Shoreditch and Brick Lane; cultural and artistic

By Danielle Bergere

SHOREDITCH AND Brick Lane are some of my favorite areas in London. Situated in East London, they are booming with vibrant, eclectic culture and style. A couple of Fridays ago I headed over to Brick Lane to sit at one of my favorite London coffee shops to read because I always end up falling asleep if I try reading in bed. Brick Lane Coffee is a great cafe worth checking out. With free wifi, magazines to flip through, amusing (and rude) stickers decorating the walls, mismatched lamps, pillows adorning the space, what's not to love? Plus they do amazing frappes.

Within Brick Lane, it's amazing to see how houses transition into vintage stores, boutiques, and quirky cafes. Curious about its beginnings, I did a little research:

The Brick Lane area of London is much like the rest of the East End in the sense that it is constantly experiencing assimilation and change; communities are constantly forming and evolving, making way for new ones. The area's first immigrants were the French Hugenot community who came to London to escape persecution from the Catholics. Finally, in the 1970s, the area of Spitalfields and Brick Lane was populated by Bangladeshis who came to Britain in hopes of finding better work. They found work in factories and in the textile trade industry.

In the 19th century, the district of Whitechapel and Brick Lane was extremely overcrowded, crime-ridden, and full of poverty. A parliamentary report of 1838 described the area to have harbored thieves and prostitutes. However, as part of a slum clearance program, the south section of Commercial Street was created in 1843 and connected to the Spitalfields Market area. The market area was also extended to connect to Shoreditch High Street. The Spitalfields Market was known for its textile trade industry (rag trade), but the area eventually underwent gentrification. The Commercial Street area now is filled with many trendy restaurants, cool bars, pop-ups and clothing shops, and the Spitalfields Market has sellers adorning their stalls with unique jewellery and other interesting things.

Many of the times I've visited Brick Lane have been during the weekends, when fashionable, edgy young people are out and about, congregating in packs to line up for an American Apparel warehouse sale, glancing through the record shop Rough Trade, strolling along the lane enjoying the street food, or sitting outside bars to soak in the atmosphere with all its graffiti, character and color. The street art and red brick shop houses really do add charm to the area in its own way. Just as there use to be immigrant communities coming and going, now with the Bengalis and young people sharing Brick Lane, I wonder if they will soon migrate somewhere else too… Or maybe all that will change now is the street art, constantly getting painted over by a new artist.

Shoreditch is a great area for night life. There are so many one-off bars and clubs with unique alternative concepts — XOXO, Cargo, Queen of Hoxton. Queen of Hoxton even has a rooftop garden bar — so it’s easy to get lost… something I’ve done multiple times!
Evening London Transports

By Andrew Karpan

TO ANY transport, London offers itself as a mystery of sorts. For most, it is something that exists namely in filmed and novelized legend, a glittering epitome of Europe’s most relatable and English-speaking isle. Of all this, the urban tourist quickly finds himself mystified within his first few minutes into the weeknight. It is all rather empty; large public art installations and shuttered public parks laced together by compact streets and signage as bizarrely colorful as ten-and-twenty pound notes. It’s a pretty scene to shoot, sure; where are the extras? Cued to as soon as the foremost analog digit strums past nine, ten: the center of the largest city in Western Europe, with a might to dwarf Berlin, Madrid, et al.

properly becomes a museum of itself.

The weekends fare somewhat better. As the minutes approach midnight, bar tenders forego tending in force, within halves of hours they will begin shoosing their milling crowd out, informing them, as if it were an accident of their utmost serendipity that the bar is closed, some solemn degree of an urbane god. But for a few noble hours, the streets struggle to remain healthily clogged, rivers of people manage to stay stuck on curbs and lock between intersections. It interests one to know that it was only since 2005 that such bars were even permitted to distill past 11pm; of the 125,000 licensed alcohol distributors servicing a city of eight million or so, only 5,000 have managed to secure license for distribution into the far late night, most being the small one-aisle bodegas that sparkle, like stars, the otherwise dark sky street rows. At some point, even the swift traffic of automobiles gives way to the hum of street cleaning machines glowering slowly with purpose: crisscrossing each other, all definitely going

Elsewhere, sometimes, the lights are still on: in Soho threads of skinny people sit in and out of clubs, bouncers open and close doors that coat whispers of manic indistinguishable laughter over the drone of low 4x4 beats that simmer quietly over the night sky. Can those small black doors really contain all of a city’s insomniacs, all those angry, fretting souls who can’t lie themselves to sleep until every bone in their body aches with the same humane tire, the same feigned feeling of accomplishment.

The New York City variety of import may have more to find disconcerting. Born accustomed to enjoying his subway system as a twenty-four hour blinking light, urine-soaked haven with the promise of a quick ticket anywhere, anytime... the somewhat more famous Underground is so much more crisp, clean, and closed sometime ‘round midnight. Somewhat at a loss without the permanent illumination of his MTA, his corner convenience store (everything in the same place, 24/7)... speaking to another obvious London oddity - the streetscape. A sea of history robs it of America’s bulldozing conventionality (try walking a short set of New York blocks without diving under a sea of scaffolding), everything feels already put down, resolutely settled. The streets dip, dive, and circle in all kinds of bizarre directions but maps pop up on every second corner to lead you on your merry way. The average New Yorker is so famous for his irate at the confused tourist simply because his city was planned to be navigated by evenly divided perpendicular lanes, both ways. There is no mystery, only cluttered pushing. Straight, ahead to undreamt-of-yet futures. Its nice to stop, be a flower. Be it in a dustbin or Bedford Square.

