

FEBRUARY 2023

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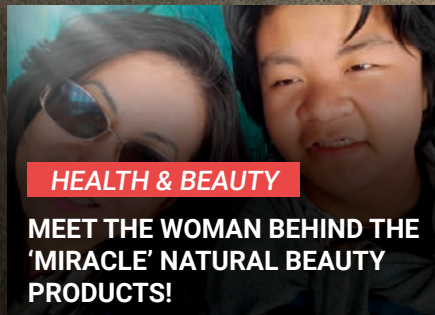
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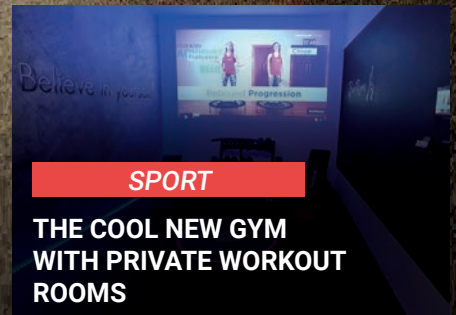
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A FEW WORDS FROM OUR EDITOR

Hey! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Justin Hopper and I own La Vida Liverpool magazine, radio show and marketing/PR business. Firstly, thank you so much for reading and supporting my mission to make the world a better place through positive media -- without an audience, my work would have a limited impact.



To fill you in on the journey, I launched La Vida Liverpool in April 2018 -- 6 weeks after my father passed away. My aim was to create a positive media platform that showcases and celebrates all the amazing people, businesses, charities and events in our wonderful region and beyond. I told my father I would do great things through this and make him proud -- he told me to just make myself proud but I still stand by my word.



I have been working tirelessly these past 5 years and am very proud to say I've helped thousands of people through this thing I have created. I work long hours but it is not work -- it is a cause and purpose that I love so very much. Every word has an energy attached to it and whereas the mainstream media mostly promotes fear, anger, hatred and division, La Vida Liverpool strives to promote faith, hope, love and unity.



What started out as an online magazine has now grown to include a weekly radio show, La Vida Liverpool Live, on New Brighton Radio. On the show I have had the pleasure of interviewing many amazing clients and friends -- capturing their story in a one hour interview -- and have had some shows reach No.1 in the global Mixcloud charts. This printed magazine you are reading now is the latest evolution of the positive media juggernaut that is showing no signs of slowing down.

This is indeed very exciting times for La Vida Liverpool as I introduce you to the first ever quarterly printed magazine -- delivered to my clients' venues and to 1000 different high traffic places in the region. I invite you to choose positive media -- to have a look around and witness the countless people in our community doing great things to make the world a better place, as I am trying to do via La Vida Liverpool.



I have been continuing to collaborate with global charity, TUFF (The Unity Of Faiths Foundation, page 60), to help spread the good word about their projects -- notably creating the Liverpool International Song Contest and creating an exciting new partnership between Liverpool and Nashville. Thanks to them, I was recently introduced to Mayor Joanne Anderson who was aware of La Vida Liverpool and was very supportive of my mission to spread positive news.



I must take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me and supported me along the way to get to this point -- there are too many of you to mention. A very special thanks to Alex Sloan and Levi Osborne from Limitless Lifestyle Community (page 80) who have transformed my life through their personal training company -- the truth is I would not be at this point without them.

Prior to August 2022 I was doing great things but didn't practise enough self-care -- drinking and partying too much and living a very unhealthy lifestyle. Ever since joining their first of its kind personal training community, I have been working out and working hard on myself. This has resulted in so much more energy, focus, clarity and drive. I am now ready to take this positive media concept to the next level. Thank you, guys.



I am very happy to say that this new found self love and self care has resulted in La Vida Liverpool becoming a multi award winning business. Recently winning the UK Enterprise Awards for Social Impact and the Manchester & North West Prestige Awards for Best Community Magazine Publication has motivated me to do even more great work -- the bigger La Vida Liverpool can become, the more people I can help.

Through La Vida Liverpool I offer positive articles that capture the gold in things -- showcased on the online magazine website, on social media and now through this printed magazine. I take great pride in the fact that my positive stories are regularly covered by local, national and international press -- how much better would the world be if the mainstream media covered more of these?

So, kick back, relax and take some time out to enjoy some of the fantastic people, businesses, charities and events our region has to offer. Every word has an energy attached to it so, much like food, be careful about the words (energies) you choose to use and consume. I hope you enjoy this first ever La Vida Liverpool printed magazine -- the first of many -- and you can expect another dose of positive vibes in May 2023. Much love, Justin x

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FOOD & DRINK



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MAGAZINE



FOOD & DRINK

PINA LOCA: BROMBOROUGH'S HIDDEN GEM WITH 5 STAR REVIEWS!

Here at La Vida Liverpool we love showcasing new places to eat and drink and we've found an absolute gem for you! Ever since opening on Allport Lane, Bromborough, in November 2021, Pina Loca has received countless 5 star reviews. We checked it out one Wednesday evening to discover what all the fuss is about....



What's Pina Loca about?

Pina Loca is not your typical Mexican with the standard quesadillas, burritos and tacos. Instead, at Pina Loca you'll find colourful, flavoursome and creative dishes in a sumptuously decorated restaurant — all Mexican themed and with their own unique twist. With a super cool soundtrack, its relaxed open plan style get you feeling good as soon as you walk in.

Pina Loca is the brainchild of Babul Miah — a man with years of experience working for top restaurant brands such as Karma and Mowgli. His new concept, subject to an incredible refit (it used to be a newsagents) is going down a storm and is open 7 days a week. Oh — and an intimate new cocktail bar is coming soon upstairs!

What's on the menu?

Pina Loca has a refined menu featuring mouth watering Mexican dishes — from small plates and tacos to bowls and burritos — all with their own intriguing twist. It's a beautiful cross between relaxed, fun dining and high end, top quality cuisine in a stylish yet not snobby environment. If you're after a bargain they do 3 small plates for £12 12pm-4pm every day and if you're after a bevvvy their tequila and cocktails range is banging!



Our visit

We visited on a Wednesday evening to sample a bit of everything they offer. We started with their signature nachos, unique in their own way, before moving on to small plates and tacos. We opted for 5 small plates of pina wings, blackened jalapenos, avocado salad, pea tostada and elote and 2 baja fish and calabaza tacos. A spiced Strawberry Margarita was the perfect way to finish.

We love to try places out before recommending them, even if they already have many 5 star Facebook and Trip Advisor

reviews, and we can honestly say Pina Loca did not disappoint one bit. We arrived at 5pm, loving the boss soundtrack, great environment and top notch food, and the place was full by 7pm on a Wednesday night — it's hardly a surprise to be fair.



Why we love Pina Loca....

Here at La Vida Liverpool we love telling you about new places and amazing places — in Pina Loca we've found somewhere new and most definitely amazing! From the soundtrack to the decor and environment and from the food to the cocktails, they've created something very special in Bromborough that's worth travelling to. The service from Babul and the team is incredible too. Very highly recommended!



Pina Loca / 24 Allport Lane, Bromborough, Wirral, CH62 7HP / 0151 245 3938

For the menu and to book visit pinaloca.co.uk

Check out Pina Loca on [FACEBOOK!](#)

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FOOD & DRINK

BOOTLEGGERS: ONE OF WIRRAL'S BEST KEPT SECRETS!

In this feature we check out Bootleggers — one of Wirral's best kept secrets when it comes to seriously top notch food and drink! Soon to celebrate its third birthday, the family run restaurant and hangout out Seabank Road, New Brighton, is very highly rated amongst those who know, with countless 5 star reviews, and here we find out why....



What's Bootleggers about?

Despite opening just before lockdowns, Bootleggers has developed an incredible reputation as one of the true gems of Wirral when it comes to great food, drink and somewhere cool to hang out. With their own on-site bakery that produces their own bread without additives and divine food including gourmet Sunday roasts, it's a winner if you're looking for somewhere new to try off the beaten track!



Located on Seabank Road, just down the road from New Brighton's busy hotspots, Bootleggers has a great atmosphere with top service and locals love it — hence the countless 5 star reviews, Trip Advisor Certificate Of Excellence and Restaurant Guru Award. Bootleggers is owned by Cory and Germaine, fabulous couple, and is open Weds-Sat 12pm-10pm and Sunday 10am-6pm.



What's on the menu?

If you're after quality and variety, you've got it at Bootleggers! The lunch menu is available Weds-Sat 12pm-5pm and serves homemade delights such as chilli, quesadillas, burritos, boss burgers, loaded fries and more — with loads of vegan options available.

During the evenings they have an incredible dinner menu — with dishes such as wings, chicken strips, ribs, burritos, pasta, mouth-watering steaks, fish specials and more. They also offer creative cocktails and it's

the perfect place to chill on Sundays — with American style Sunday Brunch from 10am and gourmet Sunday Roast Dinners to die for!



Why we love Bootleggers....

Here at La Vida Liverpool, we love showcasing the gems, the best kept secrets and the cracking independents that offer the very best food, drink, service and atmosphere. Bootleggers ticks all those boxes and whether it's midweek lunch, evening dining, Sunday brunch, gourmet Sunday Roasts or just somewhere to hang out, we highly recommend this New Brighton gem!



Bootleggers / 237 Seabank Road, Wallasey, CH45 1HE / 0151 792 6885

******BIG NEWS: Cory has now opened Nickel City over the road -- an amazing new deli and cocktail bar!******

For more info, the menu and more visit bootleggersnewbrighton.com or call 0151 792 6885!

Check out Bootleggers on FACEBOOK!

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FOOD & DRINK

LIVERPOOL CHEF SHORTLISTED FOR CHEF OF THE YEAR AT NATIONAL AWARDS!

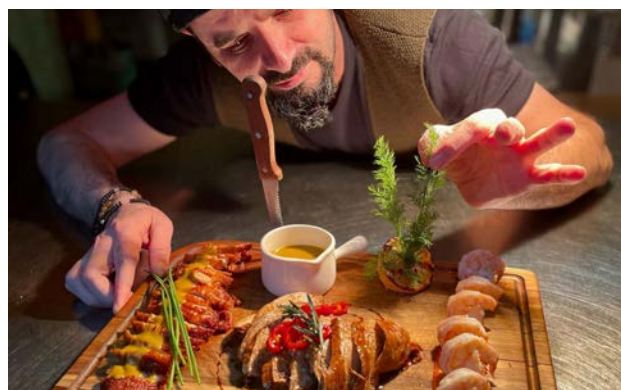
A Liverpool chef has been shortlisted for Chef Of The Year at the British Kebab Awards. Turkish Masterchef Kemal Coskuncay has been recognised as one of the 10 best kebab chefs in the country and will travel to London on 28th February to take part in the prestigious awards ceremony.



The British Kebab Awards is now in its 11th year and attracts a host of celebrities, prominent politicians, journalists and most importantly the nation's hard-working restaurant workers for an evening of celebration. The kebab industry is worth over £2.2 billion to the UK economy and the awards are sponsored by Just Eat. Turkish Masterchef Kemal Coskuncay is based in South Liverpool and is the owner of Private Delicacies — a private dining



and consultation company. Masterchef Kemal works with some of Liverpool's top restaurants including Al Dente on Lark Lane — a restaurant that has consistently been in the Top 10 restaurants in Liverpool on Trip Advisor.



A lifelong Liverpool fan, Masterchef Kemal moved to the city in February 2020 following much success in London, working at multi award winning restaurants such as Marrakesh in Leicester Square and winning a 'Best Foreign Chef In London' award. A member of the International Gastronomy Federation, his career has been as colourful as his dishes.



Masterchef Kemal has also manages Al Dente beach restaurant in Didim, a multi-

award winning restaurant in Altinkum, Turkey, that has won Best Organic Turkish Food and Best Resort Restaurant awards. Now settled in Liverpool with his wife and three children where he spends most of his time, Kemal has set the city alight with his culinary prowess.



Kemal said: *"It is a real honour to be recognised in such a way. I have been working very hard throughout my career and take great pride in what I do. I started out as a dishwasher and kitchen porter in Bodrum but learnt from the chefs, worked my way up and eventually became Young Chef Of The Year."*

He continued: *"I am what is called a New Generation chef and I blend traditional Turkish methods and recipes with my own modern twists. Whether it be kebabs, tomahawk steaks or seafood dishes, I use only the finest ingredients. I am very passionate both as a chef and restaurant consultant and it feels great to be recognised by the British Kebab Awards for my work."*



The 2023 awards features judges such as LBC Broadcaster James O'Brien, Directors of companies such as Octopus Energy and Makro/Booker and a host of celebrities and MPs. Backed by the likes of Sajid Javid, the British Kebab Awards has become one of the most respected awards in UK hospitality, with kebabs having undergone a transformation in public perception.



Liverpool will be rooting for Masterchef Kemal Coskuncay – a person who has become very much loved by the city's diners. Masterchef Kemal has endeared himself to Scousers both for his personality and culinary creations but also for his outreach work – delivering hundreds of meals to local vulnerable people and teaching children how to cook at The Florrie.

Kemal summarised: *"I love Liverpool and I have always wanted to live here. I am a big Liverpool F.C fan, as are my children, so serving food for Liverpool legends such as Ian Callaghan has been like a dream. I love the people here – they are friendly and really appreciate great food and service. I'm so happy to be recognised as one of the best chefs in the country but to be recognised by Scousers is even more special to me."*



Masterchef Kemal Coskuncay has been nominated for Chef Of The Year at the 11th annual British Kebab Awards, hosted at Westminster Bridge Ballroom on 28th February 2023. Masterchef Kemal offers private dining events through his company, Private Delicacies, and is chef and consultant for some of Liverpool's best restaurants such as Al Dente on Lark Lane.

To vote for Kemal visit voting.britishkebabawards.com/kemal-coskuncay! To enquire about Masterchef Kemal's private dining and events visit privatedelicacies.co.uk ! To book at Al Dente call 0151 727 2111!



FOOD & DRINK

RESTAURANT FAMED FOR THE BEST PIZZA IN ENGLAND CELEBRATES 10 YEARS!

Liverpool's multi award winning restaurant, Amalia, is celebrating its 10 year anniversary and has recently been given a stylish new look. The family friendly Italian restaurant, opened by Miguel and Antonio in 2012, has consistently been a firm favourite amongst Liverpool diners – with countless 5 star reviews over the years.



Nestled away in Campbell Square just off Duke Street and Hanover Street, Amalia offers top quality Italian cuisine and service with a smile in a fun, relaxed environment. It's a popular destination for families and large groups celebrating special occasions and the courtyard is a big hit in the warmer months.



The 10 year milestone has been reached with many awards in the bag. Amalia has won Best Pizza In England twice and Best Team in England in the National Italian Awards, whilst Antonio was Chef Of The Year in 2018. In addition to this, the restaurant has won multiple Liverpool

Lifestyle Awards, the Liverpool Food & Drink Festival twice and The Positive Award.



To celebrate their 10th birthday, the restaurant has had a gorgeous new makeover – with features such as a selfie swing, floral wall and a stunning mural of Rome. There's also a special lunch offer of a pizza or pasta dish plus a drink for just £10.95 Mon-Fri 12pm-5pm and their famous 'Calzone Challenge' is still a big hit amongst the braver diners.

Owner Miguel Quepo said: *"It feels great to reach 10 years as a Liverpool restaurant. There are many fantastic restaurants in this city and we are a little hidden off the beaten track so it's an achievement we're very proud of. It's taken a lot of hard work and consistency."*



He continued: *"The staff have a crucial role to play in our success over the years and we've reached this milestone due to the environment they create. We're a very family orientated restaurant with a very*

fun and friendly atmosphere — of course, we pride ourselves on top quality cuisine but it's the staff who make the experience magical for our customers."

Miguel and Antonio call their team and customers 'La Famalia' and one of the key reasons for their ongoing success is the people who continue to return to their 'favourite restaurant'. Community is an important part of the Amalia ethos and they supplied many free meals to NHS staff during the pandemic, as well as being regular sponsors of the Liverpool International Tennis Tournament.



Miguel summarized: *"We've created something very special here and so many celebrations and good times have been had over the last 10 years. So many birthdays, engagements and celebrations have taken place here and we like to think it's more than just a restaurant — it's a family."*

Amalia is located in Campbell Square, just off Duke Street and Hanover Street, and is open 7 days a week. The multi award winning restaurant is celebrating its 10 year anniversary and has recently had a stunning new makeover — with a lunch offer of a pizza or pasta dish plus a drink for just £10.95 Mon-Fri 12pm-5pm available.

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MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

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MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

ELECTRO-POP TITANS LADYTRON RETURN TO LIVERPOOL FOR HOMECOMING GIG!

When you speak about bands from Liverpool who have reached global stardom, 'The Beatles' is naturally the auto-response. However, for the past 23 years Ladytron have been quietly going about their own global domination of the electro-pop scene – with an eye-watering portfolio of achievements – and they return to Liverpool at Camp & Furnace on 11th March 2023.

Formed in Liverpool in 1999, the alternative fab four consists of local lads Daniel Hunt and Reuben Wu alongside the enigmatic Helen Marnie and Mira Aroyo. During their reign as one of the most influential electro-pop outfits of all time, they have collaborated with the likes of Christina Aguilera, Placebo, Blondie, Bloc Party and Nine Inch Nails, to name a few.



Industry respect for Ladytron is huge and their six albums have been met with critical acclaim, meanwhile they have performed at Coachella, Creamfields and Sydney Opera House and alongside the likes of Bjork and Goldfrapp.

Despite the foursome all living in different parts of the world, they are showing no signs of slowing down with their new album release and forthcoming tour.

Time's Arrow is Ladytron's 7th studio album,

launching in January 2023, and rather aptly it will be showcased in Liverpool alongside some of their greatest hits on 11th March at Camp & Furnace.



A true homecoming if ever there was one, the huge Liverpool gig is being hosted by Evol – the legendary local events promoters that Daniel Hunt and Rueben Wu helped start 20 years ago.

Courtesy of Evol's main man, Revo Ziganda, we enjoyed a quickfire Q & A with Daniel Hunt prior to the March homecoming show to talk about Ladytron's epic history spanning four decades.

Here's our interview with him and all you need to know about the huge gig at Camp & Furnace....

LVL: So, Daniel, first of all how are you and how's life living in Brazil?

DANIEL: *Right now I'm back in Liverpool for Christmas. The good things about Brazil are always there, regardless of problems that exist anywhere. For a foreigner it is an easy place to live well if you know how. Many don't figure it out. The atmosphere there is obviously far better since the election. There is finally hope for the future now after a very dark period. Brazil is back.*

LVL: What's 2022 been like for Ladytron?

What have you guys been up to?

DANIEL: *We have been preparing for this album release all year. Also we celebrated 20 years of our second album, Light & Magic, in the summer which held a lot of memories.*

LVL: **Tell us about this new album then — what can people expect if they haven't already listened to it?**

DANIEL: *It might be our best. I won't know until it is out. Music sounds different once others have heard it.*

LVL: **It must feel great playing back in Liverpool again! When was the last time and how do you feel about this homecoming?**



DANIEL: *This will only be our third Liverpool show in 15 years, I think. We last played in 2018, after a long break. I'm excited of course. It is emotional to come back and play in my city after being away so long.*

LVL: **What can we expect from this mega homecoming and new album gig?**

DANIEL: *We are beginning to put it all together now. The hits, of course. But we want to try some new approaches this time around, aside from a few new songs, also some we have not played live for a long time, or ever. But we are thinking about the show as a whole, working again with video artist, long time friend and collaborator Sam Whiel.*

LVL: **Obviously local promoters Evol are putting this on and I understand you were an integral part of starting Evol with Revo some 20 years or so ago. How do you feel the music industry changed during that time?**

DANIEL: *Yes we started Evol with Revo in 2003 after getting back off tour for our second album and wanting something to keep us occupied.*

He developed it from that party, via our involvement in Korova, into a big independent promoter of shows and festivals. Very proud of what he has achieved with it.

The industry has changed massively. We saw the very end of the old order when we first began, an intermediate phase which was then assumed to permanent, and how things are now. There are positives and negatives in such changes, of course, but it is just a case of adapting to them.

LVL: **What have been your most memorable moments and gigs over the past 23 years of Ladytron?**

DANIEL: *Some shows certainly stand out. Sydney Opera House, Bogota, Coachella.*

LVL: **What are the plans for the future after this big Liverpool homecoming?**

DANIEL: *We will be playing a few dates in the US in May. The record is going well so more shows elsewhere in the world I guess.*



Ladytron are returning to Liverpool on 11th March 2023 for a huge homecoming gig at Camp & Furnace — showcasing their greatest hits and new album material. The event is being hosted by leading local music promoters, EVOL, and tickets are available via multiple platforms.

