day, offering up their piece of an amazing puzzle.

My previous book, *NYC Storefronts*, came to be because I was missing all the places I couldn't visit during Covid lockdown. So I decided to draw my favorite stores, creating a love letter to walking around Manhattan. After it was published, I wanted to branch out and draw more stores in other cities that have inspired me, and the Big Smoke felt like the obvious answer. *London Shopfronts* is *NYC Storefronts*' sibling, made with the same energy but in an English accent (and is of course a little different, as it's depicting an infinite, multicultural town full of wonder). I couldn't travel there while compiling the book due to the pandemic, but luckily, journalist Rosie Hewitson and some of my friends helped me select places to include, in addition to all of my own favorites. It was so much fun "visiting" the city from afar by drawing these spots.

This book is a snapshot of London right now, showcasing cool restaurants, bars, stationers, cinemas, and so on. But the city's storied history is represented too, via illustrations of stately bookshops, umbrella stores, tailors, hatters, and more. The shops are divided by area, with separate maps for central, north, east, south, and west London. There are so many things to see—this is just a start!

Joel Holland



Note to the Reader



London is known for many things – among them, constant change. Care has been taken to provide current addresses for the shopfronts in this book, but some may have since moved or closed. Certain illustrations depict places that have permanently closed. In these cases, the old address is provided, and the text notes that the business has shuttered. Other shops changed locations after the illustration was made, during the process of creating this book. For these, the old shopfront is depicted, but the new address is provided to direct readers to the current location (to help keep it open there).



Central

- 1 100 Club (p. 12)
- 2 Admiral Duncan (p. 28)
- 3 Algerian Coffee Stores (p. 30)
- 4 Attendant Coffee Roasters (p. 34)
- 5 BAO Soho (p. 20)
- 6 Bar Italia (p. 17)
- 7 The Barbican Fruiterers & Greengrocers (p. 18)
- 8 Barbican News (p. 38)
- 9 Berry Bros. & Rudd (p. 24)
- 10 Bob Bob Ricard (p. 32)
- 11 Bodega Rita's (p. 24)
- 12 Bradley's Spanish Bar (p. 40)
- 13 Choosing Keeping (p. 24)
- 14 Coco de Mer (p. 38)
- 15 The Comedy Store (p. 21)
- 16 D.R. Harris & Co. (p. 18)
- 17 Darjeeling Express (p. 46)
- 18 Daunt Books (p. 14)
- 19 David Penton & Son (p. 24)
- 20 Dover Street Market (p. 52)
- 21 fabric (p. 18)
- 22 Fortnum & Mason (p. 42)
- 23 Fox & Anchor (p. 32)
- 24 Foyles Charing Cross (p. 52)
- 25 The French House (p. 43)
- 26 Frequency (p. 38)
- 27 The Fryer's Delight (p. 13)
- 28 G-A-Y (p. 19)
- 29 Gay's The Word (p. 35)
- 30 Gieves & Hawkes (p. 15)
- 31 Hamleys (p. 25)
- 32 Hatchards (p. 51)
- 33 Housmans (p. 52)
- 34 I. Camisa & Son (p. 52)
- 35 Ioco (p. 25)
- 36 International Magic (p. 18)
- 37 J. Sheekey (p. 53)
- 38 James Smith & Sons Umbrellas (p. 37)
- 39 Japan Centre (p. 25)
- 40 Lazy Oaf (p. 32)
- 41 Liberty of London (p. 22)
- 42 Lina Stores (p. 47)
- 43 Lock & Co. Hatters (p. 32)
- 44 London Review Bookshop (p. 38)
- 45 Look mum no hands! (p. 53)
- 46 magCulture (p. 29)
- 47 Monmouth Coffee Company (p. 27)
- 48 Neal's Yard Dairy (p. 26)
- 49 New Evaristo Club (p. 33)
- 50 Noble Rot (p. 19)
- 51 The Old Curiosity Shop (p. 19)
- 52 Ong Ong Buns (p. 39)
- 53 Paul Rothe & Son (p. 39)
- 54 Phonica (p. 33)
- 55 Piggys (p. 53)
- 56 Prince Charles Cinema (p. 41)
- 57 Regency Cafe (p. 33)
- 58 Regent Sounds (p. 39)
- 59 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club (p. 45)
- 60 sketch (p. 19)
- 61 Skoob Books (p. 25)
- 62 St John (p. 48)
- 63 Swift (p. 39)
- 64 Truefitt & Hill (p. 53)
- 65 Wong Kei (p. 33)
- 66 Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese (p. 49)





KING'S CROSS
ST PANCRAS



33

EUSTON



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29

61

26

ROSEBERY AVE

46

CLERKENWELL

45

FITZROVIA

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35

50

THEOBALDS RD

36

27



RUSSELL
SQUARE

44

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12

38

SOHO

51

COVENT
GARDEN



66

FARRINGTON



62

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23

21

BOND
ST



MAYFAIR

55

ST JAMES'S

22

16

32

43

9

64

Green
Park

WESTMINSTER

TEMPLE



BLACKFRIARS
BRIDGE

WATERLOO
BRIDGE

RIVER
THAMES

57

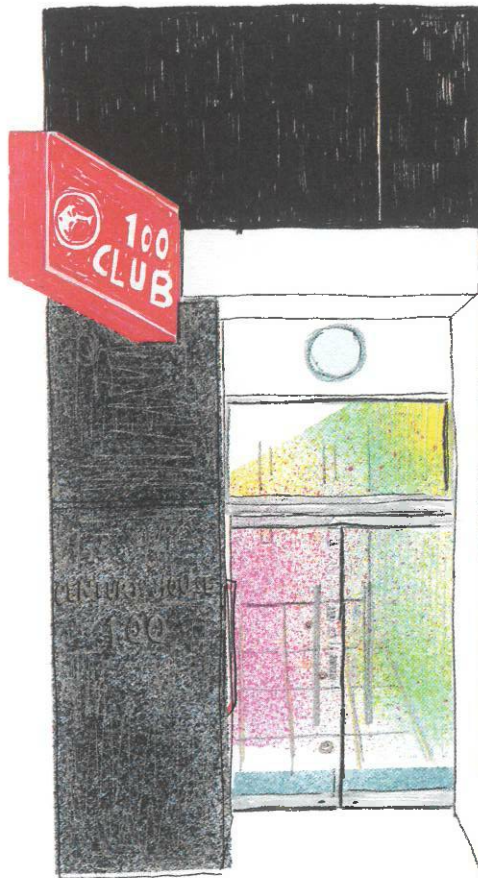


100 Oxford St

W1D 1LL

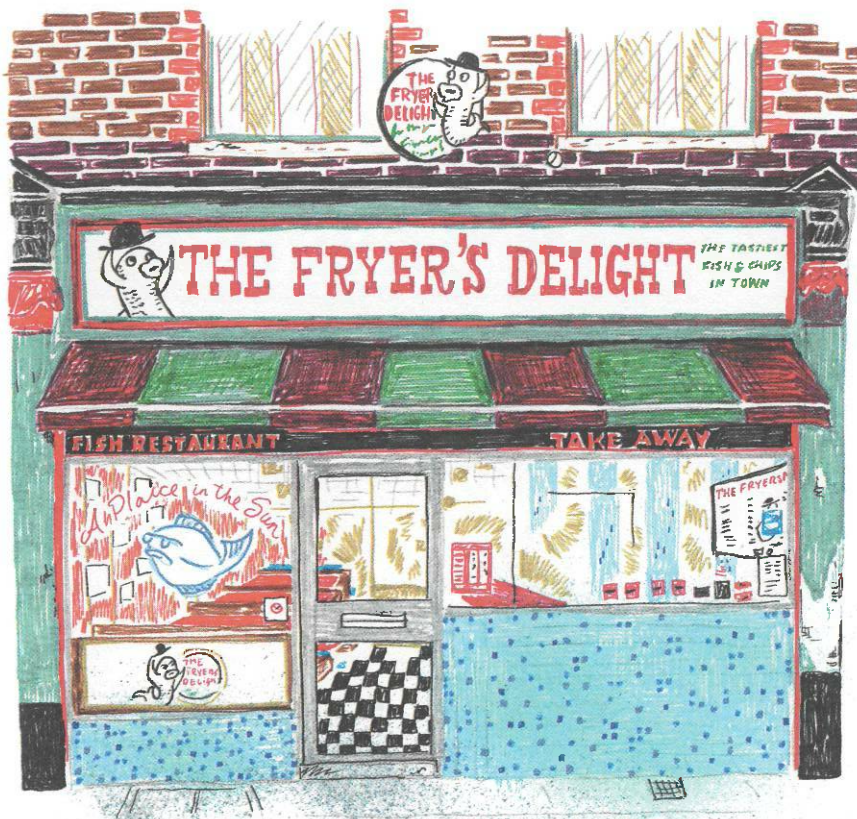
100 Club

Founded in 1942 and operating under its current name since 1964, this diminutive basement club tucked away underneath the hustle and bustle of Oxford Street is one of central London's most celebrated gig spots. Over the course of its history, the venue has been visited by the likes of blues legend Muddy Waters, rock and roll royalty the Rolling Stones, punk rockers the Clash and the Sex Pistols, and Britpop rivals Blur and Oasis. More recently the 100 Club has built a reputation for hosting secret shows, with everyone from Metallica and Queens of the Stone Age to the Pauls (McCartney and Weller) having graced its stage in front of tiny, intimate audiences.



The Fryer's Delight

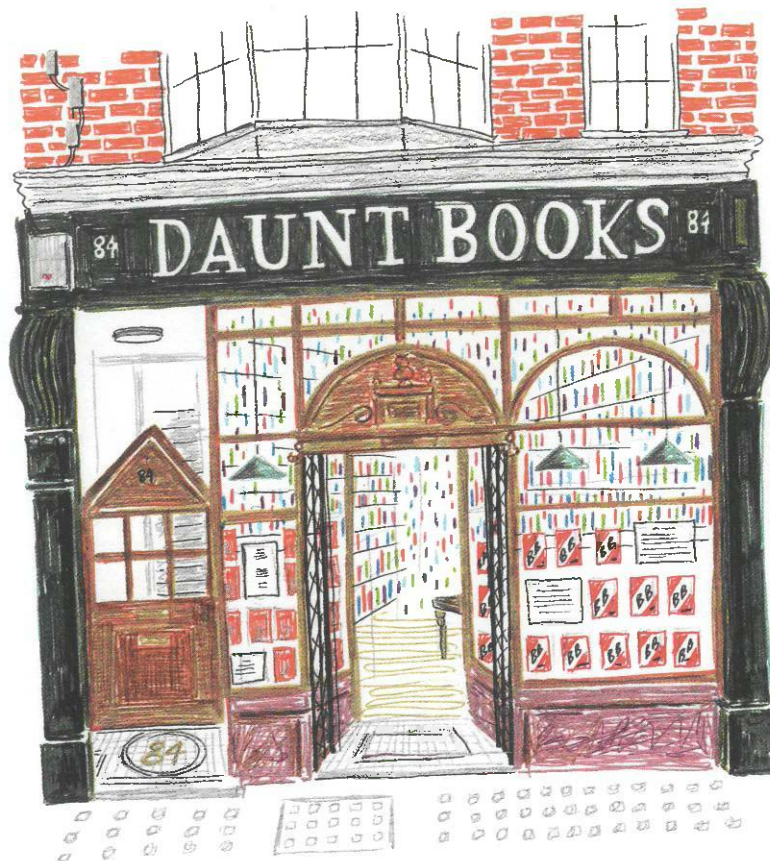
This treasured old-school chippy opened in Holborn in 1968, and it's safe to say that it hasn't changed an awful lot since then. From the Formica-topped tables and black-and-white floor tiles right down to the vintage logo of a cod sporting a rather fetching bowler hat, the shop retains plenty of original features. The menu, too, is pretty retro, offering up traditional fish-and-chip-shop fare like cod's roe, scampi and 'rock' and chips, with all the frying done in beef dripping. While the northern Italian Ferdenzi family who originally ran the Fryer's Delight may have sold it on in the 1990s, it remains a family-run affair, headed up by the Ferdenzis' former employee João Magalhães and his brother-in-law Osvaldo Bartolo (or Joe and Ozzy, as they're known to regulars).



