



TO HARPENDEN WITH LOVE

OPEN 10 JAN - 28 APR 2022

Harpenden Characters Portrait
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Photography by penny bird |



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PRINCIPLED. GENEROUS.

PATIENT. DETERMINED.

DR JOHN JENKYN (79) THE PLANT DOCTOR

I have glimpsed John in his garden from my bedroom window over many seasons. And so I photographed him there, between his cordon and espalier trained trees (something I've never encountered before and taken quite a fancy to), capturing his bright blue eyes, ready smile and a glowing health that can only be achieved through a lifetime spent outdoors.

Rothamsted's Emeritus Plant Pathologist and Historian, Doctor John Jenkyn, was born in London. His early childhood was divided between Surrey, Wales and Western Texas, before he came to rest briefly in Wiltshire to complete his secondary schooling. A year of farming experience under his belt and he was set to study Agricultural Science at Sutton Bonington, after which he went on to do his PhD at Aberystwyth University, completing his thesis on Plant Disease.

This specialism opened the door to a role at Rothamsted Research and John moved to Harpenden in 1968 at the age of 26. He has stayed here ever since, dividing his days between work, cultivating his horticulturist's dream of a garden and lifting those knees with a bit of Morris Dancing in the evenings. He hung up his dancing shoes around retirement age and replaced this with an interest in both Rothamsted's history and archives, and his own family history.

John told me that in some of the Rothamsted laboratories and offices there were artefacts dating back to the early years of the Institute. Doomed to gather dust, John and a colleague Roger Plumb started rescuing them, eventually taking over one of Rothamsted's buildings to house the collection of historic items. John has dedicated 55 years to Rothamsted; he never left his post, and has been continuing to write papers, making use of his vast intellectual capital fielding questions from the public, and curating the immense historic value of the site.

John lives a few doors up the road from my home and I have been the fortunate recipient of vegetables from his bountiful garden each year. Sadly, it was only when I invited him to be part of my Harpenden Characters project that I began to get to know him a little better.




AND CAMERA

CURIOUS. FASCINATED BY LIFE.

SPIRITUAL. FEELS DEEPLY.

BODHINI HRIDAYA (40) **THE SOUND OF STILLNESS**

I chose to photograph Bodhini outdoors as she often goes out into nature, frequently venturing onto Harpenden Common just outside her home, to connect with the world. I love the outline of light around her profile, a sort of angelic glow which one feels in her presence. She sits so still that normal sounds fade away, and you start to realise you're part of the whole.

Bodhini means wise, enlightening, knowledge: When you meet this Harpenden Character you can't help but feel yourself relax and let go, almost as if her very presence stills your thoughts. Born in the Luton & Dunstable Hospital in 1981, she spent the first fortnight of her life at the Red House, followed by a storybook childhood at Batford Nursery and the JMI Primary School. The only blight on her sunny record was being a little too lively at Brownies – something she puts down to the venue and her partners in crime.

From a young age, Bodhini had a strong interest in religions and different beliefs, having a conviction that there is a providence or energy greater than what we see. But it was only while going through a tough time in secondary school that she discovered meditation. It gave her an immediate sense of confidence, focus and calm, and the practice has been the mainstay of her life ever since. After school, and training as a Beauty and Holistic Therapist, she set up the Nutmeg Spa in Hemel Hempstead with a friend. Eight years later, she followed her calling to teach meditation and is currently studying to be an Interfaith Minister.

Bodhini has a teenage daughter Olivia and lives with her partner David in Southdown, the fourth generation of her family to spend her life in beautiful Harpenden.



 pennybird
AND CAMERA

NO. 2/18

HAPPY. CHARMING. TRUSTWORTHY.

OUTGOING. (TWINKLE IN HIS EYE).

LARRY NEAL (57) A LIFE OF GIVING

Larry invited me to take his portrait at the Harpenden Fire Station, where he has worked for nearly 40 years. While being a fireman is only part of his busy life, I think it is representative of who he is - a person always on standby to help those in need. His twinkly eyes and smile say everything about him.

Larry Neal was born in the Red House in 1964 and has lived in Harpenden and Southdown all his life. He started delivering newspapers and working in a local café from a young age, and was a keen Cub and Scout. He attended The Grove and Roundwood Schools before signing up as a retained fireman at Harpenden Fire Station when he was 18. Can you believe he has served here for 37 years? During Covid-19 he was transferred to the ambulance service, but will be back on call in Harpenden soon. Larry supplemented firefighting with working in a café and various driving jobs until the age of 21, when he was unexpectedly dealt a life lesson. He lost someone close far too young, and it made him think about how he wanted to live his life. He decided to set his sights higher.

