

44 PORTLAND PLACE

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Film Club *with John Wischmeyer*

Scrooge (1920) and Oliver Twist (1922)
11 December 14.00

Miserly London businessman Ebenezer Scrooge is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his dead business partner Marley, who warns him that three more ghosts will appear during the night to show Scrooge the error of his ways. As the night wears on, he's visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present

and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. But will even they be enough to soften old Scrooge's heart?

Also screening in December is the 1922 version of Oliver Twist. Oliver's mother, a penniless outcast, died giving birth to him. As a young boy Oliver is brought up in a workhouse, later apprenticed to an uncaring undertaker and eventually taken in by a gang of thieves who befriend him for their own

purposes. All the while, there are secrets from Oliver's family history waiting to come to light.

Tickets: Members £3.50
Guests £6.00.



Special Events in December and Beyond!

Bright lights greet us at Oxford Circus and stores full of desperate shoppers – it's that time of year again!

Please come and join us at 44 Portland Place on Thursday 11 December for our Christmas Celebration. There'll be our inaugural Christmas Quiz (with prizes!), the Film Club will be screening Scrooge and Oliver Twist (see above) and the annual Jewellery Fair will be open from 12.30 to 18.30 – perfect for last-minute gifts. The Life Members Tea at 16.30 will be followed by

Mince Pies and Mulled Wine for all members and guests at 18.00. Carols and readings will be in full swing in the Adam Lounge between 18.30–19.30.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and trustees for their hard work during 2008 making the YWCA Central Club "the place to be" for so many. We look forward to an even more successful year in 2009.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Sarah Simpson,
Chair, Board of Trustees.

Craft Group continues on Wednesday 17 December between 13.30 – 15.30. Either bring your own current project, continue with the patchwork started last month or make something last minute for Christmas. Some materials will be available but feel free to bring any others you would like to use.

Spanish Conversation Group continues on 4 December at 15.00 in the Adam Lounge. No fee for attending and no need to book. For more details, call 020 7079 2855.

Tennis anyone?

Club Member Phillipa Wielgos would like to start up a Tennis Group to play regularly in Regent's Park. Anyone interested can email Phillipa at: tennismembers@tiscali.co.uk

STOP PRESS

CHRISTMAS BREAK

44 PORTLAND PLACE WILL CLOSE AT MIDDAY ON **24 DECEMBER 2008** AND RE-OPEN ON **5 JANUARY 2009**

London Events in December 2008

The BlackRock Masters Tennis, 2 – 6 December, Royal Albert Hall

Don't miss the chance to see some of the world's greatest tennis legends in action as some of the best players in the world return to the court.

www.theblackrockmasters.com

Shop West End VIP Day 6 – 7 December, Regent Street and Oxford Circus

Beat the last-minute Christmas shopping rush with a trip to London's West End. With traffic-free shopping and magical Christmas lights you can enjoy a VIP (Very Important Pedestrians!) shopping experience. Plenty of entertainment on offer, including VIP treats, celebrity appearances and live music to help get you into the festive spirit!

www.westendvip.com

Breast Cancer Campaign's Christmas Carol Service, 9 December, 19.00 – 21.00, The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, EC1A 7JQ

Join celebrity guests, including Women's Hour presenter Jenni Murray, for festive carols and readings by candlelight followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Tickets £15.00. Call 020 7749 3700 for details.

The Frost Fair Winter Market, 12 – 13 December, Bankside Riverside

You'll find some stunning and unique Christmas gifts with more than 30 stalls selling handmade jewellery, fine ceramics and Christmas crafts. There will also be festive food on offer and a bar serving mulled wine to keep up the Christmas cheer!

www.visitbankside.com

Santa Skate London 13 December, Hyde Park

Back for another year the Santa Skate London event is sure to be a great day out for all skaters that love to dress up as the jolly red fat man and skate around London. Beginning with the distribution of the Santa Skate costumes themselves from the Victoria Pub at Strathern Place, the skating Santa crew will then head over to Hyde Park where they limber up before their unique journey across London.



Crisis Carol Service 13 December, 18:30 – 19:45, Southwark Cathedral

This year the Thames Philharmonic Choir will be joined by internationally renowned soprano Kathryn Harries and a choir of homeless people in a service led by Canon Bruce Saunders.

Call 020 7426 3853 for details.

London Pantomime,

Simon Callow and Bonnie Langford return to London's Richmond Theatre in a classic production of Peter Pan, Britt Ekland stars as the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella at The Shaw Theatre. For information on more stage productions for the festive season, see <http://www.bigpantoguide.co.uk/london.php>

Small Business Club

'Wine Tasting'
Thursday 4 December
18.30

Veronique Croft, a food and beverage lecturer on the Professional Chef Programme at Westminster Kingsway College will be provide an Introduction to Wine Tasting at this month's Small Business Club meeting.