83-84 Marylebone High St
W1U 4QW

Daunt Books

With its long oak galleries, stained glass windows and towering shelves of inviting tomes, this Marylebone shop has become a place of pilgrimage for bibliophiles the world over, not to mention hordes of Instagrammers. The grand old Edwardian building is said to be the first purpose-built bookshop in the world, having opened in 1912 as an antiquarian bookshop called Frances Edwards. Since 1990, it has housed the original site of James Daunt's small chain of London bookshops, which have garnered a particularly good reputation for their excellently curated travel sections. Rows and rows of guide books, maps, travelogues and foreign-language books can be found on its expansive shelves, which the friendly and knowledgeable team of staff are only too pleased to help you navigate.



1 Savile Row

W1S 3JR

Gieves & Hawkes

Probably the best known of Savile Row's numerous menswear brands, Gieves & Hawkes was founded in 1974 during a merger between famous tailors Gieves, a supplier of British navy uniforms founded in 1785, and Hawkes, an outfitter to the British Army established in 1771. Having celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2021, the company has outfitted dozens of royal households across the globe through the years, and held royal warrants from both the late Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh, as well as holding one from King Charles III. Historically owned by the Dukes of Devonshire, the tailor's magnificent flagship store on the corner of Savile Row was purchased from the Royal Geographical Society in 1912.





22 Frith St
W1D 4RF

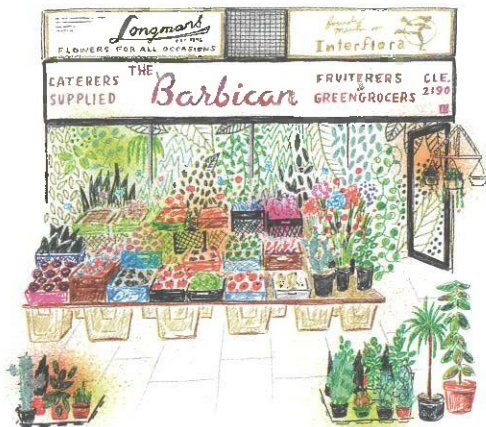
Bar Italia

Forget the gay bars, disregard the jazz clubs and ignore the Chinese restaurants; no establishment is more iconically Soho than this round-the-clock coffee bar on bustling Frith Street.

Having emigrated from their hometown of Piacenza in the 1920s, Italian expats Lou and Caterina Polledri opened one of London's first proper coffee shops in 1949 with a £50 loan from an ice delivery man they knew.

Replete with Italian flags, football memorabilia, terrazzo flooring, a Vespa motorbike and a huge picture of the legendary boxer Rocky Marciano, the bar served up espressos made using an Italian Gaggia coffee machine, using a closely guarded signature blend sourced from neighbouring coffee importer Andy Angelucci, whose family business still supplies the café to this day.

Immediately a beloved meeting spot for the many Italian immigrants who lived or worked in the neighbourhood – so much so that their families would get in touch with the bar to share important news from back home – it has since become a favourite of Soho's bohemian crowds. Sade, as well as Neneh Cherry and the rest of the 'Buffalo crew', hung out here in the 1980s, Britpop legends Pulp dedicated a song on their hit album *Different Class* to the place, and long-time regular Adam Ant performed at its 65th birthday party in 2014.



26 Goswell Rd
EC1M 7AA

The Barbican Fruiterers & Greengrocers

Run by locally adored third-generation greengrocer John Horwood until his retirement in 2018, this quaint little fruit and veg shop is famed for its vintage signage, which dates back to when it first opened in the 1960s.



77A Charterhouse St
EC1M 6HJ

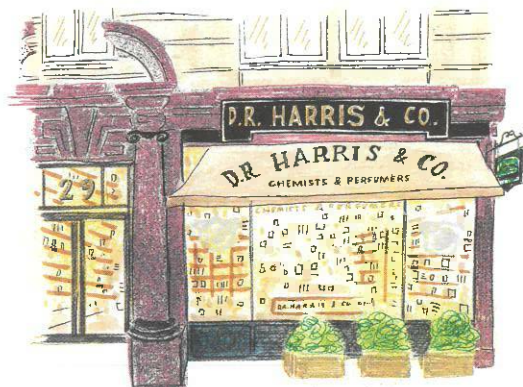
fabric

Farringdon's vast subterranean superclub opened in a former meat storage warehouse near Smithfield Market in 1999 and has established itself as a world-renowned nightlife destination – despite facing potential closure on several occasions in recent years.

29 St James's St
SW1A 1HD

D.R. Harris & Co.

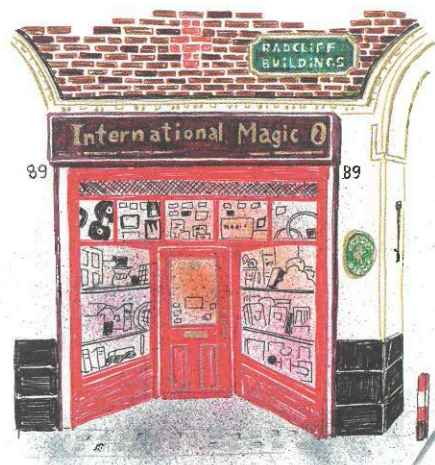
This charming St James's shop is London's oldest surviving pharmacy. Exclusively stocking its own range of over 400 traditional skincare and grooming products, it holds a Royal Warrant from King Charles III.

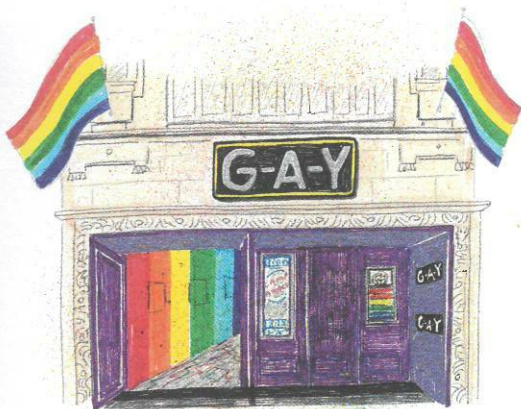


89 Clerkenwell Rd
EC1R 5BX

International Magic

Professional magicians and amateur enthusiasts alike can find plenty of entertaining tricks and trinkets at this Clerkenwell store. Opened by East End magician Ron MacMillan in 1961, it's now run by his son Martin.

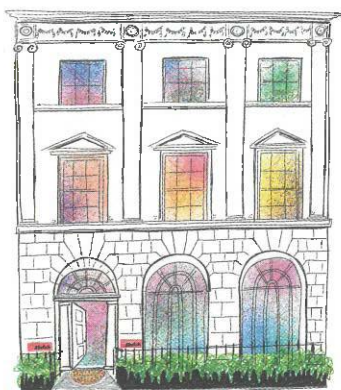




30 Old Compton St
W1D 4UR

G-A-Y

Promoter Jeremy Joseph opened this Soho gay bar in 2002 after founding his club night of the same name at the since-closed London Astoria 10 years earlier. G-A-Y has since become one of the most recognizable queer nightlife brands on the continent.



9 Conduit St
W1S 2XG

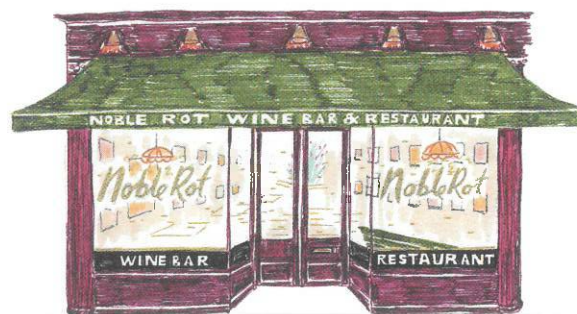
sketch

With a constantly transforming dining room that puts Wes Anderson to shame and egg-shaped toilets reminiscent of 1960s sci-fi movies, this three-Michelin-starred Mayfair bar and restaurant is one of central London's most Instagrammed locations.

51 Lamb's Conduit St
WC1N 3NB

Noble Rot

Starting life in 2013 as an instantly popular magazine about all things wine-related, this Bloomsbury wine bar – along with its Soho and Mayfair sister sites – is one of the city's finest. Eater London described its house white, Chin Chin, as 'the UK's first viral wine'.



13-14 Portsmouth St
WC2A 2ES

The Old Curiosity Shop

Built in 1567, this tiny Holborn landmark is thought to be London's oldest shop. Though it is often claimed as the inspiration for Charles Dickens's 1840 novel, the shop's signage was probably painted decades later by a shrewd businessman.



53 Lexington St
W1F 9AS

BAO Soho

Founded by chef Erchen Chang, her husband Shing Tat Chung and his sister Wai Ting, Bao's small empire of ultra-stylish Taiwanese restaurants began in 2012 as a stall at street food market KERB, before moving to a semi-permanent spot in Hackney's Netil Market, where its soy-braised pork buns amassed a cult following. Opened in 2015, this cosy little 30-cover restaurant in the heart of Soho was the trio's first bricks-and-mortar location and can be credited with popularizing Taiwanese food in the UK. Equally refined yet refreshingly individual sibling restaurants have since opened in Fitzrovia, King's Cross, Borough and Shoreditch, while BAO's mascot – a lonely businessman forlornly stuffing his face with a pork bun – has become a cult figure on the UK food scene.