Being outgoing and with a love of meeting people, Larry purchased the Copper Kettle Café in Southdown when it came up for sale. A great success, he grew this business over two decades into four Copper Kettles Cafés and the White Horse Pub, before selling everything to start a locksmith business. This is now a family enterprise, with his son working alongside him. His bright green van, a familiar sight around the town, has been part of the Harpenden community for 15 years.

Larry also has a long service record at Scouts - many hundreds of boys and now girls, have had the pleasure of him as their Scout Leader over 30 years. As he puts it, "I joined, and never left". Together with a bit of footie and cycling, Larry is one of the most enduring, and endearing, characters in Harpenden.




AND CAMERA

CALM. HARDWORKING.

FUN. LOVEABLE.

DEBORAH CARROLL (45)
RAINBOW RABBIT

I photographed Deborah in Rothamsted Park while she was running a Brownie meeting. I watched her for a short while and found her entirely absorbed in her pack. This portrait was taken while she had one eye on the girls - they were collecting items around them - and took two minutes. If you look carefully you can see the Brownies behind her. I chose to take her portrait between two trees in the setting sunlight because her genuine warmth and care for her charges must feel like a hug to them.

Deborah Carroll is a third-generation Harpenden-born inhabitant, probably best known as 'Rabbit' as she been part of Rainbows and Brownies from the age of 12. Now District Commissioner, she has seen some 1,000 girls make the journey through her packs so far. They are all so much part of her life that around 50 Brownies and their parents attended her wedding four years ago, and she is often hailed when out and about with calls of 'Rabbit!'.

After her Harpenden schooling at Manland and St George's, Deborah trained as a paediatric nurse at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and, in true Deborah-style has never left. She finds her vocation tremendously rewarding, particularly working with babies and toddlers, and she has received many touching letters and cards thanking her for all she does for her charges. In her spare time Deborah enjoys needlework (such as sewing and embroidery) reading and researching her family tree, and she loves capturing milestones and special moments with her phone camera.

This inspirational lady has clearly had a hugely positive influence on so many young lives, and continues to bring love and joy to all those around her. One of the bright lights of our town.




AND CAMERA

JOYFUL. POSITIVE. ENERGETIC.

LOVING. CARING. BRIGHT.

GINA GRAY (82)
THE FASHIONISTA
DINNER LADY

I visited Gina at her home just before (the first) lockdown. She was introduced to me by the lovely Sonia Cook, her neighbour. Gina is a very active person, and is usually busy with the business of helping others or contributing to the local community in some way. I chose to photograph her in her living room, in a timeless wingback chair, crocheting, as I could not imagine her still for very long.

Gina Gray was born on the Luton Road on 31 January 1937 and has lived in her home in Wheathampstead for 62 years. She spent her youth in Southdown and attended the local schools: St John's, St Nick's and Sir John Lawes (then called Manland). She married her husband Allan on 19 March 1960 and moved to her current home on her wedding day. The couple agreed they didn't want their children brought up as "latchkey children" as they themselves had been during the war so Gina found a job as a dinner lady at the senior school in Wheathampstead and then later at Beech Hyde. She speaks very fondly of her 29 years being entertained by the wonderful children at these two local schools, proud of having cooked all meals from scratch (including the bread baked daily) on a budget of 25p a day per child. She loved the role and views these years as an absolute delight.

Sadly, Gina lost her husband three years' ago, after a long illness during which she cared for him at home. Never down for long, this wonderful woman has endeared herself to her friends and neighbours in the community over a lifetime with her spunky personality and fascinating stories. (Her memory is faultless!) Always impeccably dressed - Gina has a love for fashion and accessories - she is mother to three grown children and grandmother to two boys, filling her life with bowling and charity work, including knitting amazing creations and crafting cards for the Salvation Army.



pennybird
AND CAMERA

ADVENTURE JUNKIE. KNIFE-EDGE

CREATIVITY. HILARIOUSLY LOVEABLE.

THEO A MICHAELS (45) **THE MASTER OF THE** **EATING EXPERIENCE**

Theo is passionate about simplicity, about celebrating the things in life that really matter: health and a good meal, prepared with love for the beautiful humans in his life. Precious moments spent savouring the flavour, texture and taste of daily life. His portrait was taken, reportage-style, having a meal with his family - where else?

Theo Michaels (@TheoCooks) was born in London, lived in the US for five years and completed his degree at Bournemouth University where he met his wife Anna. He comes from a large Greek Cypriot family and his strong entrepreneurial spirit and progressive thinking were very apparent even before he completed his studies. With the help of the Prince's Trust, he launched an online student accommodation service, followed a few years later with the world's first online property co-buying website - starting in the UK and rolling out to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. He and Anna settled in Harpenden in 2008 and, by 2014, he was at the top of his game, sitting on the board of a PLC after having started and sold a successful engineering recruitment business. It was at this time Theo decided to challenge his love of food and cooking by competing in BBC television's MasterChef UK. The experience left him in no doubt. He had discovered his passion.