Topics will include preparation for tasting, the stages of tasting, appearance, nose, taste and conclusion.

We'll then go on to taste some Spanish, French and Portuguese wines.

Tickets cost £6.50. All welcome!

For further information please email Elaine Smith at: ms.elain smith@btinternet.com

Book Club – Thursday 18 December

with Angela Broad

'Black and Blue' –
Ian Rankin
14.30 – 16.00
(Adam Lounge)

Inspector Rebus is juggling four cases trying to catch one killer – who might just lead back to the infamous Bible John. And he's doing it under the scrutiny of an internal inquiry led by a man he has just accused of taking backhanders from Glasgow's Mr Big. Added to that there are TV cameras at his back investigating a miscarriage of justice, making Rebus a

criminal in the eyes of a million or more viewers. Just one mistake is likely to mean another unpleasant death or, worse still, losing his job. Written with Ian Rankin's signature wit, style and intricacy, Black and Blue is a novel of uncommon and unforgettable intrigue.



Reducing Back Pain

Good back care is not only focused on preventing back pain from striking in the first place, but also about trying to prevent the negative consequences of back pain.

Back pain can be persistent and many people find that their pain re-occurs regularly. Chances are that you have days of fairly minimum pain and days of more severe pain. When feeling good, you may tend to do most things that you have to do, while on the bad days you cannot get yourself to do your daily activities because the pain is bothering you too much. There is however the risk that you over-do it on the good days and that this leads to more pain on the subsequent days. Even when your back pain is persistent, it is important to remain physically active. Spending too much time in bed or on the couch is likely to result in further de-conditioning and this will impair recovery of back pain. It may

not always be easy to remain physically active due to your pain, but there will be some gentle stretching exercises that you will be able to cope with.

Doing low-impact aerobics is a relatively safe way for persons with recurring back pain to begin strengthening their back and abdominal muscles. Low-impact aerobic and conditioning workouts tone the muscles that support the back without causing undue strain. Besides strengthening muscles, these exercises increase circulation, which aids in healing and improves the health of the intervertebral discs. Swimming, walking, using a stationary exercise bike or a cross trainer are all good options to help you to get active. Working out distributes nutrients into the disc space and soft tissues in the back to keep the discs, muscles, ligaments and joints healthy. Consequently, a reg-

ular exercise routine helps avoid stiffness and weakness, minimizes recurrences of low back pain, and reduces the severity and duration of possible future episodes. Lifting moderate/light weights or using resistance machines in a gym will also help.

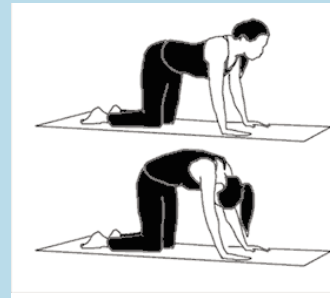
Some examples of back stretching exercises include:

The Cobra: Lay flat on stomach, forehead to ground, with arms bent and palms down on the ground under the shoulders. Try to straighten your arms as you raise your upper torso and arch your back. Hold for 3 full breaths before slowly bringing the upper torso back down to the ground.

The Cat: Begin on all fours, hands directly under your shoulders and knees directly under your hips.

Inhale as you drop tummy towards the floor and look up over your head.

Exhale as you bring your tummy back up, rounding your back as you tuck your chin in and tuck your tail-



bone in. Move slowly back and forth between these two positions pausing on each pose.

If you would like any advice on stretching and strengthening exercises for the back, or would like to book in for a session with a gym trainer, please contact the office on 0207 079 2855. Alternatively, you can email louise.harrison@44portlandplace.org.uk for more advice.

Meet the Staff: Janice Woolley, Deputy Club Manager, profiled by Lou Harrison



Janice was born near Melbourne, Australia, and spent her early years growing up at the beach before setting off in 1980 to see the world. She ended up in London where she worked in the members and players' lounge at Queens Club in

Barons Court, organising food and drink for some of the top tennis players of the day plus various celebrities and minor royals.

During the next couple of years she travelled around Europe and beyond, journeys that were funded by working as a bicycle courier, sandwich maker and by busking on the London Underground.

Following a year spent hitchhiking around Australia in the late 80's, Janice returned to London and "went mainstream", working for Marks & Spencer as a System Controller in the early days of computerised stock sys-

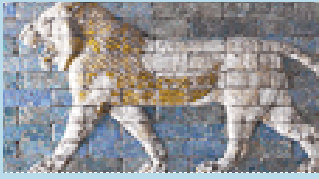
tems. From M&S she joined the City Lit, where she worked for 10 years and became the Head of Information and Registration services.