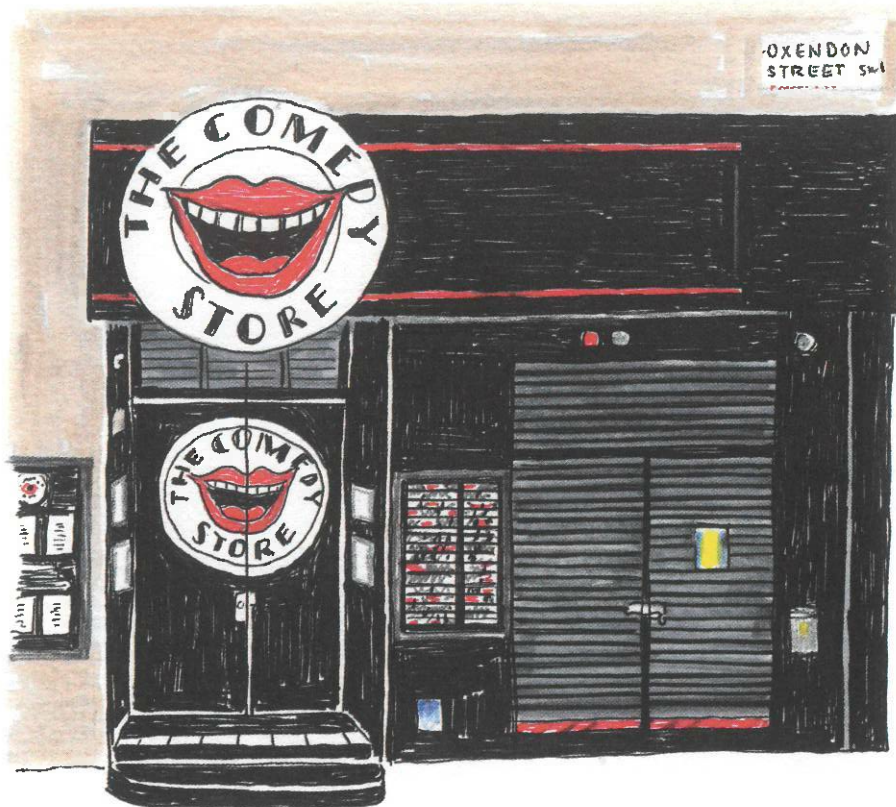


1a Oxendon St

SW1Y 4EE

The Comedy Store

Insurance salesman Peter Rosenberg and nightclub owner Don Ward founded this stand-up venue in 1979, having been inspired by trips to the US, where they had visited some of the exciting new comedy clubs popping up in New York and LA. Starting out as a weekly club night at Don's Soho strip club, by 1982 The Comedy Store had evolved into a full-time venue based at 28 Leicester Square, where it was located for a decade before expanding into this 400-capacity basement space just round the corner. Often touted as the birthplace of alternative comedy, the club was compered by influential Scouse comic Alexei Sayle for its first three years of existence. Countless famous faces have graced its stage, including Hollywood stars like Mike Myers and Robin Williams.



Regent St
W1B 5AH

Liberty of London

Tourists wandering around the retail paradise of central London's Carnaby Street can't help but be intrigued by this resplendent old building, whether or not they're aware of what treasures lie within.

The Grade II-listed flagship of luxury department store Liberty might look like a classic Tudor mansion house, but it was in fact constructed in 1924 in the Tudor revival style, using timbers from two historic battleships as – according to its website – ‘a one-of-a-kind monument to the brand's spirit of eccentricity, originality and craftsmanship’.

Referred to by Oscar Wilde as ‘the chosen resort of the artistic shopper’, Liberty takes its name from merchant Arthur Lasenby Liberty, who founded the business in 1875 as an exotic emporium selling fabrics, ornaments and miscellaneous trinkets from the Far East to the area's affluent dandies during a time when Orientalism was hugely fashionable within Victorian society.

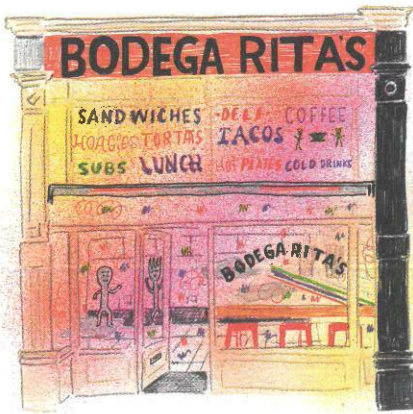
Now containing departments dedicated to luxury fashion, jewellery, beauty, homeware and children's items, the store is best known for Liberty Fabrics, its signature range of hand-painted prints, of which 45,000 have been commissioned since the 1890s. The brand has a long tradition of collaborating with major artists and designers on prints. Arts and Crafts movement founder William Morris and Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti worked on designs for Liberty Fabrics in the 19th century, while later collaborators include Yves Saint Laurent, Dame Vivienne Westwood, Nike, J. Crew, Dr. Martens and even Hello Kitty.



91 Cowcross St
EC1M 6BH

Bodega Rita's

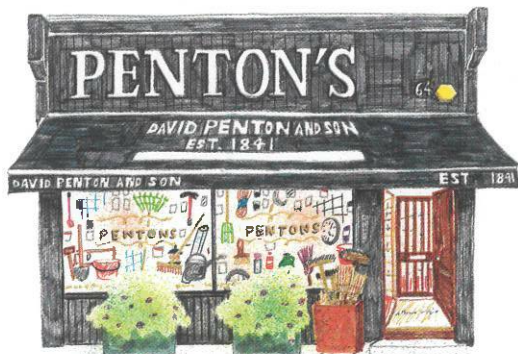
After making a name for themselves with travelling American diner concept Rita's, Gabriel Pryce and Missy Flynn opened this globe-trotting sandwich shop in King's Cross in 2018, before moving to their Clerkenwell location in 2021. Though Bodega Rita's closed in early 2023, the founders' Soho restaurant Rita's still stands.



64 Marylebone Lane
W1U 2PE

David Penton & Son

One of a cluster of charmingly unique small businesses on the same Oxford Street back alley, this traditional hardware store has been a one-stop shop for the DIY lovers of Marylebone since 1841.



63 Pall Mall
SW1Y 5HZ

Berry Bros. & Rudd

This St James's shop is Britain's oldest wine merchants, having been founded as a grocer's by a woman known as the Widow Bourne in 1698. It has supplied the royal family with wine since the reign of King George III.



21 Tower St
WC2H 9NS

Choosing Keeping

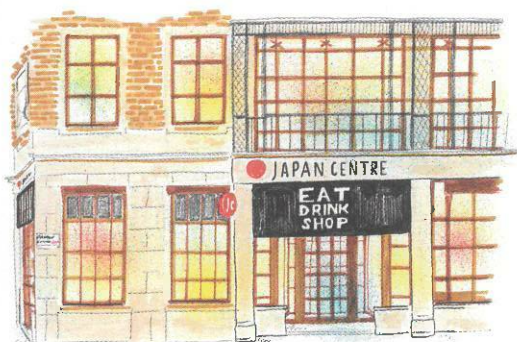
A bountiful haven for lovers of impossibly fancy office supplies, this quaint independent stationers opened on Hackney's Columbia Road in 2012, before relocating to its current Covent Garden location in 2018.



188–196 Regent St
W1B 5BT

Hamleys

This world-renowned toy shop in London's West End has been putting smiles on children's faces since opening as Noah's Ark in 1760. Today, it stocks over 50,000 different toys and receives 5 million visitors a year.



35b Panton St
SW1Y 4EA

Japan Centre

Founded in 1976 as a bookshop catering to the area's community of Japanese migrants, this West End shop is now one of London's best-stocked Asian supermarkets, and houses an incredibly good value ramen café.

46 Goodge St
W1T 4LU

Icco

One of the best-value pizza purveyors you'll find in London and a favourite with students from the several universities nearby, this traditional Italian pizzeria opened in Fitzrovia in 1999, and is now one of four branches around the city.



66 The Brunswick Centre
off Marchmont St WC1N 1AE

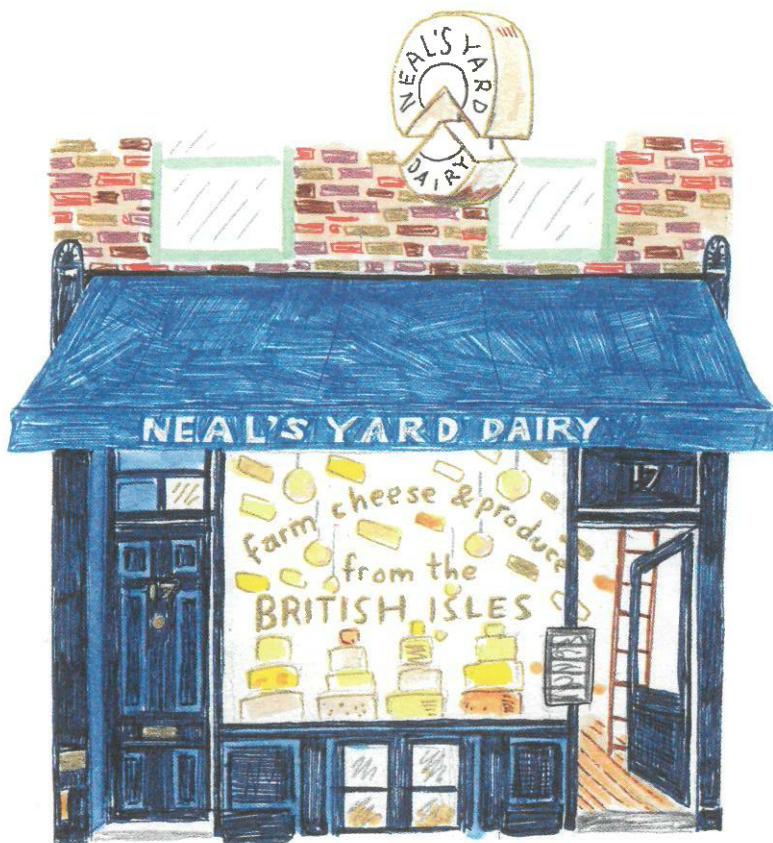
Skoob Books

Located within Bloomsbury's Grade II-listed brutalist development the Brunswick Centre, this second-hand bookshop is a treasure trove for academic books, and stocks a hugely diverse collection of over 75,000 uncategorized titles through which to rummage.



