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Photograph of London by astronaut Tim Peake, 2016. Artwork by Konstantin Penkov. ESA/Getty

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It's business. But it's personal.
London celebrated hosting the 2012 Olympic Games with an opening ceremony that showcased the city’s prosperity and diversity. Much of the exuberant commentary at the time hailed London as the model of the modern global city of the future.

But, in retrospect, might the London Olympics have marked the peak of an era, rather than a new beginning? Four years later, Britain voted for Brexit. In the UK, some have interpreted the vote as a repudiation not just of the EU but of London.

Almost 40 per cent of the city’s residents were born outside the UK and the Brexit vote was widely seen as driven by a desire to control immigration. More broadly, booming, cosmopolitan London has increasingly seemed out of sync and out of sympathy with much of the rest of Britain. London voted to stay inside the EU but was outvoted by the country.

Brexit undoubtedly poses a threat to the future of London. This is a city that is reliant on energetic immigrants, many of them from Europe. (See Helen Warrell, page 6.) Young people, in particular, have taken advantage of EU laws on free movement to relocate to the capital. Immigrants from Europe now staff everything from the hospital emergency rooms, to trading rooms in the City — and the hotels and coffee shops that keep the capital buzzing.

However, the Brexit vote has made many Europeans in London feel uncomfortable about their future. The fall in the value of the pound has also made working in the UK less attractive. If immigration from Europe becomes significantly more difficult after Brexit, London’s public services and knowledge economy will suffer.

Brexit also poses a serious threat to the financial services industry, which employs some 360,000 people in London, and nationally provides about 11 per cent of Britain’s tax revenue. The impact of Brexit on the City will depend on the negotiations and their interpretation by the world’s banks and finance houses. But it is already noticeable that many financial institutions are choosing to expand their presence elsewhere in Europe — in particular in Dublin, Amsterdam and Frankfurt — while freezing or reducing employment in the City. (See page 16.)

Some might welcome a certain slowing of the economy. The decades-long boom in financial services has been accompanied by rising inequality. Concerns about social injustice have grown after the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, which claimed about 80 lives in a poor part of a rich city. (See page 8.)

The argument that London has neglected the interests of the poor in favour of the super-rich is heard often. Concerns about soaring housing prices have also begun to preoccupy the comfortably-off middle-classes, who worry that their children may never be able to afford to live in the capital.

But the argument that a weaker City might actually benefit London is flawed. London’s tax base is dependent on the income generated by financial services and the welfare of other big employers is closely connected to the City. Hopes for more social housing and better public services will be thwarted if the tax base shrinks.

There is an argument that London, as a global city, is better placed to ride out Brexit than some parts of the UK that voted to leave the EU and depend more on manufacturing exports to Europe. Nonetheless, Brexit seems almost certain to inflict an economic and psychological blow on London. A city that has positioned itself as the world’s gateway to Europe and Europe’s gateway to Britain will be excluded from the EU.

Yet with tough times on the horizon, it can be comforting to take the long view and to draw reassurance from London’s history of inventiveness and resilience. The city’s strength as a political, commercial and financial capital predates not just the EU, but also the empire, with institutions such as the Bank of England, Lloyds’s insurance market and the Royal Exchange all founded before 1700.

The history of London’s resilience is visible in its architecture. At the heart of the financial district lies the Monument to the Great Fire of 1666, which destroyed much of the City. Less than a mile away is St Paul’s Cathedral, the subject of a famous photograph showing the dome intact amid the smoke and flames of the Blitz.

Walk north for half a mile and you will reach Charterhouse Square, used as a burial ground for plague victims during the Black Death and now home to fashionable hotels and restaurants. Two miles west is Banqueting House, where King Charles I was executed in 1649 — a reminder that London is also no stranger to political turbulence.

If London can survive fire, plague, aerial bombardment and revolution over a history spanning nearly two millennia, it will surely survive Brexit too.
The capital may have less to fear than some pro-Brexit regions.
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Across the divide

The deaths of at least 80 people in a fire in a poor part of a rich London borough has thrown extremes of inequality into stark relief. Poverty may always have been with us but it is time we heard the voices of those most affected, says JONATHAN DERBYSHIRE

Illustration by MARTIN O’NEILL

https://vk.com/readinglecture
In 1931, nearly 80 years before the Islington Fairness Commission was convened, Hugh Green, the town clerk, set out what he saw as the main tasks of those responsible for the administration of the capital: “To preserve and foster London’s influence and redeem its faults and ennoble its reputation amongst the peoples of the world.”

The “faults” and shortcomings Green identified may have changed, but the challenge he described has not. Today, residents to leave, in other words) to carry out remedial work.

Richard Lee, who lives a mile or so from the estate and belongs to a community group called Friends of Old Kent Road, says residents are fearful of what is to come. “Tenants are quite suspicious of what’s happening at Ledbury.” This is where voice and participation come in. It’s very clear from Grenfell that the local residents felt completely powerless.”

Londoners have been shocked by the Grenfell Tower disaster, the public housing block which caught fire and burned for six days in June 2017. The fire claimed the lives of at least 72 people and left hundreds more homeless. The disaster highlighted the inequality in London’s housing crisis, with some residents living in luxury apartments while others were living in substandard conditions.

In mid-2017, the government announced plans to build 50,000 new social homes, but many residents are concerned that these homes will not be affordable or accessible to them. The government has also announced plans to privatise social housing, which has led to concerns about the quality and safety of new homes.

Meanwhile, the crisis in the private rental sector continues. Many residents are struggling to afford rent, with average rents in London now exceeding £1,000 per month. The situation is particularly dire for low-income renters, who are being squeezed out of the market.

The impact of the crisis on the economy is also significant. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research has estimated that the housing crisis is costing the UK economy £10 billion per year.

In response to the crisis, the government has launched a number of initiatives, including the Green Paper on housing, which was published in 2017. The Green Paper includes proposals for affordable housing, rent controls, and increased investment in social housing.

However, many residents are critical of the government’s response to the crisis. They argue that the government’s focus on market solutions is not enough, and that more needs to be done to address the root causes of the crisis.

In the meantime, the situation for many residents remains dire. They are struggling to pay rent, find affordable housing, and access the support they need to improve their lives.

This is a moment of crisis, but it is also a moment of opportunity. As residents continue to fight for their rights, they are demonstrating the power of collective action and the importance of standing up for what is right.
A whole new ball game

America’s National Football League has long flirted with the idea of having a London-based team, and as the sport grows in popularity in the UK capital, with facilities to match, that may soon become a reality.

By MURAD AHMED
Conan Jal is an American football obsessive. By day, the 36-year-old Londoner is an account manager for an exhibitions company. In his spare time, he helps to run the Kingston Cougars, a university team in south London.

“I got into the sport when I was young,” he says, “I have never been a diehard, supporting an established [US] team... we’re waiting for a London team.”

That wait might soon be over. The National Football League, the body that runs the sport’s professional ranks in the US, believes it can establish an American football team in London by 2023. The ambitious plan for a London “franchise” is based on a bet that the capital has unique credentials as a sporting city: an international metropolis stuffed with potential fans, a lucrative TV market attractive to sponsors, and home to stadiums and professional sports clubs that can house an NFL team.

The organisation has been testing the concept for years. Since 2007, it has staged regular season matches in London, all but one of which have been sold out and with 1.5m people attending games in the city to date.

This autumn, London is hosting four NFL matches, split between Wembley Stadium, the home of English football (or “soccer”, as Americans call it) and Twickenham stadium, the headquarters of English rugby union. In any season, a team will be required to play at least eight home games.

Many of the capital’s power-brokers back the idea of a London team. Sadiq Khan, the mayor, has said it is his “dream, vision and aspiration” to have an NFL team. In 2015, the UK’s then chancellor George Osborne said the idea was a “real touchdown for London”. He has since quit politics to be editor of London’s Evening Standard, an influential perch from which he could promote the game.

Jal is not as convinced. As a regular at NFL matches in London, he notes that thousands of fans wear jerseys of their favourite US sides — supporting a team is a hard habit to break. “There is no doubt there is an appetite for American football on a regular basis,” he says. “It’s not a stretch to go from four to eight games. But you have to reconcile the idea that a load of people will need to go from supporting the Miami Dolphins or the Pittsburgh Steelers to a London team. I don’t think that will that happen.”

The man tasked with winning over the sceptics is Mark Waller, the NFL’s executive vice-president of
international and events. A British émigré to New York, he heads the league’s expansion abroad. As the sport nears saturation point in the US, the NFL is attempting to grow by gaining a foothold in other countries.

Waller says it has been proved that a London franchise is “viable”. The bigger problem will be to show it can also be a winning team. “The fundamental question, which we are as yet unable to answer, is: could a team in London be competitive week in, week out, year in, year out?” he says. “To the extent that everybody related to that team, whether it’s the players, the coaches, the fans, the sponsors or the business partners, would have the commitment and belief that the team could compete and have a realistic chance of winning the Super Bowl.”