Janice came to 44 Portland Place in 2002, a few weeks before the relaunch. "On my first day the building was still like a construction site and I had trouble searching for Joy (Grimshaw, Club Manager) in amongst the builders' rubble!" Janice is a dedicated distance runner and has competed in the London Marathon and other long distance races in the UK and the USA. This

October she ran in the Melbourne Marathon, and achieved her best time this year, running in 31 degrees against a hot north wind! Janice has never tired of travel and enjoys cooking – and eating! If she had to eat the same meal everyday for the rest of her life she would choose an Indian style vegetarian dish with basmati rice.

Janice currently lives in Shooters Hill, South-East London but keeps a second home in Australia and tries to make a couple of trips there each year.

Art in London: *written by Vivien Van Hoof*



On 13 November James Hicks introduced us to **Renaissance Faces: Van Eyck to Titian**. After centuries of painting with tempera (egg yolk and pigment), the invention of oil paint in the early 15th century kickstarted the Renaissance. The oil base made colour glow and enabled a degree of accuracy which produced the first recognisable likenesses since the ancient world. Artists were enthused to paint their subjects naturally and realistically, not 'what they looked like' but 'who' they were.

This new combination of technology and realism produced the Renaissance Portrait.

When Raphael's naturalistic portrait of the elderly Pope Julius II (1511) was put on show after his death, people screamed and fainted at what they thought was his ghost.

We discussed the Arnolfini Wedding Portrait by Van Eyck (1430); a 'technical masterpiece' in its detail and symbolism with the bride wearing green; the conventional colour for weddings, representing fecundity.

A later portrait was Holbein's The Ambassadors

(1533). Holbein brought renaissance techniques to England and Henry VIII, trusting in his skill, commissioned the artist to paint portraits of potential wives for him – an early form of catalogue!

The exhibition continues at the **National Gallery** until 18 January and is definitely worth a visit.

James Hicks will be returning to 44 Portland Place on 11 December between 11.00 – 12.30 to introduce the **Sisley in England and Wales** exhibition. Find out all about Alfred Sisley's two painting campaigns in the UK which have been brought together in an exhi-

bition at for the first time at the National Gallery.

'**Babylon – Myth and Reality**' This exhibition explores the continuing dialogue between the Babylon of our imagination and the historic evidence for one of the great cities of antiquity at the moment of its climax and eclipse. Irving Finkel, Exhibition Curator will present a talk on 8 January, 11.00–12.30.

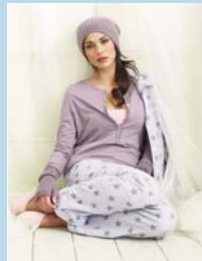
Art in London tickets cost £8.50.

44 Portland Place Member Discounts

Ozer 10% discount, Ottoman & Turkish
5 Langham Place, WIB 3DG
tel: 020 7323 0505

WIB 2HT
tel: 020 7637 1070

Hush Clothing



Clothes for chilling out in! Get your 10% discount by entering promotion code YWCA when ordering online.
www.hush-uk.com
tel: 0844 800 4108

Massage Treatments!

Practitioner Susan Morse is offering Members a 10% discount on a wide range of 1 and 1.5 hour treatments.
susanmorse@inedamassage.co.uk
tel: 07952 339497

Pizza Express 12% discount, Italian
4–5 Langham Place, WIB 3DG
tel: 020 7580 3700

Weymouth Street Dental Practice and Spa

10% discount on cosmetic work and all treatments, including check-ups and cleaning.
28 Weymouth Street,
London W1G 7BZ
tel: 020 7323 4441

India Links, a local shop selling evening wear, silks, hand embroidered clothing, pashminas, jewellery and accessories. India Links offers Members a 10% discount.
317 Regent Street, London

Pilates Review *written by Gianna Lapini*

I have been attending the Gym at 44 Portland Place for the last couple of years after I had an accident in October 2006 and broke my right ankle in three places. I started attending the gym in order to re-build all my muscles, which had wasted, and to lose weight. This year, since I am getting fitter thanks to my twice weekly gym sessions, I decided to attend a Pilates class to better work on my core muscles and improve my balance. I have found the teacher, Anne – very poised, graceful and extremely effective in her way of communicating with the students. The class is mixed levels, so some of us are more used to the routines than others. I have been able to broadly follow the teacher's instructions and have improved my posture and deep muscle tone very quickly. On the whole I found the routine not too taxing – I tend to follow instructions for beginners – and quite enjoyable in itself.

All in all my Pilates classes have been great thanks to the teacher and the other students. Also the physical effects of this work have been very good for me and I would recommend this to anyone with issues similar to mine.