Neal's Yard Dairy

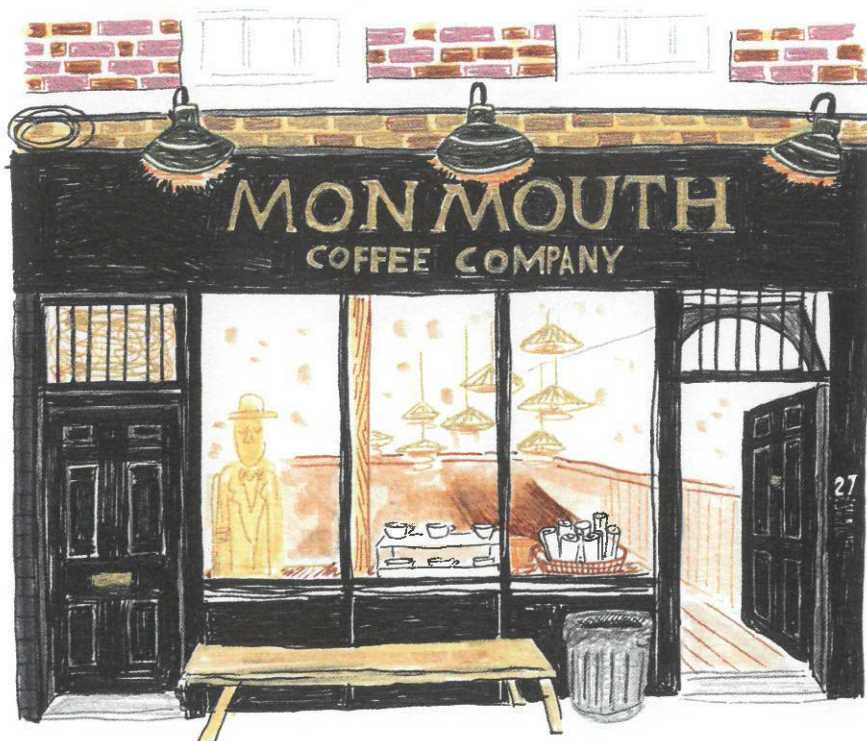
Founded in Seven Dials' Neal's Yard in 1979 by food science graduate and amateur cheesemaker Randolph Hodgson, the now internationally renowned Neal's Yard Dairy is credited with putting British cheese back on the map during a time when the country's cheese-making culture was in desperate need of a revival. Randolph has since devoted his life to championing small British producers through his shop and government lobbying campaigns, and was awarded a lifetime achievement prize at the BBC Food and Farming Awards in 2015 in recognition of the role he played in bringing traditional British cheese-making back from the brink of extinction. Now based just round the corner from the original store, Neal's Yard works with 40 different cheesemakers from around the UK and Ireland, and has opened additional shops in Borough Market, Islington and Bermondsey.



27 Monmouth St
WC2H 9EU

Monmouth Coffee Company

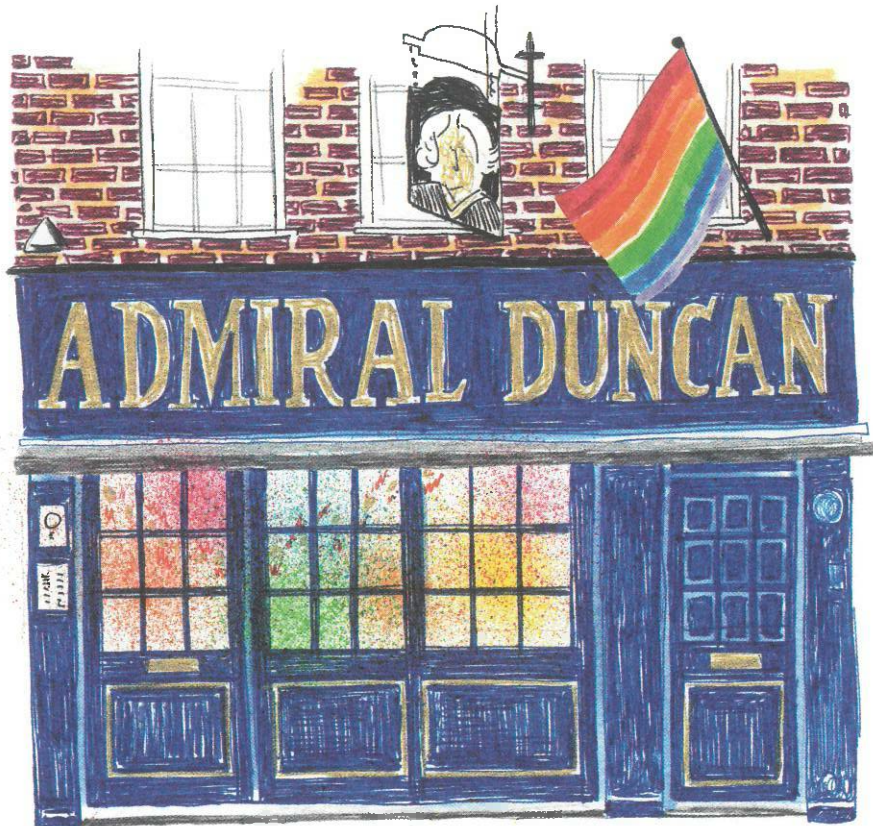
A trailblazer on London's third-wave coffee scene, Monmouth Coffee Company was born in 1978 out of the same Covent Garden development that housed Neal's Yard Dairy. Founded by Anita Le Roy – who ended up marrying Neal's Yard's Randolph – the company initially operated a tasting room on the ground floor of its Monmouth Street shop while roasting its beans using vintage machinery in the tiny basement downstairs. At the time, imported beans were very difficult to trace back to the farmers who grew them, and in the 1990s the company became one of the first UK retailers to pioneer the ethically priced single-origin approach to sourcing that is now commonplace among artisan coffee retailers. A second shop in Borough Market opened in 2002, followed by a third shop and purpose-built roasting warehouse in Bermondsey's Spa Terminus Market in 2012.



54 Old Compton St
W1D 4UD

Admiral Duncan

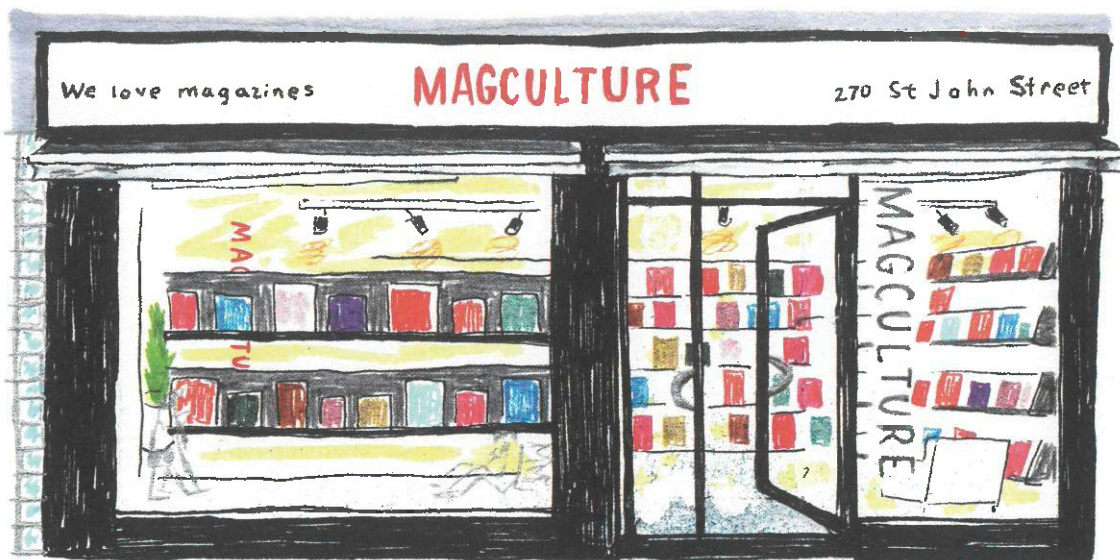
This storied old pub and drag venue is one of Soho's most legendary nightlife spots, having been a favourite drinking den of many historic figures over the years. In 1930 it was the site of a famous brawl between Italian mobsters from the Sabini and Hoxton gangs, while Welsh poet Dylan Thomas famously lost the only copy of his renowned radio play *Under Milk Wood* during an epic drinking binge here in 1953. Known as a gay pub by the 1980s, in 1999 the Admiral Duncan was the site of the worst homophobic attack in British history when a Neo-Nazi targeted it as part of a series of nail bomb attacks, killing three people and injuring 70 more. It has since been the site of several large vigils honouring persecuted LGBTQ+ communities around the world.



270 St John St
EC1V 4PE

magCulture

After two decades working as an art director for various print publications, magazine enthusiast Jeremy Leslie started magCulture in the noughties as a WordPress blog enthusing about the art of magazine making. As the blog grew in popularity, Jeremy was increasingly inundated with queries from readers wondering where they could buy copies of the magazines reviewed on the site. Realizing that London was lacking a proper magazine shop, he opened this Clerkenwell space in 2015. At a time when mainstream print publishing is under constant threat, the shop has championed countless indie magazines, and these days boasts an ever-changing stock of up to 600 titles. As well as organizing regular in-store events, the business hosts magCulture Live conferences in London and New York each year. The blog, meanwhile, is still going strong.



52 Old Compton St
W1D 4PB

Algerian Coffee Stores

Algeria might not be the first nation that comes to mind when thinking about coffee, but Londoners who know their black medicine have been flocking to this Soho coffee merchants for well over a century, after an Algerian gentleman named Mr Hassan opened the place in 1887. The treasured old shop has since changed hands between a Belgian man and the Jones family of England, who took over in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, during which the shop was damaged by shrapnel from a bomb.

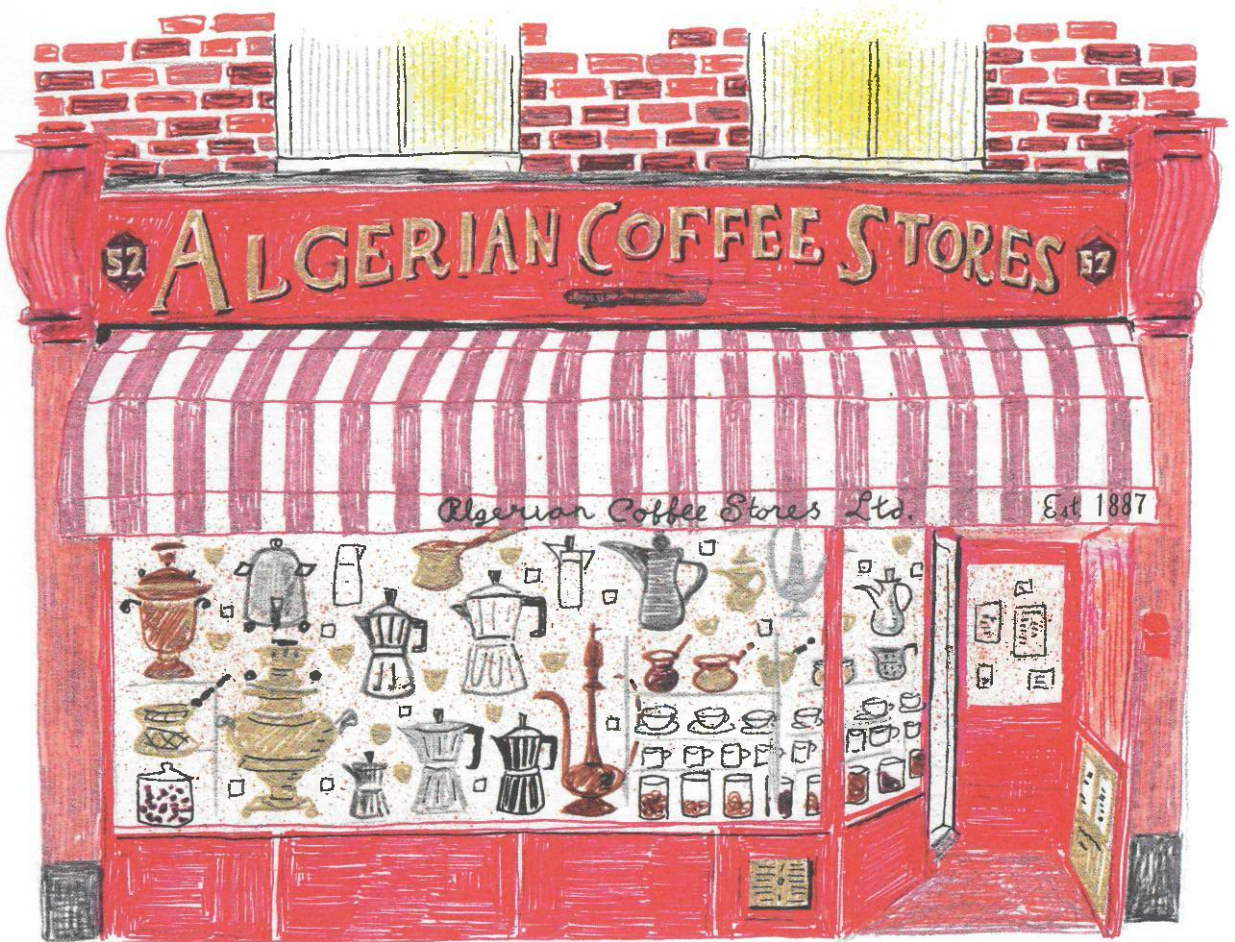
These days, the operation is headed up by an Italian, Paul Crocetta, who started helping out at Algerian Coffee Stores in the 1970s after marrying Mr Jones's daughter Francesca. He's now assisted in the running of the place by their daughters, Daniela and Marisa.