Ladytron / Camp & Furnace, Liverpool / 11th March 2023

For tickets visit: www.seetickets.com/event/ladytron/camp-furnace/2431649

MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL RETURNS FOR 10TH YEAR!

Big news for jazz fans of the North West, as Liverpool International Jazz Festival returns to Liverpool Hope University's Capstone Theatre for its 10th year! Once again, the Liverpool theatre plays host to a jazz extravaganza — featuring some incredible award winning international artists spanning a range of genres from Indo-jazz to Afro-funk to classical! Here's the schedule for this year's festival....

Thurs 23rd Feb 2023 (7.30pm): Milap Indo Jazz Club



With original music, new improvisations and the collective harmony and groove of two genres, the band brings together some of England's top Indian and Jazz music artists in a performance curated for LIJF 2023.

This is the foremost contemporary collaboration between Indian and Jazz music in England today and is the result of ten years of creativity between the professionals of Milap and the National Youth Jazz Collective. Expect a truly magical experience with positive vibes, beautiful interaction and highly creative musical energy!

Fri 24th Feb 2023 (7.30pm): Devils Of Moko



Devils Of Moko consists of Dominic J Marshall on piano and synth (Dominic J Marshall Trio, The Cinematic Orchestra), Mulele Matondo on bass (Kongo Dia Ntotila) and Sam Gardner on drums (Septabeat, Samadhi Quintet). Their music is a collective melting pot that captures all of their individual styles.

With the Western musical structure of Mulele's grooving Congolese rhythms and sonic stories, Sam's explorations of electronic music, drum & bass and production and the soulful jazz melodies of Dominic's piano playing, the trio's music has an uplifting and soul busting sound. Music without boundaries, Devils Of Moko are experimental, exciting and electric!

Sat 25th Feb 2023 (1pm): Dock In Absolute



Dock In Absolute is a stellar trio from Luxembourg composed of Jean-Philippe Koch on piano, Arne Wiegand on bass and Victor Kraus on drums. Built around Koch's

original compositions, the trio's music fuses different styles from progressive jazz to classical and rock elements. The compositions are sparkling, varying, forceful, pressing, rich in twists and turns in mood.

The group brought its first album out in 2017, under the Label CAM JAZZ and the second one in 2019. The third album is planned for 2023. DIA has been named the "Export Artist of the Year 2017 and 2019" by music:LX as they are the most active band in Luxembourg. The band's latest album has been listed in Jazzit Magazine Awards "100 Greatest Albums of the Year".

Sat 25th Feb 2023 (7.30pm): Shez Raja ft. Tony Kofi



Voted one of the 'hottest bass players in the world' by readers of Bass Player magazine, Shez Raja is renowned for his high energy live shows, unique Indo jazzfunk sound and global star collaborations with Mike Stern, Randy Brecker, Trilok Gurtu and Wayne Krantz.

Following spectacular performances at leading venues including Ronnie Scott's, the Jazz Cafe and at major international festivals, Shez and his band have amassed a big following with a reputation as one of the most entertaining live acts on the scene today.

Tony Kofi is a British Jazz multi-instrumentalist born of Ghanaian parents, a player of the alto, baritone, soprano, tenor saxophones and flute. Having 'cut his teeth' in the "Jazz Warriors" of the early 90's, award-winning saxophonist Tony Kofi has gone on to establish himself as a musician, teacher and composer of some authority. Presented by LIJF and Milap — this will be a very special night indeed!

Sun 26th Feb 2023 (7.30pm): Marius Neset Quartet



Norwegian saxophonist and composer Marius Neset has earned countless nominations and awards for his performances and recordings, including the Spellemannprisen, in Norway, for the album Lion in 2014, and an ECHO award, in Germany, for the album Snowmelt in 2017. The 2017 edition of the Downbeat magazine listed him as the only European jazz musician in their list of '25 artists to watch'.

Marius has performed with jazz musicians all over the world, has appeared at prestigious venues and events from Ronnie Scott's to the Montreal Jazz Festival and received composition commissions from the BBC and many others. Marius has also worked with classical musicians such as Leif Ove Andsnes, Andreas Brantelid, Michala Petri, Ole Edvard Antonsen, Louisa Tuck, Ingrid Neset, and the Vertavo String Quartet.

Liverpool Hope University's Capstone Theatre, located on Shaw Street in Islington just outside the city centre, has been hosting Liverpool International Jazz Festival for 10 years now — bringing some of the best international acts to the city whilst nurturing local talent. For jazz fans, this 10th year is simply a must — with some incredible artists on display over the four days.

Liverpool International Jazz Festival / 23rd – 26th Feb 2023 / The Capstone Theatre, 17 Shaw Street, Liverpool, L6 1HP

For more info on the shows and for tickets visit thecapstonetheatre.com/jazzfestival

For a ticket for the entire festival (£48.50) visit ticketquarter.co.uk

MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

LIVERPOOL COMPOSER NEIL CAMPBELL'S NEW ALBUM IS SIMPLY STUNNING!

A work of art, a masterpiece, a dream — call it what you will, Neil Campbell's latest creation, *Faldum*, is simply stunning! The Liverpool composer has excelled himself once again with a beautifully poignant and equally powerful new album oozing with strings and symphonies. Goosebumps springs to mind.



The new nine track album (including the bonus track) has been almost three years in the making, following on from last year's critically acclaimed *The Great Escape*. Indeed, it's clear to see why the album has been so long in the making — with layer upon layer of orchestral beauty. Buckle up and be prepared for an emotional, heartstring pulling ride.

In addition to being an extremely talented guitar maestro and a favourite of BBC Radio 6 Music, Neil Campbell is an ingenious composer of the highest calibre and *Faldum* states that emphatically. Heavily constructed and painstakingly curated, this most excellent masterpiece brings music back to what it should be — an art form that touches the depths of the soul.

Faldum is based on Herman Hesse's profound 1916 fairytale of the same name, set in a Swiss town where wishes are granted and chaos ensues — with a young

violinist as the centre of the story wishing to play the most beautiful music. Aptly so, Campbell's new album does exactly that and the first 10 minute track, *Overture*, sets the scene for an awe-inspiring journey.



Akin to *Requiem For A Dream*, *Overture* is a symphony of strings put together so masterfully — gripping the listener from the outset. An exquisite and dramatic work of art that mesmerises and captivates with every single sound — it wouldn't be out of place in a multi-award winning movie. Awards are certainly deserved for this beautiful piece alone.

The eight tracks that follow all flow and fall into each other effortlessly, taking the listener on a spine-tingling trip of ultimate escapism. The second track, *Faldum One*, brings drums (courtesy of Jon Lawton's expert programming) and electric guitar (courtesy of Neil Campbell, of course) into the mix and paired with the many layers of strings it makes for a fascinating remainder of the album.

As we traverse through *Faldum Two*, *Three*, *Four*, *Five* and *Six*, we experience a multitude of emotions and very deep, sensual and soft harmonies — and almost folk-like at times, spooky and haunting at others. We finish on *The Mountain* — a

soft and poignant 16 minute delight that seems to fall back magnificently into the initial Overture track — and then finally the chimey and playful bonus track, The Wish.



If you're a lover of music as an art form and appreciate the finer things rather than the computerised, talentless trash that's spewed out of the mainstream system, then please do listen to this. Faldum is what music should be — something created meticulously and masterfully and to be enjoyed like a fine whisky or vintage wine.



Bravo, Neil, you've outdone yourself again! Huge applause for your top level production alongside Jon Lawton of Crosstown Studios and to the two incredibly talented string musicians you have collaborated with on this — Amy Chambers (violins) and Nicole Collarbone (cellos). Awards now, please, for all involved in this spellbinding creation. No superlatives can truly do this album justice — simply stunning.

*For more on Neil Campbell and to keep up to date with gigs check him out on **FACEBOOK!***

*Check out Neil Campbell's Faldum on **BANDCAMP***



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MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

PARTY CENTRE OPENS IN BIRKENHEAD WITH OVER 70 DIFFERENT CHARACTERS!

A new children's party centre has opened in Birkenhead, specialising in bespoke birthday parties with over 70 different characters to choose from! Wish Upon A Party has opened on Argyle Street and has received multiple 5 star reviews for their magical parties for children featuring fun party games and more.



Boasting the biggest range of kids characters in Merseyside, from princesses to superheroes, Wish Upon A Party offers high energy parties with a variety of fun games and lots of food and drink. There's plenty of opportunity for photographs with the characters and they always make a big fuss of the birthday child.



The new concept has been created by Ruth Rundle, who has years of experience as a children's entertainer after graduating as an actor in London. Having toured children's theatre shows in the UK, Europe and Australia, she returned to her native Wirral to create Wish Upon A Party in 2015 and is currently studying for a Masters in Community Theatre at LIPA to create theatre shows for children.



For the past few years, Ruth has been providing character visits to parties in people's homes and at Merseyside venues alongside a team of highly trained actors. The new centre in Birkenhead features various play spaces, a beautiful floral wall and an area for parents to drink tea and coffee during the party, meanwhile Wish Upon A Party will still offer its service of external visits.

Ruth said: *"The concept has grown from strength to strength over the past few years and the feedback has been amazing! It's always so wonderful to see the smiles on the children's faces and it really does take a party to the next level having real-life characters entertaining them."*



She continued: *"We have a great team and everyone puts 110% into the events – making them magical and unforgettable for the children. We bring lots of energy so you can be sure they'll have a great time! Opening the new centre is a dream for me and I have a new baby daughter so she will have a great life attending parties there with me!"*

In addition to the bespoke themed character parties, the new Wish Upon A Party venue offers affordable themed events – from spooktacular Halloween events to Christmas and Easter extravaganzas. These events have also had great feedback and have created many new friendships between children.



Ruth said: *"We love hosting such fun parties and encouraging children to get off their computers and play with each other again. Our games are interactive and multi-sensory, bringing back the good old-fashioned learning through play, whilst helping them socialise and improve their mental health."*

Wish Upon A Party has had lots of excellent feedback from parents over the past few

years, with the new centre also receiving 5 star reviews. Their Facebook page has had almost 300 5 star reviews, with many parents stating how magical the parties have been.



One parent said: *"I have used Wish Upon a Party for my daughter's birthday party and at one of their own events at their new venue. Friendly, professional service and they go out of their way to make the children feel special and have a magical experience that they won't forget. So much effort and attention to detail from the organisers!"*



Wish Upon A Party has opened its new party centre on Argyle Street in Birkenhead, offering bespoke children's parties and over 70 different kids characters to choose from. The new centre is suitable for children up to the age of 8 years old and also offers themed events from just £4 per child.

Wish Upon A Party / 42-44 Argyle Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 6AF / 07972109152

To enquire about a bespoke character party for your child, text Ruth on 07972109152 or email info@wishuponaparty.land

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In this La Vida Liverpool exclusive we take you on an intergalactic journey through the history of Space — the iconic Scouse band who experienced a meteoric rise to fame in the 90s. With hits such as Neighbourhood and Female Of The Species, they cemented themselves as one of the most successful Scouse bands of all time.



Following the huge success of their first two albums, *Spiders* and *Tin Planet*, it's been a rollercoaster ride these past 20 years or so, but Space are BACK with a BIG BANG! Here we chat to Tommy and Phil about the history of Space and their new lease of life with their new album, *Music For Pleasure* *Music For Pain*, and a forthcoming UK tour of *Spiders* and *Tin Planet*!

LVL: First of all guys, what's going on with Space at the moment? It seems you've been pretty busy?



TOMMY: We've been gigging loads and I just love playing gigs! We've just released our latest album, *Music For Pleasure* *Music*

For Pain, and that's signed to Hug Records that our manager Mark runs with his eldest Jorgie. We've also nearly finished recording our next album too so yeah we've been pretty busy.

PHIL: Yeah, we always get restless when we don't play so we like to play as many gigs as possible and Tommy never stops writing. From 24th February we'll be doing some anniversary gigs as part of a UK Tour where we play the *Spiders* and *Tin Planet* albums in one gig. The Liverpool gig is at the O2 Academy on 1st April.

LVL: So, what's the new album all about for those who haven't heard it yet?

TOMMY: It's a real mix of genres. It's got hip hop influences, bits of punk, queasy listening, Sinatra vibes, some James Bond style stuff. Some Beastie Boys influence. Some of it is deep and dark and some observational about real life stuff.



LVL: Ok, so taking it right back, what was it like in the early days there back in the 90s and how did you get your big break?

TOMMY: We were originally *The Australians* and when that broke up we became *Space* and just played everywhere locally — places like *The Pickett*. Our manager Mark first saw us as *The Australians* but we were

unmanageable then, fighting on stage and stuff, but when he came back and saw us as Space he took us on. The rest is history.



LVL: You guys experienced a meteoric rise to fame. Do you think it's difficult for Scouse bands always being compared to The Beatles and what advice would you give to young up and coming local bands trying to break through?

TOMMY: *What can you say about The Beatles that hasn't already been said? They were amazing obviously but they've become more of a tourist attraction. No-ones ever going to get as big as that so there's no point trying to do it.*

PHIL: *Yeah I agree. My best advice to bands is do is do your own thing and never give up. Don't try to jump on the bandwagon and if you love what you produce someone else will too.*



LVL: How do you deal with a rise to fame like that and it must be a lot of pressure following up a debut album that does so well?

TOMMY: *It was mad you know. The furthest I'd been was North Wales in a caravan and the next thing we're gigging internationally, on Top Of The Pops, meeting Tom Jones and Mike Myers. It's true that it was tough being pressured to write another Female Of The Species when everything I do is organic and a one off but fortunately*

we had some more big hits and Tin Planet was a big follow up album to Spiders.

LVL: There's a question I've always wanted to ask Tommy. That big hit Neighbourhood from the debut Spiders album – was that about your childhood growing up in Liverpool?

TOMMY: *Obviously there wasn't a serial killer, for example, but there was someone I thought was a serial killer. I used to think the vicar was a bit dodgy. Basically, it's about my imagination – watching what's going on. Even in school I'd daydream looking out the window and using my imagination. One of my favourite bands is The Kinks and I love storytelling in music.*

LVL: I've been a massive fan of Space from the age of 10 so I feel a little starstruck interviewing you guys. Were there any moments at festivals etc. where you felt like that?

PHIL: *The biggest one for me was Iggy Pop. We were in Rome once and I got to go around The Vatican with Iggy Pop – it was odd! My wife was ripping him and he was dead sound! It was a strange experience but it wouldn't have happened without the band!*



LVL: You must have some crazy stories from over the years!

PHIL: *I was a bass guitarist originally before becoming the drummer so I've seen it all! There are too many to tell but one of my favourites was at a festival when Jamie came out in a towel and Marilyn Manson appeared. Jamie was ginger so Marilyn Manson was like 'I'm ginger too' and exposed himself to us all then chased Jamie. He was wearing big platform shoes and it was mad to watch!*



LVL: Are there any gigs that stand out over the years?

PHIL: When we were *The Drellas* we played the closing down gig at Quiggin's in Liverpool and it went off its head! It was a mad night with a lot of Liverpool bands including punk band the SS and everyone trashed the gaff as it was getting torn apart by developers anyway. It was mental! Obviously playing V Festival and Glastonbury was amazing!



TOMMY: For me playing at Anfield for a Hillsborough Memorial gig was very special. All different football fans united together for one thing.

LVL: So you guys split up then came back together. What was it that brought the band together again?



TOMMY: Our drummer Andy left the band as he didn't seem interested in all the success — he just wanted to play for the

love of it. He was the loveliest fella in the world and when he passed away in 2009 we all met up at the funeral. We all went to the pub afterwards and talked about getting back together again in his name, which we did in 2011.



LVL: So fast forward again today with so much going on — I guess this is somewhat a renaissance for Space?

TOMMY: Yeah definitely — we've got more energy now playing live and we're more crazy than ever. The new album is doing great and 2023 will be a big year. We're especially looking forward to the *Space* and *Tin Planet* tour — that'll be a lot of fun!

Buy Space's *Spiders*, *Tin Planet* and *Music For Pleasure Music For Pain* albums on the Hug Records website hugrecords.shop! For the *Spiders* & *Tin Planet* 25th anniversary tour visit spacebanduk.co.uk/spiders-tinplanet-25th

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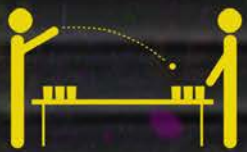


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PEOPLE & LIFE

NEW FIRST OF ITS KIND ADDITIONAL NEEDS HUB TO OPEN IN BIRKENHEAD

A new ground-breaking first of its kind additional needs hub is opening in Birkenhead. Social Living Organisation BNR Agency are completely self-funding the centre – a unique space that will bridge the gap and offer opportunities to children and adults with disabilities like never before.



BNR Hub is opening on Brandon Street later this year and will offer a safe space for those with additional, complex and challenging needs. The idea is to create a space where the people they care for, as well as people in the care of other agencies and organizations, can enjoy things they wouldn't usually get the chance to.

BNR Agency works with adults who have complex and challenging needs – prohibiting them from many activities. The new hub will offer activities such as art therapy, drama classes, holistic therapies, cookery classes, kitchen takeovers and dining experiences, music workshops, live entertainment, social events and more to people who wouldn't usually be able to experience them.

BNR Founder and Director Hildah Munikwa

said: *"We care for adults who have a variety of complex and challenging needs. We provide social living environments for them, with 24/7 care, to help them live independently however there are still many things that some of them cannot do – for example, going out for a meal with family or going to a live music event."*

She continued: *"As much as we provide them with a better quality of life and the very best safety and care, many of the things that we take for granted are unobtainable for them. They can react very badly to crowds or other triggers and it's so very sad. We've decided to create BNR Hub to bridge this gap by having a safe space where the things that they want can be brought to them – making the impossible possible."*



A place where the unachievable is achievable, BNR Hub will feature a kitchen, social area, specialist toilets and wet rooms, events spaces and multi-sensory spaces – operating on a booking system for their own service users and external organizations. The idea is to make it adaptable where it can be tailored to a variety of people with many different complex needs.

Co-Director Stefan Brunt said: *“Every person is different and requires different environments to ensure they don’t get triggered or have bad reactions. We therefore have to be on top of risk assessments with everything we do. This is vital but also limiting – meaning some of them can’t have days out or things we take for granted. The Hub aims to change that by offering a space that brings experiences to them.”*



BNR Hub will be collaborating with external companies and facilitators to provide experiences to people who wouldn’t usually be able to enjoy them. From restaurants providing dining experiences to musicians providing workshops and entertainment to holistic therapists providing treatments, there’ll be an abundance of activities delivered in a safe environment.

Centre Manager Leighton Stewart said: *“BNR Hub is ground breaking in that it will provide so many more opportunities to people – not just the people in our care but people in the care of other agencies and other organisations. We’re very proud to be self-funding this new facility and hope that it can be rolled out nationwide – it’s going to change many lives!”*

BNR Agency was founded in 2014 by Hildah Munikwa and currently employs over 80 staff – using all their own staff at all times and consistently having top CQC ratings.



The organization provide high levels of training to all its employees and has self-funded the hub in order to remain in control and keep standards high.

Hildah explained: *“We’re very proud of the high standards of care and service we provide and we are very knowledgeable about what we do from bespoke care packages to high level risk assessments. We’ve created a dream with BNR Hub where the impossible is possible and the unachievable is achievable and we want to remain in control of that. That’s why we’ve self-funded it – we know that it’s in good hands with us.”*

The Hub is opening late 2022 on Brandon Street in Birkenhead – offering experiences and opportunities to people with additional, complex and challenging needs.

BNR Agency is looking to speak with any external company, agency or organization looking to use the space or provide services to the people using it.



BNR Hub / 1 Brandon Street, Birkenhead, CH41 5HN / Opening late 2022

To enquire about getting involved or using the space call Hildah on 07831874376 or email hildah@bnragency.co.uk

For more info about BNR Agency visit www.bnr-group.co.uk



PEOPLE & LIFE

THE FAMILY RUN FUNERAL DIRECTORS WHO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND!

A family run funeral directors from Wirral goes well above and beyond for people, whilst keeping costs down to make funerals affordable. Award winning independent,

Owens, is now in its 5th year and has received a Certificate Of Excellence by Three Best Rated and countless 5 star reviews on Funeral Guide due to their ethos and ethics.



Owens is ran by mother Lorraine and daughter Alex (who both have backgrounds in care) and also father Mike (a mortician and bereavement manager with over 30 years experience). With a big focus on care, compassion and attention to detail, they aim to end the grim preconception of the traditional 'undertaker' by doing things differently and making the whole process very special for families.

