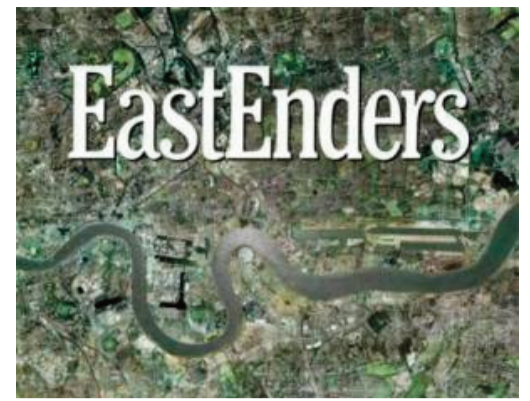


EASTENDERS' BIGGEST U.S. FAN – SEE PAGE 10

Walford Gazette



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The Newspaper for EastEnders Fans

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HERE'S TO THE NEXT 30!

BY LARRY JAFFEE

If *EastEnders'* 30th anniversary proved anything this past 19 Feb., it was that the series could still grip the nation (i.e., the UK) with a whodunit dominating print media headlines, radio chat shows, and water-cooler conversations, and especially social media.

Kudos to current executive producer Dominic Treadwell-Collins and the publicity office for feeding the media and Internet with a constant barrage of memes (intriguing photos posted on Facebook, Twitter, etc.) in the months and weeks leading up to “*EastEnders Live Week*” 17–20 Feb. (also known as “*EastEnders: The Week of Revelations*”).

Prior to the anniversary, Treadwell-Collins viewed the live week as being “a fantastic opportunity for *EastEnders* to create a massive national event, and one that will enable us to celebrate 30 years of [the show] in spectacular style.” He didn’t disappoint, especially with producing a fully live episode on 19 Feb.

But it is interesting that the executive producer didn’t think about the *international* audiences, such as here in the US as well as the more than 50 countries where some fans follow the show as closely as in Britain.

The actual anniversary episode, in which the killer was revealed (no spoiler here), peaked on BBC-1 with 11.9 million viewers (and a 44.7% share), and was considered a great success. In contrast, “Who Shot Phil?” garnered 22 million nearly 14 years ago. In 2001, social media wasn’t invented yet. More than 30 million Brits watched Den serve Angie divorce papers on Christmas Day 1986, but then there were only four TV channels.

continued on page 12



MEDIA FRENZY – *EastEnders'* 30th anniversary was a huge story, and the BBC did a wonderful job making available current and former cast members, some who appeared on a Graham Norton special, including (below, l-r) Pam St Clement, Shane Richie, Jessie Wallace, June Brown and John Altman.



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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Charlotte NC Club 30th Celebration – page 3
- Pam St Clements’ ‘End of an Earring’ – page 4
- Pullout Keepsake: EE Periodic Table – pages 8-9
- Recap: ‘Downton Abbey’ Season 5 – page 14

CONTENTS

Charlotte Fans Celebrate 30th Early
PAGE 3

Review: Pam St Clement Autobiography
PAGE 4

Exquisite New EastEnders Merchandise
PAGE 5

The Queen Vic: EE's Focal Point
PAGE 6

Tribute to EE Co-Creator Tony Holland
PAGE 7

The EastEnders Periodic Table
PAGES 8-9

EastEnders' Biggest US Fan
PAGE 10

New EE Website: Walford Watch
PAGE 11

Scottish Newspaper Spotlights WG
PAGES 12-13

Review: Downton Abbey Season 5
PAGE 14

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Around the Square

Bridge St. Market to Selfridges



TOINTON & PIVEN in *Mr Selfridge*

LONDON – Kara Tointon, recently introduced as Mickey Miller's sister Dawn on public TV *EastEnders* episodes, is joining the cast of third season of *Mr Selfridge*, as the soon-to-be-married daughter Rosalie of Jeremy Piven, the American entrepreneur who introduced in the 1910s US-style retailing to England.

Tointon told DigitalSpy any nerves she felt upon joining the *Mr Selfridge* cast were quickly calmed. "Entering a show that's established can be quite daunting, but the people there have been so welcoming," she says. "Especially Jeremy Piven – he wants you to do your best... to feel comfortable and to give it your best shot."

Kacey in Grantchester

Kacey Ainsworth (*EastEnders*' Little Mo) recently emerged on *Grantchester*, a new series broadcast by American PBS on Masterpiece Mystery. She plays wife Cathy (pictured), married to detective inspector Geordie Keating, the series' principal character (played by Robson Green). Ainsworth appeared in three of the first season's six episodes, and will be returning for *Grantchester*'s second season. Ainsworth also appeared in the 2014 Christmas special of *Call the Midwife*, playing a distraught patient Nancy sent to a psychiatric institution. She thinks she is pregnant, only to find out from a midwife that she can never be a mother. "It was amazing to be involved in something that so many people enjoy," she told the British magazine *What's On TV*. Ainsworth indicated she would be open to returning to *EastEnders*.



KEMP
NOT IN
NEW
STAR
WARS
FILM

PHONY TRAILER – A promo for the forthcoming *Star Wars* film, *Episode VII, The Wrath of the Rebellion*, turned out to be an Internet hoax, and Ross Kemp (Grant Mitchell) is not among the cast.

Looking for a new lunch spot?

We can assume what the proprietor's favourite television programme is. I wonder how the menu matches up with Kathy's cafe?



30th Anniversary Celebration in America's South

By LARRY JAFFEE

CHARLOTTE, NC – Getting a jump on *EastEnders'* 30th anniversary this past Feb. 19, several dozen Yanks here reveled on all things Walford the previous Saturday afternoon in the same state as the 1960s US sitcom, *The Andy Griffith Show*. No sheriff was needed to break up any rowdy punters a la Grant and Phil.

Since it was Valentine's Day, attendees were encouraged to dress up as Albert Square's all-time favourite couple, Kat and Alfie, and many did. But they're were also other characters on hand, such as Dot Cotton, Bianca Jackson and Den Watts, as you can see from the photos.

The ringleaders of the festivities were Charlotte *EastEnders* Fan Club co-presidents Melissa Berry, Melissa Campbell and Shonni Dixon.

Berry once gifted a pair of earrings to Pam St Clement so that Pat Butcher would wear them on *EastEnders*, and she did! Berry, known colloquially as "Mo," brought to the party the mobile version of her world-class *EastEnders* memorabilia this side of the pond.

The Charlotte club's stellar reputation and their memorable parties precede them. The BBC in 2009 sent a camera crew to Charlotte to film Shane Richie for a Children in Need segment.

The club donated a gift basket of memorabilia won by a lucky volunteer at the recent *EE* Festival for UNC-TV (see page 7).



EARLY CELEBRATION – Five days before *EastEnders'* 30th anniversary being broadcast on British television, Charlotte fans had a knees-up. On the right, Berry as Dot and Campbell as Kat.



How to Throw An EastEnders Party

By MELISSA BERRY

With the *EastEnders* anniversary being on 19 February we decided to throw another big celebration.

We had only a couple of weeks to organise and find a venue for what was to be billed as a Kat & Alfie-themed Valentine's Day event. The Charlotte *EastEnders* Fan Club is run by Melanie Campbell, Shonni Dixon and myself.

Melanie set out to find a suitable venue that could accommodate us on Valentine's Day (a seemingly impossible task) and gathering items to be used as prizes. Shonni set to work on decorating ideas. I began working on

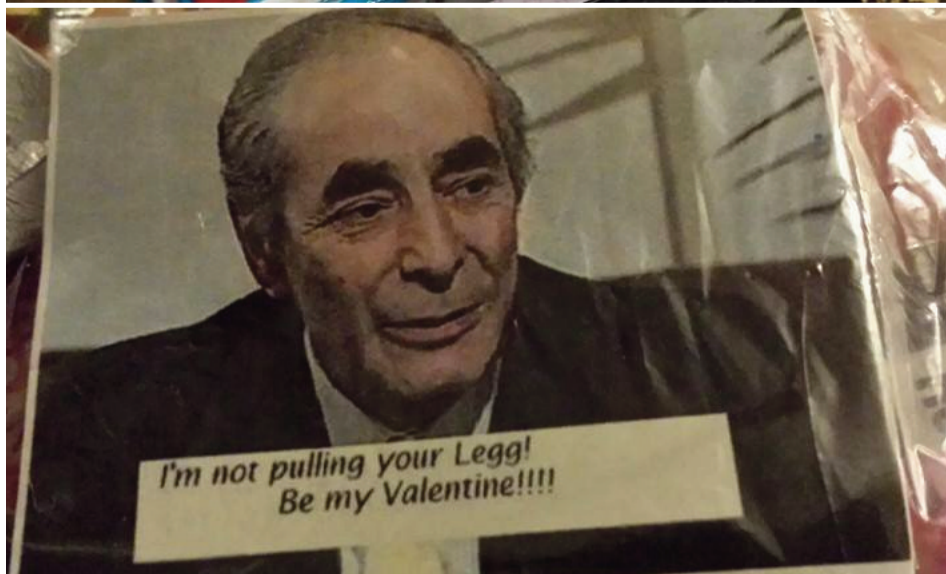
fun party activities, and came up with asking participants to come dressed as Kat, Alfie or another favourite cast member.

We planned to also present again our very own "Queen Vic Awards" for best-dressed costumes. Natalie Baggarley, our Quiz Mistress, was called in to do a proper pub quiz, and the games "Pin the Fag on Dot" and "Pin the Earring on Pat" were on offer complete with vintage *EastEnders* memorabilia as prizes.