Caffeine fiends flock here in
droves to stock up from a
collection of over 80 coffees and
120 teas from all over the world.

They can also browse the diverse range of coffee-making paraphernalia in stock and admire the magnificent interior, which retains its original counters and shelving. As you might imagine, it smells pretty great too.



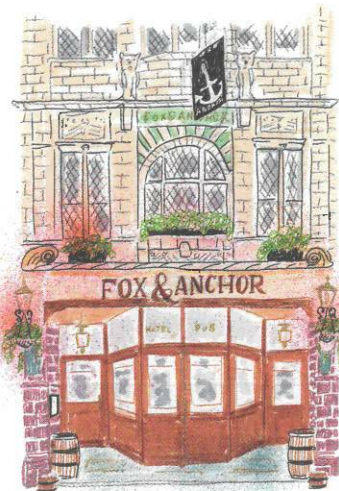
ห้องคลังความรู้
สภาผู้แทนราษฎร



115 Charterhouse St
EC1M 6AA

Fox & Anchor

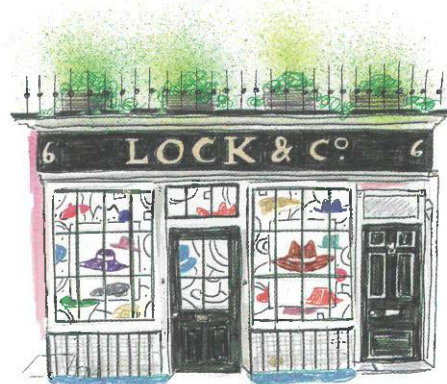
Located just a stone's throw from Smithfield's historic overnight meat market, this Grade II-listed Victorian pub famously opens at 7 a.m. on weekdays so that the market's night owl traders can enjoy a post-shift pint.



6 St James's St
SW1A 1EF

Lock & Co. Hatters

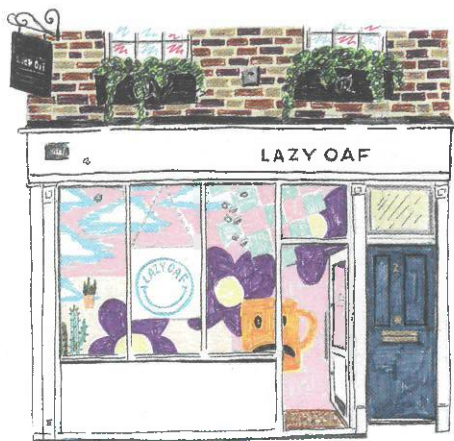
Founded in 1676 during the reign of Charles II, this Grade II-listed St James's hat shop is the oldest in the world. Its lengthy list of erstwhile clients includes everyone from Lord Nelson to David Beckham.



1 Upper James St
W1F 9DF

Bob Bob Ricard

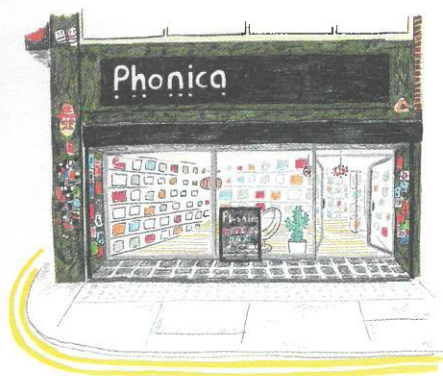
This Wes Anderson-esque Soho restaurant claims to pour more champagne than any other eatery in Britain, which is unsurprising considering that it is famed for the 'Press for champagne' buttons installed in every booth.



2 Ganton St
W1F 7QL

Lazy Oaf

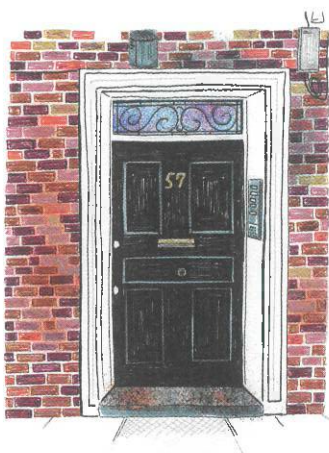
Known for its colourful and irreverent cartoon prints, Gemma Shiel's cult streetwear brand started life as a stall on Spitalfields Market in 2001, before moving to its original Soho flagship store in the nearby Kingly Court in 2008.



51 Poland St
W1F 7LZ

Phonica

Nowhere else in London will you find a better collection of dance and electronic records than this vinyl lovers' paradise in the heart of Soho, which counts Caribou, Four Tet and Floating Points among its regulars.



57 Greek St
W1D 3DX

New Evaristo Club

Officially called the New Evaristo Club but known as Trisha's after its legendary owner, this Soho basement bar originally opened as an Italian gambling club in the 1940s. Famed for its £10 lifetime membership fee and outrageously cheap drinks, Anthony Bourdain once called it 'one of the true glories of London'.

17-19 Regency St
SW1P 4BY

Regency Cafe

'It's not haute cuisine, but the Regency Cafe has got top London restaurants licked,' says *The Telegraph* of this famous Art Deco greasy spoon in Westminster, which has been serving up classic English breakfast fare since 1946.



41-43 Wardour St
W1D 6PY

Wong Kei

Seating up to 500 diners at once, this gargantuan canteen is one of the most popular of Soho's numerous Chinese restaurants, despite – or some might say because of – its longstanding reputation as 'the rudest restaurant in London'.



Attendant Coffee Roasters

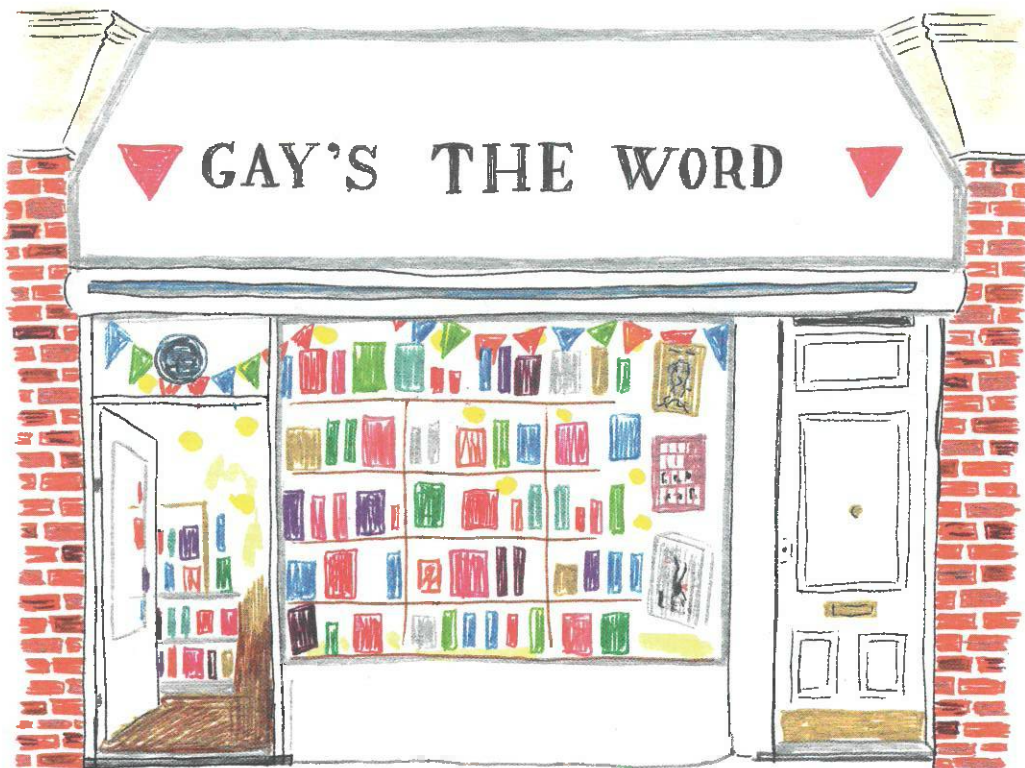
In a city with rent as expensive as London's, it pays to get creative with space. But few business owners have got quite as imaginative as Pete Tomlinson and Ben Russell, the co-owners of this Fitzrovia coffee shop inside a former public lavatory. Built in the 1890s, the subterranean gent's loos lay dormant from the 1960s until 2013, when they were artfully converted into this delightfully quirky space. It retains plenty of the original features, from its magnificent wrought-iron entrance right down to the Doulton & Co. porcelain urinals which now sit above the countertop perch where customers sip espressos. As for the name, that comes from the sign on the door to the toilet attendant's office.