The family run independent goes way above and beyond, whilst keeping costs to a minimum. They believe that personal touches are what makes the difference at times of need and simple gestures goes a long way.

They do many magical little things that

mean the world to people, hence their countless 5 star reviews, cards and gifts from people.



One of the things they offer is a 'memory tree' at their Liscard premises — with a personal bauble dedicated to each and every loved one they look after — and they provide families with Forgetmenot seeds. They also have a bespoke jewellery service where Alex personally handcrafts ashes into beautiful personalised pieces.

One of the most beautiful things they provide is a completely self-funded memorial service every December for all the families who have lost loved ones.

The annual service takes place at St. Alban's church in Wallasey and features photographs on the alter and a choir — a unique offering from a family business that genuinely does care.

Lorraine said: *"Everything we do is from the bottom of our hearts from our family to yours. Every single person who comes to us is a human being who is suffering from grief*

and loss and we aim to make their goodbye as special as possible."

She continued: "Whether it's a direct unattended service to a traditional or a more elaborate service, we ensure you and your family will be given peace of mind that your loved one will be looked after until the day of the funeral."

We pride ourselves in being different, some of the differences might not be obvious to you but we will collect your loved one as soon as practicable, your loved one will stay with us on our premisses until the day of the funeral not left in an off site facility and the funeral will be conducted by our experienced staff not by a third party company out of town.



We'll do whatever it takes for the whole process to be perfect and as you wish."

Alex added: "The preconception of a funeral director is quite daunting so we like to give the families the confidence in knowing we are there to support and guide them throughout. My Mum and I come from backgrounds in care so we made it our mission to be the most caring funeral directors around – adding lots of little touches whilst not charging the earth."

She continued: "If someone wants something extravagant that's no problem but we also appreciate that people are struggling financially at the moment."

We offer lots of the little things that mean a lot for free and we will always look at ways to keep costs down – even with things such as hiring artificial flowers instead of bouquets that cost hundreds."

Meanwhile, as a result of father Mike's 30 years' experience as a mortician, they

are able to ensure the deceased person is presented beautifully for when families come and visit them in the chapel of rest and for open casket funerals. Together, the



Owens leave no stone unturned when it comes to making sure everything is perfect. Lorraine said: "As well as being very compassionate, we are also extremely thorough. Some people know exactly what they want but others are still lost in grief so we guide them through every step to make it a very special send off for their loved one. Ultimately, we are part of the bridge between life and death and it is a role we take very seriously."

Alex added: "This is your time to celebrate and honour the loved person you have lost and nothing is too big or small – we will do everything in our power to make it perfect. It really touches us and fills our hearts with warmth when we receive all the lovely words, cards and gifts from people and it's very powerful to connect with them again our annual memorial services."

Owens funeral directors is an award winning family run independent that has countless 5 star reviews and a Certificate Of Excellence from Three Best Rated. They offer a bespoke service with lots of little touches and keep costs to a minimum – doing things differently and ending the stigma of the traditional funeral director.

Owens Funeral Directors / 15-17 Liscard Village, CH45 4JG / 0151 372 1000

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For more info and a free chat call Clare on
07762943457 or email claremorton1@outlook.com

The course takes the student on a 6 week journey of self-discovery, learning about the elements, the signs, the planets and the things that can have an influence of who we are. In addition to learning the ancient art of astrology, you will also learn about

shamanism and how shamans have used the artform for centuries.



The idea of the course is to help people gain a better understanding of themselves and others in order to become more patient, understanding, empathic and reasonable. You will not only come away with invaluable tools for life, you will also become a certified Foundation Astrologer and be able to give readings to others.

Clare said: *"It's a very unique course because in addition to teaching people how to become a Foundation Astrologer, I have also integrated what I have learnt about shamanism during my own journey of self-development. Both astrology and shamanism have transformed my life and I now want to pass this on to others."*



Clare, 39, embarked upon a big journey of transformation in 2019 after losing herself in self-sabotage. Training in astrology gave her an understanding that her water and fire elements were at loggerheads, whereas shamanic healing helped her get to the root causes of her behaviours.



Clare explained: *"I became lost in my destructive behaviour. I lived a very unhealthy lifestyle and partied a lot to the point where I lost my family, friends, job and almost my home. It got to the point I was desperate and that's when I started researching spirituality and the reasons we behave the way we do."*

She continued: *"I started researching astrology and so much resonated for me. It all made sense. Astrology taught me that there are many universal forces at play. I then met a shaman named Lewis, who showed me how shamanic healing, soul retrieval and energy work can shift underlying traumas and energies. I became trained in both and also in the sacred plant medicine, kambo. These things have changed my life."*



Clare healed herself and stopped all the negative behaviours and patterns that caused her damage, whilst becoming trained in astrology and shamanism. Through her unique new Third Eye Astrology courses, Clare aims to give others the same tools – whilst helping them become certified Foundation Astrologers themselves.



Clare summarised: *"I'm really excited to be delivering these first of a kind courses that fuse two ancient artforms together in order to help people become the best version of themselves they can be. It's really powerful and there's nothing quite like it out there!"*

Clare's Third Eye Astrology courses are 6 week courses hosted at Inner Guru on Walton Road in Kirkdale. The courses cost £444, with payment plans available, and the student learns about both astrology and shamanism in order to gain a better understanding of themselves and others – whilst becoming a certified Foundation Astrologer.

Third Eye Astrology courses with Clare / Inner Guru, Efik House, Walton Road, Kirkdale, L4 4AF

To enquire about this course call or message Clare on 07762943457 or email claremorton1@outlook.com

Check out Third Eye Astrology on FACEBOOK!

THE TWO EX-SOLDIERS WHO HAVE PLEDGED OVER £360K TO HELP FELLOW VETERANS!

Two former Special Forces soldiers from Liverpool have pledged over £360,000 of their own money and over 5,000 hours of their time to help their fellow veterans. Peter McCombe and Colin Eastaway, who both served in Iraq and Afghanistan, founded The Block CIC in November 2020 and have helped over 250 veterans despite no official funding.



The Block CIC is a veterans outreach organisation based in Kirkdale that bridges the gap and offers a wide range of support services to ex-servicemen and women. Ran by Peter, Colin and a small team of volunteers, The Block offers emergency accommodation, emotional support, coffee mornings, drop ins, signposting, workshops, courses, retreats and more.

Peter and Colin met in a careers office in 2000 and went on to serve together in Iraq and Afghanistan, both losing friends and suffering from PTSD as a result. After Peter was discharged due to a brain injury during combat and becoming disillusioned with the lack of support, he invested his military compensation into creating The Block – with Colin soon joining forces with his old friend.



During the past two years, without any official funding, Peter, Colin and the team have literally saved lives – helping veterans in times of crisis, getting them off the streets and providing a safe haven and refuge for them. Ploughing all their money into the building and running costs and investing countless hours into the project, they have dedicated their lives to the cause.



Colin explained: *"The Block really is a 24/7 service and we have gone out to veterans in times of crisis at any given time. My partner will tell you – many dinners have been abandoned because we have gone out on a call and we've been out at all times of day and night."*

One recent success story is Leon who had major alcohol problems and was living in a tent in woods with his two dogs. Colin and the team went to pick him up, gave him a mental health assessment and provided him with accommodation, a phone, clothing, food and support – he is now doing well, with a good job and his own property in the affluent area of Formby.

Leon said: *"Since leaving the military I was diagnosed with PTSD and went through a stage of drinking every day. I lost everything and this led to me living in the woods with my two dogs. I recently met The Block's Patron, Johnny Mercer, and told him I'd be*

dead if it wasn't for The Block. This small organisation have turned my life around so please anyone, just show your support to The Block."



Another veteran, Lee, said: *"I was suffering with PTSD and when my relationship broke down I became homeless – living in my car and feeling too ashamed to reach out to friends and family. I received a little support from the council and charities but it all seemed very long winded and I needed more – I needed a roof over my head and hope."*

Yet, despite the heroic efforts of Peter, Colin and the team, The Block CIC has still not had any official funding – instead investing their own money and being reliant upon donations from the public. One such donor is Sharon and the team from Adam Somes Elite Training and Total Integrated Solutions who have raised over £20,000 for the project in memory of Sharon's son Andy – a veteran who tragically took his own life due to PTSD in 2021.

Money donated by Sharon has been vital to keep the project alive whilst funders have viewed the project as too young to invest in. In 2022, Sharon's fundraising efforts fully funded one of the holistic therapy retreats that was backed by doctors at Liverpool University – with 100% positive results and 10 out of 10 veterans stating they'd recommend mindfulness to other veterans struggling with mental health.

Colin said: *"We're so grateful to those who have supported us so far. It is frustrating not receiving funding but we're getting there. I work full time and my partner works part time, whilst Peter has serious medical issues following his time serving, and although the volunteers do a truly fantastic job, we really need funding to be able to employ full time staff here."*

A recent ONS report showed that there are over 50,000 veterans residing in the North West of England. A recent British Journal of Psychiatry report highlighted that veterans are much more likely to develop PTSD than non-veterans and of those who have served in conflict, 17% reported symptoms of PTSD and 30% were predicted to develop a mental health condition. Meanwhile, NHS mental health waiting lists are over 12 months long.

The Block CIC needs funding in order to employ a full time member of staff, therefore enabling the project to do more outreach work and help more veterans. They would also like funding in order to develop more mental health and wellbeing workshops, courses and retreats – something that local veterans have asked for more of in a local survey carried out by The Block.



Colin summarised: *"Peter and I have put in everything to this project – from the building to the refurb to the running costs and we are eternally grateful to the volunteers and public sponsors who have helped and donated. We're ready to go to the next level now though and in order to maximise our potential and we need investment from funders. We have countless testimonials from veterans, it's time to support us."*

The Block CIC / 241-243 Walton Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, L4 4AR / 0151 281 4837

For more info about The Block visit their WEBSITE!

Check out The Block on FACEBOOK!

To donate to The Block CIC and help their cause check out gofundme.com/f/the-block-saving-heros-in-crisisshic

FROM AGORAPHOBIA TO SUCCESSFUL YOUNG BUSINESS OWNER

A 17-year-old from Birkenhead has overcome agoraphobia and social anxiety to become a successful young business owner. Up until the age of 15, Joshua Morgan would stay in his room alone most of the time and had few friends, until volunteer work at his local community centre led him to set up his own mobile DJ and child entertainment business.



Joshua now owns Wirral Disco Hire & Entertainments — holding a regular residency at The Queens Hotel in Birkenhead — and has a top DJ set up for parties. He also offers children's parties, with a fun disco and entertainment package, and although he is becoming very successful — this is something that was unimaginable a couple of years ago.

Joshua explained: *"Until only a couple of years ago I was in a very dark place and I was stuck in a rut. All I'd do was stay in my room, play computer games and listen to music because I was very self conscious and worried what people would think of me. I'd never go out because I had anxiety that people were talking about me. I had no life really."*

Joshua's agoraphobia and social anxiety grew worse and with the future looking bleak the pandemic hit — with isolation and restrictions expected to worsen Joshua's condition furthermore. His parents became very concerned and having tried everything they could, his father one day convinced him to come to the social supermarket at Building Bridges Community Centre.

Joshua's father, Billy, said: *"Our Josh is such a lovely, nice natured and talented lad and it was so frustrating to see him staying in all the time doing nothing with his life. I've been involved in Building Bridges and it really is a fantastic service with great people — offering support to people in the community — so I thought bringing Josh along would help build his confidence."*



Joshua's father convincing him to go along that day proved to be a decision that would change his life forever. Billy introduced him to the social supermarket and the project — including the children's summer holiday club and various activities and clubs. Building Bridges owner, Michelle Bridge, gave Joshua lots of attention and encouraged him to get involved in the project.

Michelle said: *"Josh was such a quiet and shy lad — nervous and unsure of himself. I knew Billy was concerned about him so*

I really wanted to help Josh overcome his anxieties. I gave him lots of attention, spent time with him and after a little while asked him to help out with some of the things here – starting with odd jobs and things that needed fixing. The rest, as they say, is history.”

Joshua went from strength to strength at Building Bridges and eventually got involved in the children’s summer holiday club. It transpired that Joshua was a natural entertainer and became a big hit with the younger children – playing fun games with them, dancing and showing them all the music he’d discovered spending hour after hour in his room.

Slowly but surely, Joshua came into his own and decided to pursue his passion for music and entertaining. He gained some experience working for a local disco hire company and in June 2021 he set up his own company – Wirral Disco Hire & Entertainments – that offers a full DJ service for events and functions and also a children’s party service.



Since setting up in June 2021, Joshua’s business has gone from strength to strength. After some initial investment, he now has a full sound and lighting set up, a booth, karaoke, a smoke machine, a popcorn and candyfloss machine, toys, games and more. Having entertained at many birthdays, weddings, engagement parties and other special occasions, he has become very highly rated – with many satisfied customers.

Speaking of his new found confidence, Joshua said: *“I’m a completely different person now to what I was up to the age of 15. I knew I had talent and had a brain but I*

had no motivation – the social anxiety and insecurities took over me. I am so happy that my Dad convinced me to go to Building Bridges that day and I’m so grateful to Michelle for giving me her time, love and the opportunity to get involved there.”

Joshua offers a DJ and children’s entertainment service at weekends – whilst in the week he is at Wirral Metropolitan College studying Electrical Installations. He is currently learning to drive – something that will help him get to venues to DJ rather than relying on friends and family to transport him around.



Joshua summarised: *“I’m studying hard in college and would like to one day have my own electrical company but with the way the DJing and entertainment business is going who knows – I could end up doing both. I enjoy making people happy and getting them up dancing – making people’s special occasions memorable. I love the kids parties too and helping the shy kids get up as I know what it was like when I had no confidence.”*

Joshua’s company, Wirral Disco Hire & Entertainment, is available to hire for parties and special occasions, as well offering children’s party packages. Joshua has a full sound and lighting set up, a booth, karaoke, a smoke machine, a popcorn and candyfloss machine, toys, games and more.

Wirral Disco Hire & Entertainments / 0151 314 0972 / joshua@wirraldiscohire.co.uk

To enquire about disco hire and kids’ parties call 0151 314 0972 or email joshua@wirraldiscohire.co.uk

Check out Wirral Disco Hire & Entertainments on FACEBOOK!

Dear Linda B....

PEOPLE & LIFE

WOMEN AREN'T INTERESTED IN ME AND I'M DEPRESSED

Welcome to our problem page with Linda B! Linda B is a leading international life coach from Iceland and is a LET Communication Consultant, Trauma Resiliency Model expert, Former President of the Icelandic Coaching Federation and Board of Icelandic Women's Business Association.

La Vida Liverpool has been working with Linda as part of global charity, TUFF, and we've partnered with her to help our readers with their problems!

 Hi Linda B,

I'm a hard working guy in my 30s and I just can't seem to get a girlfriend. I went through a bad divorce a year or so ago and we've been having a big child custody battle — it's been really draining and it's played havoc with my mental health. More than anything, it has made me feel anxiety and depression and I suffer from low self esteem.



I am on a dating website and I try to get talking to girls on a night out (well, when we have been able to) but they just don't seem to be interested in me. I don't know why. I'm not bad looking or anything. Maybe it's the energy I give off? I've been through so much and just want to meet someone. Any advice?

Tim, Wirral

 Hi Tim,

Thank you for trusting me with your matters. I would like to start by saying to you that you should give yourself time to heal your wounds and then take a step forward. You have been through a lot in one year and people often think that it's easy to go through a divorce but it's not so different from losing a loved one.



Your life changes dramatically when you go through it and both parties usually go through sadness and fear of the future as well as missing what was good and nurturing about the relationship.

Your anxiety is probably linked to your fear of the future and your depression to what you are missing from the relationship so you are just not ready to go on the dating sites yet and should work on your healing.

So my dear Tim, it's no wonder that you are sending out vibes of need instead of the romantic ones and I can tell you for sure that vibes like that don't attract women!

So don't let that bring you down and take away your self esteem it's just that your vibes are not the right ones.

I can tell you that you have to get your house in order before you go to the dating sites and start a new life. And once you have got yourself together and have worked on your self-esteem and know within your heart what you want to get out of life you will send out totally different vibes when you meet women and you will attract the right partner when the time is right. (Do you know what personality traits you want to find in your future partner?)

So make the slate clean and dream big about your future, meditate, do yoga or go to the gym daily, walk in the nature and finally find someone that you trust to help you with taking the steps towards your new future. So good luck on your journey and may your life from now on be filled with healing, positive thoughts and sparkling moments.

Good luck and don't put too much pressure on yourself!

Linda x



To submit an anonymous and confidential question to Linda for free advice email info@lavidaliverpool.co.uk or contact her website www.manngildi.is



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PEOPLE & LIFE

FIRST OF ITS KIND COMMUNITY PUB OPENS IN WIRRAL

A first of its kind community pub has opened in Wallasey, Wirral. Merseyside Woman Of The Year 2020, Michelle Leatham, has fused her Building Bridges community CIC with the Rose & Crown pub to create a concept that revolutionises the role of a pub in today's challenging society.



Michelle has recently taken over the pub, located on Poulton Road, having owned Building Bridges in Birkenhead for the past four years. At Building Bridges, she created a community hub that offered a social supermarket, a donations-based salon and holistics service, kids clubs, support groups, an additional needs multisensory cafe and more. She then went on to open two more hubs in Redditch.



Now owner of the newly named The Crown Community Hub, Michelle will offer all the typical pub activities there such as live entertainment, bingo, Play Your Cards Right,

pool and darts teams, live sport and food but it will also offer some vital services to serve the Wirral community. The venue is, in essence, becoming a cross between a pub and a community centre.

Michelle is bringing to the pub many of the things her Building Bridges community centre offered. There will be a social supermarket open Weds, Sat and Sun from 10am – 12pm, offering quality food, drink, clothing and more for a hugely discounted price as well as a donations based salon and holistics service.



The project will offer support groups, pamper packs for domestic violence victims, free hampers to families in need, affordable movie nights, free Christmas dinners and they will be offering heating, toast, tea, coffee and a television for £1 every day so people don't need to use their heating. There will also be parties for children and coach trips to places such as Chester Zoo.

After the success of the Christmas hamper campaign, Michelle has been working with Wirral Council who have funded £20,000 for food and essentials to get families through the last of the winter months. The

hub is also now putting on free food and entertainment to children between 3.30pm and 5.30pm on Wednesdays and Fridays.



Michelle said: "We're living in difficult times and it's time to bring pubs back to their original purpose – to be community hubs and meeting places that help, support and bring people together. We've been doing great things at the Building Bridges centres, helping all sorts of people – not just those struggling on benefits – and when the pub became available I thought about merging the two."

She continued: "Unfortunately many people suffer in silence as they are often too proud to come to places like Building Bridges – they worry about the stigma of 'handouts'. A pub is a very social place though so we're hoping that through the pub environment we can help even more people – combining all the fun pub activities with community outreach activities goes hand in hand really well."



Michelle has developed an incredible reputation in the local community through Building Bridges, winning Merseyside Woman Of The Year in 2020 and many others such as a Mecca Bingo Community Award and Redditch Business Awards Charity Of The Year. She is looking to bring all that knowledge and expertise to the new project at, bringing in her existing network at the same time.



Michelle explained: "This project is a huge one and I cannot do it alone. I'm about to embark upon a big refurb including replacing the windows, a new kitchen, painting and re-decorating and making the back yard a hidden gem. The project is all about community so I'm relying on the help of the local community and also The Prince's Trust kids. It's going to be a real team effort but it will be so worth it!"

She continued: "Young people will be at the forefront of the project as they are the future. I'll be bringing over the young people from Building Bridges and also getting local kids involved in the project – teaching them about the importance of community and working together to create a better society. We'll also be sponsoring local football teams – both boys and girls and getting them down here."

The Crown Community Hub is now open and some of the activities have already started – with a big refurb soon underway and more and more developments coming soon. Anyone wanting to get involved, find out more or learn about what's on can contact Michelle directly or via the hub's Facebook page.

The Rose & Crown Community Pub / 325-327 Poulton Road, Wallasey, CH44 4DE / 0151 638 3318

To find out what's on or to get involved call Michelle on 07490477053 or follow The Crown Community Hub on FACEBOOK!

Check out The Crown Community Hub on FACEBOOK!



PEOPLE & LIFE

FLEXIBLE SUPPORT WORK & HOURS TO SUIT YOU WITH BNR AGENCY!

Do you want to make a difference to someone's life? Do you want a rewarding job to work around you with hours that suit you? Wirral's wonderful social care organisation, BNR Agency, are offering amazing opportunities for fantastic people who either want to earn extra money or secure a full-time role in care....



About BNR Agency...