Theo opened his first pop-up restaurant to instant sell-out success and seven years later is now an established Executive Chef, a multi-award winning author of six published cookbooks, has appeared numerous times on TV and is frequently featured in the press and on radio. Theo is proud dad to three gorgeous children and the whole family entertained us during lockdown with innovative Kids Cookalongs. Amazingly, he also found time to author cook books and co-found his latest innovation, an online curated meal planning service FiveDinners.com.

I asked Theo if I could photograph him at home, enjoying a meal with his family and that is where I saw first hand his all-encompassing culture of welcoming hospitality and his deeply honest love of creating unforgettable food experiences to touch the centres of everyone around the table. He is also a great deal of fun. Have you heard the saying 'Food is love'? I almost believe that if you share food at Theo's table, you will become part of his family.




AND CAMERA

SPORTY. FUN. ECCENTRIC.

(AND A BIT OF A REBEL)



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

BETH ALLEN (78) **THE JEWEL IN** **HARPENDEN'S** **CROWN**

Beth invited me to photograph her on the way to her beloved tennis one summer evening. I took a few photographs, but something was nagging at me. I felt I hadn't captured her essence. So I pestered her to let me visit her and her husband on their canal boat moored at Grafton Regis on a beautiful summer morning – a year later. Full of beans, she happily shared the familiar flow of her river life with me, interrupted every now and again by bird sightings. I closed my eyes at one point, to feel the sun on my eyelids, and imagined her lifetime of family days afloat, navigating locks, foraging and, of course, making comforting cups of brew. When I got home, I compared the portraits I had taken of her and made the decision to use one of my original photographs. Having gotten to know her a bit better, I realised that this image reflects her busy, on-the-go nature, her brightness – well, her character. (I hope you don't mind Beth!)

Beth Allen was born in Clevedon, near Bristol, in 1943, into a family of jewellers of which she is the fifth generation: so it's no surprise she loves looking at, and wearing jewellery – it is in her genes, she says. Indeed, talking to her, I got the feeling her interests and life experiences were akin to a rich collection of bright, sparkling gemstones.

Beth is probably best known for her tennis game, her deep passion for canal boating (the family have had a canal boat since 1981), her extensive travels around the globe and her membership of the National Association of Tug Clubs (NATC) one of the largest women's organisations in the UK. She has also always been a very active member of the associated clubs Round Table and Ladies Circle and, after being Chairman locally on two occasions, went on to serve on the National Executive for six years, finally being elected National President for a year. Here she toured all over Great Britain and Ireland, as well as attended international conferences. An active volunteer and fundraiser for over 40 years, Beth has been a volunteer driver for Ladies Circle and then Harpenden Helping Hands, while raising funds for many charities: last year she made 70 jars of jam to sell for charity.

Her kaleidoscope of interests include flower arranging for church, tap dancing, Scottish dancing, squash (when she was younger she played in the Herts League) and learning French – all this while supporting her family and caring for her husband.

Beth is full of fascinating stories about her adventures in Nigeria, Trinidad and Belfast when she was a secretary in the Ministry of Defence and seconded to the Foreign Office. My favourite story (so far) is how she met her husband. Their first brief encounter was in Nigeria through work, and then Beth literally bumped into him five years later whilst skirting a wheelbarrow in Bond Street. Such a romantic start to their lifelong love story.

Bright, vivacious and with an entertaining sense of humour, this beautiful lady made me feel like making a cup of tea and sitting down for a long chat, although I somehow feel she would be itching for a game of tennis before I was even half done listening! Someone who puts a smile on your face that lasts a long time after you meet her!

CONTENT. LOVING.

FULL OF JOY.

LORNA MORIARTY- HUMPHREYS (3) THE FLOWER CHILD

Lorna is a flower child. She adores everything about the natural world around her, and her mum has to add 'nature time' to every journey because Lorna will stop to find a bloom, collect a leaf, pick up a stick or even a smooth stone along the way. I love this image of her because she has picked a daisy and is giving it to her mum Sarah, off camera. The shot is not a setup, it is Lorna. The love and wonder and joy is on her little face for the world to see. A very precious portrait of her life.

