

ECYC GAZETTE

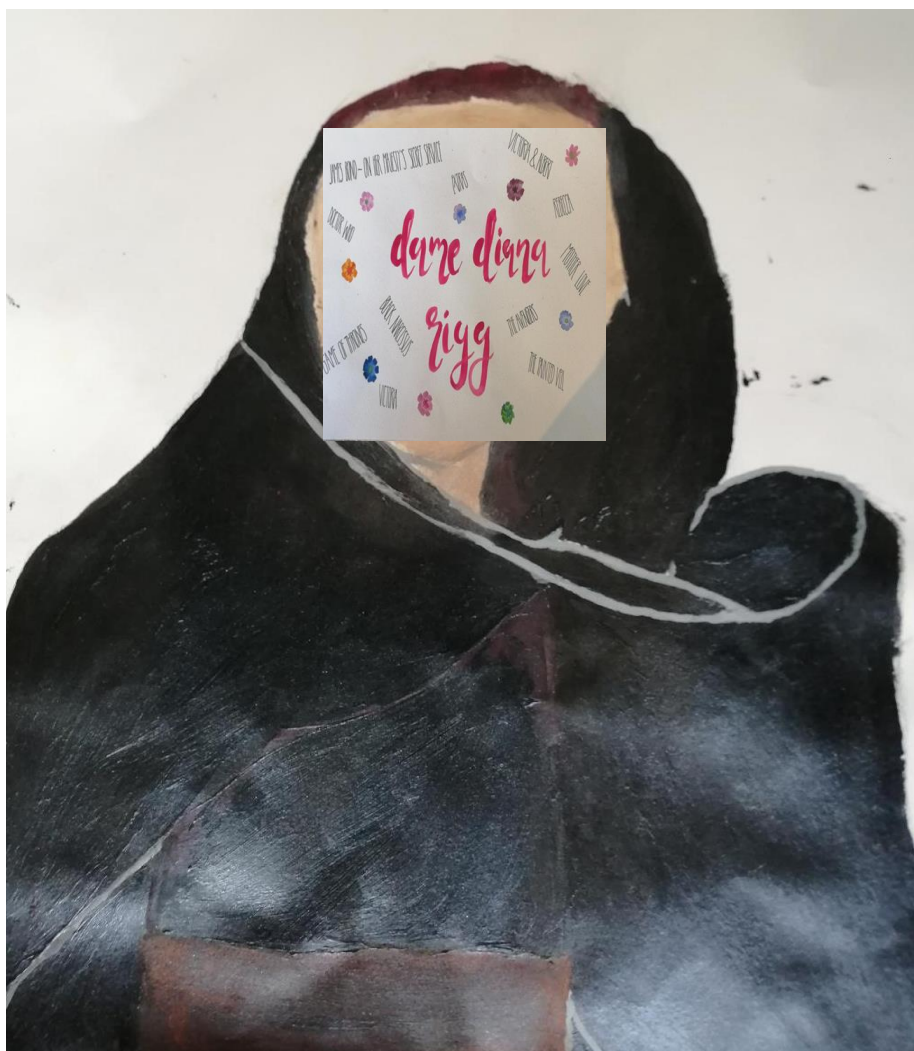
*'.....For your ins and your outs,
and your whereabouts !*

Welcome back!

It's been a dramatic month here and pretty much everywhere else. Last month, we began by celebrating our local team- and partner- Chelsea F.C. This time, our entire edition is dedicated to our late president...Dame Diana Rigg!

Dame Diana tragically passed in September 2020. The month of July marks what would have been her 83rd birthday.

In this special issue, we celebrate the life and work of the great Dame, getting insight from club members, colleagues and partners of ECYC.



Abstract appreciation/ English surrealism,
from Aisha El-din Hosseini- 11

Issue #3 - July 2021

Featured today!

- -A special featured article on our late president...dam e Diana Rigg!
- Three interviews with Club Members and partners
- -A heartfelt overture from two of our club members
- - Round up of July's events here at the club!
- -Special portraits in honor of our late President!



Of course, we cant fail to mention the heroic display of the England team. They are young and theirs will come...

London Film Academy

Workshops- Beginning in early July and, in conjunction with our partners at *London Film Academy*, EYCY began a weekly Screenwriting workshop! Conducted by Amber Jarecki, a professional Scriptwriter and, student at London Film Academy. Each session, the members learn the rudiments of compiling the perfect script for *everything* starts with, the word....



Youth Awareness Workshop-

An extremely popular initiative with our members; officers from the MET Police's Youth Engagement Team gave a series of talks on key subjects including 'Stop and Search' 'Gangs and Grooming' and, 'The dangers and pitfalls of entering high school'. The sessions were tremendously received by the young people who gamely conversed with the officers and happily took part in much animated role play scenarios!