BNR Agency is a leading social care organisation. They have a number of supported living homes that allow people with complex and challenging needs to live independently, whilst having carers on hand 24/7 for their wellbeing. They also have an Outreach Team that supports people with additional needs by visiting them in their homes and there are job roles available within this dynamic team.



BNR Agency employs over 80 people and the organisation prides itself on employing people who genuinely care. Processes, procedures and practical things can be taught, however genuine love and care cannot. BNR Agency provides exceptional training to exceptional people and this is why they are so highly rated by the Care Quality Commission.

About the role...

The exciting new role is within the Outreach Team covering Wirral. It will involve visiting people with additional needs in their homes and taking them out to support them in day-to-day activities such as shopping, going to the cinema, days out and a wide variety of things.

The role will primarily take place during the hours of 9am and 6pm, 7 days a week. Whether you are a parent looking for extra money whilst your children are at school, someone looking for a second job or a wonderful carer looking for a full-time role in a brilliant organisation — the role can be tailored to you. Whether you're bank staff or permanent, the pay is competitive and you will be truly valued.

What's required...

- First and foremost, you will be a genuinely good person who cares
- You will have an interest in care and a desire to truly make a difference

- You will be a vibrant, positive and people-orientated person who is able to apply common sense and quick thinking in any given scenario
- Experience not necessary as full training provided however care qualifications advantageous
- Driving license preferred but not essential
- Full DBS check will be carried out

A few words from Hildah...

BNR Agency Director, Hilda Munikwa, says:
"The reason we are so highly rated as a care agency is because we truly care and it's as simple as that. We provide the highest level of training and ensure all the best practises and risk assessments are in place but one thing you cannot teach is caring. If you're looking to truly make a difference to people's lives in a role that works around you, let's have a chat!"



You hold the key to a better world...

If you like the sound of the above and want to truly make a difference to people's lives whilst working hours that suit you then contact BNR Agency today! You hold the key to a better world and becoming part of the BNR Team could be the beginning of something beautiful — for everyone!

To enquire about this opportunity call 0330 113 4363, email your CV to info@bnragency.co.uk or pop into the office at 62 Hamilton Square, Birkenhead!

Visit the BNR Agency website bnr-group.co.uk



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PEOPLE & LIFE

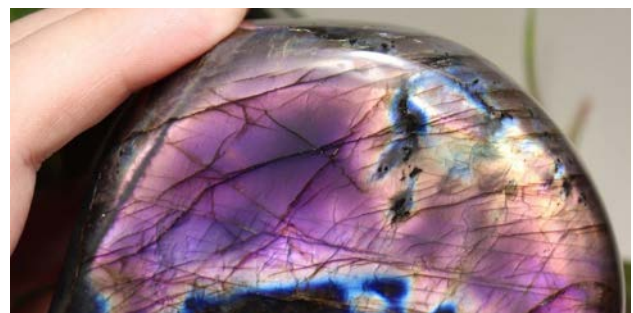
HOW I TURNED LOCKDOWN DEPRESSION INTO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS!

It's no secret that the pandemic and lockdowns have caused an increase in mental health issues — with many people suffering for a number of reasons. That said, there are also success stories out there and one of them is Natalie Speed who turned her lockdown depression into a highly successful crystals and holistic therapy business.



In October 2020, Natalie's high pressure job in social care had intensified due to the pandemic and on top of this she had family trauma. Facing stress and depression, she turned to her crystals for comfort — holding onto them for their healing powers and doing daily exercises with them such as breathwork, meditation and intention setting.

Realising how much the crystal healing helped her through these dark times, Natalie began collecting crystals and soon amassed a collection of over 3,000 from all over the world — eventually spreading the word and selling them online. Her online crystal business grew rapidly and the rest, as they say, is history.



Natalie explained: *"For a number of personal reasons, the pandemic and lockdowns were particularly difficult for me. I'd pretty much hit rock bottom. I've always had a connection with crystals but I truly discovered their powers during this time — the calming energy they give off when holding them and doing daily practices with them basically saved me from going under."*



Realising the potential of her newly founded online crystal business, Natalie set out to create a magical crystal shop and holistic

therapy hub in Liscard. She became qualified in crystal healing, quantum holographic echo healing and reiki and brought on board a team of top therapist who offers a wide range of massage, reflexology, facials and other treatments.



In July 2021, Majestic Crystals & Creations opened its doors — a gorgeous boutique shop with a calming treatment room — and ever since it's been booming. With all sorts of crystals from £1 to £1,500 — from crystal clocks to jewellery — and a wide range of relaxing treatments, people have felt transformed after visiting.



Natalie said: *"What started as a crystal collection to help me through really dark times has manifested into a business that has surpassed all my expectations. The feedback has been amazing and people leave here feeling like a new person — whether they buy crystals, have crystal healing, a treatment or even just come in for a chat. The door is open to everyone."*

She continued: *"We have some really exciting plans for next year including kids and adults crystal workshops and courses in crystal healing and holistic therapies. Crystals have changed my life and it's my mission to show as many people as possible their healing powers — especially when you combine them with daily practises. Having the team here too is amazing — they really are miracle therapists and healers."*

Natalie's inspiring story proves that there is hope and people can emerge from lockdowns and dark times victorious. What started as turning to crystals for comfort and building a collection has evolved into a highly successful crystals and holistic therapy business that's going from strength to strength.



Majestic Crystals & Creations is located at 31 Seaview Road in Liscard and is open 6 days a week. The new hub sells crystals of all descriptions including ornaments and jewellery and offers a wide range of quality holistic therapies and treatments — with workshops, courses and more planned for 2022.



Majestic Crystals & Creations / 31 Seaview Road, Liscard, CH45 4QN / 07526890732

For the online shop or to book a treatment check out majesticcrystalsandcreations.co.uk

Check out Majestic Crystals & Creations on [FACEBOOK!](#)

Check out Majestic Crystals & Creations on [INSTAGRAM!](#)



PEOPLE & LIFE

THE LIVERPOOL ENTERTAINER ON A MISSION TO COMBAT LONELINESS!

A Liverpool entertainer is on a mission to tackle loneliness in Merseyside. Ted Williams aka 'Jive Teddy' currently provides entertainment for over 1,500 people per month through his largely non-profit and low cost events — encouraging many older and marginalised people to become more socially active.



Singer and dancer Ted spends most of his spare time hosting events to encourage people, mostly the older members of the community, to become more socially active. Through his modern jive dancing nights and big events, his Happy Memories afternoon events and many other charitable causes he engages in, he dedicates his life to helping others.

In August 2011, Ted created his 'Jive Teddy' modern jive nights — a concept that has exploded in popularity and now attracts around 100 dancers every Monday at The Railway Club in Aintree. The nights have been responsible for many new friendships and has grown to include huge bi-monthly freestyle events at The Isla Gladstone alongside his good friend Pawl Anthony and weekends away.

Ted explained: *"The Monday night modern jive events are inclusive, great fun and we've created a very special community. There's a DJ who plays everything from 50s music to modern chart music and plenty of the team on hand to assist — people of all abilities are welcome."*

He continued: *"The health, happiness, confidence and social benefits are amazing and it's an honour to help so many people through dance. The big events at The Isla Gladstone are brilliant, with people coming from all over the country to attend, and the dancing weekends away to places like Llandudno and Lytham are really special."*



In addition to helping people get socially active through dance, Ted also has a Happy Memories group for older people that he runs jointly with his good friend Peter Bowyer. Happy Memories hosts five monthly events a month throughout Liverpool — featuring afternoons of live entertainment, dance, bingo, raffles and food.

The Happy Memories afternoons also draw in around 100 people for each event and feature top entertainment from the likes

of, Pauline Daniels, Ricky Tomlinson Asa Murphy, Paul McCoy and Randy King. The events are just £5 to attend, with bingo optional, and they have been responsible for getting countless older people more socially active since they started in 2018.



Ted said: *“Peter Bowyer and I are really proud of what we have created with Happy Memories. The idea is to put on top quality entertainment, dance, bingo, raffles and food at a very affordable price to get older people out of their houses and socializing. The live entertainment we offer is top class and very nostalgic – we’ve even had some tell us that it’s helped with their loved ones’ dementia.”*



Ted is also involved in many other community projects such as fronting the big monthly Plaza Cinema Community events for Julie Lawson. He also offers his singing and entertaining services to BNENC in Anfield, Everton In The Community, The League Of Welldoers with Tony Ravel, Bobby Dunne’s Make A Difference charity and various churches and nursing homes.

Ted said: *“The issue of loneliness amongst older people is a serious one. According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.”* He continued: *“I want to show people,*

particularly older people, that it’s important to remain socially active and there are some great things on offer for them if they just take that initial leap of faith. I do spend much of my spare time hosting and getting involved with these projects but I love what I do and I love to see so many happy faces and the effect the projects have on so many lives.”

Despite so many different projects going on, Ted is showing no signs of slowing down on his mission to combat loneliness in the region. He and Peter are looking to expand the Happy Memories afternoons to more venues and spreading awareness of all the social events available for older and marginalised people in Merseyside.



Ted summarised: *“There are many great events and projects out there for people to get involved in, from dancing to entertainment to days out and trips away. The key thing is to make people aware of these things – even if it means knocking on doors and telling them. Nobody should live life hidden away from the world and lonely.”*

Ted’s Jive Teddy modern jive nights take place at The Railway Club in Aintree every Monday night, with big events at The Isla Gladstone every other month. The Happy Memories afternoons he runs with Peter Bowyer take place at Mount Carmel (Mondays, monthly), Woodlands (Thursdays, monthly), St. Cyril’s (Thursdays, monthly), Dunnies (Thursdays, monthly) and Broadway Country Club (Mondays, monthly), The Conny Club on Derby Lane, Old Swan (Mondays).

To get involved with modern jive, Happy Memories or any other event contact Ted on 07941 473318 or email ted.williams@live.co.uk

Check out Happy Memories on FACEBOOK!

A photograph of three people standing together indoors. On the left is a man with dark hair wearing a blue scarf and a brown jacket. In the center is a woman with dark hair wearing a black blazer over a red patterned top. On the right is a woman with blonde hair wearing a black jacket over a white top. They are all smiling at the camera.

PEOPLE & LIFE

GLOBAL CHARITY PRAISED FOR SERVICES TO THE CITY!

Global charity, The Unity Of Faiths Foundation, has been praised by Mayor Of Liverpool, Joanne Anderson, for its services to the city. In a recent letter to the charity's Director, Dr. Shamender Talwar, Mayor Anderson declared him a 'gift to the city' due to his charity's work in Liverpool.



Dr. Talwar's charity, TUFF, has been running free mental health support for people in the city and a number of projects, including the Liverpool International Song Contest. The song contest, launched in 2020 in memory of John Lennon, was held in Nashville this year — resulting in over 21,411 songwriters from 31 countries entering and 3,600 participants opting into the free mental health programme.

The song contest was devised by TUFF in partnership with Mayor Anderson, Liverpool City Council, The Cavern Club and others. It has now led to a ground-breaking new relationship between Liverpool and Nashville. On the back of the success of this year's contest, the twin music cities have made a pledge to collaborate in order to create a better, more sustainable future for both.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Talwar and fellow TUFF trustee Daniel Xander, President of PLA Media Pam Lewis and others, the ground-breaking partnership was created. The Mayor of Liverpool, Joanne Anderson, and the Deputy Mayor of Nashville, Brenda Haywood, made a pledge to work together on delivering sustainable economic global community benefits through trade, investment, science, technology, culture, education, and tourism.



The discussions between both cities will establish various trade projects across many key sectors, in a move that could stimulate exciting growth and opportunities for many. It is this work, along with other ongoing projects and offering free mental health support to the people of Liverpool, that has led to Mayor Anderson praising Dr. Talwar in a recent letter.

Mayor Anderson said: *"Your energy, dedication and passion is absolutely contagious and it is thanks to you that thousands of musicians have had support for their mental health. I am so proud that Liverpool has been part of the amazing initiative and I am excited about the future of our two cities going forward. Thank you*

for involving us and to your father's love for our city, you are a gift to Liverpool."



Dr. Talwar, a leading social psychologist, founded TUFF with Anna Prior in 2013 and has helped countless people globally through various projects including their sports and education projects. Their recent KIND20 initiative, promoting and recognising acts of kindness throughout the world, reached millions of people and eventually came to Liverpool – where Dr. Talwar has roots.

Although based in London, Dr. Talwar's father was originally from Liverpool and working in the city feels like a homecoming for him – honouring his roots by serving the city. Both the mental health support and the explosion of the Liverpool Interational Song Contest have certainly made a huge impact, hence the powerful words from Mayor Joanne Anderson.

Dr. Talwar said: *"When I was a child I spent lots of time in Liverpool and have fond memories of the city. It's very fitting that our charity and outreach work has now come to Liverpool and to be praised by Mayor Anderson in such a way is a real honour. The free mental health support has been well received and it's been wonderful to see the song contest grow."*

He continued: *"Liverpool holds a very special place in my heart and I am a big Liverpool FC fan. I come to the city regularly now and I'm looking forward to working with Mayor Anderson on future projects. The partnership we've created between Liverpool and Nashville is very exciting and it's being discussed in parliament so I'm very excited to see what opportunities it presents for the city."*

The mental health support provided to music artists as part of the song contest's artist mental health support programme has been hugely successful and many have come forward to praise the charity further. EP, a single parent, found being a musician in the post Covid world and trying to feed her family particularly difficult and received free support.

She explained: *"I am a single parent musician with the ongoing situation of survival in a post Covid world. When this offer was introduced, I was very intrigued about how this would work, but once I contacted the team and submitted my song, I had a wonderful person holding my hand through the process."*

She continued: *"Mental health illness can creep up anytime. With all the pressure to keep up with bills and feed my family, my sanity was boiling over. But thanks to the free sessions, which are priceless, The Road to Nashville program saved my life and especially my daughter's too."*



With ongoing projects, free mental health support and the ground-breaking new partnership between Liverpool and Nashville, the future for Liverpool is very bright with TUFF in town. In times when people are struggling and things are difficult, the work of charities to provide hope and bridge the gap is even more crucial now more than ever.

For more info about TUFF and the song contest visit www.tuff.earth

PEOPLE & LIFE

DAN DAVIES ON THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF NEW BRIGHTON

In this La Vida Liverpool exclusive we talk to the man behind New Brighton's regeneration, Dan Davies. A successful businessman, Dan founded leading global company CPL Training, became Chairman of The Institute of Licensing and Board Member of UK Hospitality. Yet, instead of sitting on his fortunes, Dan has invested every penny of his money in his hometown.



Transforming the seaside town through creativity, culture and community spirit, Dan has created something very special in New Brighton through Rockpoint Leisure. From art and music to restaurants, bars and events, Dan has breathed new life into the area and here we talk to him about the past, present and future of New Brighton....

LVL: Great to chat with you as ever, Dan. Firstly, please could you tell us about your upbringing in New Brighton and where it all started for you?

DAN: *I was born in 1973 and lived in Liscard, before moving down the road to New Brighton when I was 5 years old in 1978. The 80s was a real winter of discontent – I remember us not having central heating when we moved there and there was thick snow.*

My era missed a lot of what New Brighton was founded to be about. The town was

formed in the 1830s by James Atherton, a merchant and architect who built New Brighton on 170 acres of sand dunes called Rock Point. This is why my regeneration project is called Rockpoint Leisure we have The James Atherton pub.

James Atherton based the new seaside town on the resort of Brighton and it went on to have 2 piers, 11 theatres, the largest ballroom in Europe, the largest tower in the country and the largest open air swimming baths in the world. At one point there were 5 million people per day visiting this great resort. Unfortunately, due to governments and councils, all these reasons to visit were taken away and the town fell into decline.

I was raised in New Brighton during its decline. There was a fair bit of vandalism and crime – a far cry from the reputation it once had. My first job was as a paperboy for Mr. Carruthers' shop and through reading the newspapers I learnt a lot about the world and politics and that the truth can be found in between all the varying perspectives. I read every paper and started questioning things.



LVL: Tell us about how you started CPL Training and became successful in business.

DAN: *I worked in the hospitality industry from the age of 16 and by the time I was*

18 I was the licensee at Coaster's on New Brighton promenade. It was during this time I set up CPL Training with my mate in his flat – offering personal alcohol license training. There was a huge gap in the market for it because it was only being offered to people within the industry – we took it to the mainstream and we soon had 4 training centres across the country.



Within a few years we had 80 training centres and it became an international business – working with the likes of Heineken and Coca Cola. It kind of helped that we didn't have any formal business training when we set up CPL because we did it our way, went against the grain and looked at things differently. We eventually became the market leader in the industry.

LVL: After becoming so successful, what made you decide to invest in your hometown instead of sitting back and getting rich?

DAN: Let me put it this way – I did a BBC Radio 4 interview back in 2019 and lots of things came out of that. I spoke with groups from all over the country including Love Wavertree, where businesses came together to fight the label of it being a bad place to live. A survey was done in Huddersfield where the thing local people wanted the most was to be proud of where they live.

Who wouldn't want to be proud of where they live? With the history and heritage we've got here, let's not allow it to get trampled upon! We can't live in the past but we need to nurture local talent and support local businesses in order to move forward for a better future.

If we keep it independent we're in charge of our own destiny and not just a blueprint

town with the same big brands with no personality or individuality. Big corporates don't care, they just care about profit, and there are people who are making decisions about areas they have never visited. I want to change that and keep it local.

LVL: What inspired you to introduce all the street art to New Brighton?

DAN: When I was in Brooklyn on a conference I saw some of the regeneration work they were doing there and at the same time I was asked as Chairman of the Institute Of Licensing to organise a select committee on the future of seaside towns. What I saw in Brooklyn was lots of street art and independent businesses and it made me think about how that could be done in New Brighton.

The idea of street art is to attract footfall of course but to also get people walking around exploring the area. The art is a great talking point and it brings the buildings back to life but it also gets people to engage with the local businesses and people.



We've had local kids getting involved in the project alongside local artists and internationally renowned artists. The whole project is all about promoting creativity and for New Brighton to be a hub for creatives – from artists to bands such as The Mysterines and Razzmatazz.

LVL: You've invested everything into this project and pretty much singlehandedly transformed the area. What is your message to the council and government?

DAN: New Brighton was a managed decline. We lost 2 piers, 11 theatres, the largest ballroom in Europe that the Beatles played in, the largest tower in the country, the

largest open air baths in the world and went from being the 3rd largest seaside town in the country to the 68th. How was that allowed to happen? It's quite frankly gross mismanagement.

I've put over £7million into regenerating New Brighton but the council seem to want to spend money on everything but this project. Some amazing things have been happening here — we've created projects with LIPA and John Moore's University, we've been working with schools, music videos and movies have been filmed here. Nobody from the council or Liverpool region turns up. It's deeply frustrating.



LVL: As well as fighting for New Brighton, you've also been fighting a cancer battle. How have you got through that and what has your mentality been like?

DAN: *I think the main thing is I've carried on working. Even before chemotherapy sessions I worked on the project, much to the disapproval of my consultant, but I had to keep busy — when you sit at home you just tend to dwell on it. The way I look at things is it's been an inconvenience having so much happening in New Brighton. You've just got to keep going.*

What's also kept me going is the local community. You bump into people on the street and they ask how you are, you receive messages from people saying keep the fight up. We've got a great community here and it's something worth fighting for — I'll fight for it on my death bed and until my last breath.

LVL: What's going on with the project at the moment?

DAN: *We're keeping things independent.*

Two of the Rockpoint Leisure management team, Rob and Vicky, have opened Social 114 — a cracking little coffee shop, restaurant and bar. Rockpoint Records has become a real hub with a bar, food from The South Indian, a record shop and a tattoo shop and live music.



The Mysterines played at Rockpoint Records in the summer, a local band who are doing massive things globally. Many local artists, musicians and other creatives work from Victoria Road and there's a diverse mix of people here. It's a great place to be and there's always something going on. We're continuing to be a platform for local people and we're remaining fiercely independent.

LVL: What are your thoughts about the future of New Brighton?

DAN: *It depends on whether the council are willing to recognise this as a pilot project for regeneration. The House Of Lords has recognised the model, as have councils from all over the country and many authorities, institutions and universities. This is a project that is gift wrapped for them, an open goal that they shouldn't volley into row Z again.*

This isn't about me. It's about people who live in New Brighton and their hopes and dreams for generations to come. I created this project to turn the fortunes around of the town I grew up in and we need to attract and retain talent. It is vitally important that we work together to create somewhere we can thrive and be proud of where we come from. We've proved the concept, so let's have some backing and make this seaside town great again.



