

SQUARELY

magazine

By The Square Club



April - June 2025 | Issue Nine

Cover by Inkie



Lauren Mulvaney - Editor



Rebecca Luff - Contributing Photographer



Evelyn Andrews - Contributing Photographer



Laura Jones - Contributing Photographer

Issue 9 | April - June 2025

EDITOR LETTER

Dear readers,

Welcome to our spring issue of Squarely, where we'll be bringing you your seasonal dose of Bristol life. As the days grow longer and the sun finally comes out of hiding, we're ready to embrace all that spring has to offer. This time of year brings a renewed sense of energy, whether that's through getting outdoors, connecting with your community or planning new adventures.

For some of you, that energy will be channelled into the Great Bristol Run that takes place in May, and we've got you covered with some of the best running routes in the city to keep you inspired. If your idea of a springtime activity is more about basking in the sun than breaking a sweat, we're also celebrating beer garden season by shining a light on Bristol Beer Factory and their incredible community initiatives.

Speaking of community, this quarter's Local Heroes are Poetry by Heart, a small but dedicated team helping young people engage with poetry in meaningful ways. Meanwhile, our Jet Set feature has your next getaway sorted, taking you to our reciprocal club Aethos in Milan, with insider tips to make the most of your travels.

Closer to home, May marks the last-ever CrimeFest here in Bristol. We caught up with Ann Chadwick to discuss the festival and explore why crime fiction has become a national obsession. More on the crime genre comes in our Members' Circle, where we're introducing crime author Eve Hall, who shares her journey in the industry and love for Bristol.

No doubt you'll recognise our cover artist as Bristol's very own Inkie - a true pioneer of the UK graffiti scene. His exclusive interview on page 6 gives a revealing look into his life and creative vision. Our city's arts and music scene remains as vibrant as ever, with grassroots venues shaping the next generation of talent. Music journalist Molly Davies dives into the importance of supporting local venues, and in Creative Connections, we're spotlighting up and coming artists from Bristol's ever-evolving creative scene.

Wherever this season takes you, I hope this issue brings fresh inspiration and a renewed appreciation for everything Bristol has to offer.

See you soon,
Sophie

For all queries, comments or interest in being featured, drop us a line at editorial@squarely.com



Sophie Yandley - Editor-in-Chief

A big thank you to all our contributors and the continued support of Squarely!

Contributing Photographers:
Tucker Lifford, Great Bristol Run, Marissa Doran, Bristol Beer Factory, PIGN Fotografia, Lee Poller, Travel Counsellors, Guba Spedfora, Sage Bunting, @charleywilliamsphoto, Lily Riddell, Aest Dapna, Tasha Alexander, Haruhisa Hall, Marthon, Molly Davies

Contributing Writers:
Amy Atkinson, Molly Davies, Judithgan Wls

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WELCOME

TO THE SQUARE CLUB

Welcome to **The Square Club**, Bristol's Private Members' Club for the creative industries.

Established in 1990 and housed within a beautiful Georgian townhouse on Berkeley Square in Clifton, The Square was founded to create a unique and dynamic environment for like-minded creative professionals to meet, collaborate and propel their ideas forward. Today, The Square Club thrives on the same ethos. Wealth and status carry no merit here. Instead, membership consists of people with one key thing in common – a **creative soul**.

The Square community encompasses over 750 of Bristol's innovators, and provides members with an all-encompassing services offer. Along with a vibrant events programme, playing host to over thirty events a month, and an **award-winning restaurant**, The Square provides a dynamic social environment and a flexible workspace. Equipped with a boutique lounge, the Square Kitchen restaurant, the Lower Deck cocktail bar & hidden city-centre terrace, the club is ideal for working, socialising, holding events and connecting with new people. For those wanting to stay the night, members can access preferential rates on rooms and suites in the adjacent **Berkeley Square Hotel**.

Next door, you'll find **Square Works**, our high-end serviced workspace. With everything from office spaces to flexible hot-desking packages, ergonomic furniture to a state of the art fitness suite, members are left wanting for nothing.

Our network of creatives opens up endless opportunities for collaboration, inspiration, and meaningful connections. You're invited to discover more, and experience the essence of Bristol's cultural spirit within the welcoming embrace of The Square Club. Discover a place where creativity thrives, connections are forged, and inspiration knows no bounds. Come and be a part of something truly special.

Find out more and apply for membership at www.thesquareclub.com/private-members-club/



GRAFFITI ROYALTY: INKIE

THIS QUARTER'S COVER ARTIST NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION—IT'S NONE OTHER THAN BRISTOL'S LEGENDARY INKIE.

A true pioneer of the UK graffiti scene, Inkie is one of the country's most respected street artists. From the moment he could hold a pen, he was painting alongside the likes of Massive Attack's 3D, Goldie and Nick Walker. Later, he would work with Banksy and the ever-growing pool of Bristol artists, helping shape the city's world-renowned graffiti movement.

Fast forward to today, and Inkie is still painting, pushing creative boundaries, and working on inspiring community projects. We caught up with the man, the myth, the legend himself to talk about his journey, his influences and what's next.



The graffiti scene has changed dramatically since 1989 when you were arrested as part of Operation Anderson—the UK's biggest anti-graffiti crackdown. The days of running from the police are long gone, but do you ever miss the thrill of those early years?

Graffiti has been pushed further underground due to the use of security cameras, etc, and is now really only for the hardcore. Pieces in halls of fame, although stylistically graffiti, are not really in the same league... Also, the internet means you can paint a wall in your back garden and have social media fame overnight without doing any illegal work. And the thrill of hunting down rare pieces/the joy of seeing superb fresh work is slightly lessened due to the amount you can view by scrolling through Instagram.



In 2019, you travelled to Tanzania with the Last Night A DJ Saved My Life Foundation, working with boys in a children's home on creative projects and mentoring sessions. Then last year you were involved in their Sierra Leone project. Can you tell us more about that experience?

These two projects are ongoing and are part of our 'no input no output' project and Angels Gate Creative Schools in both countries. This follows on from the fantastic work of the Strummer Foundation. We provide equipment, materials and hands on training for the street youth and disabled kids in each area. It's one of the most fulfilling projects I have been involved in, with more to come in Uganda & South America soon.

Over the years, you've supported so many charities, ranging from Last Night A DJ Saved My Life to BillyChip®, the social enterprise scheme supporting rough sleepers. What charity initiatives are particularly close to your heart?

My eldest daughter was born deaf, so the Great Ormond Street Cochlear Implant Unit, who I have raised over £50,000 for, is one of the closest ones to my heart.



You've spoken about wanting to inspire a second wave of the Arts and Crafts movement, drawing influence from William Morris and expanding into ceramics and textiles. How's that journey going?

I have been experimenting in stained glass, mosaic, repousse, fabric pattern design and more traditional methods of creating art for a while now, and alongside the likes of Phil Blake (Philt), I'm pushing forward a new era of arts and craft design.

You once said, "Graffiti has always been a hobby—you never make money from it." But looking at your success today, that's clearly changed. Has making a living from your art altered your creative process or how you feel about your work?

Believe it or not, it's still very hard to make a living from Graffiti due to the stigma around it and the vandalism aspect. I generally use my work trips for street art projects as an excuse to go painting and create an 'Ink Nouveau' wall and a 'classic wildstyle' in nearly every city I visit. I enjoy painting both, but, if pushed, it would be traditional graffiti all the way.

In a 2012 video, you wore a T-shirt that read, 'Make your mark on society, not in society.' Do you feel you've achieved that? What kind of legacy do you hope to leave behind?

I hope so! This was a quote from an old NYC Mayor Koch anti-graffiti campaign that I took from a subway advert in the late 80s, but written in reverse. I'd like to leave a mark on society, not in it, and hopefully inspire the next few generations of artists while I'm at it... that would be my legacy!

From the backstreets of Bristol to community projects spanning the globe, Inkie's influence is undeniable and has left a lasting mark on the art world. Yet, for all his success, his mission remains simple: push boundaries, support the next generation, and make art that speaks to the streets and beyond.

And if his legacy is anything to go by, the best is yet to come. www.inkie.co.uk | [@inkiegraffiti](https://twitter.com/inkiegraffiti)

QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS

Who's your biggest inspiration?

My dad who recently passed away - he was an architect who encouraged my creativity.

What's your ultimate comfort meal?

A decent Beef Wellington and sherry trifle.

Who's your favourite Bristol artist?

Currently Richard Castor or Soker for wildstyle/Cheo for characters.

What's your guilty pleasure TV show or film?

Archaeological documentaries/Trading Places.

Tell us one thing you've never shared before.

I put bubble gum in my mate's quiche in home economics class for a joke. It backfired.

Bristol or London?

Bristol. London is great for work and going out, but too large for a decent social life and country walks.

Favourite holiday destination?

Japan for food/culture or Bora Bora for scenery and snorkelling.

Are you a good cook? What's your speciality dish?

I love cooking but my partner is much better than me. My favourite dish to cook is fish pie with scallops and prawns.

How do you relax?

Travel and swim.

If you didn't go by the name Inkie, what would your alias be?

Inkie came around from the blue Pac-Man ghost, as I played in arcades a lot and got ink on my fingers when drawing graffiti. If I had another choice it would be Rusty due to the letter shapes.

