

# transmission

A person wearing a full white protective suit, including a hood with a clear face shield and gloves, is working on a rooftop. They are leaning over a stack of four pink wooden beehive boxes, which are placed on a wooden stand. The rooftop is paved with dark grey tiles. In the background, there are several multi-story apartment buildings under a grey, overcast sky. A satellite dish is visible on the roof to the left.

## Issue 2

### **Dispatches from Television Centre**

#### **Food**

See it to bee-lieve it:  
Making honey at  
Television Centre

#### **Landscapes**

Turning a new leaf  
with Gillespies

#### **Culture**

Helios hits refresh:  
Restoring an icon

# Coming up next: spring

Television Centre  
89 Wood Lane  
London W12 7FA  
020 8811 8720

Live in Television Centre.  
televisioncentre.com

Cover image:  
The beehives on the roof of  
Studio 1, by Tian Khee Siong

transmission is edited  
and produced by dn&co.  
dnco.com



**In this issue, transmission goes green. London spoils us with its beautiful parks, with new ones springing up like White City Green, a forthcoming park that will connect Television Centre to Westfield Shopping Centre. On page 18, we map just a few of the many green spaces of West London. We also learn how landscapes are created. On page 14, we meet Stephen Richards of landscape architecture firm Gillespies to learn about the planting that will have Television Centre thriving year round.**

**Springtime isn't the only renaissance taking place in White City. From university campuses to shared workspaces to a new Soho House, this area has been hailed as the site of a creative-tech revolution and it's not a label we would argue with. For more on the lineup at Television Centre, including the triumphant return of Pergola on the Roof, check out the listings on page 20.**



# Bluebirds of a feather

“Chelsea’s community centre” Bluebird is affectionately known as the place where the good people of the royal borough come together, whether it’s for nourishing family meals upstairs in the restaurant, or nurturing the television careers of well-to-do twentysomethings in the courtyard bar.



In its twentieth year, this café-bar-restaurant-deli-shop is ready to spread its wings with a new space nestled in the bosom of Television Centre. “We’ve been constantly approached over the years,” says owner Des Gunewardena, “but we’re opening in Television Centre because we love the development and its history – it’s an iconic building.”

But how do they intend to transfer Bluebird’s special brand of cocktails and camaraderie? “We’re not going to create something different and just call it ‘Bluebird’. Instead you will go in and be like ‘ah yes, this is Bluebird’. That comes from three things: the design, the menu, and the vibe.”

The design of the new – and larger – café will be overseen by David d’Almada, who recently worked on the revamp of the original King’s Road location. Meanwhile the menu is also the same core concept: “not slavishly British, like bangers and mash and Lancashire hot pot, but modern British.”

For example, on our recent visit we had spring lamb with barley cooked in chorizo, French beans bathed in butter and sprinkled with salt, and burrata

with cubes of pickled beetroot and sharp green tomatoes. The offering combines high quality ingredients with meals very much familiar to the well-heeled and well-travelled Chelsea palate. In summary, delicious.

“The staff, the music, the whole feel of the place will be recognisably Bluebird too.” Though it will differ in one respect: unlike its boozy World’s End brother, the new Bluebird will put food before bloody marys. “It will be a place for breakfast, mid-morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea, and then instead of the café-bar concept of the King’s Road, it will become more of a restaurant in the evenings.” A warning though. We imagine one ritual will make its way to White City too – namely the need to arrive before 10am to ensure a table for brunch. Damn those early birds.

**Bluebird is set to open at Television Centre in late 2017/early 2018.**

[bluebird-restaurant.co.uk](http://bluebird-restaurant.co.uk)



Helios statue, 1961. Copyright BBC photo library

## The birth and rebirth of Helios

A time-lapse of Television Centre's courtyard would show a riot of running producers, wheeling costume racks and sashaying TV stars. And at the centre, unmoving and constant, stands Helios. Last year, the iconic statue was briefly removed for restoration. Here's what happened behind the scenes.



As long as there has been Television Centre, there has been Helios. The statue of the sun god stands three metres tall, with rays of light emanating from his crown and from the sun he holds in his hands. In Greek mythology, Helios drove the chariot of the sun across the sky each day, always returning the next morning. At Television Centre, he stands atop a great obelisk, his face stylised like a stern Pre-Raphaelite as he bows under the weight of the sun. Helios became an optimistic icon for the nascent medium, symbolising the light of television radiating around the world. The statue has since been designated with a Grade II listing.