Lorna Moriarty-Humphreys was born in St Albans on 9th March 2018. Her parents, Sarah and Jon, had waited nearly a decade for her arrival and she began to spread joy from the moment of her conception. Sarah is a wonderful, warm, gentle mother and her delight in Lorna is beautiful to see. "From her first breath, her aura of contentment and pure joy has been remarked on by people seeing her for the first time, and it seems to flow into the lives of everyone she meets."

Now aged three and living in Redbourn, Lorna is happiest outdoors, with her two cats, her little neighbourhood friends and people, generally always looking for a smiling face to smile back at, enchanting those around her with her giggles and deep belly laughs. She is developing a wide range of interests such as making and baking, singing and dancing, and discovering her world. She has recently displayed a keen interest in the night sky (probably to avoid bedtime), and favourite bedtime stories include *The Tiger who came to tea* and *Chocolate Mousse for Greedy Goose*. Every now and again she puts on a theatre performance involving dancing and singing (lyrics her own, of which she is extremely proud) just before bed (possibly another endearing tactic to delay laying those pretty curls on her pillow). Her sweet nature means that even toddler frustrations change to sunshine in seconds.

Lorna has kept everyone smiling through lockdown, waving and blowing kisses through her front window. She lights up the places she visits, and leaves a sprinkle of happiness everywhere she goes. A very special little character.



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

pennybird
AND CAMERA

NO. 8/18

WARM. KIND. FUNNY.



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

CREATIVE TRAILBLAZER.

MARTIN MAYLIN (45) **THE WILDSPACES** **RANGER**

The Sanctuary is a soothing wild space, both private and welcoming to like-minded people. When I visited, I felt a sense of peace, almost as if I was coming home. Martin fits his environment so well he blends into it so I photographed him here, with his best friend Fern, planning ways to help wild creatures.

I love all my Harpenden Characters, but I have an extra soft spot for **Martin Maylin**, founder of the Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary and newly appointed Ranger for Wheathampstead District. As one of the most kind-hearted people I've met, he gives his time generously to anyone he encounters, inevitably making sure they go on their way better informed about hedgehogs and other wildlife.

From early childhood, Martin has nurtured a deep love for the natural world and has an extraordinary talent for conceiving ideas and designing solutions using technology and his fixing-making-hands.

Born at Harpenden's Redhouse in 1976, his early childhood was spent in the surrounding villages, looking after animals on the family smallholding and volunteering for wildlife rescuer Grahame Dangerfield. Martin's first rescues were at age five - an injured swan he nursed back to health - and age eight - a hedgehog - both of which were brought to the attention of the Queen and the Houses of Parliament respectively. Highly independent, he was nine when he started his first job as a milkboy and 14 when he moved out of the family home to self-built accommodation on the same property. After finishing school at St George's, Martin realised he had a talent for computing and studied Computer Aided Engineering at Hatfield University, where he distinguished himself by developing a pre-Google search engine for the University's library of digital research and academic papers. He completed his Honours degree in Atlanta Georgia as an exchange student, while coding for Microsoft. Snapped up subsequently as an IT Consultant for HSBC in St Albans, Martin's talent was quickly recognised and he was promoted to a Group-wide role, completing his MBA while working around the globe on various initiatives for the company.

In 2013, after an illness, Martin resigned from HSBC and turned to his first love, rescuing, restoring, preserving and protecting wildlife and their habitats. He bought ten acres of land overlooking Harpenden and created a hedgehog sanctuary, which was awarded charity status in 2020. Since its inception, Martin has rescued an astounding 1,300 hogs.

In addition to development and expansion plans for the sanctuary, Martin was appointed by Wheathampstead Council as a Ranger for the Bower Heath area, much to his delight. He aims to encourage a variety of wildlife back to this green space and make the woods safer and more accessible for visitors.



CARING AND TENDER. MOTHERLY.

ABSOLUTELY ENDEARING.

RUTH MAITLAND (78) THE BUGGY LADY

I photographed Ruth exactly the way I know her. Walking her dogs carefully down Manland Avenue in the dusk, stopping to chat to people admiring her pooches and glowing with gentleness. I always smile at this unlikely procession.

She's tiny, frail and a familiar sight within a mile's radius of Breadcroft in Harpenden. **Ruth Maitland** has two dear four-legged friends, Zac and Isaac, and she walks them daily, rain or shine, along the avenues near her home. What makes the sight of Ruth particularly memorable, aside from her smart purple coat adorned with a shiny brooch and wavy brushed hair, is the quaint blue buggy she uses - partly for support and to lift her dogs into when they need protection from the weather, or to rest their tired little legs. She brings a smile to my face every time I see her, with her love for her dogs so strong you can almost touch it. I must have seen Ruth hundreds of times. But I had never stopped to chat to her until I decided she should be part of the Harpenden Characters project. Her story made my heart reach out to her.