The move would probably require one of the NFL’s 32 teams to move across the Atlantic. The Florida-based Jacksonville Jaguars are seen by some as the likeliest to make the leap. The team’s owner, Shahid Khan, also owns Fulham football club in west London. The Jaguars have already made London a second home, with a deal to play a game in the city every season until 2020. Back in Jacksonville, the team’s struggles on the pitch mean attendances are poor compared with its rivals — the Jaguars last appeared in the end-of-season playoffs in 2007 and have never won a Super Bowl.

There are other obstacles to an NFL team setting up in London. Much will depend on the NFL’s new collective bargaining agreement, negotiated between multiple parties, including the 32 team owners and the NFLPA — the players union, which dictates matters such as distribution of league revenues and employment conditions for players. The current agreement runs until 2020, with significant concessions needed on all sides to make a London franchise viable.

One important change may be to the regime of salary caps for players, such as allowing a London team to pay more than rivals so it can recruit experienced players otherwise reluctant to live abroad, as well as helping to offset the impact of UK’s higher taxes. Reports suggest team owners are reluctant to sign off on such a move.

The NFL will have to be creative in other ways. It has signed a 10-year deal with Premier League football club Tottenham Hotspur to hold American football matches at its new stadium when it opens next year. Waller believes a London team could play across all three venues — Tottenham, Wembley and Twickenham — while sharing training facilities with the city’s many professional football and rugby clubs. “There will be levels of compromise,” he says. “Players, like everybody, are creatures of habit. It’s probably not ideal, but I don’t think it’s the end of the world either.” To avoid players needing to constantly acclimatise between different time zones, a London team could play matches in blocks, with two or three at home followed by two or three in the US.

While financial considerations will determine whether London gets a team, there are signs that the sport is taking off in the UK. According to Sport England, a public body that promotes community sport, more than 40,000 people aged 14 or above play American football in some form. Participation has been boosted by NFL matches being televised by Sky and the BBC in recent years; the NFL estimates that a cumulative total of 23m people in the UK watched TV coverage last season.

“A London team will help the grassroots,” says Jal, the American football supporter. “If you’re a kid in London, your sporting allegiance will go to the main sport and you will become a Chelsea fan or Spurs fan. But if there’s another sport in the city which is glitzy and fun and an enjoyable all-day family event, people might get captured at a younger age. Then they will look for a team.”

From kabaddi to kendo: foreign sports in London, page 46
After a period of post-referendum discretion, banks are testing the waters abroad and growing determined to be heard over the rumble of Brexit talks

By PATRICK JENKINS

Bankers are not known for their patience. Finance relies on speedy interaction with the markets. Traders are used to reacting to news within seconds. So it is pretty astonishing that the City of London’s financial services industry held its collective tongue for so long. For nigh on a year after the UK voted for Brexit in June 2016, few banks challenged the government’s unhelpful request to keep a low profile over the issue.

They have made up for lost time over the past few months. Once Standard Chartered, an emerging markets bank with a tiny EU business, announced it would establish a subsidiary operation in Frankfurt, others soon followed with their own announcements of post-Brexit plans involving the set-up of new subsidiaries and job moves from London to other EU financial centres.

The reason? Once Britain leaves the EU, it will leave the single market for goods and services. Without some kind of replacement deal, that means the end of the City’s role as a hub for doing cross-border business with clients across the EU, through the “passporting” of services from a regulated UK entity.

According to an analysis in August by S&P Global Market Intelligence, 13 banks have now selected Frankfurt or Berlin as their new EU hub, putting Germany in front in the race for City jobs. Dublin has attracted 12 groups — mostly banks but also a clutch of insurers and asset managers. Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands are also set to win business.

So far, in this first phase of post-Brexit planning, it is about establishing test tubes, with groups pledging to move a few dozen staff, or a couple of hundred at most, as an insurance policy. Whether they end up transferring thousands will depend on the outcome of Brexit talks between the UK government and the EU. At the extreme, JPMorgan and Deutsche Bank have talked about moving up to 4,000 jobs apiece out of London. Oliver Wyman, the consultancy, estimates in a worst-case scenario 75,000 jobs could go in financial services and related sectors.

With the UK and the EU27 still stuck on the divorce terms — principally the exit bill and the residence status of EU nationals — the feasibility of any trade deal, let alone a good one for financial services, is up in the air. No one even knows what the UK government will pitch for. “The shape of the ask for financial services is not yet clear,” says Chris Bates, a partner at law firm Clifford Chance. “It’s still a huge open issue.”

Hard-Brexit scenarios, with no attempt to replicate the single-market framework that allows business to be passported, would be the most disruptive. Some lawyers believe existing fall-back provisions might be workable, such as “equivalence” rules that should grant EU market access to any nation with comparable regulatory standards. Most bankers dismiss this idea, however, as too fragile a regime, given that it can be suspended by the EU at short notice.

Another idea is to rely not on actively marketing from London into the EU but making use of “reverse passporting” to its European centres.
an arrangement would force London fund management jobs to be relocated to other EU financial services hubs, such as Paris. Perhaps more significantly, though, it would be likely to trigger the relocation of investment banks’ sales and trading staff, who would need to be close to their clients.

Even if political talks are benign and in principle protect the City’s financial services status as an EU hub, the Square Mile could still be undermined in practice. One very real risk, say those who represent the financial services industry, is that politicians will take so long over negotiations, and the March 2019 cliff-edge for Brexit looms so large, that employers will end up committing to a more radical transfer of business and staff than may ultimately prove necessary under whatever deal is negotiated.

“Our focus is do everything we can to prevent the trickle of jobs that are set to move out of London from becoming a flood,” says Stephen Jones, chief executive of newly created bank lobby group UK Finance.

Some in the industry take heart that employers will put off a decision until the latest date possible, conscious of the huge overheads involved in staff moves. “Moving a senior banker could cost more than £100,000, so you’re not going to press the button until you have to,” says Lindsey Naylor, a partner at Oliver Wyman. But she cautions: “Once you do press the button, it’s pretty irreversible.”

If jobs are expensive to relocate, new subsidiaries are more costly still in regulatory capital terms. Bankers say the big US groups will each need to inject several billion dollars of fresh equity into the subsidiaries they are setting up in Frankfurt, Dublin and elsewhere. That is not capital that can necessarily be transferred from London, either. It is likely to be additional equity — partly because local regulators will demand it.

The Association for Financial Markets in Europe, an investment banking industry association, says €57bn of bank equity capital currently supports EU 27 securities and derivatives trading in London. In all, Oliver Wyman reckons up to $50bn of additional capital may need to be injected into the new EU banking entities.

The restructuring of the EU’s banking landscape would not only be inefficient but could also add to risk. “The dispersion of staff and structures will create more complex patterns of banks, which will be less efficient and less clear,” says Chris Bates at Clifford Chance. Lines between subsidiaries and branches will be redrawn and in some cases blurred, bankers say, throwing into question existing “living will” plans, the blueprints for wind-up in case of crisis.

By many measures the City today accounts for more than a 10th of the UK economy. It has also become a crucial strut for Europe — the EU relies on the UK for three-quarters of its hedging activities, three-quarters of its foreign exchange, half its lending and half its securities transactions. For Europe’s politicians, the terms of a post-Brexit financial services deal clearly have the potential to influence the prosperity, efficiency and safety of the continent’s entire economy.

‘The dispersion of staff and structures will create more complex patterns of banks, which will be less efficient and less clear’ — Chris Bates, Clifford Chance
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It’s business. But it’s personal.
March and June brought the inevitable to London: first on Westminster Bridge, then downriver, on London Bridge and Borough Market beyond, two deadly terror attacks ended London’s uneasy status as Europe’s most prominent capital unafflicted by Islamist terrorism in the age of Isis.

Since Isis first exhorted its followers to attack the west in mid-2014, Europe — the focus of the jihadis’ attention — has been struck by about 50 Islamist terror attacks. More than 300 citizens have been killed, according to Europol, the EU law enforcement agency.

UK counter-terrorism sources say London is home to hundreds of known Islamist extremists (compared with a Muslim population of more than 1m, or 12.4 per cent in the capital at the time of the 2011 census). Scores of Londoners have left to fight under jihadist black banners in the Middle East, Africa, the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Even before the rise of Isis, London was a prime target for jihadist violence. Fusilier Lee Rigby was the city’s last victim of Islamist terrorism, murdered outside Woolwich barracks in 2013. Before that there were the “7/7” bombings of 2005, which claimed 52 victims.

London has a chequered history of terrorism, from anarchist plots in the 19th century to the IRA bombs of the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s, to the van that rammed into worshippers near Finsbury Park mosque in June. Then came the crude bomb which injured 30 people on a Tube train in Parsons Green, west London, last month. So why, until recently, had the capital enjoyed relative peace from the latest phase of Islamist terrorism in Europe?

“London is clearly a significant target, but it is in a pretty good place to cope with the threat,” says Jon Coaffee, director of the Resilient Cities Laboratory, a research group at the University of Warwick. “London is probably top of the international pile in terms of preparedness. If you want to see where the latest innovations in counter-terrorism security are, London is the place to go.”

Many cities around the world see London’s approach — on a municipal, government and bureaucratic level — as one to emulate. The capital has received delegations from as far afield as Abu Dhabi and Sydney to study and copy its practices.