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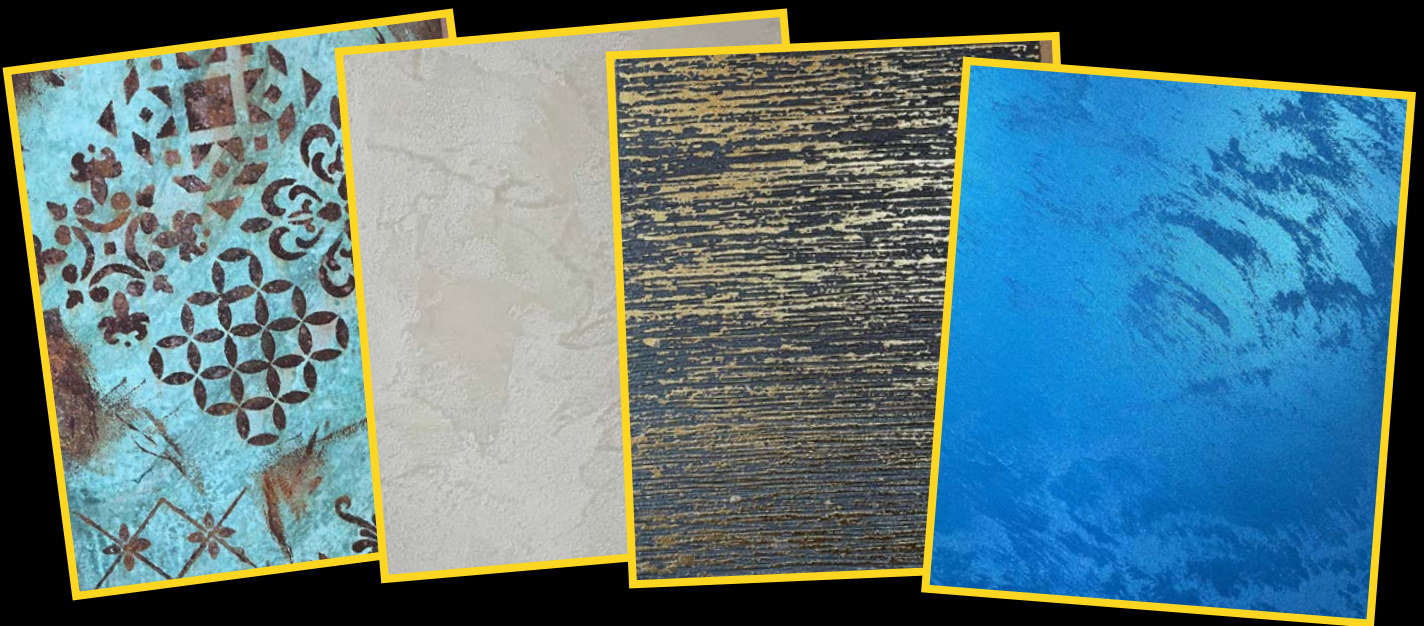


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HEALTH & BEAUTY

la vida liverpool
MAGAZINE



HEALTH & BEAUTY

THE COOL NEW GYM WITH PRIVATE WORKOUT ROOMS

A ground-breaking gym that opened in Birkenhead in February 2022 has won support from the Liverpool City Region combined authority for expansion. Barerrooms is a state-of-the-art gym that specialises in private training suites that are ideal for those who are uncomfortable or self-conscious exercising in public or looking for an alternative to open plan gyms. Each bespoke workout suite has access to 1000's of online classes and virtual instruction projected in HD while you workout.



Members have individual programmes tailored to personal goals where you can build confidence and monitor your progress. For an alternative workout the Virtual Reality suite with Katwalk treadmills allows you to fully immerse yourself in the Virtual world walking, jumping or even flying! With many games suitable for multi players. For the golfers, there is a golf suite where you can play 1000's of courses, monitor your form, perfect your swing, or practice your putt. There is also a large flexi room where you can join group classes.

The expansion project is due to commence in February 2023 and will encompass additional fitness and recreational spaces including, dedicated boxing suite, PT pods, Virtual Racing Rig, sensory deprivation floatation tank and automated massage chair.

The concept is the brainchild of Wayne Hughes, who came up with the idea after suffering an injury and becoming very self-conscious when working out in his local gym. He realised that there are many people who would prefer their own private workout space, so decided to offer something to bridge the gap between a home gym and a big communal set up.

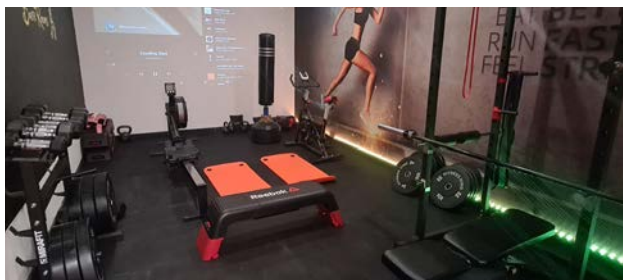
Wayne explained: *"After injuring my shoulder I went through a bit of rehabilitation before easing my way back into the gym. I had to work out with bands due to my injuries and I couldn't help but feel self-conscious – taking up space, getting in people's way and other gym users giving me funny looks."* He continued: *"I decided to buy some equipment and began to work out and do yoga from home but it was a nightmare – with distractions, lack of motivation, not enough room and the even the dog getting in the way!."*



Barerrooms offers an alternative to a big gym membership or working out at home – with single, double, and group suites that all have HD projectors allowing for the next best thing to a 121 personal training session. Members benefit from personal assigned programmes and a variety of activities, Micro gyms that provide all equipment for

more advanced workouts and fitness suites suitable for cardio, strength, mobility and physiotherapy.

There are currently 3 main Memberships, Bronze £15.99 for 1 hour per week, Silver £25 for 3 hours per week and Gold £35 for 5 hours. Golf and VR only memberships starting from £10 gives access for 4 hours per month, and the popular Class pass for the Flexi suite gives unlimited access Monday to Friday for £10 per month.



There's no joining fee or contract, you can bring up to two supervised under 16s for free and you can top up hours as and when you wish. Barerooms is open from 6am until 10pm 7 days per week, with no peak hours or waiting for equipment.

Wayne said: *"We've custom built everything here in the warehouse and recruited local street artist Johnny Benson to do some cool artwork. It's a really inclusive space that's suitable for everyone and ideal for those who want a private workout space – great if you are someone with mental health issues or simply don't want a crowded area and feeling like there are people ogling at you."*

The virtual reality suite has all sorts of games including a VR treadmill and attractions where you can run, jump and walk safely. Meanwhile, the virtual golf simulator is a golfer's dream – with training, stats and a wide variety of driving ranges and courses to choose from. With so much going on and a big emphasis on inclusivity, Barerooms is a forward-thinking concept like no other.

Wayne summarized: *"There's nothing like this anywhere and it really does bridge the gap and offer something different for people who want their own private workout space. There are many, many, reasons people are*

uncomfortable exercising in public and nothing out there that meets this need so it's important that all industries step up to the mark and offer something more accessible and inclusive. That's what our aim is, anyway."

Barerooms offer personal trainers the opportunity to build their business through low-cost PT memberships and first month free! They also welcome instructors who want to run group classes at very competitive rates!

Barerooms is located at Unit 8a, Valley Road Business Park, Birkenhead, (industrial Est behind Tesco Bidston) and is open from 6am until 9pm 7 days a week – with online booking to secure your private gym or fitness suite, group classes, virtual reality, or golf suites. There are flexible membership plans, and they offer a free 1-hour trial for anyone interested in checking out the space.



Personal training, Golf coaching, Mobility rehabilitation or Physio sessions are available at an additional discounted rate to members all members receive their 1 st PT session free.

**Barerooms / 8a Valley Business Park,
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HEALTH & BEAUTY

FROM LYMPHOEDEMA TO PIONEER OF 'MIRACLE' TREATMENTS!

A woman from Norris Green has become one of the pioneers of a 'miracle' new fat reduction solution that saved her from looking like 'The Elephant Woman' due to lymphoedema. Jade McGuinness, 32, suffered from incurable facial swelling following cancer surgery but has had a huge transformation after discovering 'Liquid Lipo' and has now opened a clinic offering a range of 'miracle' treatments.



After having five scans on a lump in her neck and being told it was a swollen lymph node, Jade was finally diagnosed with having a cancerous tumour. The lump was successfully removed however this led to the further complication of lymphoedema – a swelling of the face that she was set to deal with for the rest of her life.

Jade said: *"The whole process was really scary – from when I first had the tumour diagnosis to having lymphoedema. When they removed the tumour I bought the doctor a bevvy and was so happy that the operation was a success however I was devastated to find out that I'd have a swollen face for the rest of my life. I looked like The Elephant Woman."*



Naturally devastated about her life changing diagnosis, Jade didn't know where to turn – until a chance meeting in a Wirral clinic. Jade met Kirsty Smith – a young scientist who was operating from the clinic – and Kirsty told her about her ground breaking new solution for fat and swelling reduction.

Kirsty was in the process of launching Liquid Lipo International and from its humble beginnings in the clinic, it has now gone on to be an award winning global fat reduction company. After 3 years of research and clinical trials the flagship product, Liquid Lipo Fat Dissolve Gel, was launched in 2020 and Jade was one of the first ever clients.



The Liquid Lipo gel is a non needle, non surgical treatment and is the only one of its kind – with over 95% of participants losing fat in over 3,000 clinical trials. The product works by wrapping the gel over the area of fat or swelling then entering the skin and binding fat cells to shrink the fat.



After being introduced to the new treatment from Kirsty, Jade bought a neck strap and began to use thermogenesis gel on her neck and then the new Hydra Oz cream on her face. With incredible results after just one hour, Jade broke down and cried as she had found a 'miracle' treatment after being told by the NHS that there would be no cure or long term solution.

Jade said: *"When I saw the instant results I was completely overwhelmed! I thought I'd have to deal with my swollen face for the rest of my life but this was my saviour. People forget that the way you look and feel has a major impact on your mental health and there are so many people out there who don't feel comfortable in their skin. The Liquid Lipo treatments helped me feel like me again."*



Amazed by the results, Jade set up Liquid Lipo Liverpool in October 2021 and she has since helped around 100 people with both weight loss and loose skin after weight loss. The results have been so incredible, some clients have referred to her as a 'miracle worker'.

Jade has now opened her first Liquid Lipo Liverpool clinic in Tuebrook. In addition to Liquid Lipo, she offers a wide range of treatments for tummy tucks, bum lifts, boob lifts, facial swelling and even scar covering. She has also become one of the UK pioneers of a groundbreaking new Biohertz frequency wand – something she offers as a treatment and also a product you can buy from her clinic.



The new wand feels similar to a hairdryer blowing hot air on you and it works by using Biohertz frequencies to help reproduce, energize, detoxify and eliminate bad cells. Jade's model is a new, higher specification to others on the market and she has so far seen incredible results from people with varicose veins, arthritis, fibromyalgia, nerve pain and more – with amazing feedback.

Jade summarised: *"I can't state enough how magic Liquid Lipo is – it has certainly changed my life! I am loving sharing it with the world and helping people with weight loss and it has put me on the most amazing journey. I now have my own pain management clinic, helping remove inflammation from the body and repairing the immune system, and it makes me feel so good to be helping so many people!"*

For a free, no obligation consultation about Liquid Lipo, the Biohertz frequency wand or anything else call Jade on 07393995392!

Check out Liquid Lipo Liverpool on FACEBOOK!

For more information and scientific data check out www.liquidlipointernational.com!

HEALTH & BEAUTY

THE STRETCHMARK & SCAR 'MIRACLE WORKER' WITH AMAZING RESULTS!

A Wirral mother who set up her Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging business in January 2022 has been seeing amazing results with her clients. Louise Golden from Neston became one of the only practitioners in the UK to offer the unique treatment and says it has had huge mental health benefits for the people she has helped – whilst being cheaper and more effective than other treatments.



Louise discovered the ground-breaking solution after suffering from stretchmarks all of her life and deciding to research alternative methods. She started following Rodolpho Torres – the 'guru' of Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging, a form of micropigmentation – and herself became one of the UK pioneers of the treatment with her company, Empowered Beauty By Louise.

Now almost one year on, Louise has helped many people by camouflaging their stretchmarks and scars and the most profound thing she has found is the benefits to their mental health. This is something she can relate to, as ever since being a teenager,

stretchmarks had been very problematic for Louise – giving her confidence issues that led to her not wearing bikinis and certain clothes on nights out with friends.

Louise explained: *"It's been so rewarding helping people with this incredible treatment and restoring their self-confidence. Many people don't understand how having stretchmarks and scars can really affect you, especially in the case of scars when it can remind the person of how it happened to them, so to help people with this is a real honour."*



Louise has treated a wide range of clients, both women and men, and on various parts of the body. Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging works by pigments being inserted into deeper levels of skin to correct the colour of stretchmarks and scars so that they blend in with the skin surrounding them – therefore making their appearance massively reduced.

Louise said: *"It's such a clever treatment and it's always amazing to see the look on people's faces when they check out the results. I've had people in tears of joy and so happy as they feel they can be confident again – it gives them a new lease*

of life. Some have even called me a miracle worker."



Stretch mark camouflage
4 weeks healing progress!!

One of Louise's clients, Emma, said: *"This treatment has been really helpful in improving my stretchmarks and building my self-esteem enough to be more comfortable in my skin. Louise is a sweet soul who really has been a helping hand in my journey of self-confidence. Compared to other treatments that I have tried and tested, this has been the most effective and a lot cheaper. It really has done wonders for me!"*

Another said: *"I have been struggling with stretchmarks for a long time due to dramatic weight loss and this has had an impact on my self-confidence and emotions. After a couple of treatments with Louise I feel more confident in myself and finally able to achieve the results I want."*

One client, Helen, said: *"I had a lovely time getting my treatment done. I was quite nervous at first but Louise made me feel so at ease – such a lovely woman and a fantastic treatment! I can't wait to see the results in 6 weeks time – would definitely recommend!"*



8 WEEKS HEALED!

A male client, John, said: *"I have searched for years looking for stretchmark treatments and following our consultation we decided to proceed with the MCA needling*

treatment. I was completely at ease with the process as everything was explained fully. I would highly recommend based on the extensive knowledge, treatment evidence and professional service received."

Through her business, Empowered Beauty By Louise, Louise offers the ground-breaking Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging treatment as well as lash lifts and tints, brows and eyeliner. The Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging without doubt produces the most profound results though, especially when it comes to improving mental health, and is something Louise is very proud of.



Louise summarised: *"In an ideal world, it would be great if everyone was comfortable in their skin but the truth is that things such as scars and stretchmarks can really affect people. I know what it's like – worrying about what to wear and what people might think of you – so to offer a solution and seeing how happy it makes people is a dream."*

Louise offers Brazilian stretchmark camouflaging, a form of micropigmentation that can be used for both stretchmarks and scars and has helped many people since launching in January 2022. Treatments are very effective and she operates on a free consultation basis.

Empowered Beauty By Louise / Oaktree Court Business Centre, Mill Lane, Neston, CH64 8TP

For a free consultation call Louise on 07984274806 or message via the FACEBOOK PAGE!

Check out Empowered Beauty By Louise on INSTAGRAM!

HEALTH & BEAUTY

MEET THE WOMAN BEHIND THE 'MIRACLE' NATURAL BEAUTY PRODUCTS!

A woman from Merseyside has created 'miracle' natural beauty products, despite facing lots of adversities. Georgina Tang suffered horrific abuse during her childhood and for the last 19 years she has been looking after her son, who has life-threatening conditions, but has gone on to run a multi-award winning business.



Georgina Tang is the owner of Yours Naturally Yours and is a pioneer of ground-breaking, results-driven skincare and haircare products, creating 'miracle' formulas that have had profound results. Her products have sold globally and to many luxury brands as far and wide as the U.S and Dubai.

She has won many awards for her inventions such as Best Entrepreneur and Abundance Awards at Liverpool Lifestyle Awards and Outstanding Contribution To Organic Skincare, despite enduring many hardships along the way. As a child in Hong Kong she suffered shocking physical and mental abuse, as well as harsh poverty. This continued when the family moved to the UK when she was 13, without being able to speak a word of English, and her mother threw her out at 16.

Determined to make a success of herself, she eventually met her Italian husband but

was very ill whilst pregnant with her son, Alessio, and was sacked from a high paid Director's role in social housing because of this. Alessio was born, only to suffer from a range of complex disorders, but it is ironically due to this that she invented some ground-breaking products.

Georgina explained: *"Life with Alessio for the past 19 years has been very difficult but I would do anything for him. He suffers from an auto immune condition called Juvenile Idopathic Arthritis with no cure. Also, a few other serious conditions, some diagnosed and some un-diagnosed."*

She continued: *"On many occasions he has had seizures that resulted in him stopping breathing and almost dying. I was actually advised by the consultant that Alessio will not live pass one year of age. He is truly a medical miracle."*



In 2011 Georgina attended a free course in bath bombs and soap making and then started to attend courses in making natural skin care. She began to make natural and organic products at home such as bath bombs, soaps, body lotion, body butter, exfoliating scrub, lip balm and more.

One night in 2013, Georgina kissed Alessio goodnight and found lots of hair on his pillow. She broke down and cried as he was

losing his hair due to the chemotherapy. Interestingly, her neighbour came over to ask for help in creating a pH neutral shampoo for her as she had just finished chemotherapy too.

With the help of her trainers, Georgina created the magic Ultra mild shampoo and conditioner that aids healthy hair growth. Stated as a 'miracle' at the time, both Alessio and her neighbour grew a full head of glossy hair. These haircare products have helped many since – with many people on chemotherapy coming forward to praise the product's results.



Georgina explained: *"I love my son so much and would do anything for him. I started making natural products as an outlet for myself but it led to me creating products that cured his hair loss and also a shea butter that healed the psoriasis that caused him so much pain. Once I realised the power of what I could do I began to experiment with more formulas."*

Georgina went on to create some ground-breaking products, including a famous anti-aging serum which is also great in reducing acne and scarring, Elixir aka 'Miracle In A Bottle' and 'Botox In A Bottle' that sold internationally to luxury household names via her big white label clients.

Georgina explained: *"Yours Naturally Naturally Yours became a big hit overnight following the shampoo, shea butter, Elixir and serum products and it has helped me to save money for Alessio when I'm gone as he requires 24/7 care, basically leaving a legacy to him ensuring he is well looked after."*

She continued: *"This will be my deepest worry as a mum, leaving your child with complex needs including severe communication difficulties behind with no immediate family around. I have many sleepless nights over it and that's what keeps me going with my business – knowing my miracle creations are funding his future."*

Countless people with a wide range of conditions have given rave reviews about her skincare and haircare products, whilst she's also seen big demand for her scented candle range. As a result, Yours Naturally Naturally Yours has become one of the most respected brands in the industry.

Talking about her journey, Georgina said: *"My life has been very difficult but I now have several degrees including Psychology, Sociology and Housing and a very successful business despite lots of trauma. To make use of an old cliché, when life has thrown me lemons, I've always been determined to find a way to make the very best lemonade I can."*



Georgina Tang is the owner of multi-award winning natural and organic beauty product range, Yours Naturally Naturally Yours. Through her business based in Widnes she offers a wide range of handmade results-driven skincare and haircare products as well as scented candles. She also offers product making workshops.

For the online shop or to enquire about becoming a stockist visit www.ynny.co.uk

Check out Yours Naturally Naturally Yours on FACEBOOK!

Check out Yours Naturally Naturally Yours on INSTAGRAM!



HEALTH & BEAUTY

THE WIRRAL MUM FIGHTING THE CHILD MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS!

A Wirral mother is leading the fight against the child mental health crisis through her concept, Merseyside Mindful Mammias. Aimee Greaves is a mental health nurse with over 15 years' experience and offers a number of services to bridge the gap, with NHS waiting lists up to 12 months long.



With 1 in 6 children aged 5 to 16 years old identified as having a probable mental disorder in the official 2020 NHS report, the figure is likely to have increased further following Covid. Merseyside Mindful Mammias aims to tackle that by offering mental health services to children as well as empowering the parents.

Aimee said: *"I set up Merseyside Mindful Mammias in 2018 after struggling with my mental health during pregnancy. I came to realise that there was a lack of support out there focused on the mental health of both*

children and parents so decided to create something that would bridge the gap."

Merseyside Mindful Mammias offers a number of services such as mental health sessions for children, children's circles and workshops – featuring things such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga – and Family Connections where both parents and children can work together.

For parents, she offers hypnobirthing, women's circles and workshops, mindfulness, meditation and yoga, rite of the womb healing, post natal massage, shamanic healing, mental health awareness sessions and more. The idea is to tackle child mental health issues by working with both children and the parents.