Reviews, Reshuffled: The Roxy

By Shelby Reid

IF YOU’RE interested in going out on the town during your time here, then we know just the place for you. London’s hottest club is THE ROXY. Formerly the location of an underground work out facility for the cast of Sound of Music, this place has everything -- a different theme every day, dance floor, fully-stocked bar, and a large wall that emits just enough light to make you feel uncomfortable. Here you will find Backstreet Boys look-a-likes, facial hair, accents, and that one guy from the show Skins disguised as a potato. And if that isn’t enough for you, you can hit the dance floor with a room full of inebriated teenagers and watch them bake like Wheat Thins while “getting jiggy with it” in a room the temperature akin to the 7th circle of Hell. The Roxy has been regarded by attendees as “Like, 6 one direction members out of 5”, “Pretty cool or whatever”, and “Wait, what?” Located on 3 Rathbone Place, The Roxy costs from £5-£7 pounds; make sure to bring your student ID in order to get discounts!
How to make long distance work

By Danielle Strolia

YOU’RE FINALLY in London for the semester. Everything is great — except your partner isn’t here to share all these new experiences with you. You may begin to question if long distance relationships ever really work out, and if it’s even worth it to try. Well, if you’re with the right person, it most definitely is worth it. This is my third year in a long distance relationship and we’ve made it work. Here’s how:

• **Trust:** If you don’t trust your partner, you might as well end it now. Long distance demands trust and without it, you’ll spend way too many nights in pointless arguments.

• **Time:** Time is difficult and you need a balance. Too much time and you’re missing out on London, too little and you’re missing out on each other. But whether you talk for five minutes or five hours, it’s the content that matters. So make sure you make that time count.

• **Avoid planning:** In my experience, setting up a time to talk does more harm than good. Life gets

  • in the way, and when it does, it usually ends up in a fight with your partner.
  • **Download apps:** Viber and Skype are my saviors.
  • **Missing each other:** It’s perfectly ok to miss each other. Some days, I want to crawl into bed and listen to Taylor Swift’s “Come Back, Be Here” all day. But it’s perfectly normal to not miss them all the time. You adjust to life and it gets easier. It doesn’t mean your feelings have disappeared.

So, is it worth it? Once you see them again, you’ll know. If your heart starts racing and you feel like you’re finally at home when you’re in their arms, you made the right decision in giving long distance a shot.

First impressions of London

By Shelby Slauer

LONDON IS a place powered by vast amounts of diversity, history, and art. Upon arrival into the city, the culture of the area immediately envelops you. It’s unlike any city I’ve ever experienced. The cabs are sleeker, the driving more unnerving, the monetary system so different! It’s easy to feel a bit overwhelmed by the beauty of everything around you; so much history, art, architecture, all laid out in front of you as it has been for centuries prior.

After getting lost a few times, I finally began learning my way about the city and becoming a part of my surroundings. In just a short time, I went from feeling like a tourist -- seeing all the sights and getting accustomed to the area -- to feeling like a local. No one questions you as you walk home with heavy bags of groceries and a backpack on your back.

Although it is still early in the year, London is quickly becoming a home to me. And there’s so much to do! The activities and things to see are endless; this is not a place where you can ever be bored. And with the weather being as lucky as its been (all you ever hear about London is “rain, rain, rain”), the city has yet to disappoint me.
Greenwich in time

By Theresa Schmid

THE PRIME Meridian draws millions of visitors to Greenwich each year, which is just as well - it takes a visit to fully appreciate all of the charm Greenwich has to offer. And though I can't guarantee that all of the NYU London freshman were excited to go (half of us took a nap on the boat ride there), we all found something fascinating there.

The tour started out at the Cutty Sark, where we split off into groups and were treated to a summary of Burns' poem that inspired the name and figurehead (a white witch holding a horse's tail) of the tea clipper. Then we walked around the grounds of the Royal Naval College, originally the site of the Tudor palace. The buildings and the famous Painted Hall designed by architect Sir Christopher Wren definitely presented excellent photo opportunities. Nearby is the Queen's House, an intriguing structure featuring the Tulip Stairs, a gorgeous spiral staircase.

After watching the ball drop at the Royal Observatory at exactly 1:00 p.m. Greenwich time, everyone ran off and grabbed lunch before deciding to see any of the other feature's of the city. I personally went with a few friends to the National Maritime Museum, where we marveled at Lord Nelson's coat and tales of deadly naval explorations, and then my roommate and I trekked through Greenwich park up to the Royal Observatory. Well, not actually to it - we were too cheap to pay the entry fee - so we just enjoyed the wonderful view from the top of the hill before heading back to Byron Court.

Greenwich isn't perhaps the flashiest of tourist attractions, but it has a quiet charisma of English life hanging around it. And to me, and perhaps my fellow freshman, it gave an excitement for what a year in England might hold for us.

::The next Newsletter meeting will be held in The Academic Centre room 205 at 1.15pm on Wednesday 2nd October, please come along with your ideas and article pitches then::

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