Lord Harris, the peer and former counter-terrorism representative for the Home Secretary overseeing the Metropolitan Police’s security role, attributes London’s strengths in the fight against terrorism to several factors. “Better and usable intelligence is number one,” he says. “Second is the work around trying to prevent radicalisation and tracking it through community policing. And third, London is prepared. A huge amount of work has gone into incident planning and response over the past few years.”

The UK’s intelligence agencies — MI5, MI6 and GCHQ — are among the most capable counter-terrorism forces in the world. Information gleaned from their work has thwarted more than 18 Islamist plots since 2013 in the UK, a third of them this year alone. Crucially, though, such intelligence filters down into a counter-terrorism system that has been decades in the making. London — home to 50 of the 73 highest risk crowded places in the UK, according to the government — is the focus of this approach. “The point about London is that you’ve got to think about the long tail of terrorism in the UK,” says Raffaello Pantucci, director of international security studies at the Royal United Services Institute, the defence and security think-tank. “It goes back to the IRA, if not further.”

Other countries, in contrast, sometimes struggle to make institutions work together. In the wake of the Paris and Brussels attacks of 2015 and 2016, the flaws of having multiple police agencies, with multiple jurisdictions, underfunded intelligence services and siloed counter-terrorism bureaucracies were very clear.

Paris invites comparison with London. Although France’s intelligence agencies are well resourced, the information they gathered was, until relatively...
London forged many working structures that have remained in place since. It is not only a government-focused effort — under Operation Griffin police terrorism specialists regularly brief the private sector. In 2016, they gave 620 presentations to 17,000 people in positions of authority in London businesses and non-profit organisations.

The benefits of London’s long-standing counter-terrorism work are not just preventative. Lord Harris highlights London’s responsiveness to attacks as one of the city’s most significant accomplishments. After the murder of Lee Rigby in 2013, regular police officers took nine minutes to arrive at the scene; armed units took 14 minutes. In the meantime, response times have improved greatly. “During the London Bridge incident, the first police were there within two minutes,” Lord Harris notes. “The first paramedics were there in four minutes. In eight minutes, all of the terrorists had been shot and killed.” London now has a 24-hour fast response police anti-terror team and in the next two years will gain another 600 armed police.

All of which is no reason for complacency. London has, to some extent, coasted on two advantages in recent years: firearms are far harder to come by in the UK than in continental Europe; and Iran’s networks have not had the same focus on the UK as they otherwise have had elsewhere.

Both are fragile consolations. Criminal firearm incidents in London have doubled in the past year. Plots have been foiled in which terrorists sought out automatic weapons in Britain. And while Iraq has a francophone centre of gravity, attacks and plotting have not had the same focus on the UK as they hitherto have had elsewhere.

Solid defences through design

Since the 1980s, planners and counter-terrorism officials have been engaged in an ambitious project — to “design out” terrorism from London’s urban fabric: “In most major cities now you can see counter-measures: hostile vehicle mitigation, barriers, bollards and gates,” says Jon Coaffee, director of the Resilient Cities Laboratory at the University of Warwick. “But it’s far more normalised and embedded in London.”

Counter-terrorism measures are rarely afterwards. Often they are integral to buildings, or even prominent parts of their aesthetics, as with the huge letters spelling “Arsenal” outside the football club’s Emirates stadium in north London: they can repel a truck, but crowds of match-day fans can easily flow through them. Such ideas began with the threat posed by the IRA. But in the wake of the 7/7 tube and bus bombings in 2005, the UK government pushed for them to become even more mainstream. The Royal Institute of British Architects produces guidance for new large projects.

As terrorism evolves, however, new problems are presenting themselves. “We talk all the time about barriers,” says Coaffee. “But if someone wanders around with a knife, some chemicals, perhaps some acid — how do we stop that?”

The point about London is that you’ve got to think about the long tail of terrorism in the UK. It goes back to the IRA, if not further.”
A breath of fresh air

For all its attractions, London ranks low among European cities for quality of life, with pollution and congestion among the chief culprits. PILITA CLARK looks abroad for ideas — both ambitious and quirky — to make the capital more ‘liveable’.
London is unquestionably one of the world’s great cities, vibrant, diverse and brimming with cultural and historical riches. But it is not always easy to live there.

Its roads are some of the most congested of any European city. Its rush-hour commuter trains are full to bursting. Its Tube stations sometimes become so overcrowded they have to be temporarily closed. Air pollution on some of its streets is so bad it breaches annual limits in a matter of days.

The official website of the city’s mayor, Sadiq Khan, warns bluntly that “London’s toxic air is a health crisis”, causing more than 9,000 premature deaths each year.

London is not the only EU capital with an air quality problem. About 40 per cent of its pollution comes from diesel vehicles that European governments once encouraged because they emit less climate-warming carbon dioxide than petrol cars.

But diesel engines also pump out nitrogen dioxide, a gas linked to heart and lung disease that many big cities are now struggling to curb. London is among 16 places in Britain where persistent breaches of EU air pollution standards earned the UK a final warning from Brussels this year for repeatedly failing to address the problem.

Yet despite all its problems, the capital has a reputation for green innovation. “London is certainly seen by its peers as a leader on climate action, particularly around transport,” says Mark Watts, executive director of C40, a global network of big cities that champion climate policies.

Watts was a sustainable transport adviser to former London mayor Ken Livingstone, who launched the city’s pioneering congestion charge in 2003. London was also one of the first big cities to bring in a public bike-sharing scheme and is cracking down on car pollution, starting with a £10 T-Charge (“T” standing for toxicity) on the oldest, dirtiest vehicles from this month.

Other improvements have helped make the capital a more pleasant place to live. Large parts of the city have been transformed by regeneration schemes in the past two decades.

London has been ranked the third least liveable western European city for the past five years in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s liveability surveys, after Lisbon and Athens.

“There are plenty of things London could adopt from other European cities to improve its appeal,” says Jon Copestake, editor of the surveys. Possible steps, he says, include cutting crime and terror threats, and improving the overcrowded transport system.

So what sorts of ideas might be borrowed from elsewhere that would make London cleaner, greener and generally more liveable?

Urban innovation spreads so fast around the world that there is little London has not tried in one form or another. Nonetheless, over the following pages are some ideas other cities have put in place that could be adopted more widely in the UK capital.

### Singapore’s Green Man Plus traffic light system

It is a common sight in cities around the world: an elderly person hobbling urgently across a road before the green pedestrian light on the other side turns red. For cities trying to encourage less driving and more walking, it is a problem, especially as their populations age.

Singapore has come up with an answer. Its Green Man Plus scheme gives elderly and disabled people the ability to extend their crossing time by swiping their senior citizen cards across readers at traffic lights.

When the system began at five locations in 2009, it allowed pedestrians up to five extra seconds of “green man time” to cross the road. It proved such a success that it soon spread to more crossings and the amount of extra time allowed for people to cross was raised to as much as 13 seconds.

In a few especially busy spots near hospitals or very large roads, pedestrians were able to increase crossing times by 26 seconds in 2015.

Authorities have chosen crossings near places with a large share of elderly residents or in spots that are often visited by the elderly, such as healthcare facilities.

According to Singapore’s Land Transport Authority, the system is designed to strike a balance between the needs of pedestrians and car drivers, so that the flow of traffic is not held up excessively.

### Los Angeles’ smart parking system

Drivers in London spend an average of 67 hours a year hunting for parking spots, according to transport analysts Inrix, snarling up traffic, wasting fuel and pumping out polluting fumes.

They are not alone.

Notoriously traffic-clogged Los Angeles is tackling the problem with a dynamic parking system that raises parking fees in spots where demand is high and cuts them where it is lower. The idea is to shift drivers to under-used spaces so they park their cars faster and cut congestion.

The LA ExpressPark system was launched in 2012 and uses sensors to monitor when spaces are full or empty. Drivers access real-time data by smartphone app, showing which spots are free. Parking congestion fell by 10 per cent after the scheme was introduced, according to Conduent, a business services company that helped develop the system.

“It’s been a huge success,” says a spokesman for LA’s Department of Transportation, adding that the number of meters had risen from 5,000 to 8,000 since the programme began. Prices do not change daily but tend to be altered once a quarter. The system allows the city to respond to businesses seeking different parking limits.
TOXIC TIMES

London’s current pollution problems look tame by 1950s standards. The Great Smog that hit London in December 1952 killed some 4,000 people, with up to 8,000 more dying from related causes in the following months. The noxious air was the result of an anticyclone trapping fumes near ground level during cold weather. The low-grade coal Londoners relied on for heating in the postwar period produced high levels of sulphur dioxide. The shock caused by this lethal episode provoked action, leading to a ban on coal-burning in many urban areas in 1956.

Feergus O’Sullivan

Melbourne’s green energy project

Cities everywhere are under growing pressure to use more green energy. But there is a problem: new solar or wind farms often cannot be built until developers can be sure of signing a long-term agreement with an electricity buyer – and few cities are big enough to seal such a deal on their own.