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GREAT BRISTOL RUN

By Joshgun Iris

The Great Bristol Run will be taking place on the 11th May, and this year, record numbers are expected. The scenic route stretches along the waterside and through green spaces such as Castle Park and Queen Square, showcasing stunning views of the Avon Gorge with plenty of graffiti murals to spot along the way. Speaking as someone who took part last year, training for the event is essential and gives you a great opportunity to explore some of the best areas of Bristol. As the last few kilometres seem to stretch on endlessly, I vividly remember wishing I'd trained more. So, to help you enjoy your experience more than I did, I'm delving into some of the nicest spots in Bristol for you to kick your training up a notch in the time for the big day!

Good luck on the big day! I hope these training routes prove useful, see you at the finish line! To secure your place at the start line for the 10k or half marathon, visit: www.greatrun.org/events/great-bristol-run/



THE DOWNS, VARIOUS DISTANCES

A huge area of parkland in north Bristol bordering Clifton and Redland, the Downs is my favourite place to run in Bristol. Unlike most of Bristol, it's flat! This is a fantastic benefit, and the size of the Downs and number of paths means you can target several different distances when it comes to training. The 5k loop and 10k options are great running routes, and both provide great views of the Suspension Bridge. The biggest drawbacks are a lack of lighting and your exposure to the elements - be sure to check the weather before setting off!



HARBOURSIDE, 5K LOOP

Another option for colder and wetter days is the flat loop around Bristol Harbourside. Running this route helps to mentally prepare you for the big day, and provides some fantastic views of the Bristol Harbour! The route is slightly busier with people and well-lit meaning it definitely feels safer after dark. The beautiful views of the water mean if you want to go for a longer run, the loop won't get boring.



BRISTOL TO BATH RAILWAY PATH, 13 MILES

As training ramps up and we get closer towards the big day, longer distances are crucial to help you prepare. The Bristol to Bath railway path is a flat, traffic-free, 13-mile path which is perfect for a training run. The path runs along a disused railway line and is surrounded by greenery, which makes it ideal to run along as spring starts to bloom. The best part? When you arrive in Bath you can have a nice brunch or mid-afternoon tippie before a 10-minute train journey takes you right back to Bristol.



ASHTON COURT

Ashton Court is the site of Saturday morning park runs and has a measured 5k course, but longer routes are also an option. The estate is over 800 acres and borders Leigh Woods. It can also be accessed by running under the Suspension Bridge, helping visualise your route for race day. As we head from spring to summer, the trails and paths are drying up and becoming much more attractive to run on than they were at the start of the year when you would've ended up covered in mud!

Runna



Achieve your running goals with personalised plans for everything from a faster 5k to your first marathon. Download Runna now and enjoy your first two weeks FREE using the code 'SQUARELY'

TOP PICK



SPRING EDIT

From gigs to getaways, the Squarely team shares their top picks of the season

01 - Destination
Locke Hotels, Lisbon

As spring arrives, it's the perfect time to explore Lisbon. Soak up some sunshine without the sweltering summer heat at Locke de Santa Joana.

Take a refreshing dip in the courtyard pool after strolling the city's charming cobbled streets, and don't miss Castro's, the in-house café serving some of the best pastel de nata in town! - **Laura Baker**

02 - Clothing
Najma Collective

Started in October 2023, Najma Collective was founded in response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Their clothing, created to show solidarity, serves as a form of peaceful protest. 100% of Najma's profits go to Action Aid's Gaza Crisis Appeal. - **Pascale Loftus**

03 - Pub
The Star, Fishponds

The Star is a proper Irish pub full of charm. From its quirky artwork and traditional skittle alley to its no-nonsense 'no McDonald's' policy (a nod to the fast-food giant next door), it's packed with personality. Serving one of the best pints of Guinness in Bristol for just £4.40, plus live music, a pool table, and dartboards, it's the perfect spot for a fun night out in The Ponds. - **Lauren Mulhearn**



04 - Theatre
Bristol Improv Theatre

I have never been an 'improv person'; in fact, I have for the most part stayed as far as possible from anything involving balls of energy or asking 'and...what?'. It was the venue's incredibly popular 'This Is Your Musical' performance that well and truly converted me. From workshops to performances, I'd thoroughly recommend getting over yourself and booking a ticket. - **Evie Andrews**



05 - Day Trip
Dyrham Park

This spring, be sure to visit the National Trust's Dyrham Park to see their breathtaking tulip displays. Each spring, their gardens come alive with a stunning array of tulip varieties. Make a day of it and explore the rolling parkland, gardens and house. - **Sophie Yardley**

06 - Sport
SEAT Unique stadium

This spring I'm heading to the SEAT Unique Stadium, home of Gloucestershire Cricket Club, for some fantastic entertainment in the glorious evening sunshine. The stadium will be hosting fixtures from the inaugural women's Vitality Blast, as well as welcoming home the current men's Blast champions. Tickets to watch this historic moment in women's cricket and the best men's team in the country start at £7. - **Joshgun Iris**

BRISTOL BEER FACTORY

DRINK
MORE
BEER



By Joshgun Iris



Drink more beer. That's the message here, and it's a compelling one. Not that anyone needs an excuse to enjoy a cool, crisp pint, but Bristol Beer Factory's commitment to community initiatives has added an entirely new dimension to the nation's drink of choice. As we head towards beer garden weather and drinking over May bank-holiday weekends, BBF are providing a fantastic option which not only tastes fresh but will also make a difference around the city, meaning you can feel good while drinking it. Cheers to that!

Beer consumption in the UK has been declining steadily over the last 15 years, with the alcohol industry facing unprecedented challenges as people are choosing healthier and often cheaper options. Gen Z are the driving force behind this movement, having been dubbed the 'sober curious' generation. A third of Gen Z are choosing to go sober and most drink less than the generations that came before.

So, what are beer companies in Bristol doing about this? The approach that BBF has taken is worth highlighting, as it is providing an option for beer lovers (both alcoholic and low alcohol beer) whilst also supporting local charities.

First things first, the product itself is fantastic. Bristol is known for its cider more than its beer, and since moving here three years ago, I have personally favoured a glass of Somerset's finest over a beer. However, I recently tasted BBF's Destination Mars, and (if you'll pardon the pun) it was out of this world. Just one of a range of beers and IPAs offered, the BBF really does offer a genuinely top-quality alternative to cider.

More importantly though, is the work that BBF do to support the community. Brewed2Give - their 2% self-imposed tax on all their revenue - goes straight towards community and charity initiatives. Since this launched in May 2023, BBF have donated £170k in stock and cash to over 250 groups and charities in Bristol. That support has translated (after donated beer for raffles, auctions and event bars

have been sold) into an extra £420k of unrestricted funds towards activities that make a difference in our city.

Some of their notable stories include a donation which allowed MAZI - a charity empowering care leavers, asylum seekers and youth recovering from homelessness - to double the number of young people they are helping across Bristol!

Another heart-warming BBF story were the donations Brewed to Give allocated to Freddie's Fight and The Teenage Cancer Trust. The donations allowed for a hugely successful fundraising event for over 200 people which raised over £6,000!

It's not just about the products and money BBF are donating. Harri from Thighs of Steel, a fundraiser for young migrant families commented "it was the way they gave it to us, you could tell their heart was in the right place and that they were motivated to support local charities".

For those of us who want a low-alcohol option, BBF cater for that as well with their Clear Head beer. The best thing about Clear Head isn't the fact it genuinely tastes like beer, but the fact that 5% of every sale goes to Talk Club. This has generated over £80,000 and this number is growing with every sip. Talk Club is a talking group founded on the simple premise of asking people who struggle to communicate their feelings "how are you out of ten?" This started as a small movement but has grown into a nationwide organisation which, with Clear Head's help, saves lives.

As summer months approach, and beer gardens start to fill up around Bristol, we are encouraging people to turn towards BBF when they want to enjoy a refreshing pint. We share their passion for the city and want to help local Bristol organisations, and are proud to stock BBF here at The Square Club. So, grab a pint (or a couple) and raise a glass to celebrate BBF!



“

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SQUARELY

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

By Evie Andrews

Inspiration is a tricky thing. Some of us have it in abundance, others seem to lack it entirely. Inspiration has a myriad of synonyms, ranging from the active motivation to do something, to the more passive concept of being influenced. Artists, some might say, are the most inspired and inspiring of all.

I often lack inspiration, and when that happens, I turn to artists. Here at Squarely, we hand-pick the most inspiring up and coming artists in Bristol to feature in Creative Connections, and I'm deeply inspired by the two artists we have featured in this issue. I hope you are too.

If you know of local artistic talent that deserves to be featured, get in touch at editorial@thesquareclub.com



I HOPE THAT WHEN I GET UP ON STAGE I AM INSPIRING OTHERS TO BE A LITTLE BIT MORE WEIRD TOO."

Sage Burning



SAGE BURNING

Instagram: [@sageburning.drag](https://www.instagram.com/sageburning.drag)

Sage Burning is a local drag act, who by day works on our Property Development team as their day-to-day self, Charlotte. Since Sage's debut in 2023, they have performed at some of Bristol's most iconic queer venues and have firmly established themselves as one of the hottest and spookiest drag acts in town.