Leopard print balloons, plates and napkins were bought, and old-school *EastEnders* Valentine's cards were hand made; along with paisley and leopard candy favour

on using to raise PBS funds in the future (see related articles on pages 7 and 10).

If you are ever in The Old North State, we would love to have you join us at one of our lunches! You can also get in on all of the fun via our Facebook pages. We look forward to seeing you! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CharlotteEastEndersFanClub/> (for news and information about U.S./PBS-specific episodes) and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CharlotteEastEndersFanClubSpoilers/>; (for current U.K. episodes) And if you watch the U.K. episodes – you can also join us on Twitter at: @Melissab919B



CLUB CO-PRESIDENTS (l-r) Melanie, Melissa and Shonni

boxes and name tags designed by Shonni.

We all enjoyed ourselves so much, that our planned three-hour luncheon went on for nearly five! Aside from all "fun" activities, we had important issues to discuss. March in North Carolina means our annual PBS Pledge night at UNC-TV. We discussed the items the club would be donating for the fund raiser and also presented fans with the unique items that we plan

The Takeaway:

- They played the games "Pin the Fag on Dot" and "Pin the Earring on Pat." Who knew they existed?!

Book Review: 'The End of an Earring'

BY TIM WILSON

My personal bias regarding Pam St Clement and her autobiography, *The End of an Earring* (is that a great title or what?), is even more all-encompassing than the one I had regarding Michelle Collins's extremely engaging memoir *This Is Me*.

It was my great pleasure to spend a bit of time with Ms St Clement when she was over here to appear in a WLIW *EE* pledge drive in December 2000. I interviewed her for the *Gazette* and actually got to drive out to Long Island with her in a stretch limo for the event.

I vaguely remember that a little champagne was imbibed. I know all too well that I bent a few fellow pledge drive volunteers' noses out of joint that night because I ended up spending most of my time with Pam in the green-room area swapping showbiz stories, and this severely limited her time with the devoted *EE* volunteers manning the phones.

I apologise wholeheartedly for doing this but, uhhhh, really, could you blame me? Pam is a wonderful, wonderful lady. I was overwhelmed by being in her presence; spending time with her was something quite addictive, and I never wanted it to end.

Pam's WLIW appearance unfortunately fell on the same night as Gore's conceding the presidential election to Bush, and so the viewership might not have been as high as it normally would have been, and this did seem to affect the number of pledges.

Oh, well. Pam was definitely saddened a bit by this and actually apologized over and over – what a compassionate, concerned, lovely lady she is.

OK, now to her book, *The End of an Earring*. Words can't express how much I adored it. It is beautifully written and contains many, many wonderful anecdotes of her highly unusual life. I was very glad that I had next to no knowledge of her early life because ... wow.

It sometimes reads like a novel, perhaps by Daphne Du Maurier! Pamela Ann Clements was the daughter of Reginald Arthur Clements and his wife Ann, whom he married in 1940. Pamela was born in 1942, and when she was 18 months old Ann died of tuberculosis. This was apparently not an uncommon occurrence during the WWII years.

Pamela's father Reginald had been born and raised in the East End, was the son of a railway worker and was placed in an orphanage at a young age by his destitute mother after his father suddenly died. This sense of dislocation seems to have played a large

part in how he later lived his life. It certainly seemed to affect his dealings with women.

The man had five wives! Pamela's mother Ann was his second wife. He was by all accounts a self-made man who rose up the ranks to achieve considerable success as the managing director of a toy company – Pam claims that he may have even been responsible for the invention of the nozzle on certain sports balls through which air is inserted!

Pam's very early childhood was spent in her father's flat in Regent's Park, an extremely posh address indeed. He then married his third wife, and poor little Pamela was sent to a seemingly endless series of "foster homes" all over Britain. Some of them he found through advertisements, some were through friends, including a German couple he barely knew!

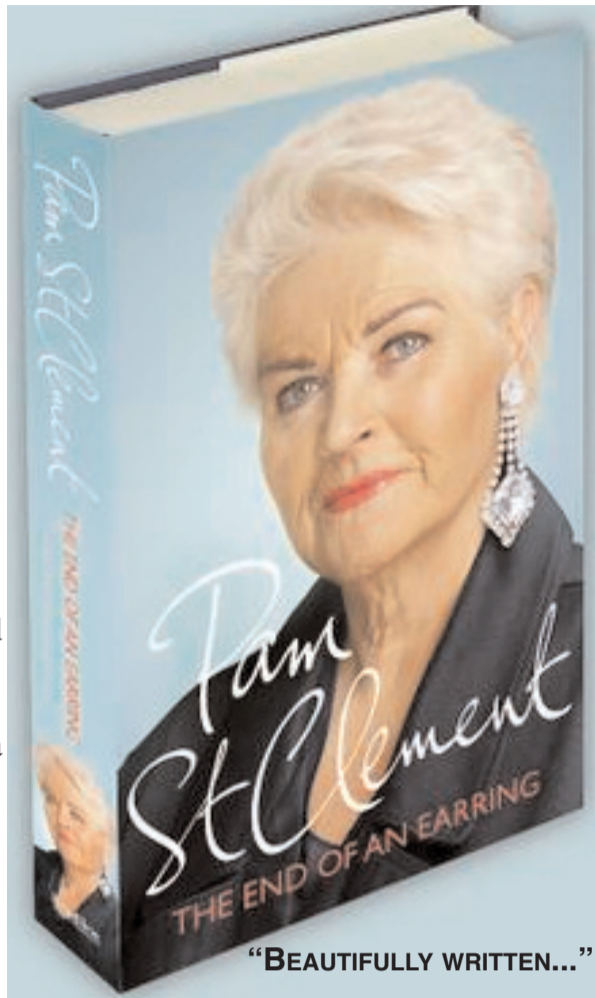
My jaw dropped open reading these chapters. Her father was, quite simply, a piece of work. He was a womanizing alcoholic with a propensity towards violence, especially towards the women in his life.

Pamela, thank God, was never a victim of physical abuse although she clearly suffered from verbal and emotional abuse. He shunted her to and fro throughout her childhood until she finally settled into a good, stable balance of a boarding school in the South Downs with a farm in Devonshire.

Pam writes very lovingly and at great length about this particular home farm in Devon, run by her beloved "Aunts" Sylvia and Courty. Their impact on her life was enormous, and her memorial to them via this book is unforgettable.

To be honest – when I normally read about someone's early life in a biography, especially a "show biz" one, I tend to skip to the part where they start performing, or at least begin to learn how to perform.

I found the first chapters of this book detailing her life at boarding school and on the farm to be ab-



solutely riveting, though. It shed light and helped me see why, in my admittedly limited exposure to Pam, she is such a special person.

When I came to the parts of the book describing her early acting career I was already firmly acquainted with her natural integrity and work ethic as well as her ability to be naughty and

have fun.

When she began her professional acting career Pam had to change her name from Pamela Clements because there already was someone with that name registered with the British Actors Equity union. She chose the last name St Clement, which also happened to be a street in North London where her parents had first met.

She writes glowingly of her time at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. Her chapter detailing the three months she embarked on a world tour of with the Royal Shakespeare Company in *Hedda Gabler* starring Glenda Jackson is delicious – Bette Davis suddenly appeared in her dressing room during the Los Angeles run!

She made many appearances on stage and on television, culminating in, of course, her role as Patricia Harris Beale Wicks Butcher Evans on *EastEnders*.

Pam writes numerous chapters about her time playing Pat, and it is a 100 percent satisfying book to enjoy from that aspect alone. She is way too classy and intelligent to dish any dirt on her fellow actors but if you read between the lines carefully enough you can glean certain perceptions from her remarks.

She doesn't name names but the people on the show over the years she seemed to take the most issue with were a certain diminutive assistant director with a particularly nasty way of running the set as well as a certain director who demonstrated what he wanted in a scene by manhandling the actors like human chess pieces.

Pam writes glowingly of her fellow *EE* colleague and increasingly frequent scene sharer Barbara Windsor and is very honest about

Wendy Richard (Pauline) and her complex persona. She acknowledges that Wendy had a very large heart if she liked you but if she didn't she could be antagonistic and highly difficult to be around.

Pam adored working with Michael French (who played her son David) and Tony Caunter (who played her fourth husband Roy). But, as it should be, a big portion of the *EastEnders* section of her book is devoted to Mike Reid who played the unforgettable Frank Butcher.

She agrees with head writer Tony Jordan that Pat and Frank's love story was the only true one in the show's history. I agree with that, too. The only time Pam appears to have been furious with the show's higher-ups was when they wrote in a fire in Frank's car lot not soon after Mike's son had committed suicide by actually setting himself on fire. This does seem like an "inhuman" thing to do, to use Pam's words.

When it comes to Pat's eventual "departure," Pam does a very smart thing. She writes in her prologue, entitled "We Have Our Entrances and Our Exits," how she was written out and how surprised and saddened she was when it was decided, against her gentle requests, that Pat was to be killed off rather than simply hop on a flight to New Zealand.

I agree that this was a terrible mistake born out of a desire by the show's executives to generate quick-fix headlines. The only good that came out of it, in my opinion, was that one of my all-time favourite characters, David, returned to Albert Square for a year or so, as a result.

Of course, Pam accepted this situation with class, dignity and integrity and played the hell out of the scenes where we saw her character slowly deteriorate to the point of ending up on her deathbed on New Year's Day 2012.