Australia’s second-largest city, Melbourne, has found a solution. The council teamed up with a group of banks, universities, zoos and other organisations to form a group with the purchasing power to support a new green energy scheme.

The Melbourne Renewable Energy Project aims to buy more than 100GW hours of energy, which is enough to keep the lights on in more than 28,000 households for a year.

The group launched a tender process last year and has picked a preferred project that each member is currently considering. An announcement on the final decision is expected before the end of this year.

“The project will change the way large organisations purchase electricity in Australia,” says Arron Wood, Melbourne’s deputy lord mayor. “Importantly, it will enable large customers to have greater influence and certainty over their energy costs and source.”

A river highway through Paris

Trucks delivering goods in cities cause traffic jams and air pollution, especially as online shopping deliveries soar. In Paris, one retailer has chosen another route: the Seine. For the past five years, the Franprix convenience store chain has been shipping stock by barge from a port south-east of Paris up to a spot near the Eiffel Tower, from where it is delivered to its shops.

The group has expanded its use of the river and now delivers to 300 of its 350 stores in and around Paris by barge, up from 135 branches in early 2016. Franprix estimates this takes 3,600 trucks off the road each year and saves about 82,600 litres of fuel.

Cost is a hurdle, as is finding appropriate berths. But campaigners in London are trying to push the idea, including some who argue that goods transported by river could be delivered to their final destination by bike rather than by truck.

“It would be great to have the Thames used for goods,” says Ivor Chomacki, a member of the UK Cycle Logistics Federation, which is trying to boost the use of cargo delivery bikes.
Copenhagen’s organic food

Denmark’s capital is known as one of the world’s greenest and most bicycle-friendly cities. Now it has become an organic food champion.

In 2007, authorities decided the food bought by the city for municipal organisations — including nurseries, kindergartens and public schools — would be 90 per cent organic by the end of 2015, up from 51 per cent at the time.

By last year, the city claims, most of the nearly 900 kitchens in its organisations were serving 90 per cent organic food. The shift has been made without needing to find extra money for more expensive organic goods. How? By buying vegetables and fruit in season, cutting food waste and using less meat.

In addition, food is cooked using fresh ingredients, rather than being bought in packets — a policy that saves money, authorities say.

Seoul’s version of the High Line

New York captured city-dwellers’ imaginations worldwide in 2009 when it began to open the High Line. The elevated public park on the west side of Manhattan is built on a 2.3km stretch of disused railway that once transported frozen turkeys, among other goods.

Earlier this year, South Korea’s capital, Seoul, inaugurated its own version, a green walkway on an old highway overpass nearly 1km long that had been destined for demolition.

The walkway is known as Seoullo 7017 — because the overpass was built in 1970 and reopened in 2017 — and has been designed to breathe new life into less-than- lovely areas around the city’s central station. Covered in hundreds of different trees and plants, it is lit by LED lights that make it glow blue at night.

The pedestrianised Right Bank of the Seine in Paris

Motoring groups said it was a disaster. Authorities in neighbouring districts said it was clogging up their roads with extra traffic. But Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris, pressed on to turn a stretch of the city’s Right Bank into a car-free, pedestrianised zone that has transformed one of the capital’s busy roadways.

Skaters and joggers mingle with lunching families and dawdling tourists in what Hidalgo branded a “magnificent walkway” when she officially launched it in April.

Hidalgo has effectively created a new park in the middle of Paris by closing off nearly two miles of roadway along the banks of the river Seine.

The move is part of the socialist mayor’s broader efforts to make tackling air pollution a priority since her election in 2014.

London’s mayor, Sadiq Khan, has similar plans. He was elected last year after promising to work on pedestrianising London’s Oxford Street and turn one of the world’s best known shopping thoroughfares into a “tree-lined avenue”. This would be a transformational move, considering that about 500,000 people visit or work in Oxford Street and surrounding areas every day.

Khan has already begun consultation on the idea of reducing Oxford Street vehicle traffic. Depending on the outcome of that exercise, Transport for London says a second consultation on more specific plans could start later this year, with a view to implementing the scheme in late 2018.
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Mishcon de Reya

It’s business. But it’s personal.
Conversations with traders on the street markets of London offer glimpses not only of changing consumer tastes but also the shifting social fabric of the city.

By EMMA JACOBS
Photographs by CHARLIE BIBBY

Mohammad ‘Terry’ Tahir, Petticoat Lane

Originally from Pakistan, Tahir has lived in London for 25 years. Petticoat Lane market, which sells general goods and clothing, is in the East End and has seen successive waves of immigration, from French Huguenots in the 17th century to Jews fleeing eastern Europe in the late 19th century, and Bangladeshis in the 20th century. Petticoat Lane market is said to be where entrepreneur Alan Sugar cut his teeth as a stallholder. Today Tahir finds the market quiet, apart from office workers who come to buy their lunch from the hot-food stands.

“Fifteen to 20 years ago it used to be very, very busy,” he says, but office workers are not interested in buying clothes from the traders. “Profits are very, very down. It’s very hard to survive. The rain comes and everyone goes home.”

Some of Tahir’s peers do extra jobs around market trading hours. While he says it is a “very hard job”, he admits he likes it and has no plans to switch career.
ALL HOME KEYS CUT HERE

Ron Granger, Chapel Market

The brothels of King’s Cross were once a reliable revenue stream for Ron Granger’s father. The older Granger used to trade in sheets from his stall in Chapel Market, Islington. “He sold sheeting by the yard; unbleached calico cotton as it was stronger,” says the locksmith.

The family have had a stall in the Islington market for about 100 years. Granger has made keys for the past 30 years, although there was a five-year interval when he lived in Alabama with his American wife, making contact lenses and then as a warehouse manager at Kmart.

In recent years he has diversified into poison. “We’ve got a lot of a problem with rats in Islington, thank God. Restaurants have exploited the rat population.” Global warming has been good for business, he says. Recently he added moth traps and balls to his range. Bed bugs have made something of a comeback too, to Granger’s great delight; he has added a deadly spray to his stock. “Cockroaches will come back,” he predicts.

Keys are the most lucrative of the products he sells, but rat poison is not far behind. The weak pound has had an impact, increasing prices of keys, which he sources from Italy and Spain.

Today, young people are not interested in taking over their parents’ stalls, he says. “They’re all Deliveroo riders now.” Granger’s own children have not followed the 67-year-old into the business, although his son, who now works in advertising, did stint in the holidays.

His customers have changed over the years, too. “You get every nation under the sun. Some years there are more Nigerians, some years more Croatians.”

When a farmers’ market was added on Sundays, traders worried it would hurt their business. But Granger thinks the increased footfall has been a boon; when customers see the high cost of organic tomatoes, he says, they often retreat to the traditional fruit and veg stalls.

Traders have always reacted swiftly to changes in tastes, he says. “Today, hoppers want cheap, good food at markets. Once it was jazz, then it was handbags.”

Is he considering retirement? Despite the early starts and downsours, Granger has no plans to quit.

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Vittoria Fichera, Borough Market

A native of Venice, Vittoria Fichera has been in London for the past seven months. She works on the Greenfield Farm Organic Life tea stand at Borough Market, which was hit by a terrorist attack in June.

In addition to her job at the market, near London Bridge, the 27-year-old works at a pub in Notting Hill, where she was on duty on the night of the attack. “I was very scared [for my friends in the market]. It was very nice the way the community [came together],” she says.

Fichera got the market job through a friend, her boyfriend works on another stand. The company she works for also sells online.

Her mother is English, so she spent part of her youth in the UK on family holidays. A psychology graduate, she hopes to study criminology. But longer-term plans are uncertain. “Brexit will make a difference,” she says.

Victorine Bille, Spitalfields Market

The Parisian has had an occasional stall in Spitalfields Market for about five years, from which she sells her own jewellery, hats, bags and boots, made with fabrics and beads sourced from Africa.

“I go round the world to show my work,” says the 41-year-old, who makes everything herself. “I don’t like buying to sell.”

The market, which has been on the site for 350 years and once sold fresh produce, was modernised at the turn of the century, despite opposition amid fears that stallholders would be forced out and the area sanitised.

Bille loves her work but says that business can be patchy. “Yesterday I made nothing. Some days nothing.”

When in London, she stays with friends but most of the time she lives in Paris with her six-year-old daughter and her mother.

Zarullah Sherzad, Brixton Market

The Afghan sells avocados, mangoes and hot chillies in Brixton Market in south London. Most of his customers, he says, are of African or West Indian descent. Why did he specialise in these fruits? “I don’t have Afghan customers, so there’s no point selling Afghan food.”

The 37-year-old sends money to his family, who still live in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. When he arrived in London, he had no idea he would be selling fruit and vegetables.

“London is the best,” he says. “It’s safe, quiet and you get opportunities if you want to start a business, study or work.”

Urban Jungle

Victorine to Click & Collect 100 years ago would have faced the steep olive with the squawks of parakeets, the gabble of pigeons, the shrieks of monkeys and the odal growl from a lion cub. Founded in the 18th century by Huguenot refugees, who first popularised the keeping of songbirds in Britain, Club Row Animal Market continued selling pets until the early 1980s, when animal welfare concerns finally led to its do being silenced.