I asked Sage what brought them to drag and of course, what inspires them. "I've found it hard to define a single inspiration for my drag and why I do it, because there are so many wonderful creatives in the scene who make the community the flourishing place that it is. I love drag because it's an exploration of a masculine and more humorous part of me I hadn't looked into before. I can create a number about anything I care about, and be as serious and or as silly as I want to be, and that can be really freeing. For example, I've told a story on stage of a cowboy alien coming to earth to find love, only to fall in love with his horse, just because it seemed like a funny thing to do. I don't think any other medium can let you quite capture what only you can bring to the stage in the way drag does. The biggest thing I can say for the Bristol drag scene is that everyone inspires each other to keep improving their artistry. I could list off countless names of performers that inspire me every single time I see them perform, of those that made me want to start drag in the first place, and those who make me want to put together a silly act and get on stage and express myself. I am inspired by drag artists creating outside the norm of social expectation, and I hope that when I get up on stage I am inspiring others to be a little bit more weird too."



ANNIE HUGHES

Instagram: [@annieh.jpeg](https://www.instagram.com/annieh.jpeg)

I first encountered Annie's work at an exhibition in Spike Island. I was initially struck by how playfully executed these satirised stereotypical women were. Annie's mum stars as the muse and model in her projects, acting out different roles that have dominated Hollywood narratives since its inception. Annie shared who and what inspires her below.

"I'm mostly inspired by the way I see women represented in the media, but more in a way that it enrages me to see how women are objectified and forced to exist as stereotypes. I'm really inspired by the work of artists like Cindy Sherman, Nadia Lee Cohen, and Jaimie Warren. I find inspiration in work that challenges and subverts the male gaze. I began working with film tropes when I was at university, and this progressed more and more throughout my masters. My work is really influenced by feminist theory, and so I began to research more deeply into these tropes. I think what drew me most to The Femme Fatale and The Damsel in Distress tropes was that both had significant historical roots; there are versions of The Femme Fatale dating back to Biblical times, and early versions of the Damsel in Distress were popular in medieval fiction. Seeing how long these ideas of women had been circulating in our culture and how they have real-life consequences for the way women and girls are viewed really inspired me to make something that subverted that."

Check out more of Annie's work here: www.anniehughesphotography.squarespace.com

LET'S TALK GRASSROOTS MUSIC

For this quarter's music feature, we're exploring the impact of grassroots venues, promoters, engineers, and festivals on the growth of new musical talent and how these talented individuals are fueling a scene that creates space for new talent to grow.



**WITHOUT THE
GRASSROOTS
VENUES, YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
ANY NEW BANDS,
SO I'M ALL ABOUT
SUPPORTING THESE
LOW-RISK SPACES."**

Mass House performing at Outer Town Festival

Bristol is home to several iconic grassroots venues including The Louisiana, The Thunderbolt, Mother's Ruin, and The Old England. Built in 1764, The Old England is the last remaining building from Rennie's Baths - one of the earliest public swimming pools in Britain. The building started life as a coffee house before being transformed into The Old England tavern which hosted musical concerts from as early as 1782! Nowadays, the musical offering is a more raucous affair with the likes of Lynks, Grove, Porridge Radio, Heavy Lunga, Grandma's House and Mass House gracing its grimey stage.

After live music stopped at the venue post-pandemic, local promoter Harry Dodson made it his mission to reignite the venue through partnering with Sunglasses After Dark for The Old England revival week in July 2024, before taking over bookings for the venue. Since then, The Old England has once again flourished with multiple live gigs a week as well as open decks and a regular community jam night. "I remember [in] 2019, just before Covid, how important The Old England was," says Dodson. "I remember some great nights there, so it's great to have that space back again. It's a low-risk location for bands and promoters in Bristol, and that's what I care about. It's a place where lots of people have memories. It's a starting ground for people, a place where sound engineers can come and practice, where bands and promoters can experiment."

The emphasis on supporting low-risk grassroots spaces for artists is a theme throughout Dodson's projects, with his main event being Outer Town Festival, an annual one-day, multi-venue live music festival hosted in Old Market. Launched in 2021, the festival now boasts over sixty acts playing across eight venues with nine stages. There's a DIY Market and vegan food vendors, with the new Left of the Dial (Rotterdam's coolest showcase festival) stage at Wiper and True Taproom being the biggest addition

for 2025. However, even with this arrival, the goal is still to create a platform for local bands to reach bigger audiences in an often overlooked area of Bristol that's home to a wealth of grassroots venues.

When asked why centring grassroots venues is so important, Dodson expresses his preference for working in smaller events with as-of-yet undiscovered bands. "A lot of them won't make it huge but it's not necessarily about that. A lot of these bands will continue to be underground but they'll create their own communities and fan bases within that. Without the grassroots venues, you wouldn't have any new bands, so I'm all about supporting these low-risk spaces."

Mass House is a Bristol band that have emerged from Bristol's music scene, made up of best mates Tom Minchin and Dylan Williams. Originally from Birmingham, the duo combine punk with industrial synth-pop to create dreamy, driving, synth-soaked bangers. "Grassroots venues are crucial for any music scene" says Minchin. "You can't have any level of music industry without people being able to cut their teeth at the early stages. Venues like The Old E offer an opportunity for bands to play a packed-out room with very little financial risk on their own part. It's opportunities like that that make people think 'yeah I can do this'. Outer Town is an example of how a good network of small grassroots venues can create a great event in the city. We've played before in a packed room at Eimer's bar. As a fairly small artist those opportunities are great!"

Another musical group born of the scene are post-punk trio Grandma's House. They played their first show in 2018 at The Thunderbolt, where they peppered the floor with pasties after a food fight during their song Pasty. Nowadays, you'll find them supporting Idles, touring Europe playing festivals such as The Great Escape and 2000trees, receiving multiple plays on BBC Radio 1 and featuring in major

GRASSROOTS VENUES ARE CRUCIAL FOR ANY MUSIC SCENE. YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY LEVEL OF MUSIC INDUSTRY WITHOUT PEOPLE BEING ABLE TO CUT THEIR TEETH AT THE EARLY STAGE.



Grandma's House at The Old England

music publications. Despite this success, they still chose The Old England for their intimate single launch party last year. "We had the most amazing night at the Old England for our single launch party," says guitarist and lead vocalist Yasmin Berndt. "It's where we did a lot of our early gigs and we have the best memories there so it was lovely to play on that stage once again. Grassroots venues are so important to the music scene, they're what allow new artists to get that first gig and be able to start performing their music to people. Our first gig wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for Dave at the Thunderbolt in Bristol. We had a 15-minute set and no band name but he took a chance on us and that opportunity led to where we are now! These small venues are such a great way for an audience to discover new artists as well - they are the backbone of the music scene."

Beyond promoters, artists and venues, the sweaty, unpredictable and inspiring shows of the underground scene wouldn't be possible without engineers - those

responsible for making everything sound great. Similarly, smaller venues offer a space to fine-tune sound engineering skills, learn how to be responsive in a live sound setting, and gain on-the-job experience for new engineers. The idea of the angry old sound engineer is dying, with Head Engineer Mike Hayes championing live sound as an art form. Hayes has been an engineer for ten years in Bristol - working across venues including Exchange, The Louisiana, Old Market Assembly and Rough Trade. This experience has allowed him to bring in engineers of all levels to The Old England, giving new engineers the opportunity to shadow on shows and learn how to overcome the unique challenges of a small venue with older equipment. "Everything's analogue. That's part of the charm. It hasn't got big money behind it and everything is just made to work and people work around what it has. There are a lot more challenges compared to bigger venues. Most acts that are playing in these kinds of places are more green and don't understand live sound or how to perform

“

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in different environments. So what I've been teaching people is the confidence to tell people to turn down amps, to get the stage to a good level so you have a lot more control to actually use the analogue systems to craft a good sound. Because it's an art, it's a very creative art form. [Live sound is] like painting. You can be taught how to do things efficiently, things correctly, but everyone who ever works in sound will tell you that there's loads of ways to do something, but the outcome you want to achieve is always the same. Good sound."

Even a small 90-cap venue plays a vital role in the emergence of talent on a larger scale, becoming a springboard for a range of different careers in the music industry. However, beyond their potential in producing a megastar act, or being a footnote at the start of a star-studded memoir, grassroots venues are a hub for local community and accessible space for self-expression, mentorship and growth. These spaces are driven by organic creativity and avant-garde experimentation, allowing artists to play their music to friends and family, whilst having the opportunity to connect with other local creatives and fans. They're spaces to create memories alongside community, and for that, they should be celebrated and supported.

So, next time you're wondering what to do with your weekend evenings, why not take a chance on your local independent grassroots music venue? You might just discover your new favourite act.



Written by Molly Davies. Davies is a freelance event producer, photographer and musician performing sad-gal-campfire songs turned alt-pop bangers under the stage name MLY.

JET SET

AETHOS CLUB

As an independent private members' club dedicated to Bristol's creative industries, The Square Club has partnered with over forty esteemed members' clubs worldwide to offer our community exclusive reciprocal access during their travels.

