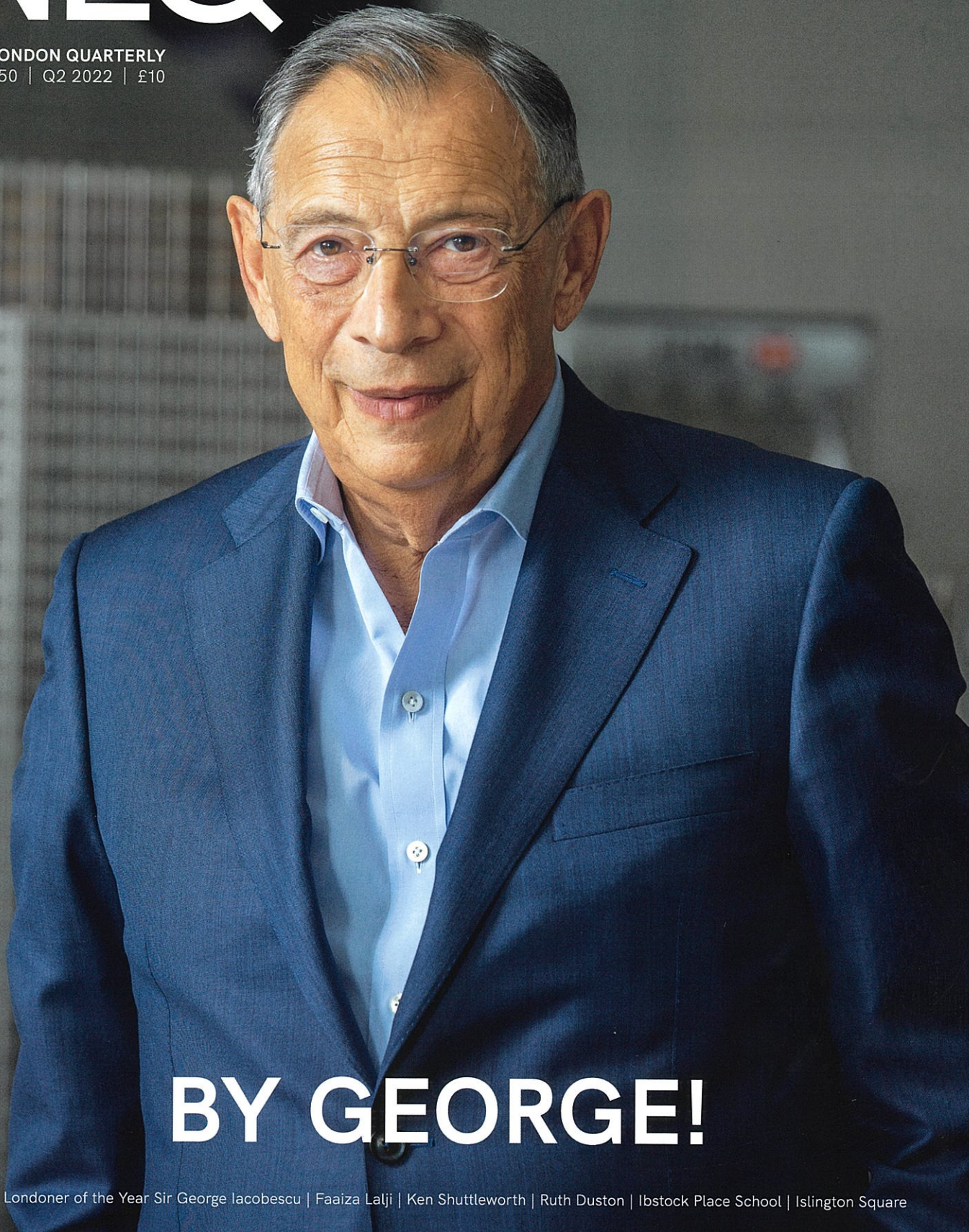


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BY GEORGE!

New Londoner of the Year Sir George Iacobescu | Faaiza Lalji | Ken Shuttleworth | Ruth Duston | Ibstock Place School | Islington Square



'In London everyone is different, which means everyone can fit in' — Paddington Bear. The best thing about London is its incredible diversity. Diversity of people, food, religion, politics, culture, beliefs, fashion, transport, scale, architecture, places, spaces, shops, businesses. If you can think of it, London can probably deliver it. As an architect living and working in London, it is this diversity that makes it such an exciting place to practise. Working across the city in so many different communities—each with its own identity and cultural references—while understanding it as part of the whole continually challenges us to think differently. London has evolved organically, rather than having been the subject of any major masterplanning. It is a joined-up series of villages, and it is fascinating to work in the middle of a particular village or at the edge where there are tensions along the seams.

Henry Squire, partner, Squire & Partners.



Pick a bridge, any bridge. My favourite place in London is bang in the middle of the River Thames. There is no park or open space that provides such wonderful vistas—north to south, east to west—of our beautiful city. Criss-crossing this incredible body of water pushed and pulled all the way from Oxfordshire to the North Sea gives limitless views, a fresh river breeze and a profound sense of freedom. Forever in a rush, I always stop in the middle of any London bridge to reflect on the accumulation of human endeavour from the Romans to the present day—that every element of the built environment, from the sewers to the streets, towers and domes, represent the aspirations of an individual and a team. I then move on with a spring in my step and a renewed sense of purpose.

Professor Sadie Morgan, director, dRMM



London has always been a place of excitement and interest to me. From my first visits as a child to current-day wanderings around the capital, central London makes me feel alive and energised, in a challenging and thought-provoking way. It's the opportunity to slip out of dense crowded streets into extraordinary public realm that creates the memorable moments for me. To be energised, and then being given a chance to mentally digest the chaos in contemplative space of a world-class quality. Historically, I remember pauses in places like Covent Garden and along the Embankment. Now it's the very accessible areas of Coal Drops Yard, together with the surprise pockets of space around Leadenhall's sky-reaching commercial building stock, that I spend these moments. One timeless place for me though is the Barbican Estate. For me it embodies everything about London—Utopian, bold, ambitious structures among tranquil, democratic public realm. A city garden so ahead of its time.

Hazel Rounding, director, Shedkm



The city-makers. I passionately believe that the best thing about London is our community of city-makers—the nurses, teachers, charity workers and designers together with all those others who make our city work. These middle-income earners drive our city's economy and cultural character and are right at the heart of Pocket's mission to help them make London their home. Yet London's ever-more-expensive housing is forcing city-makers out. It's clear from research we carried out in summer 2021 that helping young Londoners get on the housing ladder is critical to their mental health and our social and economic health. As we edge towards the end of the pandemic, a period when first time buyers have suffered in silence in less-than-ideal conditions, I am determined for policy makers to once and for all take stock and for us all to have a serious debate about granting first-time buyers a fairer share of the finite resource of London's housing stock.

Marc Vlessing, CEO, Pocket Living