In an absolutely brilliant chapter Pam writes, in her own words, what she imagined was going through Pat's head as she lay there on that bed, waiting and hoping for her favourite son David to arrive. Here's a brief extract that knocked me out:

"He won't come ... that's how he can punish me. I wanna tell him how much I love my beautiful boy ... he's ruining his life and hisself ... always running and destroying ... destroying ... never healing ... he's like a jealous little kid ... not wanting anyone else to have what he ain't got. Smashing his own brother's relationship like a toy train then walking away..."

continued on page 11

Introducing Easties Across the Pond Merchandise

BY MELANIE CAMPBELL

There is no doubt that I love and can't get enough of *EastEnders*! Anglophile since birth, I have collected treasures from the U.K. all my life.

When I started watching *EastEnders*, I collected whatever I could find on eBay and traded with other fans. I once found a beautiful piece of artwork that was a caricature of *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street*. I love the piece and would often bring it to our Charlotte *EastEnders* Fan Club meetings.

I wanted more art, but there wasn't any to be found! As the official show treasures on Ebay became fewer, I searched other online sites such as Cafe Press and Etsy, but came up empty handed.

Last year I set up a shop on Etsy called Moonbeam Emporium. I decorate [rock singer of Fleetwood Mac fame] Stevie Nicks-inspired top hats, sell vintage capes and shawls, jewellery and essential oil-infused body products.

I joined many Stevie Nicks Facebook groups, and it was through that connection I found the beautiful artwork of Lynette Kirby. Her shop is on Society6, a website storefront for artists. I reached out to Lynette, and we quickly became great friends.

I wondered if Lynette could create products for *EastEnders* fans. In chatting with Lynette, I found out that she also loves British programming and watches on her local PBS station in Georgia and on BBC America. She gladly accepted my offer about her creating a few commissioned pieces. The ball was in motion!

The first commission: The Queen Vic. After seeing Lynette's artwork of the houses in New Orleans, I knew this had to be our first piece. It's absolutely beautiful.

The second commission: Dot Cotton looking as chic as ever with the quote: "You know I ain't one to gossip!" The first time I saw it, it brought tears to my eyes. I was so happy! It still tickles me to see Dot Cotton larger than life on a shower curtain or duvet cover!

You can purchase her *EastEnders* illustrations as full-colour prints, but they're also **available on t-shirts, coffee mugs, pillows, iPod cases, tote bags, stationery cards, and even clocks!**

As soon as the shop was set up and the artwork loaded, we announced our store opening on our Charlotte *EastEnders* Fan Club – Non Spoiler and Spoiler groups on Facebook. Fans loved the artwork and wanted more, so our next commission is Pat Butcher.

We plan to do groupings of characters, such as Kat and Alfie.



How fun would it be to have a "Bad Boys of Walford" series?

Lynette gave us the best present ever by believing in our cause to keep *EastEnders* on UNC-TV in North Carolina – even though she lives in Georgia and doesn't have access to the EE on public television. Through her love of British programming, she understands why we love the show so much.

Lynette agreed with me that a percentage of proceeds from the shop should go towards public TV funding. The Charlotte Fan Club is looking forward to Festival 2016, where we will present UNC-TV with our first cheque from the shop!

I want to thank Lynette Kirby for all her help and support in making this dream come true for me and for all fans of *EastEnders*. She is a delight to work with and has become a treasured friend of mine. She has a huge giving heart, and we are so lucky to be working with her on this project.

Fans can find the *EastEnders* Collection from Lynette Kirby at Easties Across the Pond: <http://society6.com/eastiesusa?promo=W3P9MF788VRV>

Artist's Own Story

BY LYNETTE KIRBY

I am a self-taught artist born and raised in New Mexico, currently residing in Georgia. I have drawn most all my life; since I could pick up a pencil I always doodled and

drew little pictures for my parents.

Once in school I actually started out in music and tried my hand at the viola. But when we moved and I had to change schools I went into



LYNETTE KIRBY

the art class and found I enjoyed that more. So I took all the art classes I could. I started drawing things that were a bit dark, nothing in particular really. I even ventured into fairies and Ancient Egyptian art.

I was given a graphic novel by Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat*, and did a few copies of some of the art in it. Then one day in art class I was flipping through the pages of *Rolling Stone* and found a photo of Stevie Nicks. I tore the page out and once home I tried my hand at portraiture. Once I reached my junior year in high school I started in a beginning painting class.

I drew up Stevie Nicks in my portfolio, thinking nothing of it. When my teacher saw it he was impressed and asked why I was in a beginner class. At that time I did not really think about how good I was or not. Next day my teacher moved me up to independent art.

I did a lot of Stevie Nicks pieces then, and still do to this day. I did a lot of graphite or pencil work when I started doing commissions. Mostly people would have me draw their family members and give them out as gifts. I did only graphite work for a long time after graduating high school.

Then, as I was trying to get my name out there, I started using inks in my work. Just straight black inks, I loved the look of it. Once I added the colour to my pieces my work got a little more notice. I was able to have some acrylic paintings I did shown in a gallery in Savannah, Georgia for a year. I was doing portraits of drag queens then.

Through the power of Facebook more people knew of my art and shared it. I put my work on a site that sells prints and other merchandise, RedBubble.com. It has done pretty well there. So I figured I'd find another place to put my work up on, and that is when I found Society6. The Charlotte fan club has to raise money every year to keep *EastEnders* on their PBS station.

When Melanie approached me to do specially commissioned EE artwork for this purpose, I was quite excited. I had never seen *EastEnders* before. It is not aired in the state in which I live, so I looked it up to have some sort of feel for the show.

I really enjoyed working on the Dot piece. Just the pose of June Brown in the photo I referenced reminded me of my grandma when I was little.

But the Vic piece was different, and I really had fun with that. Since I'm a portrait artist, it enabled me to break out a bit more than the norm. I had done a couple of architecture pieces in 2013 of three different cottages in the French Quarter of New Orleans. Small pieces of 4x6 inches. Nothing on the scale of the Vic.

I do mostly portrait art and ink, ink and watercolour illustrations. I love to draw and illustrate the female form. Watercolour and ink pieces are my favorite pieces to do. Many inspirations come from my love of, subculture, the freedom to be yourself. The 18th century, the fashions and hair. Vampires, myth, Victorian, vintage, all things red, the unknown, porcelain dolls, corsets, tea, absinthe, light and explosive colour, the dark.

I love what I do. And I enjoy being able to share my creativity and talent with everyone.

If you're interested in seeing my whole line of artwork you can find me on FaceBook: www.facebook.com/tabelladonnaart My Society6 merchandise page: <http://society6.com/tabelladonna> And you can follow me on Twitter: @tabelladonna

The Queen Vic: EastEnders' Crown Jewel

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
AND LARRY JAFFEE

To the denizens of Albert Square, the Queen Vic is the equivalent of Rick's Café Américain in Casablanca: it's a place where nearly everybody goes as an alternative to staying home.

That glorious photograph of Queen Elizabeth II, standing in front of the Queen Vic, flanked on both sides by Wendy Richard and Barbara Windsor, has to be one of the most iconic British images of all time. No less than four institutions are attached to that moment.

When Julia Smith and Tony Holland created *EastEnders*, they chose the Queen Vic as the heart and soul of Walford, the hardscrabble community that still captivates audiences 30 years later.

Through the years, the Queen Vic has had its share of landlords, but none more colourful than Dennis Watts aka Dirty Den. His nickname was well earned, since he had impregnated 15-year-old Michelle Fowler, the best mate of his daughter Sharon. And who else would serve his wife divorce papers on Christmas Eve?

Coming after Den, Eddie Royle was downright bland. His chief claim to fame was serving as a murder victim: Nick Cotton strikes again. Next came Frank Butcher, who marries his long-lost love



ILLUSTRATION: LYNETTE KIRBY

Pat Wicks. They acquire the Vic, set up house above the pub, looking after Frank's brood from a previous marriage: teens Ricky and Diane and troubled pre-adolescent Janine.

As life takes twists and turns, Pat is out, replaced by Peggy, and Frank plays stepdad to Phil, Grant and Samantha (no less than Ricky's ex-wife; those teenage runaways). Phil and Grant took turns sharing a bed with Sharon.

These intertwined, fractured families – the Wattses, Butchers and Mitchells – have all had times behind the stick, and dominate so

much of the drama that has ensued over the past three decades. Grant nearly barbecues Sharon after torching the Vic, which has suffered numerous fires.

In a case of believe it or not, Grant later seduces Michelle after hours at the Vic, having used his then wife Tiffany as a punching bag all over the Vic. Tiff runs out of the Vic, Grant in hot pursuit. She fatally meets the car wheels of Frank.

Phil was quite the kingpin of Albert Square for a while. His holdings included being landlord of the Vic, the Arches, the café and the pool hall.

Samantha was perhaps the least capable person in the Square to look after her brother's various businesses while Phil was banged up, thanks to Den.

Getting snookered by the family lawyer Marcus Christie, poor Sam (and I mean that literally) loses the café and the Arches to Ian Beale, and most distressing of all, the Queen Vic to Den Watts, who we once thought was done and dusted, having been shot, presumed dead and dumped in the canal.

Den's reprieve from the Grim Reaper came to a crashing halt, after the lesson his second wife Chrissie planned on teaching him in the pub one night with cohorts Zoe and Sam went all wrong. It's just one example of how the Vic has earned a most valuable player role in this continuing serial, when at its best, is worthy of Chekhov and Shakespeare.