Aethos Club Milan, Piazza XXIV Maggio, 6, 20129 Milano, MI, Italy

For this Jet Set feature, we are delighted to introduce you to the Aethos Club in Milan. Created to evoke the feeling of visiting the home of a good friend, Aethos Club is a private members' club, boutique hotel and soulful culinary destination. The club has been built around the spirit of their vibrant community of like-minded individuals, who share a passion for exploration, connection and the drive to make a difference. At Aethos, they value the concept that the best communities are the ones where people give just as much as they take. You will soon discover that there is always something happening at Aethos Milan, who are passionate about hosting events that bring their community together. From cultural to culinary events, their programme is sure to offer experiences for everyone. Whilst visiting the club as a reciprocal guest, be sure to keep up to date with all the happenings to ensure you get the true insider experience!



Each reciprocal club in our collection has been thoughtfully selected to ensure their values align with ours. So wherever your journey takes you, you can trust there's a welcoming home away from home waiting for you.

WHERE TO STAY

Aethos Milan is home to a boutique hotel, which has 32 suites, each with their own spirit. All suites feature a handpicked collection of vintage Italian furniture and original décor, and most have a private balcony overlooking the city. The hotel is located in the popular Navigli district of Milan, which is one of the city's most dynamic and historically rich areas. Navigli is a hub for art, nightlife, and dining, with charming canals and cobblestone streets lined with trendy bars, cafes and restaurants. The added bonus - as a member of The Square Club, you can get 15% off your booking.

WHERE TO DINE

ZALA is a modern, Mediterranean-style restaurant located at Aethos Milan. Their foundational philosophy is that the most memorable meals in Italy begin with the best ingredients. ZALA offers a vibrant scene, focussed on community, where sharing and discovering new flavours is at the centre of their dining experience. For a more relaxed dining experience, head to the club's Doping Bar. On the menu you'll find sharing platters of charcuterie and empanadas, mains such as the Milanese-style risotto and of course, the dessert menu features tiramisu. We can't forget their speciality "pizze gourmet" made with dough that's been left to rise up for 90 hours and tastes like no other. Whether it's their signature pizza with San Marzano tomatoes, delicate olive oil and aromatic basil or more unusual combinations such as caramelised onion, buffalo mozzarella, and yellowfin tuna - the menu leaves nothing to be desired. With Aethos Milan being right in the heart of the Navigli district of Milan, there are copious amounts of restaurants, ranging from traditional Milanese trattorias to contemporary fusion spots. Be sure to explore the smaller streets off the main canals, where you're likely to stumble upon a wealth of family-run trattorias.



WHAT TO DO

Navigli offers a blend of old-world charm with contemporary urban life, making it a popular spot for tourists and a beloved neighbourhood for locals. There is a thriving dining scene, with the foodie focus being as much about the ambience as it is the food. You'll find restaurants tucked along the canal with picturesque views and plenty of outdoor seating, creating a lively, convivial atmosphere.

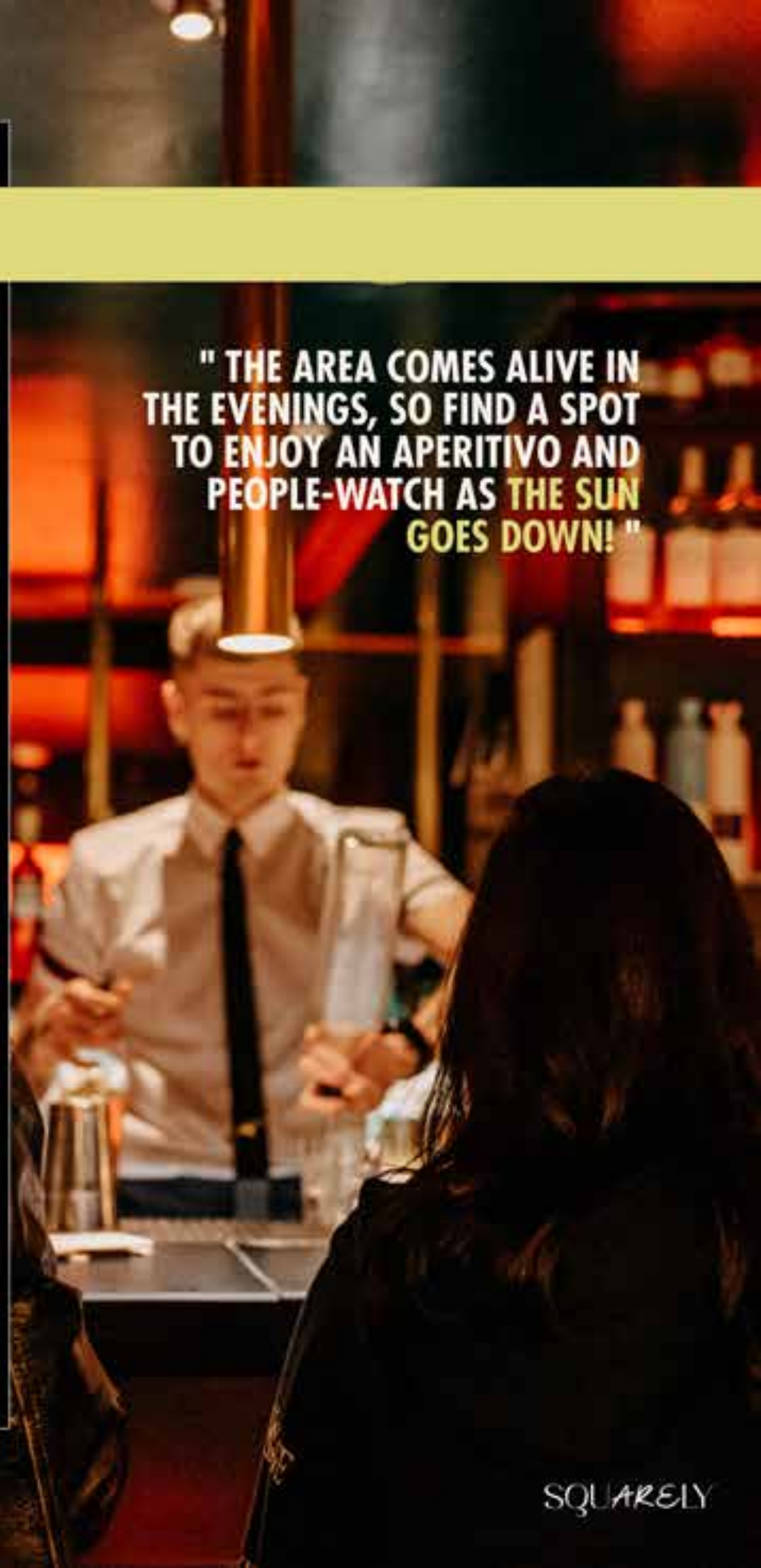
The district is also famous for aperitivo, which is the Italian take on happy hour! You'll find that many bars and restaurants serve drinks accompanied by nibbles such as bruschetta, olives, cheeses, and charcuterie. This makes these bars the perfect spot to while away the hours on a lazy afternoon.

A popular time to visit Navigli is during the monthly Navigli Antique Market, where visitors can browse a vast selection of antiques and vintage items. The banks of Naviglio Grande - the oldest canal in Milan - are transformed into a huge outdoor market, you'll find everything from antique furniture to books, paintings, jewellery, secondhand clothes and vintage vinyl and glassware. The area comes alive in the evenings, so find a spot to enjoy an aperitivo and people-watch as the sun goes down!

Members of The Square Club can book their reciprocal visit to the Aethos Club via the Sonato Alliance.

<https://www.aethos.com/club-milan/>

" THE AREA COMES ALIVE IN THE EVENINGS, SO FIND A SPOT TO ENJOY AN APERITIVO AND PEOPLE-WATCH AS THE SUN GOES DOWN! "



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: BRISTOL BUSINESSES

Among the ever-growing network of independent businesses, Squarely spotlights some of the brightest bulbs in Bristol's chandelier.



IVY LUCILDA

Ivy Lucilda is a creative studio specialising in beautifully crafted picture frames. From wavy frames to perfectly sculpted bobbin designs, their collection combines style with affordability. With frames starting from just £13 including delivery, this passion project-turned-business began with one man and his 3D printer and has since flourished into a sought-after brand. Their product drops are known to sell out fast, so visit their Etsy shop to stay ahead of their latest releases. Use "SQUARELY" for 10% off your first order.

ivylucilda.co.uk
[@ivylucilda](https://www.instagram.com/ivylucilda)



KABUKI

Welcome to Kabuki, a charming space that embodies a cute luxury bohemian vibe in Redland. Recently taken over by Darylle to breathe a fresh vision into the well established salon of seven years. Step into a warm and inviting space where inclusivity is a priority. The salon specialises in eclectic beauty treatments, utilising only the highest quality products to ensure your experience is exceptional.

At Kabuki, every client is treated like a friend, and the dedicated team is committed to helping you leave feeling like your best self. Unwind and indulge in a unique beauty journey!

www.kabukistudios.com
127 Coldharbour Road, Bristol, BS6 7SN



JETSETTING WITH JESS

For stress-free, tailor-made holidays, Jess is the go-to travel expert. From USA road trips to luxury safaris, cultural escapes, and seamless business travel, she creates unforgettable experiences with a personal touch. Every trip is financially protected, with 24/7 support and VIP service—all at no extra cost.