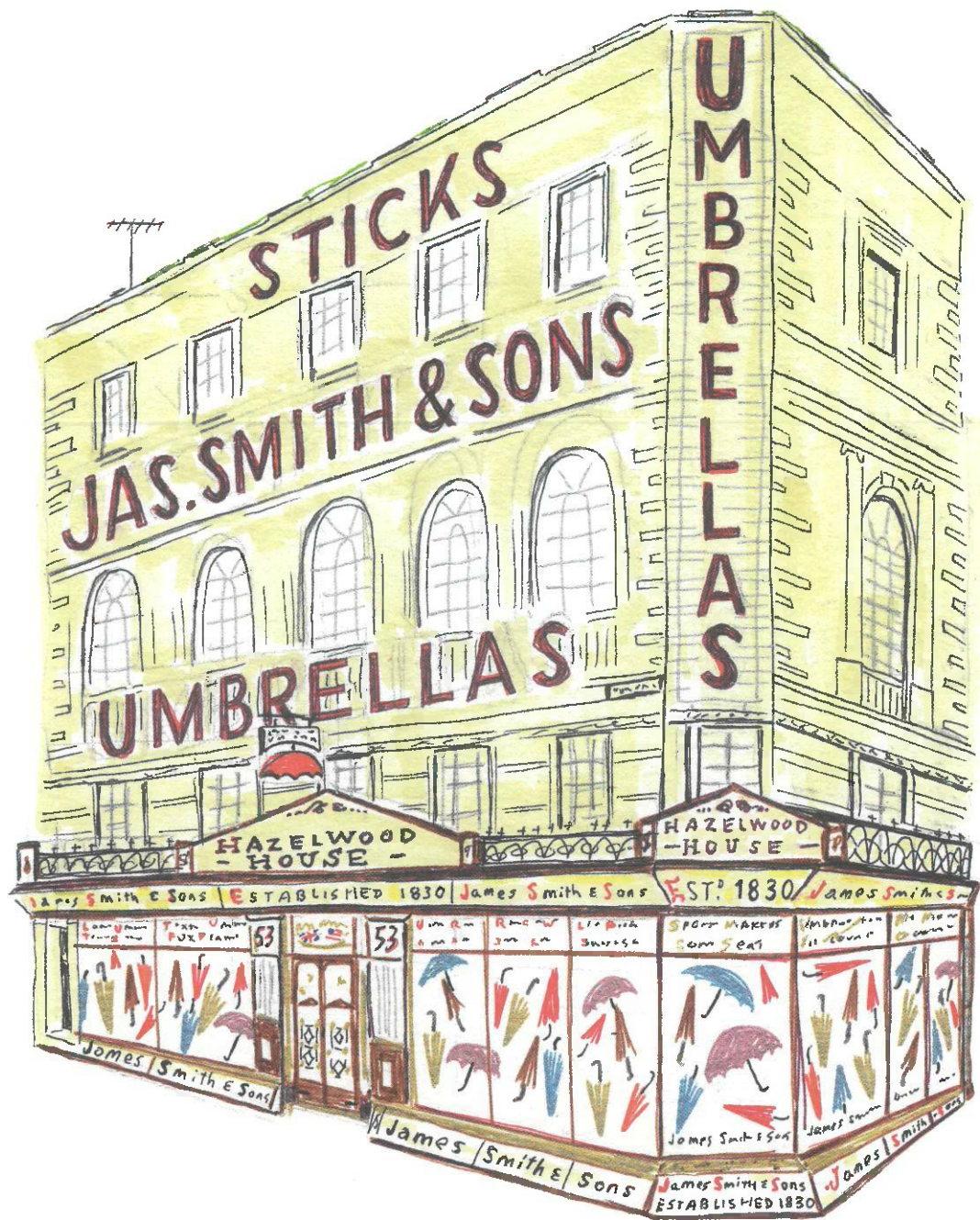


66 Marchmont St
WC1N 1AB

Gay's The Word

Founded in 1979 as a not-for-profit run by members of the Gay Icebreakers socialist group, this Bloomsbury landmark was the first specialist LGBTQ+ bookshop to open in the UK, at a time when queer literature was mostly available only by mail order. It soon established itself as a vital community space during the AIDS crisis, despite hostility from neighbouring businesses, several homophobic attacks and a 1984 Customs and Excise raid in which thousands of pounds' worth of stock was seized and the shop's directors were charged with conspiracy to import indecent books. Immortalized in the 2014 film *Pride*, Gay's The Word was met with an enormous community response in 2017 when it announced that it was facing closure due to rent hikes. With its future secured, the store's 40th anniversary was commemorated in a special event at the British Library in 2019.





53 New Oxford St
WC1A 1BL

James Smith & Sons Umbrellas

Standing proudly on the corner of New Oxford Street and Shaftesbury Avenue, this impressive, Grade II-listed Victorian building houses Europe's oldest umbrella shop, which first opened in 1830 in the popular West End shopping district of Regent Street.

Originally based in a shopfront so small that prospective customers had to step outside to test the umbrellas manufactured in the attached workshop, the family business was vastly expanded under the leadership of the founder's son, James Smith II, who was said to be a keen entrepreneur. As well as opening several additional businesses, including a hatters and a barbershop, in 1851 he became one of the first umbrella sellers to adopt a new, lightweight and cheaper-to-manufacture design made by British industrialist Samuel Fox. Sales of the fancy new model began to boom, and James Smith & Sons moved to the magnificent premises of Hazelwood House in 1857, where the Smith family also lived in the quarters upstairs.

Having survived World War II
bombs, recessions and even a
global pandemic, today it is the
only specialist umbrella shop left in
London.

The interior retains its original Victorian counters built in the 1870s and the shop stocks as many as 3,000 walking sticks, parasols and umbrellas at one time, many of which are still handmade in the workshop downstairs.

23 Monmouth St
WC2H 9DD

Coco de Mer

Named after the distinctly buttocks-shaped seeds of a rare variety of palm tree, upmarket erotic emporium Coco de Mer shut its doors in Covent Garden in March 2023, but is opening a wholesale HQ in Primrose Hill which will offer VIP appointments.



14-16 Bury Place
WC1A 2JL

London Review Bookshop

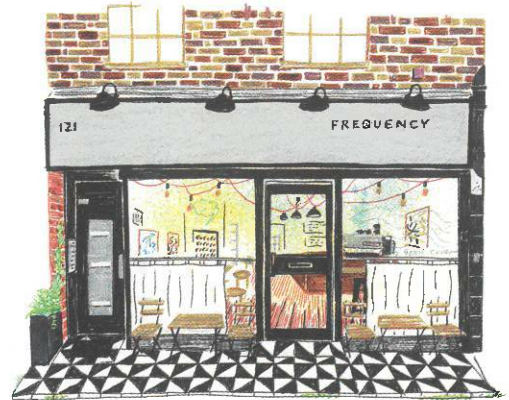
Run by famed literary magazine the *London Review of Books*, this Bloomsbury bookshop is known for a superbly curated programme of events, which are frequented by the great and the good of the city's literary scene.



34 Goswell Rd
EC1M 7AA

Barbican News

Tucked away underneath a 1950s apartment block on the City's Golden Lane Estate, this classic London newsagents houses an impressively varied stock of essentials given its modest size.



121 King's Cross Rd
WC1X 9NH

Frequency

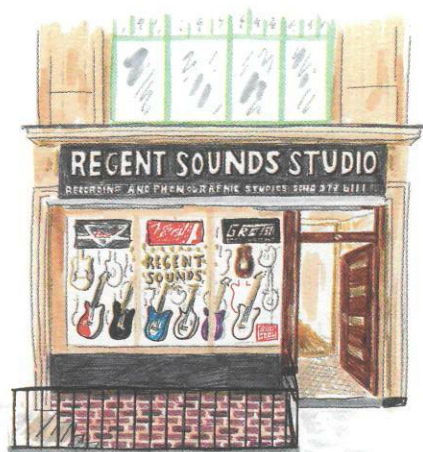
Venezuelan expat Justo Tripier founded this King's Cross shop in 2016 in an effort to combine his passion for coffee and his background in music. It hosts regular band nights and serves wonderful coffee that Justo imports and roasts himself.



Seven Dials Market
35 Earlham St WC2H 9LD

Ong Ong Buns

This Hong Kong and Malaysian bakery is known for its coconutty signature 'ong ong nom' buns. Its original Bethnal Green shop (pictured here) closed in March 2022, and was replaced by a stall at Seven Dials Market.



4 Denmark St
WC2H 8LP

Regent Sounds

The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones are some of the legendary acts who have recorded in the studio at this West End guitar shop, one of a cluster of historic music businesses on the same street.

35 Marylebone Lane
W1U 2NN

Paul Rothe & Son

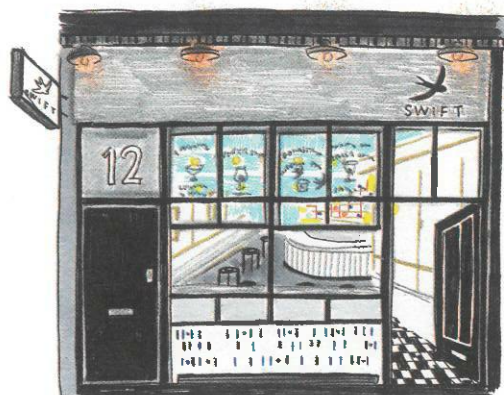
This Marylebone Village institution is one of London's oldest delis, and has been run by four generations of the same family since opening in 1900. These days, it's known for its superlative renditions of classic sandwiches.



12 Old Compton St
W1D 4TQ

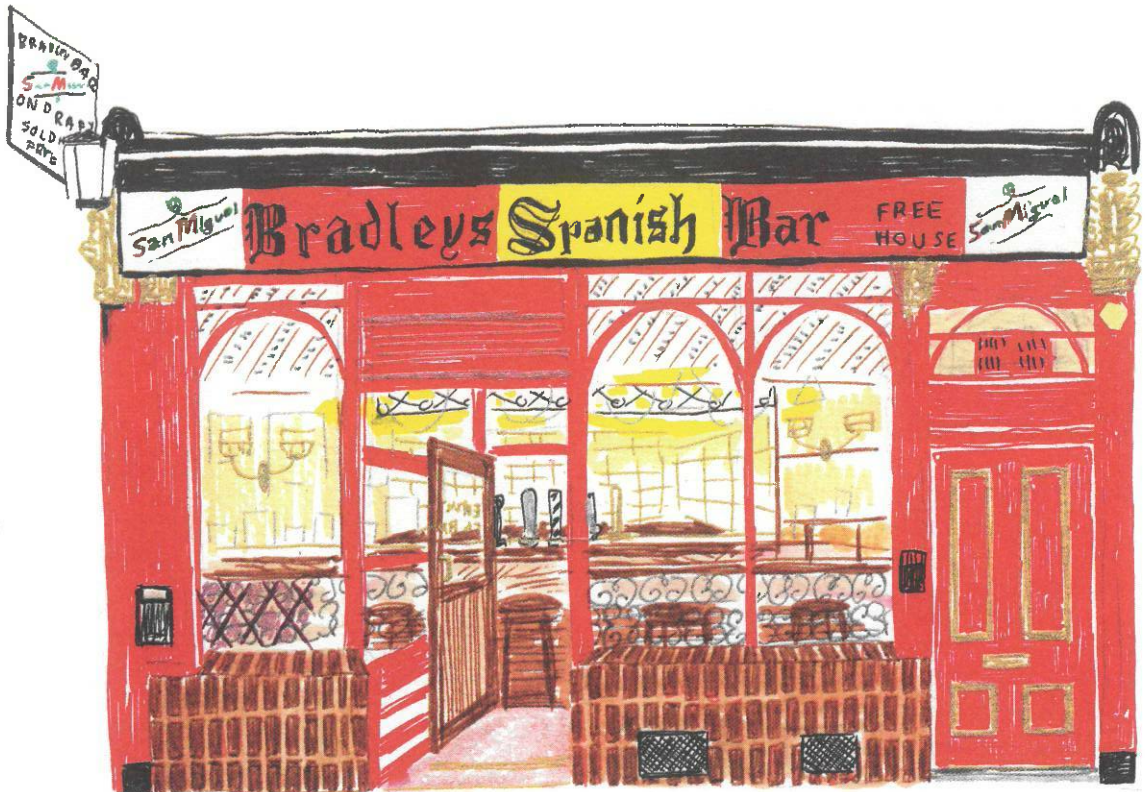
Swift

This elegant cocktail bar is one of Soho's coolest date-night spots. Known for its extensive whisky library, it has been firmly ensconced on the World's 50 Best Bars list since opening in 2017.