Over the years, the Queen Vic played host to countless parties, sing-alongs and wedding receptions, births, deaths and celebrations. In good times and bad, the Vic has withstood time itself, not to mention several fires. No matter who future landlords may be, as long as there is an Albert Square, the Vic will be standing tall and regal as befitted its namesake, Her Majesty Queen Victoria. All hail the Queen!

Dreaming About Working on EastEnders

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY

What if you were offered the chance to work on *EastEnders*? What job would you choose? Would you work in front of or behind the camera? Keep in mind that you will be working long hours with all the attendant stress that such a high-profile drama generates daily.

I'm sure that wouldn't stop either me or you signing up for the duration, given the opportunity to walk the actual cobblestones of Albert Square or the pre-fab council houses, even if they are a television production set that comes to life with lots of smoke and mirrors.

My particular dream job on *EastEnders* would have me shut in with a roomful of writers plotting the course of a story arc, as a story editor. My idea would be Gentrification Comes to Walford. A crane suspending a wrecker's ball hovers over the Square.

No neighbourhood in New York or London can escape that steep iron ball, smashing through walls, reducing buildings to rubble. A ruthless real estate developer – is there any other kind? – is offering Walford's MP a plan to first con-

demn, then rezone Albert Square for luxury housing, with particular emphasis on attracting all the movers and shakers in the City (London's version of Wall Street).

Why reside in the suburbs when you can live in spacious, deluxe, high-rise flats with a clear view of the glass and steel skyscrapers where you work during the day?

A special election is called. If Walford's MP runs with no challenger Albert Square is toast. Instead of Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney putting on a show, Walford residents have to choose among themselves to run against the incumbent.

All of Albert Square is united around saving their neighbourhood. Now all they need is a candidate. One could easily imagine Peggy Mitchell answering the call. Past inhabitants return to this place they loved, as the campaign unfolds and Election Day beckons....

Editor's note: Send your EastEnders dream job description to: East End Company, P.O. Box 271, Kings Park, NY 11754 or walfordgazette@gmail.com



GENTRIFICATION PLOT – Could this happen to Walford?



In Honour of EE's Co-Creator Tony Holland

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Tony Holland, along with his producing partner Julia Smith, created *EastEnders*.

A remarkable television writer, Holland was a man for all seasons, in an industry of creation by committee. If left to today's writers' rooms, all the king's horses, his men and his many mistresses would still be floating somewhere in the ether above the cocaine spoon and the sweet drifting smoke of marijuana. No index cards or corkboard for Holland, just a notebook, some pencils and a fertile imagination.

All of the storylines for *EastEnders*' first season came from Holland's fevered brain. He had 14 days to come up with 23 characters, Albert Square, the Queen Vic, the Bridge Street Market, all the council houses, and Arthur's allotment.

(Editor's note: Smith and Holland left EastEnders in 1989 after working on the show for five years, reportedly over talk of bringing back Den Watts from the dead, which eventually happened in 2003. They previously collaborated on Z-Cars, Angels, and following EastEnders, they created Eldorado, which only lasted a year. Holland died in 2007 at 67 and Smith in 1997 at 70.)

Every builder knows that you can design whatever structure you choose, be it glass and steel or concrete and plasterboard, if you lay a



EASTENDERS CO-CREATORS – Julia Smith and Tony Holland

truly strong foundation.

Within a frame an artist can create anything from an intimate portrait to a still life to a seashore full of summer revellers.

Holland's idea for the families that would populate the Square – the Beales, Fowlers, Wattses and

all the other blue-collar inhabitants – formed a community with an “us against them, hurt one of us, you hurt us all” mentality. Each day is a struggle to put food on the table, there are no guarantees, no hand-outs, a pride of place. Put it simply, they're survivors.

HE HAD TO COME UP WITH 23 CHARACTERS IN TWO WEEKS.

Sure, Holland created the silver-tongued devil Dirty Den, but this human mosaic allowed for a future ducker and diver like Big Mo, or the apple of every lady's eye Alfie Moon, or good-hearted Jane offering practical advice.

Among Holland's most memorable masterpieces was Den and Angie's Christmas Day 1986, watched by 30.15 million viewers, more than half of the UK population at the time. He wrote himself those two scripts about Den asking Angie for a divorce.

In his four years as *EastEnders* co-creator, Holland interestingly penned only a dozen scripts, but his tenure as *EastEnders*' storytelling creative genius was always evident in the rich characters, plots and story arcs.

EastEnders renews itself as it casts off storylines and characters. It's come a long way since its premiere in 1985. Its writers carried a larger responsibility as it went from two episodes a week to three, and then to the current four.

On any given day the human drama that is *EastEnders* can suddenly explode, devastating a life, a relationship and sending characters helter-skelter. These episodes represent *EastEnders* at its very best, and this is why the show constantly surprises.

Congratulations to UNC-TV: Another \$40K+ Night



CELEBRATORY NIGHT – UNC-TV staff and volunteers revel in exceeding their \$40,000 goal within four hours again on the evening of 15 March for the annual event known as Festival. The outcome set the bar once again for *EastEnders* appreciation in the United States, and demonstrated the possibility for viewer responsiveness during public television fundraising appeals. The *Walford Gazette* (above right) was among the thank-you gifts offered. Meanwhile, Twin Cities Public TV recently had a successful *EE* fundraising night of their own; they feasted on a 30th anniversary cake (right).



1. Tony Holland, co-creator of *EastEnders* with....

2. Julia Smith, the show's first executive producer

4. The **Beale** Family was among the first conceived

5. Louise Berridge - former executive producer who brought back Den Watts from the dead

6. Dot Cotton - show icon, enough said

7. N

8. Steve Owen - Slickly dressed crook

9. Frank Butcher - likes wearing bowties

10. Natalie - Barry's ex-wife who had fling with Paul

11. Nana Moon - Alfie and Spencer's gran

12. Mags - early pretty blonde

13. Alfie - favourite bartender

14. Simon - aka Wicksy

15. Peggy - she's a Mitchell

16. Slater - drama family

17. Cl

18. Ar

19. Kat - one of a kind

20. Carpenter - early family

21. Sc

22. Tiffany

23. V - as in the Queen Vic

24. Cr -

25. Mn - Minimart

26. Ferreira - not very popular family

27. Co - Richard Cole aka

1 H									
3 Li	4 Be								
11 Na	12 Mg								
19 K	20 Ca	21 Sc	22 Ti	23 V	24 Cr	25 Mn	26 Fe	27 Co	
37 Rb	38 Sr	39 Y	40 Zr	41 Nb	42 Mo	43 Tc	44 Ru	45 Rh	
55 Cs	56 Ba	57-71	72 Hf	73 Ta	74 W	75 Re	76 Os	77 Ir	
87 Fr	88 Ra	89-103	104 Rf	105 Db	106 Sg	107 Bh	108 Hs	109 Mt	
		57 La	58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	
		89 Ac	90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	

Although it originates in chemistry, a periodic table lends itself to *EastEnders* when you consider the definition: periodic table n. "A tabular arrangement of the elements according to their atomic numbers so that elements with similar chemical properties are in the same column." Think of all the explosive plots, etc.

28. Ni - Nigel - great tie collection

29. Cu

30. Zn - Zainab - matriarch

31. Ga - Grant aka Grunt

32. Ge - George Palmer - sleazy bizman

33. As - Aunt Sal - Mitchell relative

34. Se - Sean Slater - later heartthrob

35. Br - Bridge Street - Walford's market

36. Kr

37. Rb - Robbie Jackson - still in India?

38. Sr - Sharon - Den's princess

39. Y - Mal Young, former BBC head of drama, oversaw EE

40. Zr

41. Nb



STEVE OWEN & TRICKIE DICKT



THE SLATERS



NIGEL



TIFFANY

Periodic Table of EastEnders

Send us suggestions of the numbers we missed. First prize gets a free subscription to the Gazette.

			5 B	6 C	7 N	8 O	9 F	10 Ne	2 He
			13 Al	14 Si	15 P	16 S	17 Cl	18 Ar	
28 Ni	29 Cu	30 Zn	31 Ga	32 Ge	33 As	34 Se	35 Br	36 Kr	
46 Pd	47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe	
78 Pt	79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn	
110 Ds	111 Rg	112 Cn	113 Uut	114 Fl	115 Uup	116 Lv	117 Uus	118 Uuo	
64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu		
96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No	103 Lr		