Half a century later, the passing years began to manifest themselves on Helios's skin. A patina of dirt had formed, the once gleaming gold paint dull and peeling. When the overhaul of Television Centre began, so too did the restoration of Helios and the two sidekick statues by his feet: Sound and Vision.

According to Spencer Hall, a certified conservationist with Paye Conservation, the statue was carefully and painstakingly removed for an assessment on site. Paye is known for expertly restoring historic structures like the HMS Victory and Eton College. All things considered, the Helios statue had fared pretty well.

Helios was taken back to the workshop where a thorough steam clean removed the dirt particles that had settled over the years. In a very controlled environment that doesn't allow for any dust or air exchange, a thin coat of adhesive was applied. Once nearly dry, it was time to re-gild Helios. Each tiny sheet of gold leaf, roughly 80mm<sup>2</sup>, was applied with a soft squirrel hair brush. Gilding is a lengthy, laborious process. The last step was a layer of wax, which is blended into a smooth coat using the blast of a hot air gun. With no brush marks visible, Helios was left with a natural, matte finish.

The restored statue closely resembles how it looked when it was brand new, but Hall expects it will last much longer. In a cost-cutting measure of postwar austerity, the original colour was achieved with gold paint, which is flimsier than gold leaf and prone to wear and tear. The gilded Helios is now set for life. The statue has been returned to its rightful place, ready with new lustre to welcome residents and guests when Television Centre opens once again.

**See Helios for yourself when Television Centre reopens to the public at the end of 2017.**





# Above and bee-yond

Television Centre has always been a hive of activity, but this time it's a colony of bees that's creating the buzz.

Atop Studio 1 at Television Centre, 15,000 honeybees are getting busy for the spring, and that number's only going to grow as the weather gets warmer. Managed by Sameer Ghai of The London Bee Company, the hives are part of a sustainability strategy that makes positive use of an otherwise unused space. Wearing our best bee suits, we climbed to the rooftop to meet the bees.

Illustration: Lyndon Hayes Photography: Tian Khiee Siang

Left:  
Beekeeper Sameer Ghai holds a frame of honeycomb.

Below:  
Sameer uses a special smoker to calm the bees when tending to the hives.

## In focus Beekeeper Sameer Ghai



Sameer uses the smoke from burning pine cones when tending to the hives, a common practice among beekeepers. The smoke tricks the bees into thinking the hive is on fire, so they plunge in and consume their honey, just in case an evacuation is imminent. With bellies too full to sting, it's much safer for Sameer to open the hives.

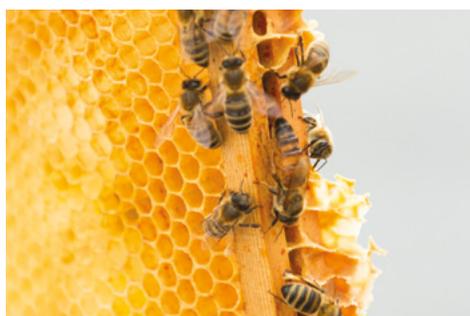
This was Sameer's first time opening the hives since the end of the winter, so he wasn't sure how they would react. Bees have a three-day memory and their moods are entirely dependent on the weather. On cold days, they are agitated and are much more sociable in the sun. Sometimes honeybees are so relatable.

They're also scrupulous about cleanliness. These little neat freaks don't defecate in their hives, and the dead ones are airlifted out by special undertaker bees and dropped a few metres from the hive. Each bee has its role, which they instinctively assume as they move through their month-long lifespan.

As we observed the hive, Sameer pointed out the queen bee, whose size and amber colouring made her easy to spot. To produce a queen, the worker bees feed three to four eggs with royal jelly, a nutrient-rich substance. When the first of the eggs hatches, the bee kills the other eggs to ensure her place as queen. If more than one queen emerges at the same time, it's a fight to the death to assume the crown.