Ruth was born in Edgware in 1942, and when her brother came along two years later, her mother became ill. With her father on night watch, they were taken into care, sent to the Holmwood Children's Home in Bristol aged three and one and a half respectively. The two and a half years they were there was a life-changing experience, and Ruth still has vivid memories of terrible abuse. She stopped speaking and eating, which eventually resulted in her and her brother receiving an emergency placement at Harpenden's Highfield Oval Children's Home. Life changed for them overnight and Ruth talks about how grateful she was for the love and care she received in Harpenden, from both the Sister at the home and the teaching staff at St Nicks.

Ruth and her brother returned home to Middlesex at ages 12 and 10 respectively. She finished school locally before finding a series of retail jobs, including the local Woolworths, before discovering that she loved looking after people, which led to a variety of caring roles. She met her husband-to-be at a bus stop in Harrow and they were married six years later, having three children together before divorcing. She brought up her children and cared for her parents living nearby, as well as doing odd babysitting jobs for friends when she could.

In 1993 Ruth came home to the place she has always loved and has lived in the flats for the elderly in Breadcroft ever since.




AND CAMERA

NO. 10/18

DEVOTED SPORTSMAN. MOTIVATIONAL

LEADER. AND, "NEVER BORING"

MIKE HODGE (74) THE HARPENDEN BUSKER

Mike and I discussed his portrait and agreed that I would photograph him in Harpenden town centre, playing his guitar and singing to the community who love him. The portrait reflects his gift for hospitality and entertaining and his incredible fundraising achievements.

I went in search of **Mike Hodge**, The Harpenden Busker, because he was given a merit award by the council for raising £250,000 for charity. In my view, anyone able to raise such a substantial amount of money has got to be interesting. I wasn't disappointed. A real gentleman (I loved his courteous, hospitable welcome and felt we became fast friends in minutes), Mike is a bundle of positive energy and charm, and I'm thrilled he agreed to participate in Harpenden Characters.

Born with an Olympic-standard-enthusiasm for sports and music, Mike grew up in St Albans, his outspokenness and ability to motivate and lead evident in St Albans School when he was appointed Captain of the school hockey team, despite the misgivings of the head. (He also opted out of the Combined Cadet Force to teach himself guitar at 14 - inspired by the Beatles and Lonnie Donegan - and convinced a couple of pals to join him too.)

He met his wife-to-be at 17 when they both volunteered to work for the Post Office in the lead up to Christmas. As Mike tells it, he had to finish his deliveries in record time to be able to say a few out-of-breath words to Sarah at the end of their shift. Mike and Sarah moved to Harpenden in 1969 to start their family shortly after he began his career in customs and international trade at HM Revenue & Customs. He moved to EY for a few years when his children were young and then started his own consultancy which he ran successfully for nearly 25 years before selling it on to a colleague.

After work it was non-stop too. As well as being an active father, Mike's days involved playing hockey, coaching and motivating young sportsmen and women, using his keen organising skills to arrange fundraising events, such as annual golf days, offering his busking skills to fundraise for charity and nurturing a host of wonderful friendships.

Mike told me his greatest moments outside home were getting his hockey team to the equivalent of the FA Cup Final for hockey in the early 1970s. Mike was captain of Bedfordshire Eagles, with their home pitch in Wardown Park, Luton, one of the very best grass surfaces in the UK. The side had an extraordinary run in the Cup, meeting the outstanding Southgate side, packed with GB Internationals. Another great moment was receiving a standing ovation at a golf day by the very people who had donated £14,000 collectively for the experience. A personal triumph indeed.



pennybird
AND CAMERA

INTROVERTED. EXTROVERTED

CREATOR. FUN. ECCENTRIC.

DAVID CLEMENT- HORTON (54) DAVE THE POLYMATH

David's photoshoot was a blast. This multi-talented man found it very difficult to choose the main loves in his life (which says a lot about him), but he eventually settled on music and a classic car. A huge thank you to Simon Darby for providing his throaty kit car, built in Harpenden, for the early evening shoot at Childwickbury Estate. I absolutely loved roaring home behind the black beauty afterwards - it was top fun!

So, the **David** I know, and the David you'll most likely meet, is his performance personality. A persona created to overcome the nerves at his first solo singing gig at the Royal Albert Hall, aged seven.

Born in London in 1965, he inherited his showman genes from his grandad, a magician, and mother, a ventriloquist. With absent parents, David and his sister were left to raise themselves, so it was at age six that David started his first enterprise: building bicycles to sell for food and basic needs.