BELINDA



LOFTY



ALI



SAL



ROD



POLLY

42. Mo - Big Mo - don't mess with her

43. Tc - Tom Clements - 1986 character stole winning leeks from Arthur

44. Ru - Colin Russell - EE's first major gay character

45. Rh - Rachel Kominiski - Michelle's flatmate/academic who wrote erotica

46. Pd - Peter Dean - Ian's dad and Den's best friend

47. Ag - Angie Watts - Vic's best barmaid

48. Cd

49. In - Irene Raymond - Tony & Tiff's mum; Terry's wife

50. Sn

51. Sb - Sam Butcher - when she was a teen bride to Ricky

52. Te - Terry

53. I - Irene - Lofty's aunt

54. Xe

55. Cs - Cindy's - Ian named fish & chips store after her

56. B - Barry - swindled and pushed

57. L - Laura - Ian took advantage of her, tragic end

58. Ce - Clare - Debbie And Nigel's daughter

59. Pr - Peter - Ian's son

60. Nd - Nadia - briefly married to Phil; Romanian refugee

61. Pm - Pam St Clement - Pat Evans

62. Sm - Sam Mitchell - She'll always be a Mitchell, according to Peggy

63. Eu - European Union - they take occasional jaunts out of Walford

64. Gd - Gill - Mark's wife died of AIDS

65. Tb

66. Dy - Dirty Den

67. Ho - Lofty Holloway

68. Er - Ethel Skinner

69. Tm - Tom Banks - Sharon's one-time love interest/fireman

70. Yb - Young Barry - Colin's lover

71. Lu - Lou Beale - EE's original matriarch

72. Hf

73. Ta - Teresa - di Marco older sister; Matthew's girlfriend

74. W - Wendy Richard - the inimitable Pauline Fowler

75. Re - Reg Cox - EE's first homicide victim

76. Os - Ali Osman - Turkish Cypriot early owner of cafe

77. Ir

78. Pt - Pat Evans - known for her earring collection

79. Au - Arthur Fowler - a good man with flaws like everyone

80. Hg

81. Tl

82. Pb - Peggy Butcher - Frank's third wife

83. Bi - Belinda - the least known Slater sister

84. Po - Polly - Walford Gazette reporter

85. At

86. Rn

87. Fr - Fowler family

88. Ra

71. Lu - Lou Beale - EE's original matriarch

89. Ac - Ashley Cotton - Nick's son

90. Th - Gillian Taylforth - played Kathy Beale cum Mitchell

91. Pa - Patsy Palmer - wore Bianca's puffy coat

92. U - Underground - Walford East (tube station)

93. Np

94. Pu - Punk Mary - early character

95. Am - Archie Mitchell - father to Ronnie & Roxy

96. Cm

97. Bk - Bookie's - betting business where Pat worked

98. Cf - Chelsea Fox - Grant girlfriend

99. Es - Ethel Skinner - Dot's best friend

100. Fm - Freddie Mitchell - Little Mo's son

101. Md - Matthew - the DJ framed by Steve Owen

102. No - Rod Norman - ran record stall; Punk Mary's mate

103. Lr - Lorna - alcoholic who Phil met at AA meetings

Everything You Wanted to Know About EE's Biggest US Fan

Editor's note: The following interview is reprinted here with kind permission from the author.

BY TOM WILLETTS

Since setting up Walford Watch as a website (see next page) and on Twitter, I have gained many great followers and supporters. One of those is the Charlotte *EastEnders* Fan Club in North Carolina, which was not known to me in Wales, UK, but well known to many fans in the US.

After having followed their account on Twitter, I was instantly interested in speaking to the club and gaining knowledge about how *EastEnders* is watched, perceived and loved by people in America. Melissa Berry is the club's co-president, and after getting in contact with her through email she kindly agreed to an interview.

It was very interesting to hear from Melissa and learn some interesting facts about the viewing of *EastEnders* in America. She informed Walford Watch that *EastEnders* has a large cult of followers and that there are fan clubs scattered across the US. Melissa has actually been a fan of the show since its beginning and has been actively involved in keeping *EastEnders* alive in the States for many years.

Melissa explained the different ways US fans view the show. "The primary source for most is via PBS (Public Broadcasting System) affiliate stations. Unfortunately, there are only about 10 PBS stations that broadcast *EE* and so it is not widely available. Fans that are lucky enough to get these TEN-YEAR-OLD eps (it's 2005 here and Chrissie has just been discovered as having killed Den!) record them for other fans and they are passed along from one viewer to another in the post." Melissa has also been lucky enough to visit the *EastEnders* studio. This and much more can be found in the interview below.

WalfordWatch: What is your first memory of *EastEnders* and what makes it such an enjoyable show?

Melissa Berry: I've watched since the beginning, so my first 'real' memories of the show revolve around Pauline being pregnant with Martin, and Lou being such a battleaxe. I remember I didn't like the Beale matriarch very much in the beginning. She soon grew on me! Angie and Den were also early characters I fell in love with – the ones who ran the pub that seemed to be the heart of Albert Square.

I was hooked from the very start. I'm sure that most of your readers know that here in America, 'soaps' are very glamorous; I cer-



MELISSA BERRY at the studio

tainly don't wake up looking like I walked out of a salon every day! A programme revolving around a working-class community was like a breath of fresh air, even though it could be terribly dismal at times! It just seemed like something we could relate to more easily.

There are several ways that US fans view *EastEnders*. The concern with PBS is that each individual station is publicly funded by its viewers. Each year, fans help raise the \$45,000-plus licensing fee to keep *EE* for just ONE more year. Here in North Carolina we travel to the PBS studios to man the phones in a yearly *EastEnders* pledge drive called "Festival." This March will be the 18th year that the fan clubs have done this with our station, UNC-TV, and we have been successful every single year.

Another option for US fans is DISH network, which is a paid-for service and is airing eps that are only a couple of months behind the UK.

The third option is through VPNs online. Through this, expats and others can view current eps airing in their home country.

At one time, BBC America aired episodes that were only a few weeks behind the UK. But in September 2003, they dropped it, claiming low viewing numbers – just days before Dirty Den returned! I began hearing from fans who were livid, so I began an online petition that garnered over 10,000 signatures. Even with this, our plea to keep the current episodes fell on deaf ears.

WW: What was your thinking behind setting up your *EastEnders* fan club?

MB: The show has rather a cult following and is not widely available here. In the early days of the Internet, American *EastEnders* fans were searching for others who were hooked on this import from across the pond.

In the early 1990s, there was a core group of fans from across the

US who would log on to AOL every Tuesday night to talk about the goings-on in Walford! At times there could be 50 or more of us in a chat room gabbing away for an hour or more!

Fellow *EE* superfan Larry Jaffee started publishing the New York-based *Walford Gazette* newspaper 23 years ago, and this gave us another way to keep in touch with each other and with cast interviews and news. Through these venues, fans found one another in their respective states, and fan clubs started popping up!

There are now active clubs in Minnesota, Florida, Texas, New York, and the D.C. area, to name a few. Here in North Carolina, where I live, our first fan club was started in 1997. A second club was started in 1998 on the other side of the state, and I eventually became president. I wanted to make our little club the best it could be and began collecting autographs and other memorabilia to share with our members. I now have over 200 autographs and what is referred to in some circles as the 'US *EastEnders* Museum'! The clubs get together several times a year – often for themed parties just to celebrate their love of the show and in support of their local PBS TV stations.

Our fan sites grew out of this. It was a way to make everyone aware of upcoming club meetings and to share photos. When Facebook made an appearance, it was a natural progression for the clubs to migrate there. And it also afforded us another way to keep in touch with other fans, both here in America and in the UK. We now have three Facebook pages: one devoted to the 10-year-old episodes that air here; one devoted to what is currently happening in the UK; and the most recent, which is devoted to uniting fans to keep *EastEnders* in the US. Twitter is a way for us to follow current storylines as well as other things that the actors are involved in.

Thanks to the Internet, I've found about and travelled to New York, Florida, and Arizona for fan club events, and it has even afforded me the fantastic opportunity to visit the *EastEnders* set on two separate occasions! I've met some wonderful fans of the show, many of whom I now consider true friends – and a few of the cast!

North Carolina fans were also approached by the BBC in 2009 and were able to be a part of *Children in Need*, meeting Shane Richie and Josie Lawrence when they visited us while filming



MELISSA'S LICENSE PLATE

Around the World in 80 Days, and fans donated \$500 to the charity.

WW: What do you think makes *EastEnders* such a success with the fans in the US? Are there any particular characters or storylines that fans in America love or hate?

MB: Anglophiles abound here in America – those infatuated with absolutely anything from England. I believe that *EastEnders* was something that piqued their curiosity. Although many American fans couldn't understand most of what was being said in the early days of watching, market stalls and the Queen Vic provided many with romantic ideas of the UK. These certainly weren't things that we were used to seeing on our television screens or on our streets!

WW: You mentioned that you have visited the *EastEnders* set. Could you share your experiences of those visits for people who have never been to Albert Square?

MB: I was contacted by the producer of *EastEnders Revealed* when Anita Dobson and the powers that be at Elstree decided that Angie Watts would never return. They had heard of me through Larry at the *Walford Gazette* and were curious to know if I could gather together a few fans in Miami, Florida where Angie had supposedly been living, for an episode entitled "Angie and Me." I agreed, and so it began! I had been planning a visit to England later that year, and Louise Berridge, who was then the executive producer, invited me to visit the set as a way to thank me for helping them.

I cannot begin to tell you how surreal it was to get my visitor's pass and walk through the gates in Borehamwood. I was taken directly to the outside set and I was just a bit speechless when I first saw it! The first thing I noticed was how small everything actually seemed in 'real life'. I knew of course, that the outside set was mostly a facade – but to actually be there and to be standing right in front of the Queen Vic – I couldn't believe it! I

continued on page 11

Introducing WalfordWatch, EE's Latest Website

BY LARRY JAFFEE

Walford Watch (<http://www.walfordwatch.wordpress.com>) is the newest website dedicated to *EastEnders*. We tracked down its 21-year-old creator Tom Willetts in Wales. Here's our interview. Slight caution: Tom's *EastEnders*' experience is skewed to the current UK episodes, so there might be some unfamiliar characters or storylines for those who watch via American public television (i.e., potential spoilers).

WG: What made you want to start Walford Watch?

TW: I have always noticed sites dedicated to *EastEnders* across the Internet and it was during Christmas of 2014 that I became interested in writing about *EE*. I got in touch with a few fan sites about writing articles for them; however I didn't receive any responses. This was always at the back of my mind and this is when I had the initial idea of creating my own blog site dedicated to *EastEnders*. I set up Walford Watch in February of this year and it began really well with good support and feedback.

WG: Was it by chance that the site's launch coincided with the 30th anniversary?