Feargus O’ Sullivan

photo essay
Pump up the volume

As foreign markets from Italy to Asia develop a taste for London’s craft beer, brewers are grappling with export dilemmas from excise duty to ‘keeping it real’

By BARNEY THOMPSON
Photographs by ANNA GORDON
The London brewery Fourpure lists its address as Unit 22 on the Bermondsey Trading Estate, a typically gritty industrial setting for the modern craft brewer. The inside is dominated by squat metal vessels, including monolithic steel fermentation tanks that contain thousands of litres of beer undergoing the required alchemy.

But Unit 22 is not the whole story. Outside at the back, attached to a low wall, is a long pipe that runs for 40m before turning into another unit — Fourpure’s canning and kegging area, plus a centrifuge and other equipment that cleans and filters the liquid.

Apart from these two units, the brewery occupies three more on the estate and is waiting to move into another one. “None of it looked like this a few months ago,” says Adrian Lugg, head of marketing for the brewery. “And it won’t look like this in a few months from now.” He points to four new unplumbed fermentation tanks, bits of packaging still clinging to their conical bottoms. Eight more are on their way.

London’s craft brewing scene is going through a boom. From half a dozen breweries a decade ago there are about 80 today, typically tucked away in railway arches among scrap metal dealers, garages, building merchants and other grimy and mysterious lock-ups.

“London was late to the party — it was only around 2010 that craft brewing really kicked off there,” says Pete Brown, a writer and broadcaster who has written several books on beer, cider and pubs. “But then the brewers really went for it and London went from being at back of the race to out in front.”

The start-up stories of craft breweries vary, but a typical version begins with a couple of homebrewing friends, inspired by innovative beers encountered in bars around the world, buying some small-scale kit and earning the approval of family and friends before deciding they could earn a living doing this. Such, for instance, are the origins of Fourpure, founded in 2013 by brothers Dan and Tom Lowe.

At this point the stories diverge. Some craft breweries power on, pumping up the volume and finding new markets overseas. A few are taken over by the giants of the industry, often to cries of “sell out” by craft beer aficionados. The Greenwich-based Meantime, whose beers are ubiquitous in London pubs, was sold in 2015 to SABMiller and then, when SAB merged with AB InBev, was offloaded to Asahi, the Japanese group.

Camden Town was bought by AB InBev in 2015 while this year Carlsberg purchased the London Fields brewery in Hackney. Such deals give craft brewers instant access to new distribution and marketing networks, even if they claim to keep their daily operations independent.
The majority of craft brewers are much smaller than these examples, however. The Society of Independent Brewers (Siba) has more than 850 members, or just under half the breweries in the UK. In its 2016 survey, 52 per cent of those that responded said they brewed 1,000 hectolitres or less a year, while a further 32 per cent brewed less than 5,000 hectolitres. (A hectolitre is 100 litres, so 5,000hl is 500,000 litres, or about 880,000 pints, or just over 1.5m 330ml bottles.)

Measuring a brewery’s output is important because in 2002 the government introduced the progressive beer duty scheme — a 50 per cent discount on excise duty for breweries producing up to 5,000hl a year (tapered until annual production reaches 60,000hl).

That has been a huge boost to small craft brewers but creates an obvious disincentive to increase output beyond that mark. Hence the decision by 84 per cent of respondents to Siba’s survey to keep production under 5,000hl. What is more, many brewers say the tapered relief is risible compared with other leading European beer producers. The progressive beer duty is in fact an EU rule that allows the 50 per cent maximum discount on annual production of up to 200,000hl. Germany chose to adopt the full allowance.

Allied to the economics is a cultural, hipster-driven imperative for craft breweries to “keep it real” — stay small, sell locally, defy convention. According to Siba, 65 per cent of its members’ output is sold within 40 miles of the brewery that makes it.

On the other hand, the data also show an increased willingness to find new markets. In its most recent member survey, Siba found that 23.5 per cent of respondents were exporting, up seven points on the previous year. Much of this was to Europe, where Siba claims “the thirst for quality beer is seeing a massive increase”. The top destination was Italy, which accounted for nearly 15 per cent of exports, though a cumulative 27 per cent went to Scandinavia.

Most (seven out of 10) of these breweries exported only a small fraction of their production — 5 per cent or less. But the survey showed that hundreds more were interested in exporting but were unsure about how to go about it or whether they could handle the business.

“You have to hit a certain scale before you can start thinking about exports,” says Brown. “But you can see such a diversity of ambition. You can tell Fourpure is hell bent on growth, while a brewery like Kernel [based nearby] is just in it to brew beer, not to grow a business.”

There are willing drinkers beyond Europe, too. Fourpure, which exports about 10 per cent of its 24,000hl annual production, sells mainly to Singapore, Japan, Australia and Sweden. “London is an extremely strong brand internationally and we have managed to position ourselves as having the London connection,” says Dan Lowe.

Older and better established London breweries have been exporting for decades. Fuller’s, founded in 1845 and based at the historic Griffin Brewery site in Chiswick, has been exporting since the 1960s and now reaches 85 countries, with Sweden and Russia among its biggest markets.

“Our 5.9 per cent [alcohol by volume] version of ESB [ale] is popular abroad,” says Georgina Young, head brewer at Fuller’s. “But in Russia they also like the Imperial Stout at 10.7 per cent, while in Brazil they love the organic Honey Dew [golden ale]. And there’s the Golden Pride — the 8.5 per cent version of London Pride [the company’s flagship ale]. Italy can’t get enough of that.”

Can craft beer be both craft and global at the same time? Young dismisses it as “a marketing term” and Brown agrees, “There will never be a definition you can pin down,” he says. “It’s more about intent — is the brewer in charge of what happens? Is the intent to brew the best beer possible or are you making compromises to please the accountants or marketing guy?”
Free thinking

Could London contribute even more to the national economy if it had greater control of its finances? BEN ROGERS makes the case for devolution while MIKE EMMERICH says we must invest in the regions

T o most of the world, London and Britain are so close as to be hardly distinguishable. Britain is Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus and St Paul’s Cathedral. London is the monarchy and parliament. But like many marriages that seem happy from a distance, this one has long had its tensions. Over recent years it has been going through a particularly difficult patch, with both sides feeling misunderstood and under-appreciated.

The capital, as it often likes to point out, works incredibly hard and brings in most of the money. It houses an eighth of the nation’s population but produces almost a quarter of its economic wealth, according to the Office for National Statistics, and almost a third of all its taxes, says the Centre for Cities research unit. Much of the UK’s remaining standing and influence in the world — its soft power — is exercised through London. The UK is no longer a superpower among nations, but London is an urban superpower in an age when cities are becoming more important.

Moreover, London insists, it is eager to contribute even more to the marriage. All that holds it back is a domineering national government. The capital has remarkably little control over its finances or its services, compared with similar cities. The London Finance Commission — set up in 2012 by Boris Johnson, then London mayor, to look into tax and financing — found only 7 per cent of taxes raised in the capital go directly to London government (the mayor and boroughs), with the rest going to central government to be redistributed.

The current mayor, Sadiq Khan, and his supporters argue that giving the capital more power over its own taxes would allow it to design a tax system that works for its peculiar circumstances and incentivises growth. This in turn would, of course, help the country as a whole, they say. London would get more of the pie but the pie would be larger and the union would be better off.

Yet these arguments fall on deaf ears. For the nation has its own grievances. It does not matter what measure you chose — population, wealth, tax take — London has moved ahead of the rest of the country in recent decades. So what, if the capital’s international counterparts have more freedom to govern themselves?

Few other cities so dominate their nation; the UK has by some way the largest regional economic disparities of any large advanced country. London already receives the lion’s share of investment in infrastructure and culture — all those gleaming railway stations and dazzling museums. Wouldn’t ceding London more freedom allow it to gobble up even more of the nation’s economic and cultural life? Wasn’t the vote for Brexit at least in part a vote against the London elite and their greedy ways?

The British people can hardly recognise themselves in their cosmopolitan, freewheeling, unimaginably expensive, crazily busy capital as it is. And now it says it wants more freedom to do its own thing. But, national government insists, to keep London in its place and work on rebalancing the UK through promoting its “industrial strategy” and investing in cities, regions and nations beyond the capital. Prime minister Theresa May’s 2017 election manifesto, with its promise to move civil servants out of London and redistribute more arts spending away from the metropolis, seemed particularly anti-London, but all national parties — not to mention Scottish, Welsh and Irish ones — campaign on a promise to recast the economy away from London.

Like most couples going through a difficult patch, both parties need to listen more. London certainly has a point. The capital does make an outsized contribution to the nation’s economy and national standing, and is undoubtedly being held back from making a greater one by excessive centralisation. The Treasury in particular needs to let go. A city with more self-government would be able to come up with a much more effective and fairer system of property taxation than the one we currently have — and be able to invest the proceeds in vitally needed infrastructure and public services, and address its exceptionally high levels of deprivation. London
asmall, but once living costs have been taken into account, most of its people are not. A quarter of British children grow up in poverty, but a third of children in London do, according to London’s Poverty Profile, a report based on government data.