Whether it's flights, hotels, cruises, honeymoons, or corporate trips, Jess takes care of every detail, so you can simply enjoy the journey. Based in Bristol but planning trips worldwide, she makes travel dreams a reality. Mention **Squarely** when discussing your trip with Jess for free airport lounge passes.

www.travelcounsellors.com/jess.masters
[@jetsettingwithjess](https://www.instagram.com/jetsettingwithjess)



PLASTER CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ever wondered who is behind the scenes of Bristol's incredible events scene? Of course there are many more, but you'd be silly not to start with Plaster Communications. From Bristol Harbour Festival to Forwards, many of Bristol's hottest tickets have Plaster, an integrated communications agency, behind them. Plaster let their events and all of the creatives associated with them take centre stage, bolstering Bristol's local arts, performance and tourism industry.

Exciting upcoming events include Sound Check, a music photography exhibition curated by Sickboy and Adam Devonshire (IDLES). Find out more about that [here](http://www.pitbristol.com/soundcheck) www.pitbristol.com/soundcheck, and check out Plaster on their Instagram, [@weareplaster](https://www.instagram.com/weareplaster).

www.weareplaster.com
[@weareplaster](https://www.instagram.com/weareplaster)



IT'S BBQ SEASON

Sweet, sticky, spicy, from street food stalls to fine dining restaurants, fast food specials to supper club menus, eastern flavours are dominating Bristol's food scene. This summer, The Square Club is not only keeping up with the trend but is setting the pace with their sizzling new Korean Barbecue Menu, designed for parties and events by award-winning Head Chef, Aidan Fisher. The menu is a bold celebration of Korea's most iconic flavours, given a playful and party-ready twist that's perfect for grazing al fresco. Regardless of what the British weather has in store for us

this season, this menu is sure to bring the heat.

At the heart of the menu are fire-grilled teriyaki chicken skewers, sticky honey-glazed pork belly, addictive katsu cod bites and Korean-fried mushrooms. These headline dishes are complemented by a line-up of zesty, vibrant sides, including kimchi cabbage, crunchy cucumber with spring onion, and vegetable and seaweed fried rice, all rich in umami and smoky spice. Fisher designed the menu with grazing, sharing, and nibbling in mind – and to add a little spice to your soiree, of course!

EAST MEETS WEST FOR THE SQUARE CLUB'S KOREAN BBQ

Inspired by the vibrant flavours of the Korean BBQ menu, the talented team of mixologists behind the Lower Deck Cocktail Bar have developed the Square Subak Hwachae: the perfect party punch. This sweet and creamy cocktail is inspired by traditional Korean fruit punch. Unsure where you've heard of Hwachae from? You may recognise the punch from its brief viral stint across video platforms last year. Users would film themselves waking up at three in the morning, claiming to be severely dehydrated and craving the concoction – and for good reason. The unusual combination of sparkling, sweet and creamy flavours makes it uniquely hydrating and refreshing. The light-hearted trend spread like wildfire, turning the cocktail into a household name across the globe. The Square Club's version is a love letter to the viral sensation: think juicy watermelon, Kwai Fae Lychee Liqueur, soda, and a rich swirl of sweetened condensed milk. It's sunshine in a glass – and yes, vegan and non-alcoholic versions are available, so everyone can get involved.

Best enjoyed underneath the idyllic canopy of The Square Club's hidden terrace, the Korean BBQ Party Menu is available now for private bookings and events at The Square Club. Bold, bright, and bursting with flavour, the menu is guaranteed to make your summer celebrations truly unforgettable.



Summer Party Menu by The Square Club

KOREAN BBQ MENU

- Teriyaki chicken skewers
- Honey glazed pork belly
- Katsu cod bites
- KFC Mushrooms
- Kimchi cabbage
- Green salad
- Crunchy cucumber and spring onion
- Vegetable and seaweed fried rice
- Soy dressing, Korean BBQ sauce, katsu mayo and gochujang ketchup



LOCAL HEROES

POETRY BY HEART



“
POETRY FINDS US
WHERE WE ARE AND
OFFERS US A CHANNEL
TO SAY SOMETHING
FUNNY, SAD, BEAUTIFUL,
MYSTERIOUS OR MAD”

The year was approximately 2013. A young girl with a very ill-advised haircut takes the stage in The Egg Theatre in Bath, and performs two poems: 'Tichborne's Elegy' (Chidlock Tichborne, 1586) and 'God, A Poem' (James Fenton, 1983). She narrowly misses out on the win to a peer who inconceivably also performs Tichborne's Elegy. Besides being quite the sore loser, the girl goes home and a decade passes (albeit with significantly improved rote memory and public speaking skills). One night at The Square Club in 2023, this girl, now a woman, bumps into the very people behind this competition, who just so happen to be members.

You may have guessed, dear reader, that this girl is I, Evelyn Andrews, I am but one of many hundreds of thousand young people who have competed in the Poetry By Heart competition across the UK. Poetry By Heart encourages young people of all backgrounds to learn a poem and perform it out loud, establishing a lifelong love for poetry. Founded in 2012 by educator Dr Julie Blake and poet Sir Andrew Motion, the competition has gone from strength to strength, with Julie and fellow co-director Dr Tim Shortis recently in the 2025 New Year's Honours List ([read more on page 36](#)).

As our most recent Local Heroes (national, really), I asked Julie some questions about their important work bolstering poetry in schools.

In challenging economic climates, school curriculums often prioritise STEM subjects to respond to rising demands in the workforce, encouraging students down paths that may lead them away from the study of humanities, and

consequently, poetry. Why is it important to keep poetry alive in schools and further education?

The Booker prize-winning novelist and poet Margaret Atwood has my favourite answer to this question, and one we've had in different forms from many of the amazing poets we work with. She says, "Every culture we know has some form of poetry. Poetry matters to us as human beings because it is deeply engraved in our DNA." To that I'd add what the 18th century writer, poet and dictionary-maker Dr Samuel Johnson said, "The only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life or better to endure it." Whether you're going to train to be a nuclear scientist, a software developer, a civil engineer or a doctor, we are all human beings with poetry hardwired in our DNA, and we will all need to find ways to enjoy and endure our lives, especially when storm clouds are brewing on the horizon. Why would we not include it in schooling?

What is it about poetry that transcends the boundaries and differences in the various student backgrounds that you work with? How does poetry enable accessibility in schools?

If you accept that poetry is part of our human DNA, then it follows that it must have the capacity to reach everybody. The evidence from thousands of teachers working with us for thirteen years corroborates this. In our annual survey, we ask teachers to tell us about something that has surprised or delighted them about taking part, and we have heard countless stories about pupils overcoming memory difficulties and stammers, pupils with limited conventional literacy feeling able to participate through spoken

performance, and at our very first pilot session in Bristol fourteen years ago, we witnessed a teacher's jaw drop as a pupil who had never spoken in her class before stood up, pushed back her hoodie and clear as a bell, recited Lord Byron's poem 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'. Poetry finds us where we are and offers us a channel to say something funny, sad, beautiful, mysterious or mad, whatever we find there that reverberates in us and helps us to give voice to.

What would you say is more important, the performance aspect of the competition, or the preservation of poetry for the upcoming generation?

These propositions are two sides of the same coin, both equally important. In 1881, the American poet Oliver Wendell Holmes said in a letter to a friend that "When the school-children learn your verses they are good for another half century." It's not us who are preserving poetry for the upcoming generation: by choosing poems, learning them by heart and sharing them aloud with others, it is the young people who are doing it themselves, curating their own





living, breathing anthologies. We're just daring them to give it a go.

In your National Championship competition, students have to pick and perform two poems, one from before 1914 and one in or after 1914. How does poetry change after the beginning of the First World War?

There's not one date on which poetry suddenly changes, so to some extent it's merely a convenient dividing point to get pupils selecting one older poem and one relatively modern one. This challenges pupils to explore a range of poems and poets and to experience first-hand the variety and diversity of poems over time. When we ask pupils about their choices we often say how amazing it is to realise people three hundred years ago felt similar things to us, or to realise there were black poets writing brilliant poetry a hundred years ago, not just in the

last ten years. The full answer to how poetry changes after the beginning of the First World War would take a six-part mini-series to explain...

Poetry anthologies in schools often revolve around specific themes, such as power and conflict or love and relationships. If you could put together an anthology for national study, what would the theme be?

In many ways we already have. The timeline anthologies for pupils aged 7+, 11+, 14+ and 16+ that are on our website have as their theme the glorious variety and diversity of poetry over time. But if I were going to choose specific thematic clusters, like the ones you've mentioned, I have two in mind. One would celebrate poems for children and young people that open a window on the world, written in English from different global standpoints and also in translation from other languages. The other would be called 'A Green Thought in a Green Shade', which is a quotation from Andrew Marvell's poem 'The Garden' and it would celebrate the natural world with poems about the sky and the sea, grass and trees, wind and rain, rock and sand, gardens and wild places, weeds and flowers.

If you forgot every other poem and could only remember one for the rest of your life, which poem would it be?

I'd like to think it would be 'The Journey of the Magi' by T.S. Eliot, a poem I've long loved. I returned to it during long dark nights of insomnia in the COVID-19 lockdowns. I calmed my mind by going over and over the lines, learning this quite long poem by heart, trying out different ways of saying the parts. However, in reality I'm sure the mind under such duress of forgetting would opt for something a lot shorter,

and that would be the anonymous poem 'The Horny Goloch'. I delighted in this poem as a child and also delighted in it all over again when I saw three boys perform it with great gusto and glee at a primary school in Bristol.