TW: Like I mentioned previously I had the thought of setting up a blog site dedicated to the show since Christmas 2014. This idea got pushed to the back of my mind and it was only on the 30th anniversary that the idea came to fruition. I created the site and began posting regularly throughout the 30th anniversary celebration week, which worked out well in terms of viewers as *EastEnders* was the most talked-about topic on social media at times throughout the week, meaning I could really get Walford Watch out there. In that first week of the site I had viewers across the UK and US but also some viewers in Thailand and Angola, which was interesting!

WG: How long have you have been watching *EastEnders*?

TW: For as long as I can remember is always my answer to this! I'm only 21 so that isn't very long but my family have always been big soap fans and *EastEnders* has always been top of my list. The first big storyline I can remember which really began my interest in the show would have been the 'Who Shot Phil' storyline in 2001. I would've been 14 at the time and that story really gripped fans and was probably the starting point of my 'obsession' with *EastEnders*.

WG: Any *EastEnders* favourite



character or storyline?

TW: As mentioned before, the 'Who Shot Phil' storyline is probably one of my favourites. The recent 'Who Killed Lucy' storyline was wonderfully delivered and will go down in television history without a doubt! In terms of characters it's really hard for me to decide. I love the dynamic of the Carter family, and Mick, played by Danny Dyer, is my favourite character at the moment. I love comedy, so characters like Kim Fox and Billy Mitchell always bring a smile to my face. Overall I would have to say my favourite character is Max Branning. He is such a complex character with lots of different emotions, portrayed brilliantly by Jake Wood.

WG: Have you had any contact with the show's staff?

TW: During the 30th anniversary celebrations I wrote a review for the live episode. This was shared on Twitter by the story producer Alex Lamb. We shared a message on Twitter and he told me he really enjoyed the review and that Walford Watch was a good site! This is the only contact I've had with someone from the show but I would love to interview and meet some cast members and I hope one day I can visit the Square myself.

WG: What are your plans for Walford Watch?

TW: My plans for Walford Watch are to keep it an enjoyable and accessible blog site for *EastEnders* fans. I want to continue providing regular episode reviews along with news articles, and hopefully as we progress more interviews with people related to the show.

WG: What do you think of the worldwide fan community around *EastEnders*?

TW: I believe it's one of the best fan communities around. There is so much love for the show not only in the UK but also in the US and other countries too. I think the fans' commitment to watching the show is second to none, and that is only backed up by the viewing figures. I think the support *EastEnders* receives in the US is wonderful. I didn't know much about *EE* support in America be-

fore I began Walford Watch but after learning about the dedication fans in the US have for *EE*, I really hope the show stays accessible and easy to view in America.

WG: Any favourite blogs or news

sources for the latest *EastEnders* information?

TW: There are many good *EastEnders* sites across the Internet. *EastEnders Ultra* is a very good site which brings regular news about the show. After receiving my first ever copy of the *Walford Gazette* in early March, I would have to say that it's one of my new favourites. It's very interesting to learn and read about *EastEnders* in the US, something I didn't have any knowledge of before I began Walford Watch!

WG: Who are your contributors and are you seeking others?

TW: At the moment I only have myself and one contributor to the site. His name is Daniel Daykin and he has written episode reviews and other articles for me. I'm always on the lookout for contributors, so please send me an email if you would like to write anything for us. I'm always open to new ideas and article ideas so send me an email at tomwilletts@live.co.uk

WG: How much time do you spend daily thinking about *EastEnders*?

TW: Most of my day! There is never a day when I'm not exploring the Internet reading spoilers or news items about the show. If I'm not doing that I'm either writing for Walford Watch or speaking to my friends and family about *EastEnders*. I love it!

WG: What do you do when you're not blogging about *EastEnders*?

TW: I'm currently in my final year of study for a degree in Performance at Aberystwyth University in Wales, UK. You might find with the Walford Watch that sometimes there will be a lack of activity on the site and this is mainly due to being very busy with my degree. We are always posting updates on Twitter and once I have completed my degree, Walford Watch will be running all the time.

WG: I've noticed that you're very active on Twitter.

TW: @WalfordWatch is where you can find all of our tweets. We are constantly posting updates or quick news items about the show. Due to being very busy with other



WELSHMAN TOM WILLETTS

commitments sometimes there is a drop of activity on our actual site. Always check our Twitter page for quick updates on the progress of Walford Watch and also news about *EastEnders*.

Biggest Fan

continued from page 10

was walking in the footsteps of so many characters! Later, I was shown where the sets were stored and then taken into the office buildings. Walking down the corridors, I saw Gary (Ricky Groves) and was so stunned I couldn't even say a word as he walked past me! (Such are the problems of a 'fan girl'!) I met several influential people during that visit who all seemed amazed that their programme had such a following here. And those people invited me back again a few years later! I have been VERY lucky and have had the privilege of writing several stories for the *Walford Gazette* and attending other events featuring past and present cast members. Aside from Anita Dobson, I have met June Brown, Shaun Williamson, Jill Halfpenny, Nicholas Bailey and consider Gary Hailes a good friend.

End of an Earring

continued from page 4

I think Pam still has further mountains to climb, and it's my fervent wish to somehow meet up with her along the way.

I can't recommend this highly absorbing, entertaining memoir strongly enough to you *EE* lovers out there. It's simply a class act all the way, like the lady herself.

DID YOU KNOW? Some 17 million BBC-1 viewers tuned in for the launch episode on 19 Feb. 1985. There have been 102 deaths since the show began, including four dogs.

6

EASTENDERS 30

Reprinted with kind permission.



■ Mike Reid and Pam St Clement as Frank and Pat.

20 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT EASTIES

■ DOT COTTON wears the same dress every Christmas. It's the oldest item in the wardrobe department.

■ PEGGY MITCHELL had the most expensive wardrobe and Barbara Windsor had a big say in what the Queen Vic's landlady wore.

■ PAT BUTCHER could choose from more than 125 pairs of earrings and the wardrobe department loved it when fans sent them in for Pam St Clement to wear on air.

■ THE railings surrounding Albert Square look solid but are actually made of plastic and would break if Mick Carter leant on them.

■ GRETCHEN FRANKLIN (Ethel) was less than happy to discover the pug playing her "little Willy" was chauffeur-driven to the set while she had to get the bus.

■ THE mythical borough of Walford's an amalgam of Walthamstow and Stratford, where the soap's two creators were born.

■ THE postcode for Albert Square is E20 6PQ.

■ FICTIONAL tube station Walford East is located between Bow Road and West Ham on the Hammersmith & City and District lines.

■ BARBARA WINDSOR was suggested as Peggy Mitchell by Steve McFadden and Ross Kemp, who played sons Phil and Grant.

■ DEN and Ange were originally to be called Jack and Pearl.

■ BARBARA WINDSOR says she based Peggy partly on Violet Kray, mother of the twins.

■ DEREK BRANNING was played by Jamie Foreman, son of London gangster and Kray associate Freddie Foreman.

■ THERE are two Albert Squares in London's East End, in Stratford and Ratcliff.

■ PATSY KENSIT, Cheryl Baker and Joanna Lumley were in the running to play Chrissie Watts.

■ SINCE 2010, the tube trains running past the Square have been computer-generated.

■ SPICE GIRL Emma Bunton played a "troubled teen" in 1992 and auditioned as Bianca Jackson.

■ DALIP TAHIL was meant to play the head of the Ferreira clan but couldn't get a work permit.

■ DOT COTTON was the first soap character to have an episode devoted to a monologue, when she recorded a message for husband Jim in hospital.

■ ANITA DOBSON reached No 4 with her version of the EastEnders theme, Anyone Can Fall In Love, produced by husband and Queen guitarist Brian May.

■ JILL GASCOINE resigned after playing Glenda Mitchell for a single day, being replaced by Glynis Barber.

■ Barbara Windsor and Steve McFadden as Peggy and Phil.



Times Square It's Walford all

WHICH would you pick, Times Square or Albert Square?

Well, for native New Yorker Larry Jaffee, there's no competition — it's Walford all the way!

Larry is just one of millions of EastEnders fans in America who can't do without their regular dose of goings-on at the Queen Vic.

And such is the college professor, journalist and PR professional's devotion to Den and Dot, he set up a newspaper for fans 23 years ago, named The Walford Gazette, in honour of the show's fictitious local rag.

"I was living in Washington DC when EastEnders debuted in the United States in late 1987," recalls Larry, author of two books on the show, Walford State Of Mind and Albert Square & Me.

"I just stumbled upon it. I was immediately interested because I'm a sucker for a British accent!

"I grew up on Monty Python, anything British-oriented I'm kind of interested anyway but I was immediately hooked.

"I've since met almost every person in the first episode and my lasting impression of it was when there was a fight in the pub and Den was wearing a crisp, white Oxford shirt.

"He's trying to break up a fight between Nick Cotton and Ali and just says: 'There's blood on my shirt!'

"The Walford Gazette came about by accident.

"I started a new job in a New York publishing company in 1992 and in the cubicle next to mine were two guys who were discussing EastEnders.

"I said: 'I watch that, too' and

By Alan Shaw

they couldn't believe there was another fan in the office.

"The next day, one of them emailed me a memo of his insight into the previous night's episode and every other line simply read: 'Ian should be shot!'

"His name was Dan Abramson and he later claimed I said: 'I bet you we could make money out of this' and we turned that idea into an actual newspaper.

"Dan, who died in 1999, was friends with Freddie Hancock, the widow of Tony Hancock the great British comedian, who was based in New York working for the BBC so he was able to cut through the red tape to get permission to do the newspaper.