The capital can, in turn, come across as arrogant and uncomprehending. Harping on about how much it contributes to the country through supply chains and tax take is bound to provoke as much as it persuades — people do not like to be reminded of their dependency on a richer partner. It is humiliating. Successive mayors have often seemed much more enamoured by London’s role as a global city than as a capital.

London needs in particular to get better at making common cause with the UK’s other cities and regions and its smaller nations. Instead of always insisting on how much it brings to the table, the capital might consider committing itself much less reservedly than it ever has to the goal of rebalancing the UK economy. The UK’s very lopsided economic geography is not just bad for the regions but arguably hurts London itself. Stronger regional economies would take some of the pressure off the metropolis. The cities and regions should work together in pressing the case for devolution — they all suffer from the UK’s ludicrously over-centralised system of government.

We have all become used to seeing the mayor of London — a role created only 17 years ago — shaking hands with kings, presidents and international city mayors as they come to London or he travels around the world. But Ken Livingstone, Johnson and Khan have been slow to look after their relations with the rest of the UK and its smaller nations. Instead of always insisting on how much it brings to the table, the capital might consider committing itself much less reservedly than it ever has to the goal of rebalancing the UK economy. The UK’s very lopsided economic geography is not just bad for the regions but arguably hurts London itself. Stronger regional economies would take some of the pressure off the metropolis. The cities and regions should work together in pressing the case for devolution — they all suffer from the UK’s ludicrously over-centralised system of government.

As a first step, Khan could call for a national parliament of mayors: a body of UK city leaders that could speak up for the needs of the country’s cities — the heart of Britain’s economy. But he should make it clear he would not necessarily expect it to meet in London.

Ben Rogers is director of Centre for London, a think-tank
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Mishcon de Reya

It’s business. But it’s personal.
A difficult start

Terror attacks, disasters and business uncertainty after Brexit have tested Mayor of London Sadiq Khan’s upbeat vision when he entered City Hall last year. Has he risen to the challenges?

By JIM PICKARD
London has chosen Sadiq Khan as its first Muslim mayor in May 2016, he promised "there will be no better future". "London has today chosen hope over fear and unity over division," he said in his six-hour victory speech at City Hall. That upbeat vision has been tested repeatedly over the past 18 months with a succession of unexpected shocks and events.

First came the Brexit vote. When Khan was elected, the polls suggested that Britain would remain in the EU; seven weeks later came the Leave victory. London is a pro-EU city. Nearly a million EU citizens live there, "grief-stricken", he told The New Yorker magazine in July. "It was like we were in mourning." The Leave vote has prompted major changes in the mayor's role, making it imperative to maintain London's voice in the Brexit talks. He has secured a monthly position with David Davis, the Brexit secretary, met with other cabinet ministers and senior EU figures, and set up a Brexit advisory panel.

One of the mayor's priorities for post-Brexit London is to argue for an immigration system that will allow Europe — and others — to continue to flock to the UK capital. Many Londoneers take pride in their home's reputation as a diverse, modern city where the colour of someone's skin matters less than their abilities. This was underlined by Khan's election — he describes himself as a mayor who happens to be Muslim. His rise also set up his own Brexit expert advisory panel.

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Khan's reputation as a "shape-shifter" who has enjoyed a positive "first-year" reputation for tolerance. On March 22, a jihadi乘车 crashrd into pedestrians on London Bridge, killing eight and injuring 48 before they too were shot dead. Two weeks later a van was driven into a group of Muslims near a mosque in Finsbury Park, causing one death and 11 injuries. Khan later stood by his colleagues in the city's worst fire since the Blitz on June 14, flames ripped through Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey social housing block in west London, killing 80 people.

Public fury was directed at politicians of all stripes, the mayor included. But Khan, a day later, visited the still-smouldering site to give a speech and was heckled by some locals. He sought to claim that as mayor he would promote to hold both the local council and the national government to account. "I have experienced first-hand (the resident's) partial grief, anger and frustration. I share it," he said.

Much of his time in the summer has been focused on dealing with the fallout from the attacks. One of his first acts on becoming mayor was to commission Lord (Toby) H闫 to review London's readiness for a major terrorist incident. More than a third of the review's 127 recommendations have so far been implemented. The mayor is in regular contact with Cressida Dick, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, while City Hall has worked with other authorities to install barriers on bridges. He also launched a "London Is Open" campaign to reassure tourists.

At-enemies continue to the occasion. "His response to the terror incidents has been proportional and sensible," says one Tory member of the London Assembly. "He's been good at being inclusive, there's no doubt about that." Khan has chosen to remain on the mayoral pipeline of new buildsin London. But he says he has "turned our eyes to the future" of the city's public transport system, to keep investing and sustaining jobs.

The Cost of Khan

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One activist from the Liberal Democrat party says Khan's first year in office has featured "no major screw-ups" but points out that there are any major new projects under way. "That's a contrast to (Johnson, Khan's predecessor), who was obsessed with lives.

A Conservative London Assembly member describes Khan as a "shape-shifter" who has enjoyed a positive media profile. Opinion of Tony Blair in his early years as Labour leader. The mayor's ability to mix with others, business executives and Tory ministers alike has irritated some of his political enemies. "He has set up a City Hall as a platform to attack government at every opportunity," one says. "Yet they feel ever more insecure about Khan," he said. "I'm not sure they feel how much they like seeing Khan go down over his policy progress. They claimed that his promise to reduce fares, at the cost of up to £6,000m a year by 2020, had jeopardised certain public transport schemes, such as the extension of the Metronet line to Watford. Khan has hit back, saying that such schemes is the responsibility of central government.

Meanwhile, the mayor says he is making "tough efficiency savings" at Transport for London, the operator of the city's public transport system, to keep investing money back into services. He also withdrew funding for a planned Thames garden bridge, a scheme he inherited from Johnson and never fully endorsed.

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Khan says his priorities for his four-year term are to protect London's competitiveness, tackle the housing crisis, boost business, make London safer, encourage social integration, improve the transport network and make the city greener.

The mayor, who developed asthma as an adult, says he wants better air quality to be one legacy. London already has a low-emission zone that applies only to commercial vehicles. He has begun a consultation on extending this at the end of this decade. The month he will bring in a new "T-charg"(toxicity charge) of £20 for polluting vehicles — typically more than 10 years old — entering the existing congestion charge zone in the city centre. There will be "clean bus lanes" and "a new air quality alert system. Aresha Haigh, a campaigner with Greenpeace, the environmental organisation, says other European cities are pushing harder — Paris, for example, is banning diesel vehicles by 2022 — but adds that Khan is much more proactive than the previous regime.

Some believe that Khan has another long-term strategy in mind: to one day become Labour leader. They say he is using City Hall to build his own profile. "There was an advert on buses not long ago that said, 'The mayor, Sadiq Khan, has launched the new hopper fare'," one sceptic points out.

When he was asked if May, however, the mayor insisted he was planning to stand for a second term in 2020. “Why give up the best job in the world to be Labour leader?” he said.
Foreign fields

Games and martial arts introduced by minority communities are winning converts and helping newcomers find a foothold

By MURAD AHMED

Portraits by ANNA GORDON

Kendo

Yoshikito Takaya, 46, moved to the UK nine years ago to work as a doctor. Last year, he was treating a fellow Japanese man who trains at Nenriki, the oldest kendo club in London, founded in 1968. The patient suggested he come down to the club’s dojo, or training centre, near Elephant and Castle in south London.

It proved to be an unexpected way to meet people from across the city. “Not so many Japanese are there,” says Takaya (pictured left). “Just one lady who has lived here for 20 to 30 years, and recently a young lady joined the club. The rest are the British or other EU people.”

Takaya grew up learning the martial art, which is often performed with wooden swords and light armour, and is grounded in the country’s samurai military tradition. In its modern form, fighters earn points for strikes to the head or body. Attacks take place with sudden, bewildering speed.

Takaya says that there are 30 to 40 regular members at Nenriki and believes there are few other cities in the world outside Japan where a similar club could survive. “London has the culture of diversity,” he says. “On that basis, people can find a lot of activities like martial arts. But in other countries… I think it’s difficult.”
Kabaddi

Naneesh Bhathal, 20, from Hounslow, west London, was born in London to Sikh parents who were originally from the Punjab in India. Growing up, her family were keen kabaddi players. “I think it goes back to history and old times,” she says. “With kabaddi you don’t need anything – just a few people to play a game on the mat. It’s fun. It’s a big thing in the Sikh community.”

The sport, which originated in India, looks like a particularly violent form of tag, played between two teams. Players take turns in their attempts to raid the opposition half and touch members of the other team, while repeating “kabaddi” to show they have not taken a breath while in their rivals’ territory. The opposing team must avoid being tagged or tackle the “raider” before they can return to their half of the court.

Although kabaddi’s popularity is strongest among ethnic Indians in the UK, Bhathal insists that “now it’s becoming bigger, everyone is starting to play it”, helped by professional matches being screened on Sky television in the UK.

Now playing in a student team at Birmingham university, Bhathal has also made friends with players at universities in the capital, such as Imperial College London and the London School of Economics, where women’s teams have become established. “Everyone is just so nice, and so supportive, as everyone knows kabaddi is not as big a sport as others,” she says.