Bradley's Spanish Bar

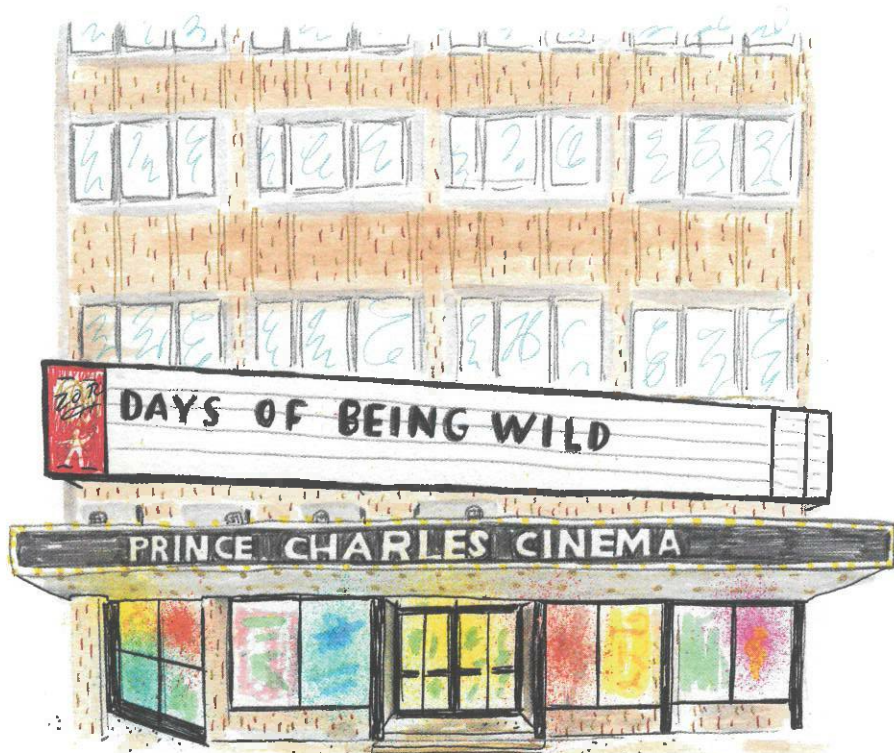
Replete with shabby chic furniture, eclectic jumble-sale decor and a vinyl jukebox, this quirky Fitzrovia dive bar is the last relic of a cluster of Spanish (or Spanish-themed) businesses that once existed on the same small side street. A licensed premises since 1869, the bar previously belonged to a succession of Spanish wine importers, before being taken over by John and Tommy Milo, Greek-Cypriot twins who had no discernible connection to Spain. The pair gave the bar its distinctly English name in a posthumous tribute to William Bradley, a glass-cutter based nearby who hosted a social club for his employees at the venue. These days, the Bradley's menu features several Spanish lagers, wines and Cava in honour of its extremely tenuous roots.



7 Leicester Place
WC2H 7BY

Prince Charles Cinema

The last independent cinema left in London's famously film-loving West End, the Prince Charles initially opened as a theatre in 1962. It was then reinvented in the 1970s as an adult cinema known for its long runs of erotic films like *Emmanuelle* and *Caligula*, before new owners took over in 1991 and turned it into the beloved indie picturehouse that exists today. Its endlessly diverse and fun-filled programming encompasses everything from major new releases and rare 70mm showcases to singalong screenings and all-night movie marathons. The bar is named after Quentin Tarantino, who once described the Prince Charles as 'everything an independent movie theater should be'. There's also a cubicle dedicated to Kevin Smith in the ladies' loos, after the cult director joked that 'they haven't even named a toilet after me!' The cinema's namesake may have ascended to the throne in 2022, but its owners have insisted that it will always remain a Prince.



181 Piccadilly
W1A 1ER

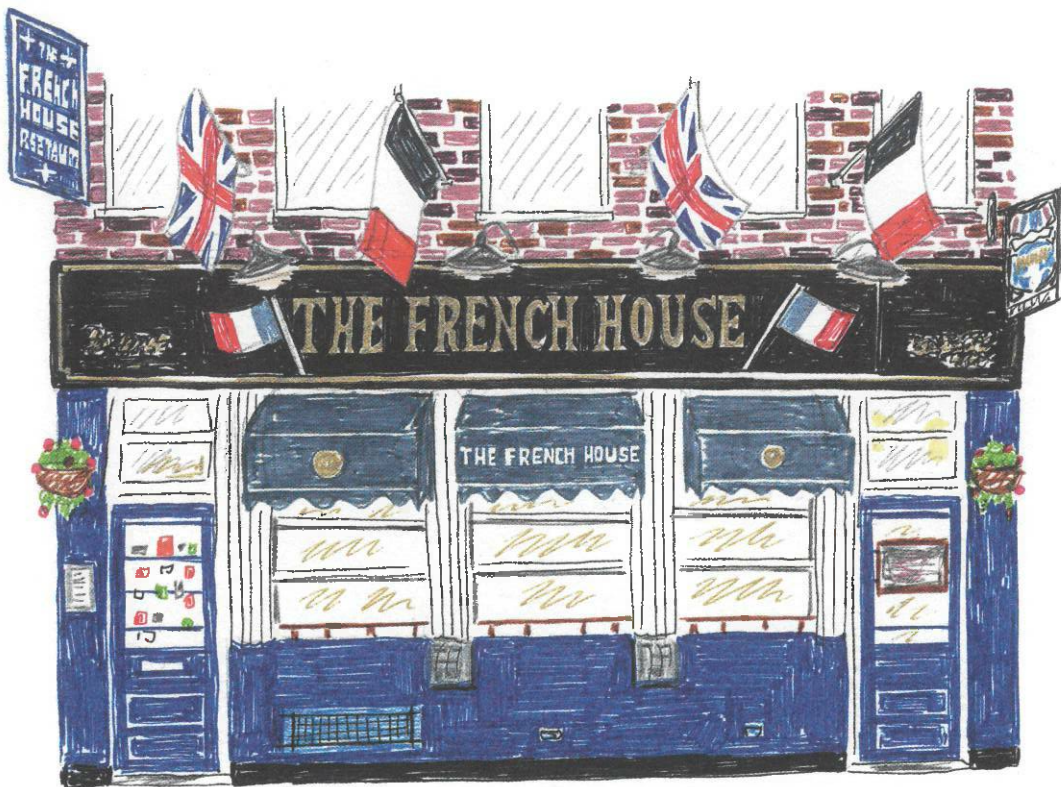
Fortnum & Mason

Founded in 1707 by a footman to the royal household named William Fortnum and his landlord, Hugh Mason, this Piccadilly department store has built a towering reputation for quality and luxury over its illustrious 300-year-plus history. Originally a grocery shop, it lays claim to several gastronomic firsts that are now synonymous with British food culture, from inventing the Scotch egg in 1738 to becoming the first UK retailer to stock Heinz Baked Beans in 1886. Having expanded substantially in the Victorian period, the six-storey shop now includes homeware, fragrance, beauty and accessory departments, as well as an entire floor of luxury hampers. It's also home to one of London's most iconic tearooms, where delicate finger sandwiches, warm scones and intricate petit-fours are churned out in their hundreds for the hordes of customers who visit for afternoon tea each day.



The French House

Dylan Thomas, Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud are some of the many creative luminaries who have imbibed at this storied Soho drinking den. Contrary to what its name may suggest the pub was founded by a German named Christian Schmitt in 1891, before being sold to Belgian expat Victor Berlemont in 1914. Its French connection was forged during World War II, when it became a meeting place for exiled government officials during the French occupation; Charles de Gaulle was a regular, and is even alleged to have written his famous speech 'À tous les Français' here. Known for only serving half pints – allegedly owing to a ban introduced by the landlord in the 1920s after drunken soldiers wouldn't stop smashing pint glasses over one another's heads – the pub still serves more of the French aperitif Ricard than anywhere else in the UK.





47 Frith St
W1D 4HT

Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club

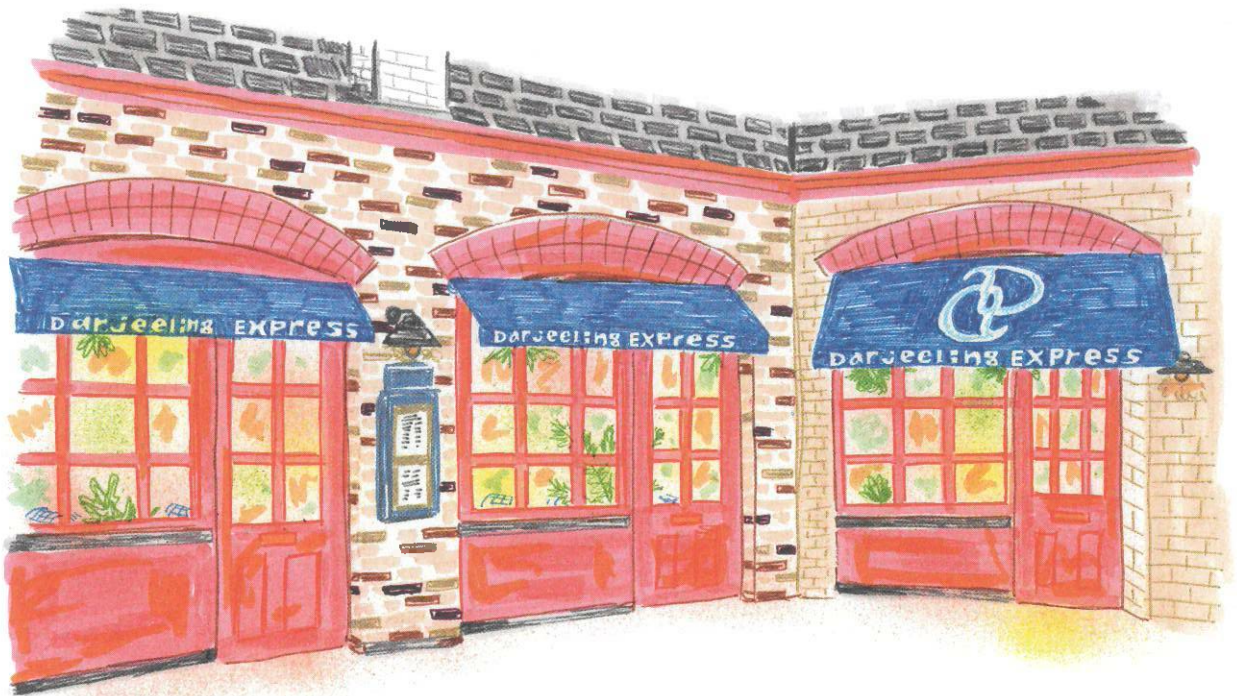
Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald,
Nina Simone and Chet Baker
are some of the distinguished
musicians who have played at
this world-famous Soho jazz and
blues club over the course of its
illustrious history.