"Freddie arranged our first interview which was with Nick Berry (Wicksey)."

To be honest, I'm struggling to see why EastEnders seems so bizarrely popular across the Pond.

But Larry explains: "It's unlike anything on American

television. We have very few programmes that deal with working-class people, either fiction or non-fiction.

"Most of our reality shows are about rich people.

"Another difference is that Americans who appreciate EastEnders consider it to be a drama, not a soap opera.

"It's an acquired taste though most of my readers all watch Downton Abbey as well and we've had a couple of articles comparing the two.

"The similarities are there, such as the servants being working class, and look at the matriarchs of Downton Abbey, they're very powerful women and EastEnders has those, too — Lou Beale, Pauline Fowler, Dot Cotton.

"It's escapism. Despite what Cheers would have you think, we don't have bars where everybody knows your name, unlike the Queen Vic."

Larry's interviewed most EastEnders cast members, and has struck up firm friendships with some.

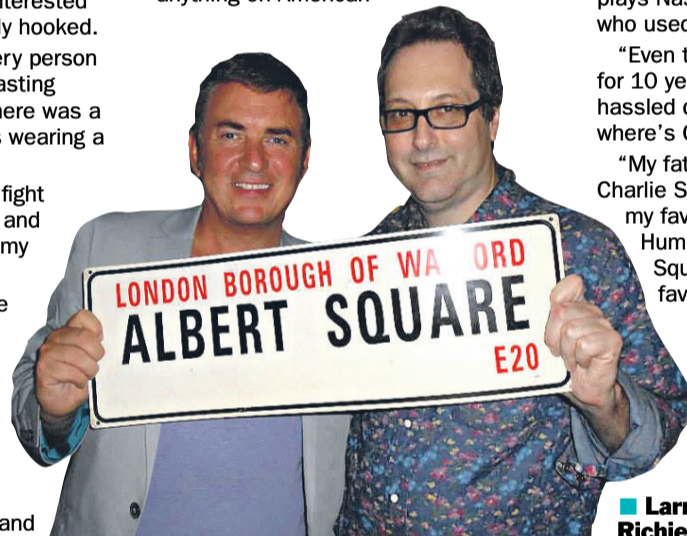
"I'm friendly with John Altman who plays Nasty Nick, and Deepak Verma who used to play Sanjay," adds Larry.

"Even though he'd been off the show for 10 years at one point, he was hassled constantly — 'Hey, Sanjay, where's Gita?!'

"My father was a taxi driver, so I liked Charlie Slater but I think Den Watts is my favourite character. He brought a Humphrey Bogart swagger to Albert Square and Den was probably my favourite interview that I did.

"I appreciate Dot Cotton but I'd be afraid of Grant and Phil!"

■ To see the online edition of The Walford Gazette, visit the website www.wgazette.com



■ Larry with EastEnders fan Shane Richie.

It's tough being an American fan

IT'S not easy being an American fan of EastEnders, writes Alan Shaw.

BBC America dropped the show back in 2003.

Very few public channels now show it, so you either have to root out clips on the internet or pay a premium to

a satellite channel for the privilege.

"There are about 10 public TV stations in America that still broadcast EastEnders on a weekly basis but unfortunately, those episodes are 10 years behind what you see!" says Albert Square superfan Larry Jaffee.

"It's a completely different show.

"Most Americans would only recognise about half

a dozen characters that you're watching now.

"The BBC iPlayer never materialised over here. You can see two-week-old episodes on the Dish Network but you have to pay an extra \$20 on top of your subscription.

"I used to work for a British publishing company and I'd be in England twice a year for meetings. It just so happened the week they cancelled EastEnders, I was in London.

"I had a friend at the BBC and he got me a few phone numbers. I was in Television Centre and called the Director General.

"He said: 'How did you get this number?' and I said: 'Never mind, I'm here to speak to someone in authority about this!'

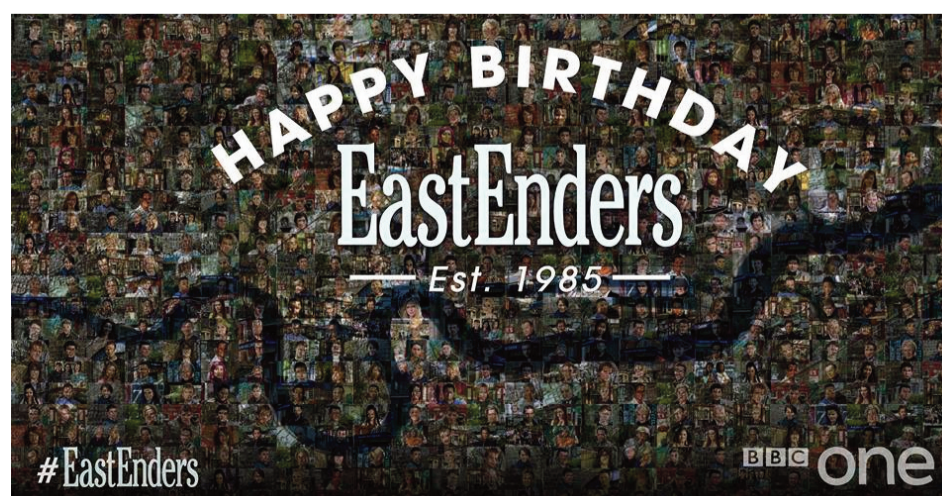
"There's a new guy in charge of BBC America now and I'm waiting to hear if I can get a meeting with him."

Next 30 Years

continued from page 1

Live scenes had been inserted into episodes during the week. Superimposed on the screen throughout the week was: #EELive, encouraging viewers to comment via Twitter.

As the murder mystery unraveled, social media records were broken twice. The first episode saw



508,678 tweets sent, while the flashback episode broke that record with 519,359 making it the most tweeted about UK soap episode. The live broadcasts came off without a hitch, except for one moment when an actress, who shall go unnamed, asked "How's Adam?" when she meant "Ian."

Speaking of which, congratulations to Adam Woodyatt for his amazing performance (see p. 12)..

or Albert Square? the way for Larry



The cast of EastEnders pictured last year.



Gretchen with "Willy".

Gretchen was British gran I never had

GRETCHEN FRANKLIN found a place in our hearts as gossipy Ethel Skinner, writes Alan Shaw.

And Larry Jaffee, editor of US-based EastEnders newspaper The Walford Gazette, has more reason than most to love the late actress, a fixture in the Queen Vic with her pug Willy.

"The single person who made me really realise I had something special with the newspaper was Gretchen Franklin," says Larry.

"She was the first interview I did in London, and this was when I was banned from the studio after we published photographs of an American woman who got onto the set under the headline 'ALBERT SQUARE TRESPASSER!'.

"I thought I was being cheeky but they took it badly and I heard someone in security was fired.

"I called various producers and the PR department.

"However, they all told me I wasn't welcome.

"Gretchen couldn't believe it.

"She said: 'It's too bad I'm not working this week.

"If I was, you could be my dog-minder and they could have nothing to say about that!'.

"But she also told them: 'This man is helping keep the show alive in the United States, how can you do that to him!'.

"Gretchen and I became close friends and we used to

see each other every year for the last 12 years of her life.

"We had this ritual. I'd go to her house in Barnes and she'd have a bottle of champagne waiting, even though I don't really drink!

"I saw her in hospital towards the end of her life, and when she died, BBC radio interviewed two people, June Brown, who plays her friend Dot, and me.

"She was the British gran I never had."



ADAM / IAN

The anniversary episodes prompted former American fan who resides in southern California, Priscilla Mayfield, to get addicted again after losing interest over a decade ago. "Like Michael Corleone, we're pulled back in. Dang *EastEnders*," she posted on Facebook, attributing her rekindled appreciation to a VPN service Tunnelbear.

The *Los Angeles Times* published a nice essay about why *EastEnders* is so important to British culture.



#EastEnders

one

Downton's Fifth Season: Something for Everyone

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Now that *Downton Abbey* just wrapped its fifth season, the question is how many will follow?

Sir Julian Fellowes created and has written every episode since its inception. In a *New York Times* interview, Fellowes was asked about the show's future, to which he responded that NBC Universal – not he – was in charge of whether it would continue past the promised sixth season.

(Editor's note: *Downton* originates via Britain's ITV, and is broadcast stateside on PBS. The production company is Carnival Films, which NBC Universal acquired in 2008 as its flagship international production arm.)

In American television at least, a network is very likely to keep broadcasting a successful series long after its sell-by date (e.g., CBS and *Two-and-A-Half Men*).

It is an open secret that Fellowes has been tapped to write a pilot for NBC that would be set in his comfort zone, the past.

Downton has had so much success and few missteps, excluding most-loved character Matthew's exit, which was not the show's fault, but the actor's wish to do something different. Hence, he was killed off.

By contrast, AMC's *Mad Men* will begin its final season in April. Matthew Weiner engaged in a dust-up with the network over who ran the show. Management reportedly threatened to fire Weiner and bring in a new showrunner (TV-biz speak for chief). Cooler heads prevailed and Weiner's still in charge. While *Mad Men* was on hiatus through much of last year, *Downton Abbey* overtook the 1960s advertising drama for having the best ensemble cast on television.

If *Downton's* Season 4 was dogged by dark shadows, leaving most of the characters in jeopardy and with very little to feel good about, thankfully Season 5 gave everyone (including fans) something to cheer.



DOWNTON ABBEY – Season 5 gave everyone – fans and characters alike – something to cheer.