The Horny-Goloch is a fearsome beast,
Supple and scaly,
It has two horns, and a handful of feet,
And a forkie tailie!

As a former participant and overall poetry fan, I can certainly attest to the positivity Julie, Tim and the rest of the team have brought to so many young people's lives. If you know a young person in Key Stages Two to Five who would benefit from taking part, send them to www.poetrybyheart.org.uk, where they can find the digital anthologies with performance recordings, and much more



THE SQUARE GALLERY

The Square Club is proud to showcase the work of South West artists at their revolving art exhibition The Square Gallery. All are welcome to visit during opening hours. Call 01179210455 for further details or visit thesquareclub.com/square-gallery



FEBRUARY – APRIL 2025

**'ECHOES OF THE WILD'
BY JENNIFER KEENEY-BLEEG**

An artistic exploration of land and sea that taps into memory and imagination, reflecting how nature's rhythms awaken our internal world.
jkbleeg.com

MAY – JULY 2025

**25 YEARS OF CREATIVITY
WITH JIM STARR**

Jim Starr will be celebrating 25 years of creativity with a show of new work, showcasing large scale experimental bird paintings and prints
screenprintjim.com





DR JULIE BLAKE & DR TIM SHORTIS

In the 2025 New Year's Honours List, resident members Dr Julie Blake and Dr Tim Shortis were awarded MBEs in recognition of their services to Education for their work as Directors of Poetry By Heart.

Poetry By Heart is a national competition encouraging young people to choose a poem they love, learn it by heart, and perform it out loud. Since the competition's founding in 2013, thousands of schools across the country have taken part. On receiving the accolade, Julie said, "We are proud to be recipients of this honour and accept it on behalf of all the pupils, teachers, school librarians, poets, partners and our incredible team who make Poetry By Heart such a joyful and rewarding celebration of poetry."

Tim also described what makes the competition so special. "Poetry By Heart is about daring to do it differently. Poetry is part of everyone's DNA and everyone can enjoy it. Receiving this award, my mind is full of all the wonderful recitations we have heard by children, young people and teachers at every level of the competition."

We have a more in depth interview with Julie on page 32, so please do have a read. Visit Poetry By Heart's website here: poetrybyheart.org.uk

SQUARE WORKS

ACHIEVEMENTS



GEORGIA MIZEN

If you are a regular reader of Squarely, you may already be familiar with Georgia Mizen from our previous issue. As the Founder and Director of her own freelance marketing network, Fable & Verse, she is an exceptionally busy woman; naturally, she still found time to take on the Barcelona Half Marathon.

Georgia undertook six months of tough training to support The Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre. Despite not considering herself a runner, she achieved a personal best in the first 10km and finished in 2:05 on race day. Her goal was to raise £1,000 for the charity, which provides vital support for children with additional needs and their families. Having hit her target, Georgia is still welcoming donations to make an even bigger impact.

You can donate here:

justgiving.com/page/georgiadoesthebarcahalf

HOW MUCH CAN ONE PERSON DO IN A DAY?

PRODUCTIVITY IS OF COURSE SUBJECTIVE, BUT THERE ARE SOME INDIVIDUALS WHO JUST SEEM TO EXCEL IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS, WHILST WORKING FULL-TIME AND OFTEN JUGGLING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

Mark has a 'gold star' awarded 'good behaviour' at primary school. It is my belief that we should always shoot about the goal that people are putting into the world. Square Works, the award-winning co-working space within The Square Club, has an impressively high number of accomplished members. We'd love to spotlight and celebrate just a few of the incredible recent achievements in our community.

JIM ROBERTS & MARK HORTON

What happens when two creatives meet at an event at The Square? The possibilities are limitless, and Jim Roberts and Mark Horton are here to prove it.

Jim is an Adventure Travel Content Manager and Writer at Swoop Patagonia. Jim recently saw the culmination of a six year side project by releasing his first novel into the wild—a dystopian fantasy tale—*The Monkey State*.



Mark is a Brand Strategist, Generative AI Consultant and business owner. After meeting at a talk on AI at Square Works (hosted by Mark), the two collaborated on the vitally important book cover. Mark used his extensive design experience and expertise to produce an eye-catching print cover, bringing Jim's passion project to life. In Jim's own words, "I know they say you can't judge a book by its cover... but I hope with Mark's they do!"

Fans of 1984 or The Planet Of The Apes may want to check it out. *The Monkey State* is available to buy on Amazon.

They have now begun work on the cover for the more utopian second book in the trilogy.



If you know of any other members who deserve to be recognised for their achievements in the Square community, please do reach out to us at editorial@thesquareclub.com



As part of our members' circle feature, we introduce our readers to a stand-out Square Club member. In this issue, we had the pleasure of catching up with Bristol-based author Eve Hall.

Eve Hall's career path has been anything but conventional, from selling pygmy goats and running a wine shop on Christmas Steps to becoming an editor at Penguin and author. We sat down to chat about her journey, the world of publishing, and why Bristol will always feel like home.

MEMBERS' CIRCLE: EVE HALL

By Sophie Yardley

First up, Eve Hall, or should I say E.C. Nevin, can you tell me a bit more about your alias?

There is something about writing under a pseudonym that feels a bit more freeing. It started because I used to work in publishing and so know a fair few of the editors. When my agent sent my manuscript out to publishers on submission, I didn't want them to be swayed by knowing it was mine.

Writing, like any of the creative arts, can also feel quite exposing and it simply feels less embarrassing to put things out there when you have a slight distance.

I might use my real name for a project one day, but not yet.

What a career path you've had; goats, wine shops and the glamour of publishing houses! How have you found the journey?

Fun and confusing! Some bits were missteps (oh that wine shop era was – really something, I came in one morning and the keg of Sauvignon had flooded the shop. When I shut the place down, I sold most of the stock out the back of my car and took 20 litres of Merlot to a music festival).

I've always wanted to be an author though. I read constantly growing up and couldn't believe my luck when I got a job at Penguin. I have to pinch myself when I remember that writing stories is my actual job now.

I think the more things you do the less scary trying something new becomes. It might not work out, but there

are unlimited paths to try. You don't have to be fresh out of school – I was in my late twenties when I got my first editorial assistant job and still worked in a pub at night for quite a while.

You've moved between Bristol and London a few times – what is it about Bristol that keeps drawing you back?

Bristol will always be home, and I'm so lucky to be from such a fun city. I know a lot of Londoners who have moved here despite having no connection to the city at all. It is exciting, has amazing restaurants, beautiful countryside nearby, and you can walk to most places. It's a privilege to also have my roots and my family in such a cool place.

Saying that, I love London and there are so many opportunities there. I'll never be done with it.

Working in publishing at places like Penguin and Hachette must have been an experience. What was the biggest surprise about the industry from the inside?

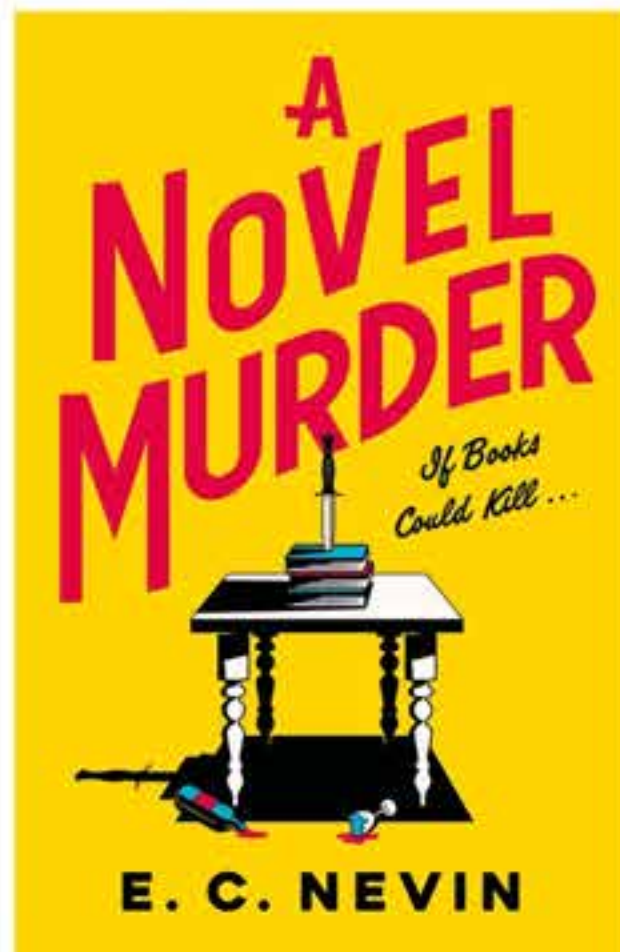
How chaotic it is. A lot of things are guesswork, everyone is underpaid and running on fumes, everything is late and panicked. It's brilliant, don't get me wrong, and there is certainly a bit of the glamour I expected in there somewhere, but there is also a lot of running around and crying in the art cupboard.

Another surprise is that you can never tell who is going to have a *don't you know who I am?* attitude. It's not linked to their level of fame and success.

What made you take the leap from editing other people's books to writing your own?

