Emily Evans

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To: Emily Evans
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ILC Friday three

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Reversing the lens – a look at nightlife from the back of the queue



David Sinclair, ILC's Chief Executive, spent the weekend in Hull – his old university stomping ground. On Saturday evening, he managed to persuade his 18-year-old daughter to go to a club with him and a friend. They'd felt a bit too nervous to go without someone a little younger.

But they needn't have worried. Spiders in Hull turned out to be one of the most inclusive spaces he had ever experienced. No one paid them any attention – people were just enjoying themselves. And so did he, *"From Green Day to Hole, it was as if the 2000s and 2010s had never happened."*

The crowd was surprisingly age-diverse. When David used to go, it was mostly people in their early 20s. This time, there were many in their 30s, a few in their 40s – and he doesn't think he was the oldest person in the room.

ILC is currently working on a project exploring the night-time economy. Already, the team is identifying a number of barriers that prevent people from getting out at night. David's experience at the weekend reflected some of these early findings:

- **Cost:** A taxi to Spiders – barely a mile away – was disproportionately expensive due to surge pricing. But drinks in the club remain incredibly affordable (£2.50 to £4 for a cocktail – Gangalactic Garglebuster, anyone?).
- **Transport:** Uber makes it easier than it was when David was a student, but they couldn't get one after the club and had to walk back to the hotel. The walk, through an old industrial area to the east of the city, could feel intimidating if walking alone.
- **Self-imposed ageism:** David assumed he might be too old. Perhaps he was. But no-one else seemed to care.
- **Noise**: Yes, it was loud – but that was expected.
- **Seating**: There were plenty of places to sit.

David noted that the last time he went to Spiders was before the smoking ban. Waking up the next morning without reeking of cigarettes was a welcome change.

But today, key aspects of the night-time economy are struggling. There aren't enough staff, and not enough young people to fill the clubs. The sector hasn't yet adapted to demographic change. For most people, the night-time economy doesn't revolve around clubbing – or certainly not often. The future of towns and cities is likely to involve less alcohol and more spaces that facilitate relationships, hyperlocal services, technology, immersive environments and learning experiences.

ILC wants to play a part in designing the night-time economy of the future. The team is working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to feed into its night-time economy strategy.

What do you think? How can we rethink the night-time economy – and what's your idea of a perfect night out? Let us know via the button below.

WHAT IS YOUR PERFECT NIGHT OUT?

From mosh pits to mindfulness – how UK festivals are growing up



I don't live in either my past or my future. I'm interested only in the present. If you can concentrate always on the present, you'll be a happy man. Life will be a party for you, a grand festival, because life is the moment we're living now.
Paulo Coelho (1998)

Festivals have been falling at an alarming rate since the pandemic. According to the Association of Independent Festivals, in 2025, there will have been 592 music festivals across the UK – of which 360 are greenfield events and 232 are single-venue or multi-venue festivals across cities and towns.

That's a sharp drop from the 800 to 900 that existed at the sector's peak in 2018 and 2019. But it's not all doom – and music festivals possibly have much to teach the night-time entertainment industries about making fun accessible to all.

At the weekend, David Sinclair went to a city-based festival. Hull's Humber Street Sesh is reportedly *"more than a music festival – it's a grassroots celebration of regional creativity, culture and community"*. It remains one of the UK's largest independent music festivals, with affordable ticket prices (£20 per adult ticket), local food, family-friendly activities and a focus on up-and-coming artists.

Meanwhile, the editor of this newsletter, Emily Evans, forked out £293 for her long-weekend camping ticket at a greenfield event. Wilderness Festival in Oxfordshire might not be cheap – but for five nights of general camping, it still comes in at over £30 less than Reading & Leeds. And although the festival line-up might be less on trend, unlike its louder, more adolescent cousins, Wilderness markets itself as age-inclusive, family-friendly – and unapologetically posh.

Set in the beautiful Cornbury Park estate in the heart of the Cotswolds, the festival vibe may be luxurious – think corporate-sponsored cocktail and champagne tents, celebrity chefs and a cricket pitch – but that doesn't mean it's unwelcoming. Quite the opposite. Festivalgoers span generations – all mingling in a laid-back swirl of sequins, retro DJ sets and mischief. One band asked the crowd, "Are there any young people in the audience?" Hands flew up from both teenagers and retirees.

Of course, if you opt for every add-on – from luxury spas to woodland feasts – it'll cost you a small fortune. But the additional funds have allowed the organisers to team up with Festival Spirit, a local charity that provides, at no extra cost, a wonderful adapted tent for people with life-limiting conditions and disabilities. The facilities include heating and equipment – such as electric beds and hoists – as well as a fridge for medicines. These are provided at no additional charge, enabling people living with disabilities to enjoy the full festival experience – and the charity's volunteer staff mean that family carers get some respite too.

For all its bougie branding, Wilderness is – like an increasing number of the UK's festivals – a place where age or physical limits become irrelevant once the glitter goes on and the beat drops. Whether you're six or 76, you'll find something to love: wellness, spoken word, dance, brilliant new bands, DJs, and folk with a twist.

Fifteen years ago, David Sinclair wrote a blog about festivals and the ageing demographic. *"Perhaps one of the reasons why The Future of Festivals didn't raise the*

profile of the ageing society was a fear of the media reaction. The festival scene is portrayed as youthful and young, and therefore stories about an ageing audience may not have seemed appropriate to the PR people. But ageing is a challenge which will not go away and Glastonbury and other festivals must seriously research, consider and address the long-term impact of an ageing society on their activities."

Thankfully, many festivals have indeed adapted – and grown up a little – since David's observations in 2010.

READ MORE

Three things - some summer listening, reading and viewing

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Three things

If things are a little more quieter for you this August here are three things you might wish to take a look at or listen to:

Pensions unpacked: How can we make the most of longer lives?
In the first episode of a new podcast series from our friends at Brightwell, ILC's David Sinclair and Brightwell's Amy Mankelow talk to finance broadcaster Georgie Frost about the implications of longer lives, how we can age well, and why rethinking retirement is more urgent than ever.

Listen to the podcast here

Share a children's detective story about dementia
Scarlett Buckling and the Case of the Missing Pictures is a powerful and poignant children's novel about living with dementia and an engaging detective story with real emotional depth. The author of the book is Mario Ambrosi, Director of Communications and Marketing at Anchor, a not-for-profit provider of older people's housing and care and a member of ILC's Partners Programme.

In writing the book, Mario hopes to encourage children not to be afraid to ask questions about dementia or to connect with older generations – and hopefully be inspired to consider a future in the care profession.

More about the book here

Sowing trust, growing futures
Rather than simply sponsoring an event this summer, Legal & General – another member of the ILC Partners Programme – made excellent use of their presence at

BBC Gardeners' World Live 2025, welcoming 3,000 customers to their lounge and taking time to chat with them about their current and future plans.

See Legal & General in action here

You can find out more about the ILC Partners Programme and other ways of working with us via the button below.

MORE HERE

The Friday three newsletter, edited by Emily Evans, usually goes out fortnightly – but with summer holidays coming up, the next edition will be at the beginning of September

To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

Please follow us on social media via the links below for our latest news and event updates. Help support these events and our independent analysis. Donate to ILC here.

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