Aimee offers all services either on a 1-2-1 basis, with parents and children together or in groups, with regular events and retreats such as Family Connections – where children and parents engage in holistic activities together. Aimee also offers 2 day Youth Mental Health First Aid course, where adults can become Youth Mental Health First Aid specialists.

The first aid courses are for everyone who works with, lives with or supports young people aged 8-18 and they teach people how to listen, reassure and respond to potential mental health issues. Aimee gives people the skills to be able to tackle issues, even before they arise, and people come away with an internationally accredited Mental Health First Aid qualification.



Aimee said: *"Since setting up Merseyside Mindful Mamas, I've seen a shocking increase in very sad cases. I've had children as young as 5 years old saying they don't want to be here and at the same time I've seen more mothers having breakdowns. My aim is to help as many children as possible but also the parents so that they can be the best they can be for their children."*

She continued: *"I'm also very passionate about delivering the Youth Mental Health First Aid courses. There's a major issue with the lack of adults in a position to help children with mental health problems. The more people trained in youth mental health the better as they can catch the early signs and prevent crisis through early intervention."*



Combining science and spirituality, Merseyside Mindful Mamas uses a wide variety of mental health techniques from her 15 years' experience as a mental health nurse, as well as practises such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga. Aimee has vast experience working within CAMHS

(Children & Adult Mental Health Services) and has seen some great results through her work.

Aimee explained: *"Tackling children's mental health issues on a 1-2-1 basis through mental health counselling is a big part of what I do but it's just as important to work with the parents. I work with mothers before, during and after pregnancy and work with both children and parents together in order to strengthen their bond and promote mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing."*



Merseyside Mindful Mamas works on a free consultation basis where parents can have a free, no obligation chat to see if the services may suit. There are also regular 2 days Youth Mental Health First Aid courses available for £200 for anyone wanting to become trained in mental health first aid for young people.



For a free consultation and chat about mental health services for children or parents, or to enquire about Youth Mental Health First Aid courses visit mindfulmamas.org

Check out Merseyside Mindful Mamas on [FACEBOOK!](#)

Check out Merseyside Mindful Mamas on [INSTAGRAM!](#)

HEALTH & BEAUTY

IV OZONE THERAPY HAVING PROFOUND RESULTS AT THE DETOX CLINIC!

The Detox Clinic in Liverpool has become the only clinic in the North West to own a medical grade IV Ozone machine and it's having profound results. The oxygen treatment, applied through an intravenous drip, has helped people with long covid, Lyme disease, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, cancer, diabetes, COPD, asthma and many other conditions.



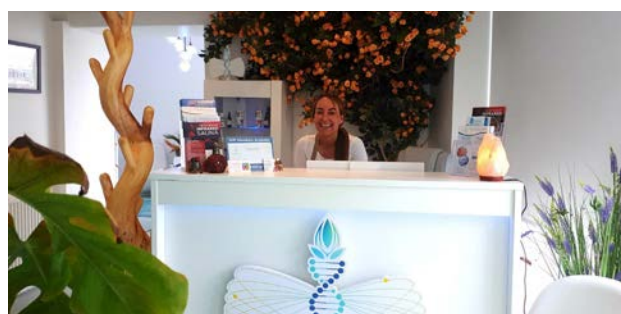
There have been many studies on the benefits of IV Ozone therapy – with a 2018 study finding that ozone mixed with blood and injected into people with HIV significantly reduced their viral load over a 2-year period. Meanwhile, a 2014 study found that the therapy improved quality of life and ability to exercise in former smokers with COPD.

IV Ozone therapy works by dissolving oxygen gas into blood that was taken from you, before injecting it back into you through an intravenous drip. The Detox Clinic has recently started using the North West's first medical grade machine and so far the feedback from clients has been amazing, with great results for a wide range of illnesses.



One of the most compelling cases is that of Ryan Brown. After receiving a bite from a tick in June 2016 that led to a bullseye rash, it took a long time for him to become diagnosed with Lyme disease until it was too late. A life of brain fog, chronic fatigue, insomnia and nausea became extremely debilitating – until he discovered IV Ozone therapy at The Detox Clinic.

Ryan said: *"I was misdiagnosed in the UK and when I was finally diagnosed with Lyme disease after visits to specialists in Dublin and the U.S, it was too late. Lyme disease is never cured as the bacteria is very clever and adapts to different treatments until it finds the right environment to attack again. I was taking lots of antibiotics but these were doing damage to my gut so discovering the more natural IV Ozone therapy changed my life."*



He continued: *"I started having the treatment at The Detox Clinic in the summer of 2021 – with 10 'passes' in a session and 10 sessions. Straight after my first session I felt lighter (I was constantly feeling heavy with Lyme) and slept like a baby for the first time in a long time – the nausea went away too. I have to live a very clean lifestyle, with a strict diet, but I feel I finally have my life back after years of suffering. It's incredible!"*



Another client, Donna, said: *"I've suffered from asthma and COPD for some time now, often using my inhaler and waking up pretty much every night coughing. I heard about IV Ozone therapy at The Detox Clinic after my daughter told me about it and I cannot believe the results!"*

She continued: *"I had 5 'passes' of the intravenous oxygen drip and I could literally feel the energy running through me. I came out feeling totally buzzing! It's been 6 weeks now and my cough has pretty much gone, I can sleep at night, I hardly use my inhaler and I have loads more energy. I've even been swimming on holiday. I've just had covid and even that didn't affect me too badly – it's amazing!"*



The Detox Clinic opened on Green Lane in Old Swan in 2020 and offers a wide range of treatments such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, IV ozone therapy, IV

vitamin therapy, colonic hydrotherapy, coffee enema, infrared sauna and parasitic cleansing. The alternative therapies have helped many people and the clinic works on a free consultation basis.

Founder Allison Mountaine said: *"Some people attack alternative and natural therapies but they should speak to the many people we've helped since opening in 2020. We take great pride in what we do – showing people that there are alternatives therapies out there. We do not profess to cure things or to be doctors, but our treatments have helped so many people with a wide range of conditions – giving them a better quality of life!"*



IV Ozone therapy is available at The Detox Clinic in Old Swan, Liverpool. The therapy has been trialled by a number of peer reviewed studies and can treat a wide range of conditions. The Detox Clinic has a team of highly qualified professionals and works on a free consultation basis to establish whether IV Ozone therapy or one of their other treatments is a suitable option.

The Detox Clinic / 197 – 197 Green Lane, Old Swan, Liverpool, L13 6RH / 0151 228 5164

For a FREE CONSULTATION call The Detox Clinic on 0151 228 5164, email the-detox-clinic@outlook.com or visit thedetoxclinicltd.com

Check out The Detox Clinic on FACEBOOK!

Check out The Detox Clinic on INSTAGRAM!



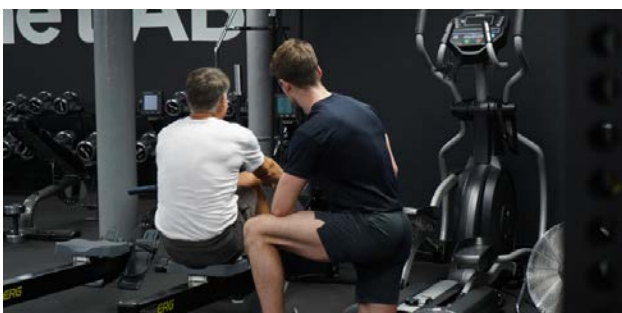
HEALTH & BEAUTY

FIRST OF ITS KIND PERSONAL TRAINING COMMUNITY CREATED IN LIVERPOOL!

Two personal trainers from Liverpool are revolutionising the personal training world with their new concept, Limitless Lifestyle Community. Alex Sloan, 28, and Levi Osborne, 24, have created a 'first of its kind' solution to offer unlimited personal training 7 days a week and to build a sustainable lifestyle rather than a quick fix.



Founded in May 2022 and based at The Lab on Dale Street, Limitless Lifestyle Community offers people unlimited personal training for a set monthly fee — meaning sessions can cost as little as £8.50 compared to the average price of £35 – £60 per session elsewhere. In addition to this, there's a focus on a holistic approach, a 24/7 support group, a sustainable nutrition plan, meditation, yoga, massage and social events.



Since its formation in May, Limitless Lifestyle Community has over 40 members from different walks of life — who are all now part of a community that supports and encourages each other. There are events such as Wellness By The Water, hikes around the country, meditation and yoga and big community social events and monthly member challenges. There have already been some incredible success stories.

One such success story is that of Madoka Moroi. Madoka moved to Liverpool from Japan and gained a lot of weight during lockdown but after working with Alex and Levi managed to reduce her weight from 74.4kg to 51kg. Training six times per week, she went through cycles of reducing body fat then putting on muscle mass — an incredible transformation to the point where she has competed as a bodybuilder.



Madoka said: *"Whatever your goal is, they offer full support — not only losing weight but also building strength, living a healthier life and in my case participating in a bodybuilding competition! I feel so much stronger than before both mentally and physically. This is not just a personal training gym but the best fitness community ever"*

and it's amazing to think I'm a bodybuilder now!"



Co-Founder Alex Sloan explained: *"Levi and I have been personal trainers for a few years now and we've seen so many people develop eating disorders through unsustainable diet plans and they have developed serious body image issues from the pressure of achieving a six pack in six weeks. We thought we'd put an end to this unrealistic and unhealthy approach to living a healthy lifestyle."*

He continued: *"Your health is your wealth and our main focus is to break down unhealthy habits and provide the tools and support to develop new, healthy and most importantly sustainable habits. Say no to the quick fix and change your life forever."*



Members of Limitless Lifestyle Community have access to one session per day 7 days a week for a set monthly fee – meaning the more they use the service the better value it becomes. They receive a personalised nutrition plan and join the 24/7 support group to help them on their journey and share individual triumphs along the way. Members can also take part in monthly challenges to win amazing prizes.

Alex said: *"One of the biggest benefits we've found is helping people get out of the rut of alcohol and drug abuse. For me personally this is massive as I have been in that position and it took me a long time to pull myself out of that dark place alone. I*

don't want anyone to have to go through that on their own again and I truly believe we've created a place where we can help and support without judgement."

Limitless Lifestyle Community has become a big hit amongst its members – with a 5* rating on Trust Pilot and some amazing transformations. The community is growing rapidly and offers its members 50% discount for a month with every person they refer. Lasting friendships have been formed within the community, with members supporting and celebrating each other through their journeys.



Co-Founder Levi Osborne said: *"Since the Covid pandemic we have now entered a mental health pandemic. A lot of people are lonely, their mental health has deteriorated and they feel there is no way back to feeling amazing. We offer more than just a gym – we offer a community that acts as a support network for everyone on the journey to a lasting healthy lifestyle."*

He continued: *"We aim to give people the tools to truly make a lasting change – through unlimited sessions, a holistic approach incorporating mental health practises, a personalised nutrition plan, events, 24/7 support and a community of great people. There's nothing like this out there and we aim to revolutionize the way people use personal training and learn to love themselves again."*

***Limitless Lifestyle Community / The Lab,
40-46 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 5SF***

***For a free introductory session
call 07803507095 or contact via
limitlessfitnessgyms.com***

***Check out Limitless Lifestyle Community
on FACEBOOK!***

***Check out Limitless Lifestyle Community
on INSTAGRAM!***



HEALTH & BEAUTY

THE WIRRAL WELLBEING GROUPS HELPING WOMEN RE-DISCOVER THEMSELVES!

Wirral-based wellbeing groups for women have been seeing amazing transformations during the past 12 months, helping over 100 women since they formed. Cosmic Divine was created by Becky Jones and offers 1-2-1 sessions, sharing circles, 6 week courses and retreats.



Based at Noubalm's new wellbeing centre on Borough Road in Birkenhead, Cosmic Divine fuses many different practises into the different sessions, including breathwork, life coaching, angelic reiki, sound healing, oracle cards and more — with a big focus on Theta Healing Meditation.



Founder Becky Jones has qualifications in many practises, including Advanced Theta Healing Meditation. Theta Healing Meditation is a type of mindfulness

meditation that produces a deep state of relaxation to improve mental clarity. Theta waves encourage deep relaxation, creativity, and intuition. This practise is an integral part of what she does and is used to tap into any blocks or beliefs that hold us back.



Becky said: *"The transformations we have seen in our groups have been unbelievable! A lady that came to me for a year struggled with depression, didn't have a job or even move out the house due to fear. We worked through a lot of beliefs/blocks and now she has a job, boyfriend and her own place and is doing amazing. This is one of the many amazing stories that have come out of Cosmic Divine."*

She continued: *"A key part of it is Theta Healing Meditation and that is something that helped start my own healing journey. When I was younger I got lost in drink and drugs, spiralling out of control, and this led to dark thoughts, suicidal tendencies and ultimately hitting rock bottom. That's when I started some deep soul searching."*

Becky started researching meditation and various self-help wellbeing techniques. After discovering the power of Theta Healing Meditation, she embarked upon a long journey of self-discovery and took a spiritual path. Now, through Cosmic Divine, she is on a mission to help other women re-discover themselves and re-connect with their divine feminine.



Cosmic Divine's sharing circles are very powerful group sessions and are often filled with both laughter and tears. The sessions are usually 2-3 hours long and cost £33. The 6 week transformational courses feature a wide range of treatments, techniques and practises and are £555 for the full course. Becky has a team of professionals but also works on a 1-2-1 basis for bespoke work.

Coming soon in the new year will be women's retreats — offering weekends away in spiritually grounded locations — and Becky also offers free courses for charity through Noubalm's CIC, Nou You. Through all of the different courses, Becky has seen some huge shifts in women and has had some amazing feedback.

One woman said: *"I have been having healing sessions with Becky for just over a year. I feel so safe, held and seen in her presence and in how she holds space, that I can comfortably allow all that needs to come up to be witnessed and be released."*



She continued: *"There is never any judgement, only clarity and powerful insights given around the situation. I leave every healing feeling lighter, more aligned with a deep inner peace. I cannot recommend Becky's sessions and workshops enough, they are truly life changing."*

Becky summarized: *"There are so many women out there who give, give, give and always put themselves last — as a result they lose touch with the divine feminine and warrior woman within them. The aim of Cosmic Divine is not simply to heal and transform — it's giving women the support and tools in order to do so themselves. We all have the power within, we just need to re-connect with it."*



Cosmic Divine is based at Wirral Wellness Centre in Price Street, Birkenhead, and offers bespoke 1-2-1 sessions, regular sharing circles, 6 week transformation courses and will soon be introducing retreats. Women can have a free initial consultation with Becky to see if it aligns for them.



Cosmic Divine / Noubalm's Wellbeing Centre on Borough Road in Birkenhead

For a free consultation/chat with Becky call her on 07908389105 or join the ever-growing FACEBOOK GROUP!



HEALTH & BEAUTY

STAR SALON NAMED BEST SALON IN MERSEYSIDE AT THE SALON AWARDS!

Exciting news at Liverpool's multi-award winning Star Salon! The South Liverpool salon has recently won Best Salon in Merseyside at The Salon Awards and they will also soon be opening their beautiful new creative space upstairs – meaning freelance opportunities for hairdressers, make up artists, nail techs and aesthetic practitioners.



FREELANCE POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Join our fabulous community of creative friendly artists we have the following available in our new space in January

- Hairdressers
- Makeup artists
- Nail technician
- Treatment room available for aesthetic, beauty, lashes

The latest award comes prior to the big reveal of their extended space, planned for February 2023. The salon, located at 542 Aigburth Road, has already won a multitude of awards such as Best Salon in the Hair & Beauty Awards, as well as reaching the Wella Finals, Goldwell Finals and Global Creative Awards Finals.

The latest award of Best Salon in Merseyside is testament to the fantastic quality and service they provide – with every one of their reviews on Salon

Spy 5 star rated. With a team of Master Colourists, they've worked with top models and are Educators for Goldwell – such is their expertise.



To celebrate this accolade, the salon will be introducing a February and March offer of 25% off colours for new customers on their first two appointments. They will also be on the look out for talented hairdressers, make up artists, nail techs and aesthetic practitioners for their new creative space coming soon.



Salon owner Kelly McDonald said: “Star Salon has been doing great things for 12 years now and I’m very proud of the team and all we have achieved. All that matters is what our clients think and the fact that all our reviews are 5 star rated on Salon Spy says it all, but it does feel amazing when we get recognised with awards.”



She continued: *"There are some fabulous hairdressers in the region so to win this latest award is some achievement! It's thanks to the amazing team we have here and the consistent quality and service provided — honestly I couldn't have a better team! If you'd like to be a part of it get in touch about the new opportunities."*



Star Salon has developed an exceptional reputation as the place to go for hair cuts and colours. Colours represent by far the most popular service at Star Salon and they are renowned for being one of the best salons for colours in the region — hence their multiple awards.



One customer, Rachael, said: *"I've only been going to Star Salon since October but Kelly and her lovely team make me feel like I've always been one of their clients! Everyone is so friendly and they go out of their way to make you feel relaxed and welcome."*



She continued: *"Kelly is an actual colour genius and my hair has never looked better. She is so knowledgeable and explains each step of the process so you feel at ease. I always look forward to my appointments and can't recommend Star Salon highly enough!"*



Star Salon has recently won Best Salon in Merseyside at The Salon Awards and they will also soon be opening their beautiful new creative space — meaning freelance opportunities for hairdressers, make up artists, nail techs and aesthetic practitioners.

**Star Salon, 542 Aigburth Road, Liverpool,
L19 3QG / 0151 427 7526**

**TO ENQUIRE ABOUT HAIRDRESSING OR
BEAUTY POSITIONS CALL 0151 427 7526
OR CONTACT VIA STARSALON.CO.UK**

Check out Star Salon on FACEBOOK!

Check out Star Salon on INSTAGRAM!



INNER GURU



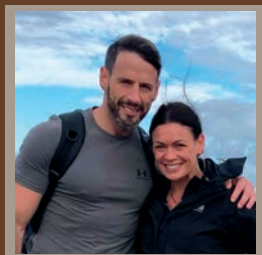
Inner Guru CIC is a community interest company with two locations in Walton & Kirkdale, Liverpool. Our vision is to support the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of our community.

We provide a number of services to the community, hosted by a variety of trained practitioners including; Cacao Ceremonies, Kundalini Dance, Breathwork, Meditation, Yoga, Motivational Workshops, Well-being support groups + much more. We aim to end the stigma of mental health, by offering inclusive, non-judgement support groups in a non-clinical setting



Dasha from My Body Therapy has been with us for a number of years now, offering Sports Massage, Relaxation Treatments, Cupping and Dry Needling. She is rated 5* on Google and has provided a number of treatments and therapies to professional athletes and the likes.

Another on-site facilitator is Kev Deaves, The Mind Shaman. As a Mindfulness Coach, Kev has helped countless people evolve through meditation and mindfulness techniques. He teaches meditation and alternative healing techniques - including Reiki, Kambo treatments and more.



Men and Women's P.A.C.T Mantality is a Trauma Informed Mental Wellness and Human Development Institute. Held by Paul Garrigan and Carly Skelly, PACT helps build individuals, families, businesses and communities that are self empowered, self-awareness and compassion to themselves and to others.

One of our newest team members, Rob Collier, The Scouse Buddha, is a volunteer at our Rice Lane location. After benefiting from the practices offered at the Inner Guru, Rob now helps others overcome their adversities with weekly classes and drop-in sessions.



"My purpose is to aid in restoring balance on Earth, to be a receiver and transmitter of the cosmic light, and to help others find their unique skills and abilities and align with their life purpose."

Lewis Powell,
Founder



"THEHUB"



'The Hub' is our new centre, located off Rice Lane in Walton, which recently opened in March 2022. We have plenty of facilities on site for you to utilise including a Sauna, Ice Bath, Exercise Equipment, Shower, Coffee Machines, and a great space to relax. We host a number of events, classes and workshops hosted each week including;

- Weekly drop-in sessions,
- 5 Elements Workshops
- Sauna & Ice Bath bookings
- 1-2-1 Sessions and Holistic Therapies

You can also hire the Inner Guru & 'The Hub' for an hourly rate for your own classes, workshops, events, private sessions etc. Please get in touch to discuss options and availability.



www.Inner-Guru.co.uk



07482 871127



ARTS & CULTURE



la vida liverpool

MAGAZINE

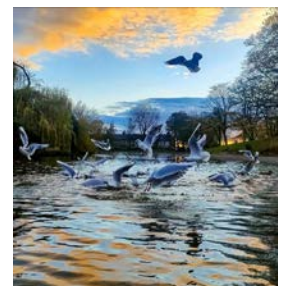
ARTS & CULTURE

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE QUARTER

In this section we showcase some of the wonderful photographs from local photographers. The Liverpool region is a photographer's paradise -- from urban and industrial backdrops to stunning coastal settings. Our area inspires many local photographers and in turn they inspire us with their captivating captures. So sit back, relax and enjoy this season's selected photographs....