Urban beekeeping has become an increasingly buzzy practice. You can find bees on rooftops throughout London, including at Fortnum & Mason (who auction off their honey), the Ritz London and the V&A. Sameer will harvest the hives at least twice, perhaps thrice in a season. Each colony can produce up to 30 kilos of honey per year. But just for us, he scraped a little bit of honey, which we tasted straight from the hive. Delicious.





Clockwise from top: Sameer tends to his bees, with a smoker at his side; scraping some honey from the hive; a jar of Television Centre honey; can you spot the queen bee?

# A new take on the London crescent. The Garden Series.

TELEVISION CENTRE



Designed in the spirit of London's garden squares and crescents, The Garden Series is a collection of new apartments overlooking private gardens.

2 & 3 bedroom apartments from £970,000\*

Open day 6 May 2017

Television Centre  
89 Wood Lane, W12 7FA  
020 8811 8720

[televisioncentre.com](http://televisioncentre.com)



\*Prices correct at time of going to press



# Green party



For more than two decades, Stephen Richards has worked with landscape architects Gillespies, the firm behind the garden design at Television Centre as well as NEO Bankside, the Canary Wharf Crossrail Roof Garden and many projects across the UK, Russia and Middle East. We visited their headquarters, located in a 70s concrete mid-rise in Clerkenwell, to learn what seeds they've sown for Television Centre.



## In focus

Gillespies partner Stephen Richards



### What can we expect at Television Centre?

Bulbs and flowering in spring, lots of autumn colour, and then evergreen so it doesn't just disappear in the winter. Seasonal interest is important for residential because it gives you that clock of the seasons. The worst thing that you could have is a bland landscape that never changes.

### What makes this project different?

What we found fascinating about the existing plan was a very powerful architectural statement, which is now being given a completely different use. What was, for all intents and purposes, a television factory, suddenly becomes a place where people are living and working in a very different way.

### How did that shift the design?

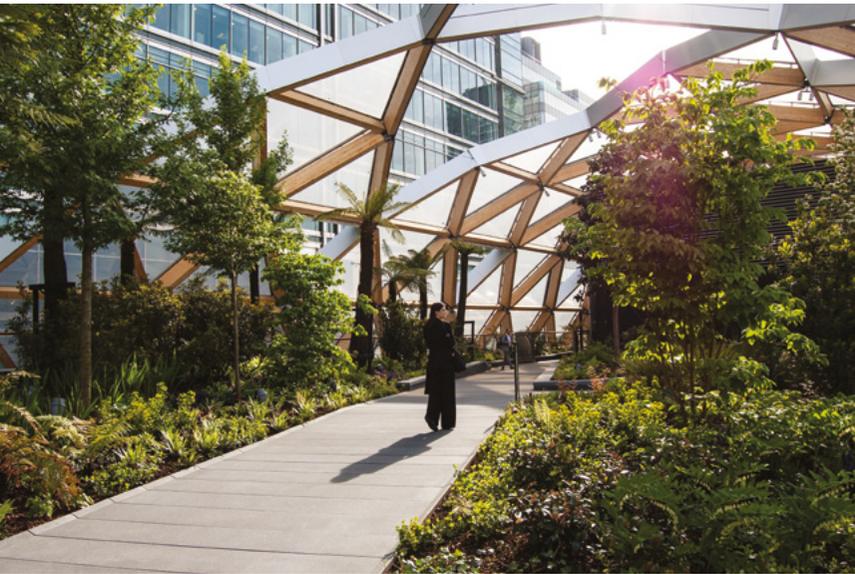
The original forecourt was always designed as the arrival sequence, and it was closed off to the public. Now you won't need to be invited, you can wander in. So it was very important that it felt like it was welcoming and that it had shifted away from the original design, which was basically a drop-off for cars.

### What will the forecourt be like now?

There will be a big lawn for activations and events, to build a sense of community. Then you've got the garden where it's just you and nature, a quieter experience. So it's providing different scales of landscape and the options to interact with it.

### Tell us a little bit about the very first time you visited this site.

I went once years ago to see Doctor Who being filmed. The BBC permeated my childhood, and that building was its expression. I recognised the building but actually I didn't know it, because I had never really engaged with it. I think that was the real sense of surprise, wandering around this incredibly powerful form, but then within it was all the gritty back-of-house nuts and bolts of television production.