Australian rules football

Hugh Wells, 25, moved to London from Sydney in 2015 to work as a hospital administrator. At a party last year he found himself chatting with one of the leaders of the Putney Magpies, an amateur Australian rules football team in west London.

It was not long before Wells became the club’s president, which he attributes to a quirk of the immigration system. “With the two-year visas [for many working Australians], you take on a lot pretty early, to be honest. The first-year players come in [just to play], but the second-year players are generally expected to do something and step up to senior positions at the club. So I have taken that on this year.”

The sport, known colloquially as “Aussie rules”, was founded more than 150 years ago. Matches are played between two teams of 18 players, who run with, kick and hand-pass a rugby-like ball to score goals at opposite extremities of an oval pitch, 135m-185m long.

It is the most watched sport in Australia, though has not taken off widely in the rest of the world. The Putney Magpies run men’s and women’s teams, the club forming a natural community for fellow Australian expats. “We brand ourselves as a family,” says Wells. “When someone new comes, you bring them in socially and on the field.”
HOME-FROM-HOME RUNS
While the second world war raged across Europe, an altogether more amicable struggle was taking place in London between two foreign armies: baseball teams from the US and Canadian forces. By 1942, troops stationed in Britain from both nations were forming baseball teams that drew to their matches large, eager crowds who welcomed a respite from the war. The Americans’ far greater numbers meant that they generally — though not always — had the upper hand in these clashes, as in the pictured game at Wembley in 1943, which they won 6-3.

Feargus O’Sullivan

Capoeira
Silvia Bazzarelli moved from the Brazilian city of Santos, near São Paulo, to set up the London School of Capoeira in 1988, at a time when the martial art had only a small following in the UK. She was not put off by teaching only “very small classes” in the beginning. “In Brazilian culture, there is no incentive needed to go do something. Go get up and do your thing.”

Now 52, Bazzarelli (pictured left) remains a capoeira master at the school in Finsbury Park, north London, and has about 70 students regularly under her tutelage. Though a martial art, capoeira mixes elements of dance and music, and when performed by skilled exponents, partners move together with mesmeric synchronicity. Capoeira’s origins date back the 16th century, when it is believed to have been created by west African slaves and became an activity that swept Brazil. Only in recent decades have Brazilian émigrés spread it around the world.

According to the 2011 UK census, there are an estimated 33,000 Brazilian-born people in the UK capital. The London school draws many of its students from other backgrounds: British, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese people have joined classes. The need to perform closely alongside others has created a community, says Bazzarelli. “It’s nice to see that the impact is not just in the classroom,” she adds. “It transcends into meeting other people, even getting married.”

Video: inside the little-seen world of foreign sport in the capital.
ft.com/london-sport
Forty years ago this year, the Pompidou Centre opened its doors in Paris. It was perhaps the most radical cultural building in the world, a statement of openness, flexibility, democracy and faith in the future. Some derided it as looking more like an oil refinery than a cultural centre, others ridiculed a building with its guts on the outside. But within months it became Paris’s most visited attraction, outstripping the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower.

Its architect was Richard Rogers, the Briton who, with the Italian Renzo Piano, had been determined to create a new “High-Tech” architecture in which the audience determined the content — an idea of the future from the bottom up. It was to have been covered in multimedia screens, broadcasting its content to the city and the plaza in front — the space outside was as much a part of the architecture as the interior. These never happened and the escalator, once a free mobile viewing platform is now beyond the barriers, for ticket-holders only (partly in response to fears of terrorist attacks). Yet the brightly coloured building remains one of the most radical and striking structures to be built in the heart of a historic city.

Less than a decade earlier, the Greater London Council, working with some of the young architects who would go on to form Archigram, an avant-garde London practice whose work was as much influenced by comic books and sci-fi as it was by modernist architecture, had built the Hayward Gallery. A sculptural work of great power, it too was criticised by those for whom it was intended. It was described as a brutal, inhospitable concrete monstrosity and, as the rain began to stain its walls, it was little loved, except by artists who appreciated its austere, dramatic spaces.

Today Brutalism is fetishised and revered. Concrete clutters Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram feeds. Bookshop shelves sag under the weight of books as weighty as its concrete architecture. The architecture of the Hayward and its wider context, the South Bank, has become an indispensable part of London life. When proposals were made to build in the concrete undercrofts adopted by skateboarders in 2014, there was an outcry, and the city lobbied for the retention of the dark, dank space that were once so reviled.

London, it seemed, had finally fallen in love with modernism. Erno Goldfinger’s fiercely uncompromising Trellick Tower is now one of the city’s most desirable high-rises, the Barbican appears on tea towels and the Brunswick Centre in Bloomsbury has been rebranded as a contemporary destination. Alison and Peter Smithson’s Economist plaza is a settled part of establishment St James’s, although their Robin Hood Gardens housing in the East End atrociously is being demolished.

These buildings have now been adopted as heritage. But they were once the vanguard of contemporary architecture, glimpses into a radical utopian future. A cursory glance at London’s contemporary skyline shows a city falling over itself to build — more and taller. But compared with these buildings of the 1960s and 1970s, what will we leave behind? Has London architecture lost its radical edge? This is the city that built the world’s first municipal social housing, Shoreditch’s Boundary Estate, in 1930 — still a very fine place to live. Now we have...
The London Aquatics Centre, designed by Zaha Hadid for the 2012 Olympic Games

The tragedy of Grenfell Tower, a fire allegedly accelerated by the cheap panels used for a cosmetic makeover to cover its uncompromising concrete. London, it appears, is no longer a city of radical architecture.

What went wrong and what can be done to restore this radical spirit? Should it be restored at all? Are we now too cynical for the avant garde? By its very nature radical architecture can upset. It is often, as was the case with the concrete behemoths of the South Bank, deeply unpopular when it is first built. Even the National Theatre and the Barbican, from the gentler end of the Brutalist spectrum, were much derided in their time (both finished in the 1970s when their rugged concrete style had become passe). Since Rogers’ Lloyd’s Building in 1986 there has been little architecture in London in recent years that could be called visionary or radical.

The one architect who introduced a genuinely original new approach was the late Zaha Hadid, but her finest architecture is elsewhere. London proved largely resistant to her unconventional style and only the Aquatics Centre for the 2012 Olympics and the Evelyn Grace Academys stand as testament to her talent — and both were compromised by cost-cutting. The most successful public building has been reuse of an existing, epic space, Herzog & de Meuron’s superb repurposing of Bankside power station as the Tate Modern gallery.

The city’s current architecture is surprisingly conservative. Most of the hundreds of towers sprouting across the city, or about to, are clad in polite brick, a sop to planning officers who like buildings to “fit in”. Developers have resorted to a polite modernism — polite in materials if not scale — and need to sell their schemes, so that architectural response is a commercial imperative.

The radical blockbusters from the 1960s and 1970s were all, without exception, backed by the state or the city. Real radical architecture needs the intervention of the authorities as the private sector will never take that kind of risk. The result has been a legacy that transformed the civic spaces of the city, but what is the legacy of today? The state and the city have withdrawn from architecture, with shocking results in the housing market and a lack of leadership in the public realm.

Today, London’s civic spaces are the byproduct of commercial development, the results of promises made by developers to create public amenity as a condition of planning consent — the Section 106 agreement. Ironically, Paris, which once imported its radical architecture from London in the form of the Pompidou Centre, now has a much more visionary approach to building. From its new museums to its spaces for swimming to its inventive and extensive new social housing programme and revival of industrial space, it is much more of a nexus for interesting architecture.

The Greater London Council’s architecture department used to be the biggest architecture office in the world, and its younger, hungrier architects made more innovative work. Now the city architect is a vague memory — only Croydon is making any real effort to revive public architecture. Much of what came out of the GLC’s golden age was poor and has not stood the test of time. Perhaps its utopianism and self-confidence now look naive and arrogant. But the upside was a layer of public and social architecture that still contributes to the city and still surprises. Until the city takes architecture seriously again, we will have to rely on the radicals of the past for our architectural thrills.
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Beyond the fringe

The arts and creative industries are no longer ‘nice to have’, but central to the way cities work. We must protect them from the grass roots up, says London’s deputy mayor for culture, JUSTINE SIMONS

In a globalised world where our lives are increasingly run by algorithms, we all wear the same trainers and drink the same coffee, what makes our cities distinctive? And how can we futureproof London as an open, vibrant and successful world capital?

Any diplomat will tell you that getting 25 countries to agree on anything can be a very difficult task. Every year I chair the World Cities Culture Summit, to try and do just that. It is attended by influential city leaders from global cities, including New York, Shanghai, Moscow, Paris, Seoul and Buenos Aires, and I am always struck by how united the delegates are in their common mission, regardless of the international tensions at the time. They all turn up because, whatever political or economic system they come from, their shared goal is to grow the role of culture in our cities.

It is obvious to say that cities have much in common, but what has changed in the past decade or so is how those who run, live and work in them feel about culture. Culture is becoming a golden thread, woven through all aspects of urban life, rather than something separate or aloof.