KIMBERLEY PHILLIPS

facebook.com/Intuitionphotography1



TRACEY RENNIE

facebook.com/byTraceyRennie/photos



To submit your photographs for future editions please email lavidaliverpool@gmail.com

POETS' CORNER

The Liverpool region isn't short of wordsmiths and in this section we bring you two poems from local writers. From the poignant and profound to the silly and surreal, here you'll find poetry at its finest...

The City At Night

*As afternoon shopping draws to a close and families fly back to their nests
The animals arrive to storm the city and murder soon manifests.
The nine to five ants have finished their shifts and it's time for Friday night lights,
As dusk descends on the concrete jungle in this Egosystem there are sure to be fights.*

*The hustle and bustle begins at the bars, it's feeding time at the zoo,
Boisterous baboons beat on their chests as gallant gazelles so graciously woo.
Wild cats go out on the prowl, powerful lions parade their pride,
The leader of the pack commands his presence whilst the cheetahs have something to hide.*

*And in the streets hyenas howl, dogs urinate on the walls,
The weaker one at the back of the pack slowly staggers then stumbles and falls.
Rats scurry down the back alleys, opportunists delve through the trash,
Rushing rhinos in the roads charge through cars to withdraw some more cash.*

*Gorillas guard the doors as they queue up two by two,
Whilst cheeky monkeys already inside are causing chaos in the loo.
Inside the club there are tribal noises and pounding of the drums,
Macho males make mating calls whilst the females flaunt their bums.*

*Dashing does in distress walk with hooves in hand,
The smell of sex is in the air and on their bodies so exotically tanned.
Pheromones and hormones hypnotise the dominant males,
Baying for blood and in a trance they roam with pointed tails.*

*So if you go down to the city tonight you're sure of a big surprise.
If you go down to the city tonight you'd better go in disguise.
If you go drinking in the city you might just get a fright.
Oh what a wild place! The crazy City At Night.*

JUSTIN HOPPER - lavidaliverpool.co.uk

To submit a poem email lavidaliverpool@gmail.com

POETS' CORNER

Her Secret

*It was one night last week when everything changed
I got all in a muddle - my life rearranged
I was cleaning the car, I was just whistling away
When my wife came behind me with something to say
She stood there all shameful looking at the block paving
I knew then for sure that she'd been misbehaving*

*"I've got something to tell you, you might get a fright
I'm going to be honest, I hope that's alright"*

*I looked at her pallor, and she was white as ghost
And I couldn't work out, which one of us, was scared most...*

*"I've been keeping a secret, I really must tell
I can no longer deceive you, this lying is hell"*

*I stared at my sweetheart, my soul mate, my Betty
With a lump in my throat and my palms became sweaty
The world started spinning, my legs turned to jelly
Just what could this secret be, she was trying to tell me!
Was it that guy from the green grocers, that bastard called Steven?
She's been going there often, I can't believe that she's leaving!
I stood there all frozen, but too scared to hear
She looked me right in the eye, took two steps, and came near
I cried "Oh darling don't go! I can't believe that you're leaving!"*

*She said...
"It's not that you dummy... You see... I've been turning you vegan
It started off slowly, when you got drunk at parties
I'd swap all of your sausages for Linda McCartney's
Then I got much worse, I'd sneak Jack fruit and tofu
You must understand... I was always planning to tell you!
That cottage pie that I made... Had no meat... It was lentil
But I was too scared to say because I'd thought you'd go mental"*

*I said...
"Oh Darling, thank goodness, I was so close to crying
I got the wrong idea when you said you'd been lying"
I felt such a fool, but I was happy, ecstatic
I shouldn't jump to conclusions/ be so automatic*

*I said...
"Oh Betty I'm so pleased, with what you've just said
I guess this explains the big cucumber, under your side of the bed?"*

GED THOMPSON - facebook.com/angeluspoetry

To submit a poem email lavidaliverpool@gmail.com

LUMA

ARTS & CULTURE

LUMA CREATIONS BRINGING LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC & CULTURE TO LIVERPOOL IN 2023

FRI 3RD FEB -- Grupo Luma at The Philharmonic Music Room



GRUPO LUMA return to the Music Room at the Liverpool Philharmonic with their six piece musical ensemble to take you on a magical journey of Latin America through a wondrous array of music and song.

FRI 31ST MARCH -- Nano Stern at The Philharmonic Music Room



LUMA Creations is proud to present Chilean Singer/Songwriter Nano Stern who is riding the crest of the new wave of Chilean Song, and has become a reference of contemporary song-writing in South America to Liverpool.

TUES 12TH - SAT 23RD SEPTEMBER -- Festival of Latin American Music, Arts & Culture



Music showcases, collaborations with national and international partners and an amazing all day event that brings Liverpool a real taste of Latin America with live music, dance groups, street art, lots and lots of food. A chance for everyone to participate in a true Latin American carnival atmosphere and a community tour across the city region.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

*For more details, contact
Francisco Carrasco, Creative Director on
07740 189 385 or visit lumacreations.org*

*Check Luma Creations out on **FACEBOOK**
and **TWITTER***



Welcome to La Vida Liverpool's art gallery, where we showcase some of the incredible art from our region's finest artists! From abstract and modern to watercolour and canvass, we bring you ingenious creations from local artists every quarter. Here's our two selected artists of the quarter....

DEREK PRESCOTT

facebook.com/derekprescott.artist



JOE FORREST

facebook.com/joeforrestart



To submit your art for future editions please email lavidaliverpool@gmail.com

GED SAID

Ged Thompson is a one-man literary force, a world-renowned performance poet, storyteller, author, and a true bard of the oral tradition. His titles including 'Middle Earth Magic' & 'Diaries of A Man Who Believes in Angels' have touched the hearts and minds of readers around the globe, daring them to hope, to love, and to be kind – wherever and whenever they can.

Buddy left school last week and that brought forward a plethora of thoughts. I remembered how when he started he was so tiny, only half the size of the other children. He looked like a toddler swimming in a school uniform. He had a little peg in his stomach which we had to attach a tube to so he could get enough fluids and his heart meds. But having two belly buttons and being tiny were only the physical differences; Buddy was well behind cognitively as well because of his stroke. He had poor manual dexterity, balance, and coordination. He was weak along one side of his body and physically couldn't do the things that his peers could do. In short, Buddy was different.

I looked back on my own early school days (which were pretty rough) and thought about how any difference could make one a target. I wondered how this fragile little creature I loved so much may integrate into such a structured and goal-based milieu. And I was anxious about it. Buddy wasn't made for schools; he was made to live in the woods and eat mud and piss on trees. He's a child by definition but very much a wild animal in his own right. I wondered if such captivity as school life might dull his magic, if he'd be bullied, if he'd be even aware that he was being bullied if he was being, and if the school would recognise how vulnerable he was and try to shield him.

The school-run was challenging at times but something I loved, and I'll miss it. It's a

struggle putting a tie on a wild thing and dragging him away from his toys to read books and do sums. He couldn't see the logic of that, and I empathised profoundly with his plight. Some days he'd kick-off and it took a great effort of Dad-sorcery to magic him to the gates. Juxtaposing that, my mental health hasn't always been the best, especially in his early school days, and I guess he magicked me to the school gates also sometimes, via some Buddy-sorcery. We've both had our struggles and we've both helped each other greatly. Together... Somehow...We got there, and we got to the end.

If I said 'Buddy is really well behaved and always tries his best' I'd be lying. He's far more capricious than that. What's true is that; Buddy tries hard and knows when he's had enough and says "Blow this I've had enough I'm doing what I want instead". I think my friend Michelle summed him up perfectly when she said that "Buddy expresses from the depths of his soul" (She said it smiling and full of admiration, as any good art therapist should). Buddy isn't 'well behaved' that's a term adults put on kids who conform to their expectations. Buddy is a legend, he's the kid that all kids should be, before they are suppressed and conditioned into doing what suits everyone else around them. Buddy owns humanness, the highs and the lows, the ecstasy and the anger. And he's taught me to say what I think and feel, not let it fester, and to rage against the shrinking of the soul, and the anonymity of conformity.

Buddy fell in with a good class of kids, I remember how touched I was when I found out that, after PE the other children would help him get dressed and do his buttons for him, because they knew he couldn't do that. And I guess he helped them too, like when the teacher asked them to open their maths books and he'd

ARTS & CULTURE

LVL TALKS TO LATIN MUSIC SUPERSTAR CLARITZEL!

We recently brought you a feature about the December offer at Liverpool's favourite Italian restaurant, Amalia. During our visit we discovered that the owner Miguel's partner is none other than Claritzel — the Latin music superstar originally from Cuba and now residing in Tenerife. We caught up with her in Amalia to talk about her new single and comeback....



LVL: So it seems this is a bit of a comeback for you. What have you been up to recently?

CLARITZEL: Yes, it's been a while since I released something. I have been taking some time out and preparing for my new album. I've recorded 8 songs so far and they have a big focus on salsa and tropical, with a bit of Reggaeton, and I'm looking to go back to my Cuban roots with my new music. Other than that I've been performing cover concerts across the Canary Islands.

LVL: What has brought about this new single, the planned album and your comeback?

CLARITZEL: I've been feeling really inspired to go back to my Cuban roots and release some music from my homeland. Growing up I was influenced by great artists such as Isaac Delgado and Boleros music and you know, Cuban music has changed quite a lot, so I've been feeling inspired to release new

music that respects both traditional Cuban music and modern music.



LVL: What is the new single all about? What does it mean for those who speak English and cannot understand?

CLARITZEL: It's about a broken relationship and a woman who says she cannot live without this man but saying she is much better off without him. It's like a female empowerment song. Most Latin songs are about love and relationships haha!

LVL: You have had a great career so far. What is your most memorable moment?

CLARITZEL: I think now is the best time in my career as I have a clear vision for the future but obviously my big break appearing on The Voice Spain was very important for me as it gave me the big chance to show everyone who I am.

LVL: Your partner, Miguel, has a multi-award winning restaurant in Liverpool. That must be good right?

CLARITZEL: Of course haha! I actually met Miguel at Amalia when he flew me over to perform for their New Year's Eve party one year. We have been together since and I love coming to eat at the restaurant when we are in the UK. It has won many awards!



LVL: *How do you find coming to Liverpool regularly? What do you think of the city?*

CLARITZEL: *I love the city and even though I don't speak English very well people are so friendly! The music here is amazing and the history. I would love for my music to be heard here some day – perhaps even do a concert.*

LVL: *Following on from this single, what are the plans for the future for Claritzel?*

CLARITZEL: *It's going to be a busy 2022 with more single releases after this one and then the album release. Then of course there's concerts, festivals, carnivals and some television performances lined up. So yes a very busy year ahead but it's very exciting!*



It was indeed a pleasure to visit Amalia recently and find out why they have won so many awards, but to meet a Latin music superstar at the same time was incredible! Claritzel is a super talented artist and a natural performer – oozing with Latin passion – and who knows, perhaps we'll see her in Liverpool sometime soon?

Check out claritzel.com

Check out Claritzel on SPOTIFY!

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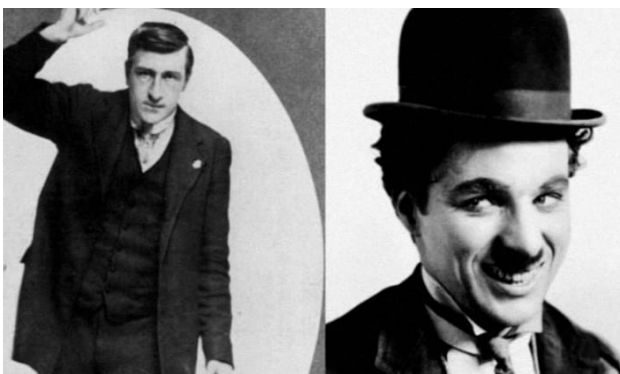
ARTS & CULTURE

NEW PLAY AIMS TO RECOGNISE LIVERPOOL'S GREATEST ACTIVIST AFTER 100 YEARS!

A powerful new play aims to recognise Liverpool activist James Larkin — 100 years after his release from Sing Sing prison. The enigmatic Irish republican, socialist and trade union leader, who campaigned for the rights of lower skilled workers, is portrayed like never before by Liverpool playwrights and a talented cast who wish to see him finally recognised by his city of birth.



Stone On Stone is a ground-breaking theatrical masterpiece based on James Larkin's incarceration in the notorious American prison, Sing Sing, and his relationship with the legendary Charlie Chaplin during that time. A rebel and revolutionary from Toxteth, Liverpool, 'Big Jim' has been recognised in Ireland for his heroic human rights efforts — yet never by Liverpool.



The profound new production is coming to The Epstein Theatre in Liverpool on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th March, celebrating 100 years of James Larkin's release from prison. The Liverpool dock worker of Irish descent was one of the pioneers of trade unions and one of the founders of the Irish Labour Party — a trailblazer who has yet to receive official recognition in Liverpool.



The thought provoking new play is being showcased by The James Larkin Society — a group who have been campaigning for 'Big Jim' to be recognised by Liverpool. His triumphant efforts that led to countless unskilled workers receiving statutory rights saw a statue of him erected in Dublin, yet The James Larkin Society are still working towards something similar in the place where he was born.



Stone On Stone tells the story of James Larkin's fight against the establishment and his dedication to his downtrodden co-workers, resulting in his detainment in the American jail for fundraising and raising awareness of injustice. The play follows his journey through the prison system and encounters with Charlie Chaplin, who was a big supporter of his cause.

As with any great production, the ground-breaking new play aims to not only enthrall the audience but bring about social change. Today's equality, fairness and human rights is only possible due to activists such as James Larkin and the mission of Stone On Stone is to highlight the unsung hero, whilst encouraging people to stand up for their rights in the same way.



Barry O'Hara from The James Larkin Society said: *"Everything we take for granted today – our minimum wage, holiday pay, equal rights – is due to people like James Larkin. If it wasn't for their resistance we would be living in the dark ages – submissive and without any rights."*

He continued: *"It takes great bravery to rise up and fight an unjust system but Jim was prepared to become a martyr and it is his actions that have paved the way for the free world we live in today. He is celebrated in a big way in Ireland so surely, after 100 years of his release from Sing Sing prison in America, it's about time to recognise him here in Liverpool."*



The James Larkin Society was founded in 2003, attracting almost 150 members, and it works closely with Ireland's Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) to ensure Jim's legacy and ethics are carried out today. Carrying the baton of 'Big Jim', Barry O'Hara and the society preserve his revolution of justice passionately – with an exhibition currently at the CASA on Hope Street.

Co-Producer Peter Devaney said: *"The play is very unique as it captures a very important yet unspoken part of the movement. It was written by Frank Kenny and explores the pivotal moment when Jim decided to accept support from Charlie Chaplin whilst incarcerated. He was a very stubborn man and fought the system at any cost but accepting the support of the great Charlie Chaplin was a crucial decision."*

Stone On Stone is coming to The Epstein Theatre on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th March in celebration of 100 years of James Larkin's release from prison. The play captures one of the most important periods in the history of human rights and justice. Tickets are available via Ticket Quarter and are just £15.



Stone On Stone / Fri 24th & Sat 25th March 2023, 7.30pm / The Epstein Theatre, Liverpool

For tickets to this ground-breaking play, visit ticketquarter.co.uk

Written by Frank Kenny, Produced by Barry O'Hara & Peter Devaney, Directed by Mikyla Jane Durkan, starring John O'Gorman, Lew Freeburn, Franklyn Jacks, Thom Williamson, Addae G, Mikyla Jane Durkan

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SPORT



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MAGAZINE

SPORT

HOW KITESURFING SAVED MY LIFE!

Watersports such as kitesurfing and wing foiling have grown massively in popularity in recent years, with many people realising the mental as well as physical health benefits of getting out on the water.

Testament to this is the story of Adam Crouch, 35, who ditched his high-pressure job in London, following a breakdown, to set up the Wirral's only licenced Kitesurfing & Wing Foiling school, called Northern Kites, based at Wallasey Beach, New Brighton.



For 13 years, Adam was working in Construction Project Management in London — a hazardous job that consisted of dangerous operations, strict health and safety, and tight programmes and budgets. The high-pressure role, including an incident that almost led to his own death, was the final straw which spurred him into leaving the construction industry.

Adam explained: *“Over 13 years in the job, paired with the fast-paced lifestyle of living in London, took a massive hit on my mental health which led to depression and a breakdown.”*

“While on a short kitesurfing holiday to help improve my health, it was decided that I would leave my job.”

Upon returning, there was an incident which nearly led to my death, and I knew I had made the correct decision.”



Adam decided to escape the UK with a three month kitesurfing trip, taking him to Europe and Africa. This time wasn't enough for him to recover, so he trained as a kitesurfing instructor and spent the summer of 2019 in Greece teaching the sport. He fell in love with the kitesurfing life and vowed never to return to the rat race.



While away, Covid started and Adam had to return home, but within two weeks of returning, lockdown hit, plunging him into depression again.

Adam explained: *“After being so free, the lockdown was very difficult for me. As soon as we were allowed out I headed to the Wirral to scope out where it was possible to kitesurf. I found an amazing community of kitesurfers, but there was no kite school.”*

Word got out that I was an instructor and the demand for lessons skyrocketed. This was the start of Northern Kites in the Summer of 2020."



After falling in love with New Brighton, Adam set up Northern Kites at Wallasey Beach. The only licensed Kitesurfing and Wing Foiling School in Wirral and North West of England. He is now setting up a Watersports shop based at the beach.

Northern Kites offers full courses that take people with no previous experience right through to being competent independent kitesurfers. They also offer taster sessions for those who want to learn, with countless 5-star reviews and one of the top-rated schools in the UK.

The team at Northern Kites has grown over the last 2 years and now has 8 instructors. And Northern Kites has now been accredited to train new instructors, offering others the opportunity to follow a career in this amazing sport.

The sport is open to anyone from young to old (their oldest student so far was 73 years of age, and the youngest 12 years old) and has a dedicated ladies community.

Adam explained: *"I've really found my home here back in the North West doing what I love and it's been amazing getting so many people involved in kitesurfing. Watersport is really good for mental health, as well as fitness, getting out in nature, and the social aspect of it."*



The scene here in Wirral is growing massively and we have lots of events taking place out of the new Wallasey Beach Club, based at the premises of the old West Cheshire Sailing Club."



The vibrant community now based at Northern Kites and Wallasey Beach Club is really putting New Brighton on the map as a mecca for watersports, with new and experienced kitesurfers, and other water and beach enthusiasts coming from all over the UK to enjoy our fantastic beaches and outdoor life.

Wirral's watersport community is growing at a rate of knots, with an ever-increasing community of sailors, kitesurfers, surfers, stand-up paddlers, kayakers, cold water swimmers and others.

Adam continued: *"Honestly, I don't know where I'd be if I hadn't pursued my dream of kitesurfing. The truth is I'd probably be dead due to the sheer pressure and stress from my old career. I was in a really dark place and had bad thoughts, but now I'm a lot happier and want to show others the mental health benefits of getting out on the water."*

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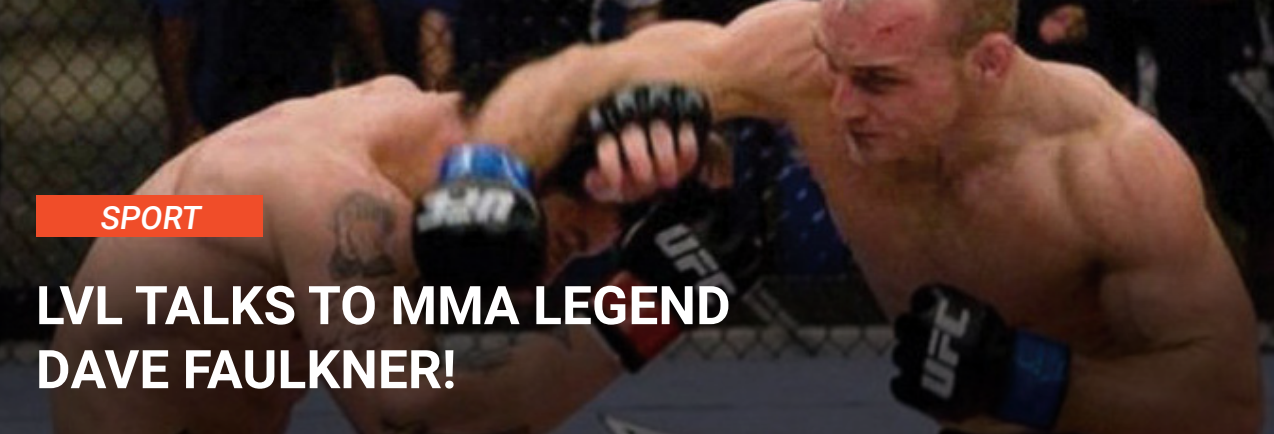


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SPORT

LVL TALKS TO MMA LEGEND DAVE FAULKNER!

