



1933: PREPARED FOR ALL
EVENTUALITIES AT THE
HENLEY REGATTA



1952: NORMAN PARKINSON
SHOOTS WOMEN'S FASHION



1975: THE EVENING
STANDARD WAS UNDER THE
EDITORSHIP OF ANNA
WINTOUR'S DAD CHARLES

CHANGING FACE OF LONDON

Stylist speaks to 10 women
who witnessed the events that have
shaped London's landscape

INTERVIEWS BY LUCY BALLINGER, CLAIRE BAYLIS,
JO USMAR, JULIA MAILE AND LIZZIE POOK



1967: MODELS IN LUREX
FASHION TRY AND FLAG
A CAB TO THE MOON



1936: A FASCIST MARCH IS
HALTED DURING THE
BATTLE OF CABLE STREET



1905: FEMINISM IS
ON THE STREET:
MUCH LIKE STYLIST





1940: LONDONERS TAKE COVER IN HOLBORN TUBE STATION DURING THE BLITZ



1941: FUR COAT AND FEATHERED FASCINATORS IN LONDON'S HYDE PARK



1966: THE AGE OF CHIVALRY IS CLEARLY OVER ON LONDON TRANSPORT

Since the Romans settled on the banks of the Thames in AD43, it's fair to say a lot has happened to London. Fires and plagues have ravaged its cobbled streets, painters have been inspired by its impressive vistas and writers and poets influenced by its unflagging energy. But London's characters are what have really shaped the country's capital, so we tracked down 10 women who between them have lived through the past 100 years of the city's history. Here they tell their stories from the Blitz, the Festival of Britain and the first Gay Pride parade to Diana's funeral, the opening of Tate Modern and last year's London riots.



HETTY BOWER, 106

Hetty supported the General Strike of May 1926 when London workers walked out for nine days in solidarity with coal miners facing lower wages and poor conditions

"It's not often you see a London street completely silent, nothing moving, but that's what happened on May 4, 1926, during the General Strike – the largest industrial dispute in Britain's history. I was 20, living in Hackney, and a member of the Independent Labour Party. The London strikers, from all industries and walks of life, were supporting British coal miners working in terrible conditions. We benefitted from miners' labour – they provided fuel to keep the city going – so they deserved our support. I made sandwiches for the picket lines – there was no other way for the men to eat. Our allotted time to bring them food was 4am. I felt that the spirit in London was 100% behind the miners. People accuse Londoners of being selfish, but I don't think that's true."



BEATTIE ORWELL, 94

Beattie was at the Battle of Cable Street in October 1936, trying to stop the Blackshirted British Union of Fascists (BUF) and their anti-semitic march in Whitechapel

"A large group of fascists were determined to march along Whitechapel, then home to London's largest Jewish population, on 4 October 1936. These Blackshirts used to strut around all the time, causing trouble. As a 19-year-old Jew living in Aldgate, I certainly didn't want them there. So we all – Jews and Christians together – turned out to stop their march of hate. There were thousands of people, all shouting 'No pasaran' – 'they will not pass'. It felt amazing to see so many out in force against them, but scary too. Things did get heated – a lorry was turned over to block their path and there were lots of scuffles – but eventually the Blackshirts decided not to march. That day was a warning to the fascists

that they couldn't walk through the East End like that – that we, born in London, were just as British as they were. That day killed fascism in London. Things are much more integrated now."



VERA CALEY, 84

Vera was just 12 when the Blitz started on 7 September 1940. Then living in the East End, she witnessed the devastation of the World War II bombings

"We lived in a fourth floor flat on an estate in Bethnal Green, so when the sirens went we had to run down to the bomb shelter in the courtyard, – a covered hole in the ground. Once, when a bomb dropped on our street the whole shelter shook. There was dust in the air and a woman was shouting 'it's gas, it's gas'. I went to the top of the flats after one bombing and the sky was orange and yellow with flames, and on each side of us were burning buildings. The darkness of the blackout was frightening itself. You could see bullets being shot into the sky. The worst times were when someone you knew died. One day I went to school and a girl called Rosie Bell wasn't there. She was killed the night before. Suddenly gone. During the Blitz there was a real sense of community on our estate – everyone knew each other. There is much less of that now, everybody shuts their doors behind them. London has changed so much."



BRENDA BURKILL, 90

In 1948, Brenda, now living in Essex, worked full-time on the Festival of Britain in London, which aimed to rebuild the country's culture after the war

"I was 27 when I started working in the Festival of Britain Office in 1948, three years



1926: ALL INDUSTRIES SUPPORTED THE MINERS IN THE GENERAL STRIKE



1951: THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN GAVE LONDONERS HOPE AFTER WORLD WAR II

before it opened to the public. The Festival was not only about recovery after the war, but to show hope for the future after London – and the rest of the UK – had been so damaged. Amazing buildings were built – the Royal Festival Hall, Hayward Gallery, National Theatre and National Film Theatre. They were so modern and exciting, like nothing we'd seen. There were exhibitions, concerts, parties. It was about coming together. Millions visited the Southbank when it opened – it was especially magical in the evenings, dancing in the open air – well wrapped up, mind you. After the years of hardship, the festival director described it as 'a tonic to the nation'. It was the start of a new era for London. We knew Britain could be great again."