It would be easy to say that London has too much on its plate to prioritise culture—from just running a big city to a housing crisis, Brexit, terrorist attacks and the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower. But prioritise it we have. Sadiq Khan was the first mayor of London to declare culture a core priority alongside housing, transport and air quality.

London is not alone. Around the world, awareness has grown of the importance of culture if cities are to thrive in the 21st century. The paradigm has shifted and the notion of culture as a core ingredient in urban policy has gone from niche to mainstream. Whether that is Bogotá embracing street art, Berlin giving heritage status to its underground clubs or London saving the Southbank Centre skate park, the birthplace of British skateboarding, it turns out that we care quite deeply about the granular, gritty stuff—what some might call the “intangible heritage” of our cities.

If you think about it, it is logical that culture matters to us. It is in London’s DNA and creative tribes have defined our identity through the decades. In the 1960s The Rolling Stones and The Who were on pirate radio, Mary Quant started a mini-skirt revolution and Soho was home to artists such as Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon. The 1970s saw punk explode—a short movement with extraordinary longevity, which remains a perennial influence on fashion catwalks and a thriving subculture in Japan. The New Romantics and Britpop followed and now Grime is a big creative force, changing the face of music.

In London today, creativity, technology and business collide in Shoreditch, where east London meets the City. To the south, in Peckham, an artists’ takeover of a derelict town-centre car park, Bold Tendencies, has arguably boosted property prices more than any expensive marketing campaign could have done.

This is not just storytelling—it is backed up by data. Four out of five tourists say culture is the main reason they visit, according to research for the mayor of London; the creative industries generate £43bn a year for the capital’s economy, by GLA Economics’ figures; and London is the most googled city in the world for “culture”.

It is not now enough for cities to just have great transport and efficient roads—they also need a soul. They need culture and creativity. As the artist Grayson Perry once
said: “Life without art would be a series of emails.” Imagine your life without music, film, design, craft, art, theatre and books. The same goes for cities.

But there are some big challenges. It is hard to be a creative in London. Pay is low, intellectual property is under threat and the gig economy is a challenge. City Hall studies show that London is set to lose 30 per cent of artists’ studios in the next few years and in the past decade we’ve lost 50 per cent of clubs and 40 per cent of grassroots music venues.

These grassroots creative spaces are vital incubators for the next generation of artists, musicians and DJs. It is harder than ever to break into the creative industries, and with the average age of musicians headlining festivals rising from mid-20s to over 40 in recent decades, we can see a problem brewing. It is what finance people might call living off our capital assets.

Talent drain is a worry, amplified by Brexit. London’s success is dependent on people and ideas. Built on decades of immigration, with more than 300 languages spoken every day, diversity is central to our success as a world city. As the great philosopher Paddington Bear once said: “In London everyone is different, and that means everyone can fit in.” Our significant creative economy is reliant on the best talent — the pattern cutters, the game designers, the photographers, the animators, the one guy in London who can allegedly mend a Stradivarius violin. The creative workforce is one of our biggest assets.

The news is not all bad and if we grab the opportunity it can be spectacular. First, we have a seat at the table. Culture is no longer seen as an elite night out for the champagne-sipping classes — it is what we watch on TV, it is the music we listen to on our smartphones and at the festivals (and car parks) where we hang out. It builds confidence and raises aspiration among young people, whatever their background, and we must make it accessible to all. It is a way to open our minds, connect with others, play and imagine.

Business and policymakers have grasped the potential of culture to help deliver positive growth and change in almost any context, with depth and sophistication. It is being hardwired into planning, regeneration, health and social policy in imaginative ways. Developers want to embed culture in big schemes across the capital. Tourism is championing all kinds of culture — big and small, mainstream and hidden gems. London’s Night Czar is part of a global movement of cities including Amsterdam and Berlin which are reimagining the night as a playful, positive and creative space.

Second, there is significant progress on infrastructure. We have Tate Modern’s brand new Switch House, a glorious new Design Museum in Kensington, a cultural district in the pipeline for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, and a new Museum of London in West Smithfield Market in Clerkenwell. Dagenham, to the east, is transitioning from cars to content, with plans for a new film and TV studio complex. Grassroots music venues have stabilised for the first time in a decade, new artist studios are being secured and LGBT venues such as The Joiners Arms have been saved.

We are learning from other cities and trying new ideas. Following San Francisco’s lead, a creative land trust is planned to secure permanent affordable creative studios, with bridging finance to help buy them. Creative Enterprise Zones will be tested, with the mayor, councils and developers offering incentives such as workspace and business support to help artists put down roots in the areas they have helped regenerate.

The creative economy is in a good place, with its workforce growing four times faster than the economy at large. In the future, content will be king. Creative people are the authors of original content and you cannot automate the imagination. Recent research by Nesta, formerly the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, concluded that 87 per cent of creative jobs are unlikely to be automated, meaning that creativity will shore up our global position in the future.

So do we need culture at a time like this? Absolutely. Our creative muscle will help us reassert our values as an open, ambitious leading world capital that is welcoming to all. What could be more important at this moment than fending off global competition, boosting the economy, bringing in millions of tourists, breathing life into rundown parts of town, feeding our imaginations and protecting the weird and wonderful things that make London London.

Justine Simons OBE is deputy mayor for culture and the creative industries and chair of the World Cities Culture Forum
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Henry Mance

As Brexit beckons, the moment has come for Londoners to rise up and found a city state — if only they can find the time

I can feel it in my bones, I can almost touch it — the Independent Republic of London. It's an idea whose time has surely come.

Scotland still has a burning independence flame, Catalonia had its unofficial referendum. Why not London? It dominates its country politically, culturally and economically like few other cities; it is the birthplace of modern democracy, Charlie Chaplin and Pret A Manger.

Our population is two-thirds bigger than Scotland’s; our economy is two-thirds bigger than Catalonia’s. Per head, west London is the richest area in Europe — above Luxembourg, Hamburg and Brussels. Yet the capital has been outvoted by rural England. It is being dragged out of the EU against its will. It is under the control of a Conservative government it didn’t elect. Its brand of liberalism is out of the game. It’s not the specifics, it’s the principle. Shouldn’t we point out that it’s our ball, and we are taking it home?

Benedict Anderson, the sociologist, described nations as “imagined communities”. What are Londoners if not one people, bound together by our frustration at the District Line and an urban sense of superiority? Actually, the sense of superiority is very nuanced: we ascribe to ourselves the virtues of cosmopolitanism without any of the self-centeredness that afflicts New Yorkers. Truly, we would be the Goldilocks nation.

What about the practicalities? An independent London would stay in the EU. We would seek a deep and special partnership with the rest of the UK. We would take back control of our laws, money and borders. Our flag would be the Tube map. Our border would be the M25 motorway. Relax — it would be as frictionless as possible. An even more global London. The love child of medieval Venice and today’s Hong Kong.

I know what you’re going to say: there might be an economic cost. Indeed there might. But look at the upside. House prices might fall. You might get a seat on the 113 bus, or a centre court ticket at Wimbledon.

London’s dominance is a mixed blessing. We have been clogged up by the headquarters of national power — the ministries, the monarchy, the BBC. Better to turn Westminster, Buckingham Palace and Oxford Circus over to the tourists, who have pretty much taken control of them anyway.

A London enclave could do us all a favour. It would regenerate the rest of the UK. Plus Britain would no longer be an island nation — adieu to the isolationist psyche. We Londoners would lose our stake in the England football team winning the World Cup, but most of us lost that a while back.

Immigration inevitably would be a thorny topic. Of course we would, to quote Brexit secretary David Davis, make a generous offer. Our starting point is that anyone with an Oyster public transport card would be allowed unlimited right to remain. What happens if you lose your Oyster? Would we really allow free movement to those from Hungary but not from Hull? These are details the Department for Exiting the UK would have no problem sorting out. Presumably.

We would need a national anthem. Which is tricky given that The Beatles were from Liverpool, and nearly everyone else on the Wikipedia page for best British bands seems to have come from Manchester. There was a suggestion that we could try something whimsical by Flanders and Swann, but it turns out they were born in Wales. Again, this is something the Department would need to look at.

These uncertainties might damage the prospect of the London Leave campaign, so we would need a popular figurehead to win the case for independence. A person of flexible views. Who knows London, but also knows Leaving. Former mayor Boris Johnson, if you’re reading this, please phone the office. And delete any previous article you’ve written opposing an independent London.

And yet something doesn’t quite convince. For one thing, where will it end? Already, UK Independence party councillors in Havering have tried unsuccessfully to separate their borough from the Greater London Authority. Who could stop a similar separatist movement in Hampstead or Dulwich? The literati would plot in the London Review of Books, and no one else would find out until it was too late.

Then there’s the risk our city-state might get a bit insular: how many Chelsea-Arsenal derbies do we want to watch? Crucially, there’s the time commitment. Independence is a diary killer. Londoners like to think of themselves as cosmopolitan, but their primary identity is just being busy. You can hardly have a conversation without contractually agreeing to watch a whole new box set. I’m not sure we have the time for revolution. We have a dream, but we also have a full schedule.
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