Badly bullied at school, David took charge of his education from the start too, nurturing his love of music by learning the tuba and guitar, taking drama and metalwork classes, and bunking off to spend his days soaking up information in the 'university of life'. He visited museums, flew kites at Hampstead Heath, investigated aeroplanes, boats, trains - actually anything that moved - and developed his entrepreneurial skills. At age 10 he moved on to fixing and selling televisions. Despite his low attendance in class, David left school at 15 with 3 CSEs and proceeded to turn the concept of a 'career path' on its head. He has been employed, and he has run multiple businesses employing people, in a diverse variety of roles, looking at the business world from every angle and perspective. Some of the things he has excelled at include: photography, sales, model making, guitar teacher, IT technical support, audio visual equipment hire, singer, despatch rider, bicycle shop owner, actor, Mad Scientist teacher, car mechanic, joiner, WOW Engineer at Google and CEO of Forget me Not Musicians - a charity David started when he discovered how much live music stimulated memory in patients with dementia or Alzheimer's.

David is interested in everything. And does everything very, very well. A fascinating human and a wonderful evening spent learning about him. Especially touching for me was how David made time with my daughter, listening to her, and encouraging her to find her voice and sing too.



pennybird
AND CAMERA

ZEST FOR LIFE. BUBBLY. INFECTIOUS.

EXPERIMENTAL. AFRICAN SOUL.

PATTI SLOLEY THE AFRICAN GODDESS

I invited Patti to this shoot at Bowers Heath a year after her mum had passed, and when the loss of the mainstay of her life had broken a piece of her heart. Her mum was her dearest friend, confidant and greatest champion, with her encyclopaedic knowledge of West African cooking a huge inspiration in Patti's cooking. Our shoot was really a tribute to her. Her legacy is a brave, strong woman with a goal of sharing Ghanaian culture through food and lively hospitality: teaching and demonstrating traditional recipes, customs, art, dress and music. I love the colours of Patti's dress, against the setting sun, her arms spread wide to embrace life, and the joy of the magical moment on her face.

I met **Patti** through a dear friend and client Katharine Tate and was instantly mesmerised by her colourful, bubbly persona and the delicious plantain bites she fed me as fast as she talked. Born in Ghana, Patti settled in the UK 36 years ago. Deliciously fluent in the universal language of food, she soaks up as much as she can about how the humans around her live and eat and, in turn, shares her passion for the food of her roots.

A resident chef at the Jean-Christophe Novelli Academy, she runs a course titled 'A taste of Africa', which she delivers with a flourish of Ghanaian music, art and culture. Patti has also published two fusion-inspired cookbooks, 'A Plate in the Sun' and 'A Date with Plantain'; demonstrates at food festivals; schools; and talks to young children through Katharine Tate's education programme. She is frequently invited to share her creative recipes and tips, and sometimes presents a Sunday evening show on BBC Three Counties Radio. She always delights her audiences with her TV appearances, most recently John and Lisa's Weekend Kitchen.

Patti tells me she credits her passion for cooking to her mum, who had an almost encyclopedic knowledge of African cooking. A year spent as an AFS exchange student in America where she fell in love with her second mum a Danish-American (also an inspiring and wonderful cook), her love of travel and a big circle of firm multinational friends (made and kept since she was a young girl) all played a part in her interest and love for fusion food and flavours.

When I spend any time with this vibrant, charming character, I come away with tantalised taste buds and a renewed energy for life. Thank you Patti.



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

pennybird
AND CAMERA

NO. 13/18



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

DYNAMIC. LOYAL. CARING.

BUBBLY. ASTONISHING.

TERESA HERITAGE (64) THE LADY TERESA

Teresa is beautiful and when I studied her, I proposed contrasting her elegance and bubbly character against a black backdrop. We took formal, leadership-style photographs and more relaxed images showing her warmth and depth. Kindly, she let me choose between her public and personal personas. Teresa has made a huge impact through her community work over three decades, but in the end, I was drawn to a more intimate version of this great lady. The face loved by her family and close friends.

My first impression of this lady was one of an engaging, positive personality with an understated, highly professional, 'can-do' demeanour. One of those people who speaks quietly and takes action from the heart. The bright twinkle in her eyes hinted at more beneath the surface, and when she told me she was a 'retired' redhead, I realised my intuition barometer had not let me down. But when I spent a bit more time learning about her, I was astonished by the sheer scope of her work.