I had always wanted to do it, but just – never did. Some people work as editors in-house and write at the same time, but I never could. You have to spend so long staring at other people's stories on a screen in the daytime, I couldn't possibly do it in the evening and on weekends too. Being an editor in-house means you are expected to read submissions in your free time as well, and have a social life.

I left my job as Editorial Director and started freelance



editing. That's when I got a bit of my life back and could organise my time in a new way. Suddenly, I could write undisturbed, for large chunks of the day, and edit other people's work around it. When I got a three-book contract for my new series I was able to stop editing altogether, though I do a few projects now and again if they sound interesting.

You're currently writing a cosy crime series—what drew you to that genre?

My last in-house job was Editorial Director for Crime and Thriller, so I read a lot of crime fiction. I learnt so much about it that it felt natural to write in this area too. Crime fiction is so varied and broad, it has something for everyone. Part of what makes it great is that the stories have such a natural shape and pace, and in a way make a neat sort of sense in an otherwise senseless time.

As for the cosy aspect – I try to inject humour into most things I write, and this genre lends itself to that. It's escapist. It's fun. It seemed to work well with the plot. Basically, it just happened.

*Your upcoming book *A Novel Murder* is out in June—what can you tell us about it?*

The first book in the series sees falling author Jane Hepburn arrive at crime-fiction festival Killer Lines – a place where authors, publishers, agents and book lovers will congregate for a few days to drink, talk, read and listen to their favourite writers answer questions.

On the first day, she finds her own literary agent's body with

a knife in the chest. From there, she teams up with the hapless agency intern and the celebrated debut writer to solve the crime, meeting various writers, agents, critics and readers along the way. It is absolutely a crime novel, but mostly it's just good fun.

If people want to check out a crime fiction festival in real life, Bristol has its very own! Check out CrimeFest that's happening in Bristol in May (www.crimfest.com)

Do you have a favourite part of the writing process, or is it all just varying levels of chaos?

The best bit is the very beginning. Everything makes sense, nothing contradicts each other yet, there is no real plot to tie you in knots. It's ages until your deadline. Why not take a few days off? You've got months! It's all going so well! I'll just write this scene which sounds good. I'm sure it'll make sense later. Yeah I can knock off at 3pm to go to the pub, why not?

From there it's a sharp downhill collapse into tears, anger, frustration, rewriting, and alcohol.

What's your ideal writing setup—are you a coffee shop person, or do you need complete solitude? Do you have any favourite writing spots in the city?

I move around a lot because otherwise I get into a procrastination slump. I often write while walking on a treadmill at home – it keeps me focused. Otherwise I write in Mokoko on Wapping Wharf, or in The Square Club of course!



Bristol is full of creative people doing unconventional jobs—what advice would you give to someone wanting to set out on their own path?

If you really want to do something, make your life work around it. I learnt so much by having a job in the same field (being an editor), but then ultimately had to change to freelance editing in order to make writing actually work for me.

Also, don't just do it for yourself if you want it to be a job rather than a hobby. If you want to create, educate yourself and create something that people will want to pay money for that also chimes with who you are and what you want to do.

*What's next for you after *A Novel Murder*? Will you be diving into more writing*

or taking a well-deserved holiday?

I've already written the book that comes after *A Novel Murder* and I'm waiting for the edits back. Dreading that, actually. I've just started the third book in the series while I wait, and I'm also working on adapting another novel I've written into a script.

I do have a lot of holidays though, don't worry about that, and I'm getting married in June. So I'm busy, but with generally delightful things.

A Novel Murder publishes 19th June, and is available for pre-order: www.waterstones.com/book/a-novel-murder/e-c-nevin/9781785306068

ewewrites.co.uk

HowTheLightGetsIn

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23RD-26TH MAY

CRIME FEST

As Bristol's long-running CrimeFest comes to an end in May, Ann Chadwick explores why murder has become a national obsession, from our bookshelves to our screens.

By Ann Chadwick

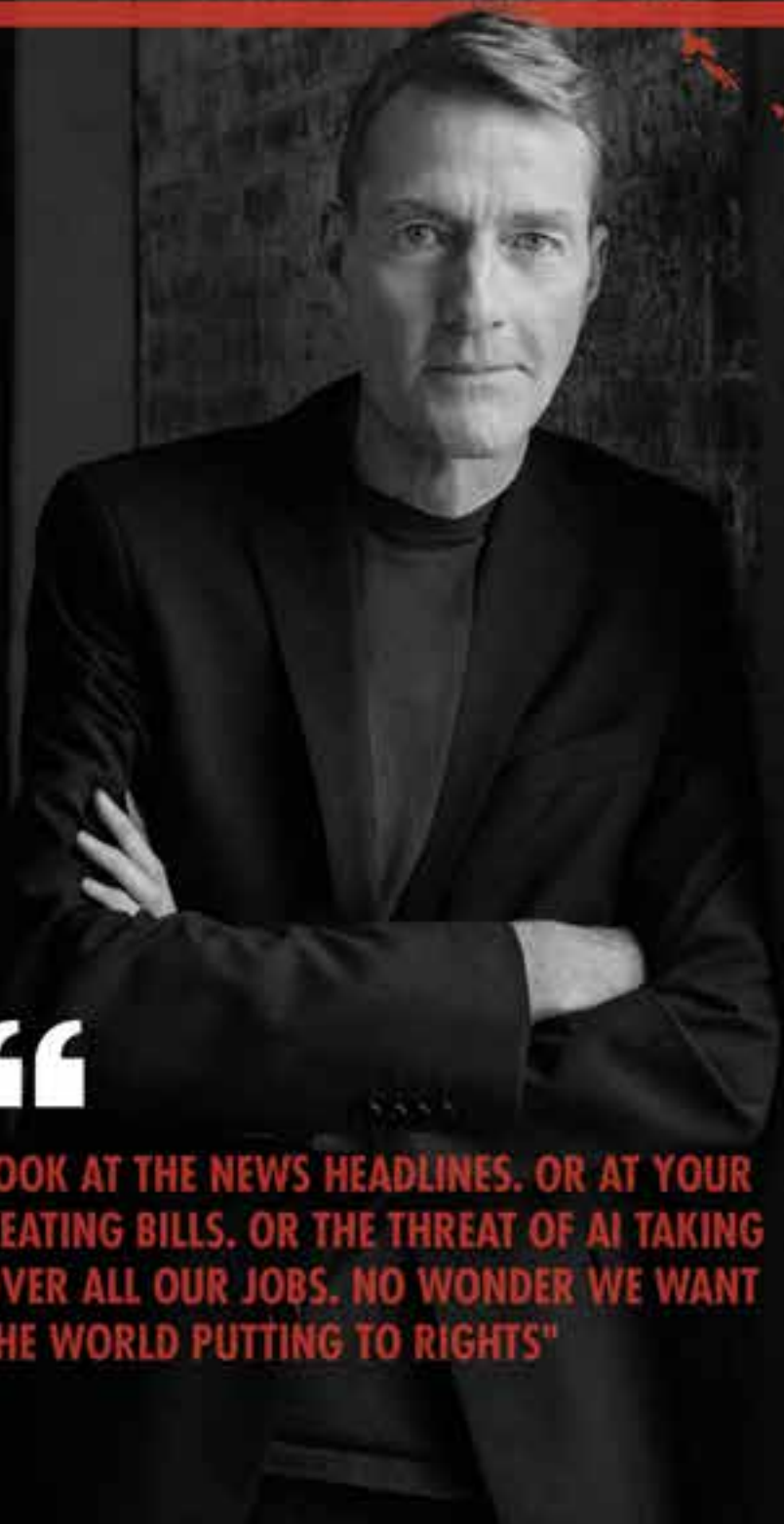
CrimeFest's roll call of authors can feel a bit like flicking through the Radio Times TV Guide. Last year, Bristol's long-standing crime fiction convention, which first began in 2008, welcomed authors such as Laura Lippman (Apple TV adapted her novel, *Lady in the Lake*, starring Natalie Portman) and the original trailblazer, Lynda La Plante, who set up her own TV production company after *Prime Suspect* was released in 1991, making a star of Helen Mirren.

This year, brothers Lee and Andrew Child who co-write the *Jack Reacher* series, headline CrimeFest. With a book selling somewhere in the world every nine seconds, maybe you're one of the 100 million people in need of an addictive *Reacher* fix? Readers mainline a book a year.

Reacher was adapted to screen starring Tom Cruise, and is now streaming for the small screen via Amazon Prime starring Alan Ritchson. It all began when Jim Grant (Lee's real name) spent £3.99 on pencils and paper at his kitchen table when, aged 40, he was made redundant and began to write. It's the stuff of Hollywood movies. A boy from Coventry ends up flying in helicopters with Tom Cruise (he's had cameos in each of the *Reacher* films, as well as the Amazon series).

“

LOOK AT THE NEWS HEADLINES. OR AT YOUR HEATING BILLS. OR THE THREAT OF AI TAKING OVER ALL OUR JOBS. NO WONDER WE WANT THE WORLD PUTTING TO RIGHTS”



In my previous interviews with Lee, he's explained why this genre has, literally, got a stranglehold on popular culture: "Everybody really wants a fair world," Lee said. "Everybody really wants to do the right thing, but generally speaking we can't because we're either physically incapable, inhibited or intimidated. Or maybe the unfairness is at work, where if you make waves, you're going to get fired, so people live with a kind of buzz of frustration all the time. They want to do the right thing but they can't so they turn to the *Reacher* books. *Reacher* does what they want to do, and they find that very consoling, a compensation – real life isn't like that, but it can be in fiction."