We recently attended the huge open weight fighting contest, Jigoku, at Poulton Vics in Wallasey. The extravaganza featured a number of fights between MMA fighters, Muay Thai fighters, kick boxers, Brazilian Jujitsu artists, karate fighters, wrestlers and more.



It was some showcase and not the aggressive, pumped up masculine event you'd expect — it was competitive, yes, but held in good spirits with a great atmosphere and camaraderie. This is due to the founder and organiser, DAVE Faulkner, and his positive philosophy.

In this feature we catch up with Dave — a good man and a legend of the Liverpool fighting scene. Dave Faulkner is the first Scouse Ultimate Fighter, 1 time MMA World Champion, 2 time World Submission Wrestling Champion, 1 time World Arm Wrestling Champion, a multi-time judo, freestyle and submission wrestling Champion, a black belt at K1 kick boxing and ex Coach of the England WMKF submission wrestling squad.

Dave has also been a sparring partner of Mike Bisping, a training partner of Quinton Jackson (Mr.T in The A Team), a bodyguard of Idris Elba and other celebrities and is a respected Liverpool doorman. A voice for

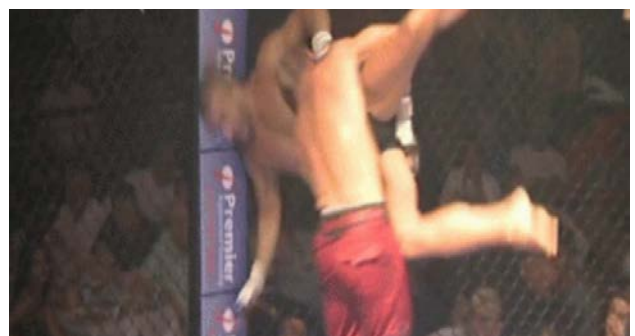
anti-bullying, the No More Knives campaign and a respected referee, actor and author, Dave is one of the good guys of the fight game and a fascinating character.

Here's our interview as we get his opinions on Jigoku, wrestling, the UFC and more....

LVL: What's the wrestling scene like these days?

DAVE: *So firstly I have to clear this up. The wrestling I watched in 1982 and similar organisations like WWE is called Professional wrestling and is "worked", which means the outcome of the bout, also certain action during said bout are pre-determined. The wrestling that the "cuddling fellas" were doing is called amateur/freestyle wrestling and is a legitimate sport that contested in the olympics.*

So now that's been addressed, the Professional scene is absolutely booming! The amateur side, we have the talent but we don't have the backing, so most wrestlers are moving over to other combat sports like MMA.



LVL: Tell us about your time in the UFC and being the first Scouse Ultimate Fighter.

DAVE: *That fact didn't hit me until way after the show when I was prepping for another interview. With regards to my time there, I had an enlightening experience. I'd managed to win my first fight while having no skin on the bottom of my right foot and five days notice. I met some awesome people one the show, Dana White not being one of them.*

It was just hard luck getting a staph infection and bronchitis at the same time. I was a strong favorite from the start but I was confident enough to have another crack at it one day. To be honest, I'd fell out of love with MMA around that time and was only doing the show for court funds. That's another story all together.



LVL: *What do you think about the UFC today?*

DAVE: *I'm not a fan anymore due to, firstly, silly childhood reasons. Fighters use to look like action figures. They mostly look like malnourished teenagers. Secondly, and most importantly, the promotion of negativity! Without sounding like a cheese-ball, kids watch this now! Kids tend to emulate these people.*

When you've got these grown men saying ridiculous and vile things to each other, bare in mind that the day before they were announced to fight didn't acknowledge each other, kids think that's how you get ahead in the sport and start talking to other kids like this, it's a joke!

LVL: *What was it like being bodyguard to celebrities?*

DAVE: *Any interesting stories to tell us? I'll do a quick fire round, like a game show! Kurt Angle was a straight up cool dude! Idris Elba needs to smoke less pot! Mickey Dolenz*

was not aware that he was in Rob Zombie's Halloween!

It's been good but I always got these jobs by chance, I never went looking for this type of work. They all get the vibe when you're not starstruck. they either hit with all their accolades, try to impress you with sexcapades or just talk to you like a normal person.



LVL: *How did you get involved in the No More Knives campaign?*

DAVE: *Through the founder and also my friend, Paul "Boom Boom" Bentley. I mostly referee his charity fight shows but I'm looking to get more involved...so watch this space.*

LVL: *What next for DAVE Faulkner?*

DAVE: *Since I got into a spot of bother with the law, which I should have received a medal for and not community hours! I lost a lot of work due to losing my work permits and I also had to shut my gym down. I'd been down this path too many times and to quote Einstein "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" so a change of momentum was in order!*

I got a major movie role, as the baddie no less, which I done all the fight choreography for. I've also been living a childhood dream by doing a bit of Professional Wrestling but the door is always open for new ventures though!

Check out Jigoku on FACEBOOK!



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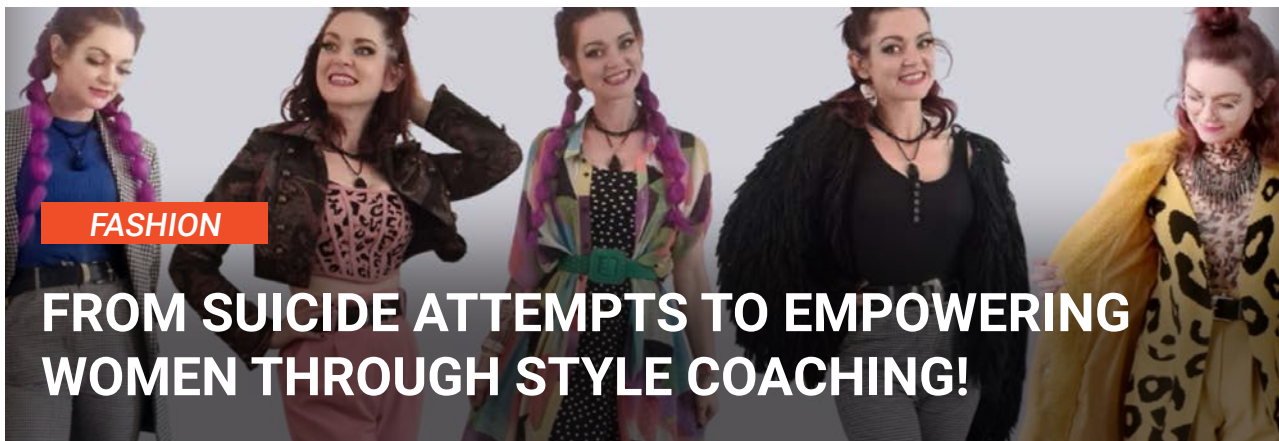
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FASHION

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FROM SUICIDE ATTEMPTS TO EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH STYLE COACHING!

A Wirral woman who has suffered from mental health problems and attempted to take her own life multiple times now empowers other women through Style Coaching (TM). Claire Welch-Beasley, 31, has fought a long battle with ADHD and borderline personality disorder but now helps other women step into their power with her business, Wardrobe Warriors.



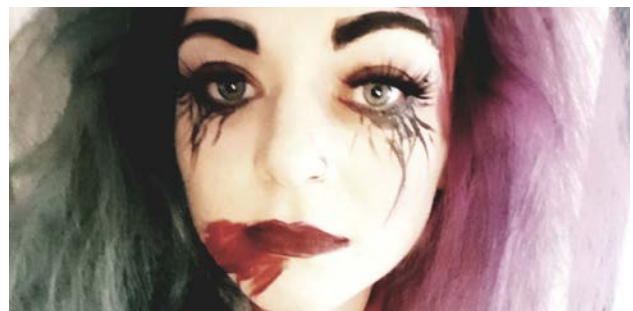
Claire is a Style Coach (TM) with a difference — taking women on a journey of self-discovery and helping them become more confident in the process. She works with women who have been through trauma or suffer from lack of self worth by helping them with life coaching, setting goals, affirmations, discovering their style, creating a new wardrobe, working on their body language, NLP, Reiki and more.

Claire offers one off sessions and workshops or a full 6 month bespoke transformation programme — taking women on a journey to become the best version of themselves and 'fearlessly authentic'. Her unique business, created in February 2020, has been given some amazing feedback from the women she has helped but it's the story behind it that makes it even more special.



Claire explained: *"I've been on a monumental journey of change to get to where I am today and be in a place where I can now help others. It all started for me in school where I was known as a 'goth' or 'rocker' and alternative dresser with acne and glasses — this led to some pretty harsh bullying, being called 'freak' and 'weirdo' amongst other things."*

She continued: *"The bullying was unbearable and I developed social anxiety — spending most of my time in my bedroom. By the time I was 13 I had self harmed and this led to several suicide attempts through my teenage years. By the time I left school I was a shell and I sought refuge in abusive relationships with narcissists who took what was left of me."*



Claire's most serious suicide attempt in 2012, when she was 21, led to her seeking help and being diagnosed with ADHD and a borderline personality disorder. She sought therapy until she was 25 — when she

discovered the law of attraction and then Reiki as therapies that helped her greatly.

She explained: *"It was really a case of managing my pain and mental health problems but the real breakthrough was with the law of attraction. I began to 'fake it' by being positive about myself and people around me and found that miraculously good things started to happen – I even began to feel more happy within myself. Then I discovered reiki healing and that was the next step of my evolution."*

Despite feeling misunderstood and like an outcast for most of her life, style and image was always something she adored and as found comfort in. No matter how bad the bullying got, Claire was adamant that 'fitting in' was the last thing she wanted to do and she stood her ground despite the social pressures.

Claire said: *"From the age of 8 I was creating my own alternative fashion clothing – ripping clothes to bits and creating new wild or gothic designs. I absolutely love design, creativity and style and in 2019 I pursued my dream by achieving a Diploma in Style Coaching (TM) with The Style Coaching Institute (C) – achieving the highest score possible – and that's I came up with the Wardrobe Warriors concept."*



In addition to qualifying as a Style Coach (TM), Claire trained in Reiki, NLP, crystal therapy and City & Guilds Level 2 Pattern Cutting. Through Wardrobe Warriors, Claire has become much more than a Style Coach (TM) – offering a holistic approach by helping women heal their relationships with both themselves and their image – becoming their true, authentic and best versions of themselves.

One woman said: *"I spent 6 months with*

Claire and found her to be knowledgeable, supportive and creative. Claire has helped me find a confident and authentic version of myself that I am able to share with the world. I no longer feel I have to hide from the world."

Another said: *"For anyone who knows me, you'd have been lucky to have found a photo of me on social media. Claire helped me re-discover the real me but also step into the me I wanted to be. I feel delight and pride when I look at photos now because I can see my eyes are shining and my smile is genuine."*



Claire summarised: *"It's been a long and hard journey but I'm so proud of who I am today and it's an honour to help women in the same way I've helped heal myself. I'm much more than just a Style Coach (TM) or Image Consultant – I go much deeper than that and I the life experiences I've had means I can truly relate to people."*

Wardrobe Warriors is based on Woodside Business Park in Birkenhead and offers one off sessions and workshops or a full 6 month bespoke transformation programme. Claire works on a free consultation basis and offers an initial free mini session to establish areas for development and both wellbeing and style needs.

Wardrobe Warriors / Woodside Business Park, Birkenhead

For a free consultation session with Claire visit wardrobewarriors.co.uk or email claire@wardrobewarriors.co.uk

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TRAVEL

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TRAVEL

LA VIDA LIVERPOOL EXPLORES EGYPT!



Hello and welcome to the Travel section of La Vida Liverpool magazine, where we capture your imagination and invigorate your senses by taking you away to some of the most beautiful places this world has to offer!



In this feature we explore Egypt, staying on Makadi Bay — a gorgeous beach resort just outside the city of Hurghada. Located on the Red Sea, Hurghada was founded in the early 20th century as a little fishing village but has now exploded into a popular destination with very warm temperatures all year round and an average temperature in the 20s in January.

As Owner of La Vida Liverpool I had been working extremely hard throughout 2022, so a January break somewhere warm for my birthday was needed as much as it was desired. I searched far and wide to find that holiday prices had risen dramatically but fortunately La Vida Liverpool's new travel agent partner managed to secure me a fantastic 4* all inclusive deal on the Egyptian coast — 14 nights for £1,168.

I flew from Manchester on New Year's Day morning — heading to Labranda Club Makadi for my amazing 14 night all inclusive deal, a steal given the current climate and some of the other quotes I was getting. Prior to my adventure, I set about asking

advice from people who had already been there and got some valuable information and contacts.



I was travelling solo and wanted a nice blend of relaxation and exploration, vowing to not have one of those crazy holidays where you need another to recover from it! Labranda Club Makadi seemed the perfect choice — with a good range of restaurants, spa and gym facilities, a beautiful beach and plenty of trips and excursions available.



My friend Graham had visited many times and put me in touch with a legendary tour guide named 'Elvis' (real name Mohamed, as so many Egyptian men are called). Having discussed all the options with him, I decided on a boat trip to Giftun Island, a swimming with wild dolphins trip, Luxor and a Quad bike desert safari — four fantastic action packed days built around much needed relaxation and down time.

The first thing to tell you about Egypt is prepare to be sold to! As soon as I arrived at the airport there were baggage porters waiting to take my suitcase for a fee and

I had been at the hotel for less than 5 minutes before one of the boutique shop owners tried his utmost to sell me Egyptian glow in the dark prints (yes, I bought one for £10 in the end).



In Egypt they love to haggle and you'll soon learn to barter for literally everything to want to buy. They are such determined sales people though and I would love to get them over here to sell advertising for this magazine – we'd clear up with the Egyptians on the graft! Oh, and here's a little tip – get your Egyptian visa (around £20) before you fly, as it saves extra queuing at Hurghada airport upon arrival.

With my excursions pre-booked from a reliable source and for a great price (just £140 for all four trips), I spent my first couple of days taking it easy and appreciating the heat compared to the bitter cold back home. I spoke with the hotel spa manager, another relentless salesperson who I had to hard-haggle with, and booked in a Turkish Hammam & massage plus four further one hour massages for £200. I spent the first couple of days creating a nice routine of a morning run along the bay,



hitting the outdoor beach gym and then relaxing by the pool, drinking all inclusive cocktails, meeting new friends and sampling the great quality and variety of the hotel restaurants.

In January it gets light early and dark around 5pm, so I'd recommend waking up early to

enjoy as much of the sun as possible (it can get a fair bit cooler in the evenings, so do pack some warmer clothes). I managed to evade the lively hotel nightclub, Coco Loco, for the first few days but that soon changed as I met new friends in the hotel.



On Wednesday 4th January it was my birthday and what better way to spend it than a visit to the idyllic Giftun Island? Elvis arranged my pick up from the hotel at 7.45am and I was taken with other guests to the departure point for an action packed boat trip that included two snorkelling sessions, dolphin spotting, a couple of hours on the stunning Orange Bay on Giftun Island and a banana boat ride.

I met some more fantastic new friends and the tour guides Fox, Ahmed and the crew were fun and charismatic – with some amazing photographs supplied for an extra cost. I was a pure novice at snorkelling but the guys were great tutors and I managed to see some incredible sea life amongst the coral reef.



Witnessing dolphins leaping out of the water alongside our boat was a truly breathtaking thing to experience on my birthday and it was most definitely one of the best birthdays I've ever had! There are a couple of different boat trips from Hurghada – to Giftun Island and Paradise Island – and I'd fully recommend them!

Although the hotel has a great range of all inclusive restaurants, I couldn't resist paying extra for the seafood restaurant on the beach as a special meal for my birthday. This proved to be a great choice, as three of us dined for just £25 per head and it included starters, fresh lobster, desserts and unlimited wine — the finest food and unbelievable value!



The hotel nightclub, Coco Loco, is situated on its own little island and it soon lured me in, as I met some amazing people and formed some fantastic new friendships with a plethora of different people from different countries. We made some unforgettable memories together.

This is the thing I love most about travelling — connecting with people from all over the world and proving that contrary to what the media tells us and the wars world leaders create, people are mostly good and we can all live together in harmony. I think that by developing these relationships we are doing our bit for world peace — every positive interaction at a time.

I actually decided not to go on the wild dolphin swimming trip, as much as I wanted to, as I felt I wasn't a strong enough swimmer to be able to do it properly — snorkelling was probably my limit. Boat trip guide and photographer, Ahmed, showed me some of his incredible underwater captures though and it was amazing to see what is possible if you're a decent swimmer.



Makadi Bay is a superb destination for quality hotels that have a variety of different excursions — in addition to the ones I mentioned, there are trips to Cairo and The Pyramids (both very long days), Nile cruises and more. Elvis is the guy to go to for these trips — with much better prices than the hotel ones and package discounts for booking multiple experiences.

My next excursion was to Luxor — a long 16 hour day but well worth it! I was picked up at 5am and joined other tourists from different hotels on a coach, again forming new friendships with many other nationalities. Our tour guide, Mimo, was very entertaining and had a wealth of knowledge. During our 5 hour coach journey he wowed us with his great knowledge of Egyptian history, culture and customs.



Upon arrival at the major city on the banks of The River Nile, we first visited the Karnak Temple — a large historic site with an awe-inspiring series of ancient statues, columns and buildings. We then enjoyed a boat ride and lunch on the banks of The Nile before heading to Hatsheput's Temple and Valley Of The Kings. Mimo was so knowledgeable throughout — with in depth insights into every subject explored.

Experiencing some of the historic sites is a must when visiting Egypt and seeing some of the hieroglyphics created centuries ago was fascinating and seeing the burial sites of some of the most iconic Kings and Queens was unbelievable, as I lost myself in the magic and mystery of it all.

The tour of Luxor finished with a beautiful sunset Nile cruise with fruit and the delicious sugarcane drink, before arriving back at the hotel at 10pm. It's a long day

but without doubt a must — Cairo and The Pyramids are longer days — around 20 hours for those excursions but again, worth it, from what other tourists told me.



More fun with new friends at the hotel ensued — fully taking advantage of the all inclusive offering. I had a wild night in Hurghada, where I hooked up with Fox and Ahmed from the boat trip and visited one of the top nightclubs there. Hurghada is a very fast paced city that never sleeps and the Marina is highly recommended — with some really cool waterside restaurants and bars.

After a crazy night in the city, I had a really fun quad bike safari in the desert, Mad Max style! We ventured deep into the desert, where we met the Bedouin people, had tea with them and enjoyed camel rides. This was such a fun and action packed day that was for sure one of the highlights of my holiday!



The Bedouin are desert nomads and Bedouin in English means 'desert dweller'. Interestingly, spoken word is the most popular art form among Bedouins. Having a poet in one's tribe is highly regarded in society. In addition to serving as a form of art, poetry has been used as a means of conveying information and social control.

On the Friday night I entered the 'Mr. Labranda' competition at the hotel's Roman amphitheatre events venue. Despite some dazzling stage performances, I regrettably did not win the competition — something that pains me deeply to this day — but it was indeed in great fun and great spirit.

During the two weeks I attended a few different events there with my holiday friends — including a fire show and acrobatics. The hotel's 'animation' team staff, such as Blackie, Snoop and Mollie, were full of energy and did their best to get everyone involved in the wide range of activities and events.



The final few days of my holiday were spent relaxing at the hotel and enjoying massages courtesy of the spa masseur Amr — a wonderful man who works hard to send money to his wife and daughter in Alexandria. During our time together we had some profound conversations about life, love, our cultures, his time in the military fighting terrorists in Sinai and more — another new friend for life who I will be keeping in touch with.

I have visited over 20 different countries in my life and I'll honestly say that this was one of the best holidays of my life! Egypt has it all — quality hotels and resorts, great food and drink, nightlife, beautiful beaches, relaxation, adventure, culture and wonderful people. It's fantastic value too — particularly if you master the art of haggling.

Stay tuned for more epic La Vida Liverpool adventures where we take you away with us to some of the most amazing destinations this world has to offer — from beach holidays to city breaks to the obscure. Here's to celebrating the diverse and beautiful places and people in this wonderful world of ours.

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With special thanks to all the fantastic people who helped make this a holiday of a lifetime!



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