It was as if the curtains on the windows were pulled aside and the sunlight pured into the rooms of *Downton Abbey*.

Bates and his wife Anna were separately accused of killing apparently serial rapist Mr Green (played by Nigel Harman a/k/a *EastEnders'* Dennis Rickman). At the finale, Bates appeared exonerated; Anna was at least out on bail to try to enjoy Christmas with the Grantham family. They sing Christmas carols together.

Bates gets off the hook when fellow servants Mr Molesley and Miss Baxter found the pub in York where Bates had lunch on the day Mr Green was murdered in London. I'm hoping Molesley and Baxter fall in love like Anna and Bates. If any two other characters deserve happiness it's these two.

Downton matriarch Violet, the dowager duchess, finally came face to face with her long-lost love, Russian Prince Kuragin, exiled in England. Some 60 years earlier, their love affair ended abruptly, as Russian royal family wishes prevailed, dashing the dreams of the young lovers. The prince's wife caught them, and threw Violet into a carriage that began her return to England.

The ever-bitter princess, presumed deceased, re-emerges for an awkward reunion – at Downton, no less – with her husband as well as the original (and present) object of affection. No matter what the prince may be guilty of, to be stuck with the princess for the rest of his life is too harsh a punishment.

This time Violet rejects him, eschewing twilight love. The elderly royal couple in exile head for a life of strife in Paris, while the dowager doesn't regret her latest choice.

Meanwhile, her cousin Isobel Crawley wisely decided not to marry when both of her suitor's sons refused to accept her as their stepmother.

The always spirited and in love Lady Rose, played by a radiant Lily James, marries Atticus, a dashing young man from an aristocratic, albeit Jewish, family. Her new father-in-law would prefer his son marry in the faith, but true love prevails and they're moving to New York.

Former chauffeur Tom Branson, proud Irishman who marries into wealth only to lose his bride Sybil during childbirth, bids a long goodbye to his adopted family with whom he spends a last Christmas. A new life in America, in Boston to

be exact, for him and young daughter Sybbie beckons.

Lady Edith makes peace with her father Lord Grantham now that she's able to acknowledge her daughter Marigold, born out of wedlock. At least, there's another grandchild to nurture and love, just as Sybbie is about to leave.

Young widow Lady Mary decides to go with neither eligible bachelor, but at a shooting party she meets a new suitor who no doubt will figure in Season 6 proceedings.

Mrs Hughes accepts the head butler's marriage proposal after years of unrequited love. "Of course I'll marry you, you old booby. I thought you'd never ask," she tells him.

The Season 5 image of Mrs Hughes holding Mr Carson's hand as they waded into the water, harks back to several seasons ago when a last episode was set at the beach.

If I had my druthers, I'd prefer *Downton's* run end before the lead up to the Second World War. We haven't even reached the Depression years.

That would satisfy the faithful and guarantee a long life in syndication, and I wish Fellowes much success with his new American show.



Here Comes Another Marigold

Maggie Smith gets about the same percentage of screen time in *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* that she does in *Downton Abbey*. Of course, she's a pivotal character in this film, a sequel to *The Best...*

Despite the 80-year span between when *Downton* is set and the contemporary India, Smith plays a quick-witted, saucy-tongued dame set in her ways who commands respect, such as reprimanding a California waiter for not knowing how to serve tea.

Smith doesn't have to carry the film, which has an all-star cast, in-

cluding return heavyweights Judi Dench and Bill Nighy, as well as newcomer Richard Gere. It's also fun to see *Downton's* Mrs Crawley (Penelope Wilton), albeit in a minor role.

The new movie is mostly about the young ambitious hotelier played by Dev Patel, who also starred in the first 2012 film, as well as the Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire* as a teenager. What's best about *Second Best* is that it gives the older demographic something to see at the cinema.

—Larry Jaffee

Dear Walford Gazette...



JOHN BARDON, RIP – EastEnders fans know him as Jim Branning, but he also appeared in the classic Britcom *Only Fools & Horses*.

John Bardon Tribute Spot On

Good Morning Larry,
JUST TO SAY RECEIVED COPIES OF the *Walford Gazette* and to say thank you for the lovely moving tribute you made to my darling husband John. It made me cry and very proud that he was so loved by so many in the USA.

I am off home to Ireland for Christmas and New Year as with four brothers and four sisters will have the support I need to see me through this time of year without my wonderful husband

Seasons greetings to you all.
Kind regards,
Enda Bardon,
Essex, England

Larry,
THANKS FOR A GREAT GAZETTE issue. I especially enjoyed reading the John Bardon tribute. He was a favourite of mine.
Thanks,
Peg McGuigan,
Philadelphia, PA

Dear Larry,
THANKS VERY MUCH FOR VOL.22, Issue 4 (No.88) of the *Walford Gazette*. It was a great read! The tribute to John Bardon was touching and to read all the comments from various cast members was brilliant. A true *EastEnders* great who will never be forgotten.

Thanks again.
Tom Willetts
Cerdigion, Wales, UK
Editor's note: The author is the proprietor of the new EastEnders website called WalfordWatch that you can read about on page 10.

Another EE Kiss

LARRY,
I FAINTLY REMEMBER THE KISS between Colin and Barry, The kiss that I thought was memorable was at Blackpool between Simon and

Tony. I especially enjoyed this edition of *Walford Gazette*.
Happy New Year!
David Laughlin
Long Beach, CA



'Folks I Grew Up With'

Dear Larry,
ENCLOSED IN MY CHEQUE FOR next year's subscription to the *Walford Gazette*. It is so nice to read about the folks I grew up with.

I was born in Liverpool and raised Mersey-side. I performed in Christmas pantomimes for seven years. Now I try to meet British celebrities who come to the States, such as Peter Noone (lead singer of Herman's Hermits), as you can see from the photo (above). I've been able to attend his yearly performances in Annapolis. Other folks come hundreds of miles to see him perform.

Please keep up the good work with your paper. It's much appreciated, not only by us British Expats, but also American Anglophiles, both whom appreciate the excellent acting on *EastEnders*.

Have a great holiday season,
Veronica Lyon-Davis,
Annapolis, MD

Subscriber Needs Fix

Dear Larry,
HERE'S MY ONE-YEAR RENEWAL. I can't do without getting my "fix"

of the *Gazette* every three months. Keep up the good work.
Cheers,
Rhoda Baron,
Silver Spring, MD

This Great Fanzine

Larry,
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
I have enclosed my payment for two more years of the *Walford Gazette*. Thank you for publishing this great "fanzine."
Sincerely,
Peter T. Santangelo,
Cherry Hill, NJ

Little Mo Gets Around

Larry,
HAPPY NEW YEAR. I WAS JUST watching *Call the Midwife* holiday special, and there was Little Mo. How exciting!
And then I was watching the

our 48th anniversary.

She was the *EastEnders* fan in the family, and always enjoyed the *Gazette*. Thank you for the pleasure it gave her.
Best wishes,
John Eggers,
Towson, MD

How Do I Catch Up?

Hi Larry!
JUST CHECKING IN WITH YOU TO see what you recommend. I will be away in Japan, working, again, for four months, and want to keep up with our local broadcasts on WLIW21. Do you know of a way to do that? I can't DVR them for that length of time.
Thank you for all that you do!
Peace,
Ty Stephens
Montclair, NJ
Editor's reply: Here's an idea. Go to <http://archive.walford.net/> and figure out the date in 2005 of the episode you want to watch and then match the UK airdate on YouTube. It's amazing how many complete episodes are there.

DC Girls Check In

Dear Larry,
PLEASE GIVE A SHOUT OUT TO THE Queen Vic Pub – 1206 H St. NE, Washington, DC – as they always treat us like royalty. Here are pics from our recent 30th anniversary *EastEnders* party there.
Cheers,
Kathy Alvarado
Burke, VA



GANG'S ALL HERE AT THE VIC

British show *Grantchester* and Little Mo is the policeman's wife.

By the way, I enjoyed reading the *Walford Gazette* over my holiday from school. My father died last Saturday, and *EastEnders* got me through it. I wish it was on more often.

Regards,
Liz Drucker,
New York, NY
Editor's note: Yes, we did notice. Read about Kacey Ainsworth's extra-curricular acting work on page 14.

Consistently Interesting

Larry,
ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$25 for the *Walford Gazette* for 2015. Thank you for consistently publishing such an interesting and fun to read newspaper!
Mary Neustel,
St. Paul, MN

Prayer for an EE Fan

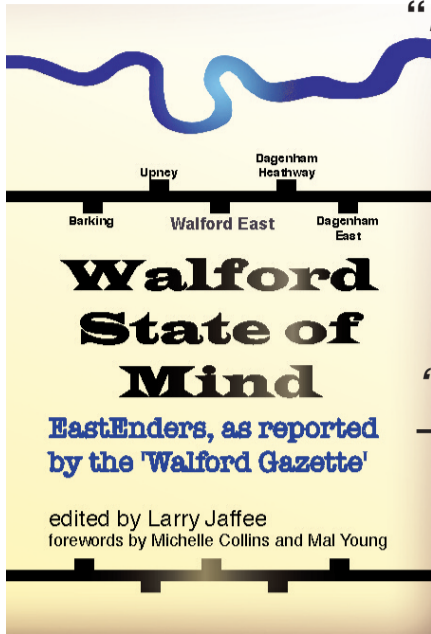
Dear Larry,
Thank you for the *Walford Gazette* expiration notice. I am sorry to report Helen died of cancer last July, three weeks short of

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- No. 37* (Dot Cotton, Louise interviews)
- No. 38 (Beppe interview)
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