Reacher soothes a universal nerve in a world where Lee says everyone is insecure in a 'big culture of anxiety'. Look at the news headlines. Or at your heating bills. Or the threat of AI taking over all our jobs. No wonder we want the world putting to rights.

Steve Mosby, who writes under the pen name Alex North, is also heading to the city for the mini-crimewave. Like Lee, Steve has been coming to CrimeFest for years. The Leeds author has written ten novels as Steve Mosby, then, in 2019 he released a book under the pen name, Alex North: *The Whisper Man*. It became a Sunday Times and New York Times bestseller, translated into over 30 languages.

Last month, it was announced that none other than Robert De Niro will star in an adaptation of *The Whisper Man* for Netflix, produced by the famed Russo brothers. "I had to read the email twice. It felt a little surreal," Steve said on being told De Niro would star in his book adaptation. "I had to keep it quiet, but that was fine. People are working hard behind the scenes, and I wouldn't want to mess anything up. It was nice to have good news that I knew would come out eventually."

Steve is a fan. "Aside from all the obvious

classics, I'm a huge fan of *Midnight Run*. That's a perfect film to me, and he's brilliant in it. The scene with his estranged daughter is beautifully done, but the whole thing is great." The process of page to screen took years: "I signed the original deal for *The Whisper Man* close to seven years ago now, so it's been a while. I think you have to put the whole process out of your mind and see what happens as time passes."

Lee Child has cameos in all his screen adaptations, but Steve said his involvement has been pretty hands-off. "I've spoken to the director, and I've been asked for my thoughts on various drafts of the screenplay, which I've given, even



though I know it's not my medium. That's a nice level of involvement. You have to accept that certain things are going to change. I've been very lucky in that the people involved have captured everything that was important to me about the story, and I couldn't ask for more than that."

His fourth Alex North book *The Man Made of Smoke* was published in May.

Steve believes the genre lends itself well to the screen due to its page-turning qualities: "The crime genre relies upon putting great characters under pressure in extreme situations. There's a natural momentum to the stories, and they can deal with very weighty themes. But also, crime readers are really smart: as writers we have to work hard to keep them wrong-footed,

surprised, and wanting more, which is ideal for the screen in this day and age."

Conventions like CrimeFest are also where screen magic happens. The Welsh-Canadian author Cathy Ace described how attending CrimeFest changed her life.

At the 2018 event, she was hanging out with the author Martina Cole, who introduced her to her friend, Barry Ryan. Cathy said: "I had no idea who he was and we nattered about this and that. He asked me about my writing and, well, I don't know many authors who don't get passionate about their characters and stories – so I dare say I went on a bit. Then we met again down at the bar, more chat. It was at this point that I discovered he is the joint MD of the indie production company Free@LastTV, which brought the *Agatha Raisin* series to our TV screens." At CrimeFest a year later, Barry told her he wanted to option (secure the rights for adaptation) her books.

Cathy and Barry will both attend this year and announced that the actor Eve Myles (*Keeping Faith*, *Torchwood*) will star in the adaptation of her *Cait Morgan Mysteries*. If that wasn't enough, CrimeFest features a panel devoted to Le Carré, featuring his son the film producer Simon Cornwell, who is currently bringing the second series of the Tom Hiddleston hit, *The Night Manager* to our screens. You'll also find Barbara Nadel, whose much loved *Inspector Cetin Ikmen* series was adapted for TV as *The Turkish Detective* starring Haluk Bilginer, which aired on BBC2 in June 2024.

As it bows out from Bristol, the final ever CrimeFest is set to celebrate the remarkable legacy of the genre that's changed our cultural landscape, and dominated the small and silver screen, because in our troubled times, we all need a hero.

The final CrimeFest takes place 15-18 May at the Mercure Bristol Grand Hotel.

35 Years The Square Club

Celebrate With Us!



35%
Off*

Celebrate 35 Years

Bristol's premier **private members' club for creatives** is celebrating 35 years of excellence, having served as a vibrant hub for the city's creatives since 1990.

You're invited to celebrate with The Square Club this April with a delicious 35% off your bill in the restaurant, all month long!

Reserve your spot today to indulge in the city's freshest seasonal cuisine.

Restaurant open to non members.

Monday to Saturday
12pm - 2pm & 6pm - 8.30pm
*T&Cs apply



January

Tuesday 01 April | 17.30-20.00
Bristol Creative Industry Freelancer Drinks
■ All are welcome to the BCI freelancer networking drinks, open to freelancers as well as anyone who regularly engages with freelancers!

Thursday 03 April | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at Square Works!

Monday 07 April | 18.00-20.30
Dffmt Rebel Meet Up
■ Open to all, the Dffmt Rebel Meet-up is a monthly casual networking for founders and creators powered by business mentors Dffmt.

Wednesday 09 April | 10.30-12.30
Motherhood Community Meet Up
■ A space to help you nurture yourself as an individual, explore transitions into motherhood, and to make like-minded friends.

Wednesday 09 April | 18.30-20.30
Kick Get What You Get
■ Bristol's favourite creative technology event - Think creative AI, digital strategy, genius campaigns, web 3 and more.

Thursday 10 April | 08.50-11.30
Linking the value in your business
■ Experts from hgic, GS Verde and Barclays explore different business's valuation drivers, ways you can maximise the value of your business and what buyers are looking for.

Monday 14 April | 19.00-21.00
HUMANS Talk
■ Honest, Uplifting, Motivational, Aspirational - Join some incredible HUMANS for an evening of inspiration.

Thursday 17 April | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at The Square Club!

Thursday 24 April | 12.30-14.00
The Bristol Creative Industry Lunch
■ A networking lunch for members of Bristol Creative Industries.

Sunday 27 April | 18.30-20.30
Square Comedy Club
■ Come and check out a variety of Bristol talent in the intimate setting of the lower deck cocktail bar.

Monday 28 April | 18.00-21.00

Bristol Business Connections

■ The City Girl Network are bringing together all genders in the diverse business community of Bristol for relaxed networking drinks.

Tuesday 29 April | 18.00-21.00
Fuckup Night
■ Most people fuck up at some point... and live to tell the tale. Come along to hear stories of professional failure and growth.

May

Thursday 01 May | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at Square Works!

Monday 05 May | 18.00-20.30
Dffmt Rebel Meet Up
■ Open to all, the Dffmt Rebel Meet-up is a monthly casual networking for founders and creators powered by business mentors Dffmt.

Tuesday 06 May | 14.00-16.00
PCN Networking Drinks
■ Join the Private Client Network for an exclusive ladies only event at the Square Club in Bristol.

Tuesday 06 May | 17.30-20.00
RTS South West Mixer
■ Come along for a mixer evening to meet other members of the RTS community, along with members of their committee.

Monday 12 May | 19.00-21.00
HUMANS Talk
■ Honest, Uplifting, Motivational, Aspirational - Join some incredible HUMANS for an evening of inspiration.

Monday 15 May | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at The Square Club!

Sunday 18 May | 18.30-20.30
Square Comedy Club
■ Come and check out a variety of Bristol talent in the intimate setting of the lower deck cocktail bar.

Thursday 22 May | 12.30-14.00
The Bristol Creative Industry Lunch
■ A networking lunch for members of Bristol Creative Industries.

Tuesday 27 May | 20.00-22.00
Bristol Square Poetry Night
■ With live music and poetry for some fantastic talent from the South West, its shaping up to be a

What's On

must see event on the Music and Poetry calendar.

June

Monday 02 June | 18.00-20.30
Dffmt Rebel Meet Up
■ Open to all, the Dffmt Rebel Meet-up is a monthly casual networking for founders and creators powered by business mentors Dffmt.

Thursday 05 June | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at Square Works!

Thursday 09 June | 19.00-21.00
HUMANS Talk
■ Honest, Uplifting, Motivational, Aspirational - Join some incredible HUMANS for an evening of inspiration.

Tuesday 10 June | 17.30-20.30
Bristol Creative Industry Freelancer Drinks
■ All are welcome to the BCI freelancer networking drinks, open to freelancers as well as anyone who regularly engages with freelancers!

Thursday 19 June | 17.00-18.00
Members' Drinks
■ Get to know other members of our community with drinks on us at The Square Club!

Sunday 22 June | 18.30-20.30
Square Comedy Club
■ Come and check out a variety of Bristol talent in the intimate setting of the lower deck cocktail bar.

Thursday 26 June | 12.30-14.00
The Bristol Creative Industry Lunch
■ A networking lunch for members of Bristol Creative Industries.

Repeat Events

Every Friday | 12.10-12.55
Luxurious Plates with Charlie
■ Join us on Friday lunchtimes for Charlie's energy-boosting and fun-filled Plates class.



Scan QR code
for additional events in the
programme and further details.



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BY THE SQUARE CLUB

Created by The Square Club, 15 Berkeley Square, Bristol, BS8 1HB

Membership applications can be submitted at:
thesquareclub.com/private-members-club

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