ECYC Youth, take on the Police!! Played on the 15th July, our partners- alas now our rivals- came down to the club for a good natured round of 5 a side. The MET's finest on the pitch and on the beat, played five of ECYC's best senior club members. With the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea himself in attendance, Passions were peak, desire was high and ultimately....ECYC youth emerged victorious!



“There ain’t nothing like a Dame..!!”

She was the thespian of a thousand faces, on stage, screen and on the box. Dame Diana Rigg....the flame haired siren by Steed, spouse of Bond and, wily queen of thorns. But more than this, she was a beloved community champion and president of ECRYC, up until her passing almost a year ago.



The national treasure who epitomized the swinging sixties, was born to Anglo-Indian parents in July 1938; living out WWII in Rajasthan, and speaking Hindi as a second language. Back in England, she found boarding school ‘cold’ and ‘alienating’; a disposition which must have propelled her toward the stage.

She enrolled into the Royal Academy of dramatic Arts, before joining the Royal Shakespeare company. By the early sixties, Rigg was set for a career treading the boards, until a chance opportunity to star as sidekick on a popular television show arose.



Diana Rigg starred in just two seasons of *The Avengers*- which ran from 1961 to 1969. Her turn as *Emma Peel*- intelligent, feisty, strong; captured the vibes of the times and, her brief portrayal would forever be associated with the cult show.

Her short tenure on the Avengers was due not just to Dame Diana’s ambition, but also problematic practices of the time. She demanded a pay rise, equaling that of main character Steed’s, when Rigg realized her wages were less than the cameraman’s. Moreover, she felt constrained by the shallow persona tied to playing sexy, second fiddle.



Nonetheless, in 1969, she accepted the coveted role of Bond girl, opposite George Lazenby-Sean Connery’s replacement as 007 in, *On Her Majesties Secret Service*. More than a love interest, Rigg, as Contessa Teresa Di Vincenzo is the only woman to become Mrs. Bond- albeit tragically brief.....



...The sixties marked the end of Diana Rigg's global fame, however, the screen's loss was the stage's gain, for in the coming decades she would focus extensively in theatre, receiving critical acclaim for her turn as French writer Sidonie Gabrielle Collette in *Collette*- 1982, and, as the titular character in *Medea*, for which she received her third Tony award in 1994.



Playing *Medea*, at the Almeida theater, London.



As, Collette, during an American theatre tour

She would also feature prominently in television over the years, winning an Emmy for her chilling depiction of the diabolical Mrs. Danvers in a 1997 adaptation of, *Rebecca*. In later years, Dame Diana would earn a whole new generation of fans when in 2013 she was cast as Olenna Tyrell in *Game of Thrones*. Rigg confessed she'd never heard of the show prior to being cast, yet, attested she had fond memories of her four seasons playing the scheming, witty matriarch.



Queen of the Screen, Dame Diana as Olenna Tyrell



As the twisted gatekeeper- Mrs. Danvers, in *Rebecca*

As far as we are concerned, her most enduring role was As President of our youth club; a stellar performance which ran for five eventful years. Here, some of our members and partners recall their stories with the dame....



Sheyanne Williams- 18, has been a member at ECYC for over nine years. She is currently studying for A-levels at St Charles college.

'...I first met Dame Diana at a club event commemorating International Women's Day. I was about sixteen at the time, about to finish high school, and had never previously heard of Dame Diana. After reading up on her, I was immediately astonished by her passion and work ethic, particularly, that she was able to persevere in a male-dominated industry. I was impressed that despite her fame and wealth, she took an active role in her community, such as presiding over our club and taking an interest into the lives of its members. Without doubt, her input spurred me onto the course of activism and politics I'm on now....'

*'....In 2017, Dame Diana approached my company with the hopes we could set her up in a flat. It was a long process I recall, with her even suggesting we put her in the Savoy until a suitable property came along!
But It was a pleasure to be in her orbit all the same and given her background, I was delighted when she agreed to be a guest judge at a Film festival I was organising in the area. Of course, I knew her personally toward the end of her life, and she was always generous with her time and resources . She got a great joy from helping local causes, charities and business's. She was foremost and artist, and up until the last did what she loved. If I had to sum her up in a sentence it would be a quote from Kipling...**IF YOU COULD WALK WITH KINGS- YET NOT LOSE THE COMMON TOUCH.**'*

Toby Brown is an Estate Agent and, chairman of the Earl's Court Community Trust. He is also the director of a theatre group 'The Earls courtiers' whom Dame Diana was a patron.