Born in Borehamwood, **Teresa** moved to Harpenden in 1985 at the age of 28, with her husband, David. Her son, John, was born two years later. A Chartered Secretary by profession, Teresa was employed by a FTSE100 company for 30 years and then consulted. Despite her absorbing career, she has always wanted to 'give back' to our Harpenden community and surrounding areas. She started working in the public sector in 1989, serving as a Town Councillor for 20 years, as Harpenden Mayor in 2000/1 (during which year she initiated the development of the skate park), then joining the District Council in 2002 and working in various roles until 2021. She joined the County Council in 2008 and has been Deputy Leader, and served in various Cabinet roles. Currently, Teresa is the Cabinet Member responsible for Children, Young People and Families. In her County Councillor role her proudest moment has been the opening of the Katherine Warrington School, as she had worked for many years with parents in the town to gain a fourth secondary school.

In addition to her private and public sector roles, Teresa has contributed hugely to the voluntary sector locally. She has been a non-executive director at the Harpenden Trust and is currently its President, having worked with the organisation for around 15 years. She is also founder member of Harpenden Connect aka 'the Harpenden Hopper'; joint chair of The Southdown Play Areas Working Group; President of SSAFA Hertfordshire; and has served and chaired the Board of Governors at the Grove Junior School.

Her interests are gardening and travel, and she loves dancing and having a good laugh with friends.



PEOPLE PLEASER. ACTION MAN.

TRUTH SAYER. GENTLEMAN.

MIKE PLATT (71)

PLATTY

I photographed Mike in his happy place. It was early evening and only a couple of people were enjoying the Common, despite the peace. He has been a member of the Harpenden Cricket Club for 55 years and tended the landmark pitch for 5 years since retiring from full time employment. I wanted the image to reflect both the symmetry and perfectly manicured space, which takes hours of care all year around, and a man who thrives on a lifetime spent in the fresh air, playing sport.

Mike, aka 'Platty', is one of those people you feel like hugging. Why? Because he wears his kind heart like a cloak. Because you know that, without asking, he sees the places he can add value, and then just goes about doing his thing, so everything runs smoothly in the background.

Hertfordshire born and bred, he became obsessed with cricket aged 10 and has probably spent more hours on the grounds playing, coaching and manicuring the Harpenden cricket pitch (he's been a member for 55 years!) than he has had hours of sleep. A social person who is happier outdoors than in, he distinguished himself at the young age of 17 competing in the British Junior Ski Championships.

After finishing school, Mike enjoyed working in a variety of roles, including his dad's metal manufacturing business, selling advertising in Fleet Street, running the sports shop in Harpenden, and then working for a hygiene supplies company up until retirement. I definitely got the idea from talking to this gentleman that his love of sports topped work any day, so after work and on weekends, you would invariably find him outside doing something energetic and honing his wide-ranging skills.

Wicket keeper and batsman, he has been on two tours to South Africa and the Far East, captained the first team, been Fixtures and Team Secretary for many years, coached Colts and is Vice President of the Harpenden Cricket Club. He also owns about 50 Wisden Cricket Annuals kept at the pavillion. His moment of pride was scoring a 123 at the age of 21 against the RAF in West London.

I don't know where he found the time, but he also played hockey and squash and retirement certainly hasn't slowed him down. He trekked up Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka aged 66 and Mount Kinabalu in Malaysian Borneo a few years later. His three grown children can always find their dad tending to the pitch or working at the cricket grounds.



IMAGINATIVE. BRIGHTLY COLOURED.

FREE SPIRITED. EN POINTE.

ELLA PURVIS (18)

**ELLA BELLA
BOOBALOO**

After talking to Ella I knew exactly how to photograph her. But it was edgy, different and she would need to let me cover her in paint. Yep. I remember wondering how to put my idea to her and then I just came out and said it. My intuition told me it would be a perfect fit, and it was. She painted the backdrop, and then we painted her in a similar style. What I like about this portrait is that you can see her, and yet you can't. It is almost as if she is emerging from her environment, which in a way, I suspect, is exactly what is happening.

I met **Ella** when she booked a headshot for her modelling and acting career. She has a special quality about her - a strength and an endearing fragility mixed with a little magic poised in the wings. This girl is going to fly (or is that roller skate?). I couldn't help but invite her to take part in my project.

Ella was born in London at St James Hospital and moved to Harpenden when she was seven. She discovered her love of dance and movement aged ten and after dancing in Wheathampsted for a few years, she attended the Royal Ballet School in London. Her A-Level subjects at Sir John Lawes were Drama, English and Philosophy, and she has gone on to study at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in London.

Together with her schooling and rigorous ballet training, Ella has taken action on protecting our planet through joining the UN Sustainable Development Goals where she has helped organise events, workshops and anti-bullying conferences. She describes herself as a "vegan-feminist-cat-lover-with-a-sense-of-humour".