BARBARA SHERVINGTON, 70

Barbara helped to organise the first Notting Hill Carnival in 1964, in celebration of the area's diversity

"In the early Sixties I was friends with a social worker called Rhaune Laslett O'Brien who worked with West Indian immigrants. They'd reminisce about the carnivals back home and one day a group of us, including my Guyanese husband, said how great it would be to create that here. Notting Hill Carnival was born. It was intended to foster a community spirit with bands playing West Indian, African and Irish music. The first one was very small with one float and costumes made by local children. It's changed enormously over the years and has helped race relations a lot. It's too crowded now for me but I still help with the costumes and love sitting on my doorstep with my grandchildren watching everyone go past. I've never seen any violence and it frustrates me that the newspapers are only interested when there's trouble; they don't see the good side of it."



NETTIE POLLARD, 62

Nettie was on the first Gay Pride parade in London in 1972, which took place just five years after homosexuality was decriminalised

"The first Gay Pride march was the most fun, liberating experience, but serious too. It was about being completely out and open, something that wasn't known at that time. We were meant to hide that we were gay – there was massive discrimination. I was 22 and a proud lesbian. There were about 700 people marching, and women made up about a quarter. The police considered us a threat but the public were simply bemused by this colourful parade of people who looked so happy. There were lesbians in 'dyke' T-shirts, men with beards wearing dresses. It brought national publicity and made a lot of people more aware, plus it brought everybody from London together and inspired them. Back then it was tough but exciting to be gay because it was subversive and exclusive – like being apart from conventional society. Now being gay is part of the establishment – things are more equal. It is an offence to discriminate against us. London – and Britain – has come a long way."



2000: TATE MODERN OPENS, TRANSFORMING LONDON'S CULTURAL SCENE AND LASER BUDGET



1997: THE CITY COMES TO A STANDSTILL FOR PRINCESS DIANA'S FUNERAL



2011: THE LONDON RIOTS TURNS NEIGHBOURHOODS INTO NO-GO ZONES



JANE PROCTOR, 56

Jane was the editor of Tatler magazine when she attended Princess Diana's funeral in 1997, and watched London come to a standstill

"I didn't really understand the collective outpouring of grief in London, and the rest of the UK, when Princess Diana died on 31 August. I remember I had to drive past the palace to my office every morning and all I could see was this sea of flowers. Before the funeral, the streets were eerily calm. Everyone was at home watching the TV. My abiding memory was when the coffin was put down, the Queen got up and rearranged the cloth, like she was smoothing down a child's bedclothes. It was the most touching thing I've ever seen. I don't think anyone else would inspire that kind of mourning

"I THINK THE LONDON RIOTS HAVE MADE EVERYONE TAKE MORE PRIDE IN THE CITY"

now. It was because Diana's life was cut short in such a dramatic way. It's nice that since then, with the royal wedding and the Jubilee, London has united in celebration of the royal family, not in grief."



FRANCES MORRIS

Frances, head of collections, was part of the opening of Tate Modern in 2000, which kick-started London's new and exciting cultural direction

"The first people through the door of the Tate Modern on 8 May were the locals from Bankside. We are first and foremost a London museum and I wanted it to be that way. We didn't have any idea how popular it would be – it's changed the cultural landscape of London, making art accessible to people who might have heard about Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin but never seen their work. One of my favourite memories was when we invited all of London's black cab drivers to see Louise Bourgeois' huge spider in the Turbine Hall. For weeks after, whenever I got into a cab, the cabbie would say 'Oh, I saw that massive spider!' The gallery has made the cultural scene vibrant. New York has MoMA, Paris has Pompidou and London has Tate Modern."



SUSAN HARRISON, 34

Susan lost her lower leg in the 7/7 bombing that took place between King's Cross and Russell Square. She spoke to Stylist about it in 2006

"I got on the Tube at Turnpike Lane station that morning – the bomber, Germaine Lindsay, boarded [six stops later] at King's Cross. Suddenly, as we entered the tunnel, there was this huge force and I lost consciousness. Coming to, I knew it was a bomb and my thoughts went to al-Qaeda. My first reaction was that people would be hurt and I should help. I couldn't see much, but could hear people in agony. But on trying to get up, I realised the carriage's metal hand rails were laid across me. I was carried out of the tunnel by eight police officers on a blanket. That period's very hazy, but after a few days I began thinking more clearly. I had to have a left leg above-knee amputation. I knew I'd walk again though. I decided this wouldn't beat me."



LENI WHITE, 32

Violinist Leni was a victim of the London riots in 2011, which saw the streets of London erupt in violence and looting between 7 and 10 August

"I'd heard about the Tottenham riots on the news, but didn't realise they had reached Ealing until I got home and saw on Twitter that the shopping centre behind our flat was on fire. Then we saw groups smashing windows and heard them break into the shop below. We were trapped in our house. It was surreal. We heard someone shout, 'Let's start a fire!' and saw them pour alcohol on bags and throw them towards the shop. We quickly left and watched our building burn down on the television. The next day there was an amazing sense of community spirit though – people sweeping the streets together. London has been through worse and survived. I still love London and am still immensely proud to be a Londoner."