Roy Amlot, has been an ECYC committee member since 2002, and chairman of ECYC since 2011. He is also a retired QC.

'....About twenty years ago, I was referred to Dame Diana, who at the time was embroiled in a defamation case against the Daily Mail newspaper. I'm pleased to say I was instrumental in helping her win the case and, that professional relation was the springboard to what would be a long and important friendship between us. Like many of my age, I was aware of the image she exported to the popular consciousness. Contrary to the perception of the rich and famous, the Diana Rigg I knew was always a big-hearted, selfless individual. And coupled with her warmth, empathy, and understanding of the youth, we approached her to become president at ECYC. Her tenure lasted five years and coincided with a period of great development at the club. Apart from her fame and skill as an actress, which was considerable, she was a keen traveler also, with an inquisitive and adventurous spirit, even in old age. Doubtless, her wisdom and experience was transferred to the young people at ECYC and, it was incredible to watch her relate to them- as if no bridge existed.'

"....Finding out one of my neighbor's was a rich and famous actress was surreal, for sure.

*Growing up, there were brief interactions: passing each other on the streets, or while shopping. For years she had been *that* polite old lady, till I spotted her at a function at ECYC and was told she was only the president of the club. That was two years ago. Last September she passed. Long, long before I was born she'd been an icon. And, among many things, I wondered what *Icons* think about whilst grocery shopping? What erstwhile Bond girls see, when they spot tabloids splashed with the latest starlet scandal? What manner of life is led, when the cameras stopped snapping and, snippets of the past fill the house in Ifield Road. If I'd looked closely, I would've realized she was still at it, in *Game Of Thrones* . It wasn't surprising then, that a National treasure would have it in here to support the youth club which happened to be on her road. Even when she moved to Gloucester Road she continued on as President of the club....right to the day she died. Despite all our connections, I cannot say I *knew* Dame Diana Rigg. But in an age of rabid celebrity culture, elitism and apathy, she put paid to the term 'the great *and* the good.'*

ECYC's Write Stuff! This month, our scribe pens a wistful piece to a mentor and, a neighbor....

‘My Dalliance with a dame...’

My interest in Drama, derived from a deal. I needed 250 ECYC COINZ to be able to print 10 T-Shirts for my burgeoning clothing brand. Yes, before creativity there was commerce. Anyway, the center manager at the club said if I wanted the credits I would have to attend a free masterclass at LAMDA Drama school. I took the deal, and by the end of the three months, passions were replaced.

Later, in 2018, or 2019 (memories hazy since my jab) I first saw Dame Diana Rigg, at the youth club, whilst she was presiding over a committee meeting. She must’ve been eighty, but I clocked the resemblance from afternoon reruns of *The Avengers* on ITV4. A friend also mentioned she’d been on *Game of Thrones*- which I’d never seen. It took another chance meeting for us to be properly introduced. In that time, I’d done the LAMDA course, starred in a school play, and was enrolled at Sylvia Young.

It was a cold evening inside the church which was hosting the Earl’s Court Film Festival’. Dame Diana was on the judging panel and, aside from deciding who would win had remembered me from the youth club. I remember she was polite. I remember I was a little star-truck. I told her what I’d been getting up to and she was excited enough to suggest we sit down at the club for a ‘proper chat’ as she put it.

Ahead of the meeting, I admit I let my mind run away with me. My chief reason for going to the festival was to network. Being identified by the guest judge and a dame no less, I was sure I’d be fast-tracked onto fame and glory.

We sat in the studio of ECYC, where she said something I had not considered. ‘...*work on your craft, but don’t neglect your education...*’ Prior to this bombshell, I’d never assumed higher education would aid me in the Arts. She went on to say how being at RADA and RSC had helped her when producers decided to cast her, an unknown, on a network TV show. ‘..*whichever field you’re dealing in, people’s eyes open when you tell them OXFORD or CAMBRIDGE.*’ I didn’t quite know what she meant, but I figured the inkling was that I mustn’t rule out education and with my youth I had time to keep acting as a hobby. By the end of the meeting I felt I had sat with a wise, old grandmother. It was the last time I saw her.

Later that year, with the pandemic in full force, I remember sitting in my mum’s car when I checked my phone and read that the dame had died.

Prior to that, I could only think of one other close to me who’d passed. Like then, news of Dame Diana’s death left me feeling shocked, numb, confused. We had met less than a handful of times, but the impact she left in my life was such, that my whole perspective on a great many things has changed....somebody up there likes me.”



Ismail Wasfi- is a long-time member at ECYC, soon to begin a scholarship at *London Film Academy*



Until next time....