Ella's favourite thing is sitting in an historic square and people watching. When you are with Ella (and I'm sure she is oblivious to this), you are drawn to watching her. A bright, beautiful young woman, filled with talent and conviction. I'm looking forward to following her journey. I am sure it is going to be a captivating one.



pennybird
AND CAMERA

NO. 16/18

INSPIRATIONAL. ASPIRATIONAL.

DEEPLY CARING. MILLENNIAL NINJA.

KIERAN STANBRIDGE (25) **A DOG'S BEST FRIEND**

When I asked Kieran to describe his vision of an ideal portrait, he told me that the most special times of his life are walking with his German Shepherd Buddy at Ashridge Estate. So I joined the best friends (as well as his mum and her German Shepherd TJ), on a crisp autumn day for their favourite circular walk. The dogs didn't disappoint - boisterous, each with their own distinct personality and excellent manners - and, neither did the humans. I asked Kieran's mum if she could describe her son in one word. She said, without hesitation, "inspirational". Job done.

I met **Kieran** on a shoot for the launch of his national retired police dog charity Thin Blue Paw a year and a half ago. You observe a great deal about someone on a shoot, especially if dog handling is involved. He is calm, consistent and has a quiet deep courage.

Born in Harpenden into a large thriving two and four-legged family, Kieran's childhood was spent learning all about man's best friend at dog shows and developing a lifelong passion for animal welfare. Despite being targeted by bullies at Roundwood School for his belief "there is no normal", Kieran overcame the mental challenges of these experiences and started setting the world on fire in his early teens. In 2011 he was selected as the Young People's Role Model of the Year, and in 2012 he was awarded Harpenden Rotary Club's Young Citizen of the Year. On leaving school, he discovered his insane talent for marketing and, combined with a modern day Ninja-like determination, began an astonishing career trajectory that has seen him brush shoulders with royalty and celebrities - both the two-legged and four-legged variety! In only eight years, Kieran has worked himself up from managing digital communications for a royal charity to a role with Lintbells, the world's number one dog joint supplement brand, with global strategic responsibility for PR, social media, influencer, corporate and charity partnerships. Outside his work, he launched the BeingMeCampaign, a charity which encourages people to own and celebrate their differences, and the hugely successful Thin Blue Paw, which has helped 250 dogs since inception.

Having Kieran in your orbit just makes our galaxy a better place. His recipe of solid values, hard work and determination have made his star shine super bright, and I've seen him lift up those around him.




AND CAMERA

STRONG. GRACEFUL. LOVING.

WITH A DELIGHTFUL DASH OF HUMOUR

JOAN BARTHOLOMEW (94) THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

Quite a few people suggested that Joan Bartholomew was an essential participant in my Harpenden Characters project, and I wrote to her, inviting her to take part. I was absolutely thrilled, and very impressed, when she rang me up and agreed to meet. I photographed her standing next to her fish pond, looking out across her lovingly tended garden on a warm day, her hands resting on the balustrade of the stone balcony wall, the scent of a late blooming rose, given to her by a friend, making her smile. Just as it should be.

Joan is tall, willowy and absolutely beautiful. Her grace and dignity shine from her. It is easy to imagine how captivating she must have been on stage in earlier years when she danced, sang and worked as a comic's feed. And now in her role as mother, grandmother and homemaker, she continues to draw family and friends to her warmth. Joan and her family moved to Harpenden in 1961. She recalls how she and husband Eric Morecambe were looking for somewhere to live, a short distance from London with open spaces and countryside. Approaching Harpenden, they saw that Jarvis was already building on West Common and had other plots available. They parked in the village (now more of a town), and after tea and cake at Bunty's, they contacted Jarvis and chose a plot. Her three children Gail, Gary and Steven, now in their 50s and 60s, attended local schools and had a routine upbringing, despite having a celebrity for a parent. Joan enjoyed cooking, particularly a Sunday roast for the family which often included friends. Once Eric and his partner stopped doing pantomimes, Christmas lunch and celebrations became very special and required much planning and preparation beforehand. A keen gardener and dog lover, a gracious smile and arms ready to hug, Joan has all the ingredients necessary for a happy and loving home life. Perhaps most understated about this lady is the difference she has made to so many through her dedication to giving children the best possible start in life. Particularly notable is her long-standing service as the founder President of the Lady Taverners, a charity enhancing the lives of young people with special needs and disadvantaged backgrounds. She is also President of the Harpenden branch of Save The Children, a charity focussed on giving all children the best possible start in life; and one of the first patrons of the A-T Society, which supports those living with a rare genetic condition ataxia-telangiectasia. Her charity work and fundraising saw her awarded an OBE in 2014 (her husband was awarded an OBE in 1976).


AND CAMERA



VIEW & LISTEN ONLINE

NO. 18/18