First opened on nearby Gerrard Street in 1959 by a celebrated London jazz saxophonist – no prizes for guessing his name! – it moved to this location six years later, where it gained attention as the first club to host American jazz musicians in the UK. Legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix's final performance took place here in September 1970, just two days before his untimely death, while the house label founded in 1978 has recorded live albums with the likes of Curtis Mayfield, Van Morrison, Jeff Beck and dozens of members of the world's jazz and blues royalty. Ronnie Scott himself regularly emceed at the club until his death in 1996, after which it was sold to London theatre bigwig Sally Greene, who had been a regular for many years since being taken along by her father as a teenager.

Reopened in 2006 after undergoing a swanky refurbishment that increased its capacity to 250, Ronnie Scott's remains a gem in the crown of the British jazz scene, and a place of pilgrimage for renowned musicians and jazz lovers from all over the world.

Darjeeling Express

Asma Khan's restaurant started life as a supper club, where she and a group of female friends from the South Asian diaspora would cook for as many as forty guests in her small home kitchen. Born in Kolkata, India, the chef moved to the UK with her academic husband in 1991, and only learned to cook on a trip back home when her mother, noticing how isolated and homesick she was, decided to teach her the family dishes that she grew up eating. Opened in 2017 after a successful residency at a nearby Soho pub and based at its current location since early 2023, Darjeeling Express is named after a steam train that Asma used to ride as a child, and is staffed entirely by women who had never previously worked in professional kitchens. Shortly after it opened, Asma was profiled in the sixth series of the hugely popular Netflix show *Chef's Table*. (She also penned the Foreword to this book.)



18 Brewer St
W1F 0SH

Lina Stores

A Genovese woman named Lina founded this green-tiled Soho deli in 1944, selling fresh pasta, cured meats, cheeses and other imported goods at a time when Italian ingredients were hard to come by in the UK. San Marzano tomatoes and truffle taleggio might be on the shelves of just about every corner shop in London these days, but Lina Stores remains a go-to for the very best-quality produce from all over Italy. In recent years, the store has established a modest empire, starting with a restaurant on nearby Greek Street and now encompassing locations in the City, King's Cross and Marylebone. Having celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2019, in 2021 the shop launched a line of signature products packaged in its now iconic mint-coloured branding.



26 St John St

EC1M 4AY

St John

Opening in a former smokehouse in 1994, chef Fergus Henderson and restaurateur Trevor Gulliver's hugely influential Spitalfields restaurant pioneered London's modern nose-to-tail cooking movement with a then-radical menu of inventive offal-based dishes inspired by traditional British cuisine. These days, St John is now a small foodie empire, encompassing Spitalfields Market small-plates venture St John Bread and Wine, a commercial bakery in Bermondsey and two small bakery and wine shops in Borough and Neal's Yard, while visitors from across the globe still flock to this Michelin-starred original to sample the beloved bone marrow and parsley salad dish that has been a permanent fixture on its menu since the beginning.



Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese

Samuel Johnson, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are just a handful of the historic literary figures who are alleged to have quaffed pints at this Grade II-listed Fleet Street pub. Reconstructed in 1667 after being destroyed by the Great Fire of London, the original pub dates back to 1538, making it one of the city's oldest. Attracting very little natural light, its cosy (if gloomy) interior is still warmed with wood fires during the winter months. Outside the pub's entrance is a list of all the monarchs who have reigned since its construction, while presiding over the bar are the taxidermied remains of Polly, a famously foul-mouthed and tempestuous male parrot who entertained Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese's customers for over 30 years until his death in 1926.





187 Piccadilly
W1J 9LE

Hatchards

Jane Austen, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Mary Wollstonecraft were some of the popular authors at the time when the UK's oldest-surviving bookshop first opened its doors in 1797.

Founded by publisher and anti-slavery campaigner John Hatchard, the Piccadilly Circus shop had become London's most fashionable book retailer by the early 1800s. According to journalist William Connor Sydney, it was also a lively social venue; he named Sir Walter Scott, Hannah More, Benjamin Disraeli and Lord Spencer among the many literary figures, politicians and dignitaries who frequented its back parlour.

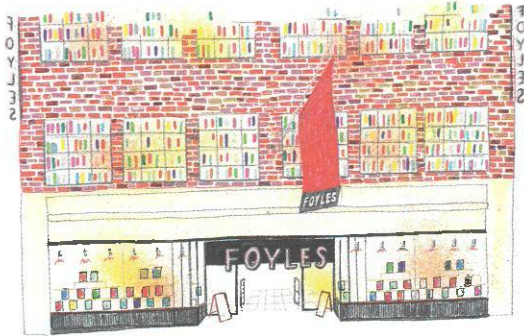
The Whig MP William Wilberforce is said to have made use of the space to conduct abolitionist meetings, while the Royal Horticultural Society was founded there in 1804. Several decades later, Oscar Wilde would conduct signings at Hatchards, which he declared his favourite bookshop. Hatchards also has a long history of royal patronage dating back to its first few years in business, when King George III's wife Queen Charlotte was a regular customer. Today, it holds a royal warrant from HRH King Charles III.

Now owned by Waterstones, the UK's largest bookstore chain, the shop stocks more than 100,000 tomes, ranging from first editions worth thousands of pounds to the latest bestsellers.

107 Charing Cross Rd
WC2H 0DT

Foyles Charing Cross

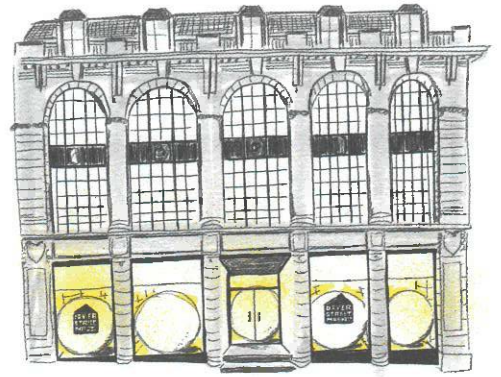
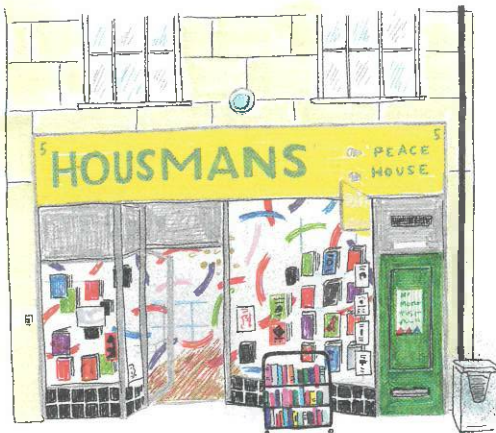
Foyles' family-run chain of bookshops was founded by brothers William and Gilbert in 1903. This five-storey flagship store opened in 2014 and stocks over 200,000 titles on shelves stretching for over four miles.



5 Caledonian Rd
N1 9DY

Housmans

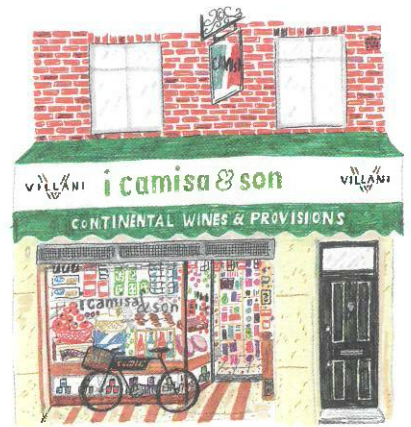
Founded by a group of pacifists in 1945, Housmans is one of the longest-running radical bookshops in the UK. It stocks a wealth of political literature on everything from anti-capitalism to Zionism.



18-22 Haymarket
SW1Y 4DG

Dover Street Market

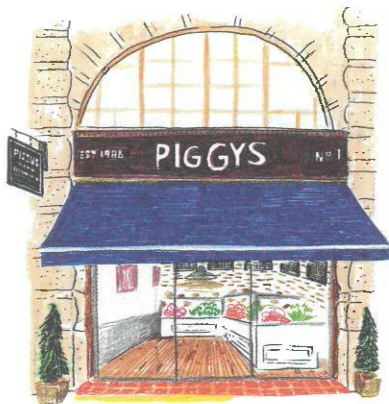
Stocking cult global streetwear brands and designer labels, this high-end market was opened by Comme des Garçons founder Rei Kawakubo in 2004. Originally located on the eponymous Mayfair street, it moved to the erstwhile home of Burberry in 2016.



61 Old Compton St
W1D 6HS

I. Camisa & Son

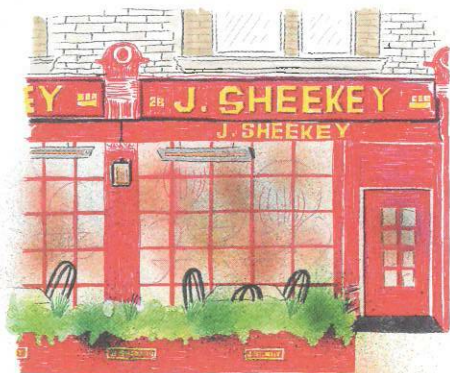
London's original Italian deli was opened by brothers Ennio and Isidoro Camisa on this same Soho street in 1929. They parted ways after relocating to nearby Berwick Street following World War II, and Isidoro opened this rival shop in 1961.



1 Air St
W1J 0AB

Piggys

Run by the Fiori family since 1986, this Piccadilly sandwich bar serves up generously proportioned, made-to-order sarnies and hearty homemade pasta salads that are a huge hit with the area's go-getting office workers.



28-32 St Martin's Court
WC2N 4AL

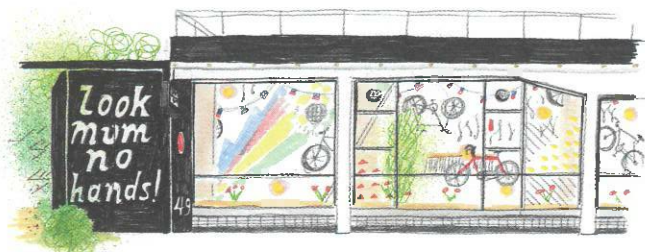
J. Sheekey

With its iconic ruby-red frontage and traditional menu of oysters, caviar and *fruits de mer*, this Covent Garden seafood restaurant is a firm favourite of tourists and Londoners alike, and celebrated its 125th birthday in 2021.

49 Old St
EC1V 9HX

Look mum no hands!

An early adopter of the bicycle café trend that swept through hipster neighbourhoods across the world in the late noughties, this Old Street bike workshop sadly closed its doors in February 2023.



71 St James's St
SW1A 1PH

Truefitt & Hill

Founded by high-society hairdresser William Francis Truefitt in 1805 before merging with Edwin Hill's rival shop in 1935, this traditional barbershop is the oldest in the world, and has been based on St James's busiest shopping street since 1994.