Above:  
An example of Gillespies  
landscaping at Canary Wharf  
Crossrail Roof Garden

### How did the original architecture influence your design?

We decided it's about the wave form of transmission, the idea of information being broadcast to television sets. That seemed to fit rather nicely into the courtyard, and so the shapes of the planting are inspired by this.

### How does landscaping affect wellbeing?

The coming together of humans and nature is so important. There's been a real renaissance of this in the last 10, 15 years, particularly in London where much more emphasis is now being placed on the quality of the external spaces in the residential landscape.

### How did you consider the residents as you were creating the landscape?

Television Centre is very much about public access, but there must be spaces that are private for the residents. You create a sort of intimacy and a sense of ownership. That's very important in successful landscape and architecture, that people feel they belong to it.

### And how does the landscape create a sense of play?

We wanted a place where children could move and explore, but we didn't want it to look like a playground. Children love to follow lines and the different scales of landscape. Somewhere they can hide and adults can't. We used mainly natural elements: logs, rocks, stepping stones - things to explore and to balance on, which is all good stuff for building motor skills, but again not overt play equipment. So when children are not on them they just blend in.

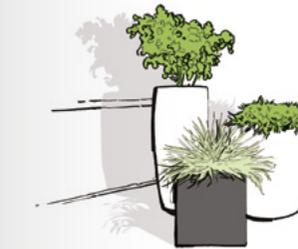
### The way we interact with nature is such a visceral thing, isn't it?

It's where we're from. It's life on earth. We feel superior in so many ways and we love to control, but actually the fundamental thing is we have a huge relationship with other living things. There's an energy that we get from that and a sense of belonging to the wider story of the earth. Buildings are static. Landscapes evolve and are constantly reacting to temperature, water, time of year, sunlight, angles, and that sort of thing. And we are too. We're interacting with the air we breathe and the light that we see. It shapes us. What I feel is that as much as architecture shapes me, it's landscape that really shapes us as humans.

# Garden variety

Balcony gardens are a great way to make the most of limited outdoor space. Here's how.

1



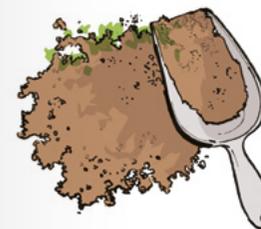
2



3



4



5



#### 1 Throw some shade

Survey your balcony for how much direct sunlight it receives, and make sure to select plants that can handle these conditions. If you don't have much sunlight, stick to plants like fern, begonias and ivy, and strawberries, sage or mint for the sunny patches.

#### 2 Level up

To create a sense of dynamism, explore different levels of planting. Try shelving units, antique ladders or hanging plants to add dimension to a confined space.

#### 3 Year-round intrigue

When Richards was designing the landscaping around Television Centre, it was important to create a sense of vitality year-round. Do the same for your own garden by including plants that stay green in the winter.

#### 4 Use the right soil

An obvious one, but easy to forget for first-time gardeners. If you're unsure, check when buying plants.

#### 5 Light it up

Consider lighting: lanterns or string lights add an instant Pinterest-worthy dash of whimsy to your balcony garden.



# The parks of west London

## 1 Hammersmith Park

Just behind Television Centre, Hammersmith Park proves that good things come in small packages. The historic Japanese garden here contains original features from the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910.

## 2 Kensal Green Cemetery

This handsome cemetery was founded in 1833, inspired by Père Lachaise in Paris. While you won't find the celebrity presence of its Parisian counterpart, you also won't find camera-clutching tourists puckering up against Oscar Wilde's grave.

## 3 Wormwood Scrubs

In the 19th century, this wide open field was used to train cavalry horses, and was designated a military exercising ground. Today, it's a fine option for Sunday sport, be it football or fetch.

## 4 Shepherd's Bush Green

A triangular park surrounded by lush trees that drown out the sounds of surrounding traffic. Surrounded by busy roads, five tube stations and two shopping centres, the term "urban oasis" comes to mind.

## 5 Kensington Memorial Park

Not to be confused with the Princess Diana memorial in Kensington Gardens, this park was designated in the 1920s as a tribute to those who perished in the First World War. Today, its water play area is a great place to bring the children, or simply channel your own internal 10-year-old and jump on in.

## 6 Holland Park

The Kyoto Gardens at Holland Park are the next best thing to hopping on a plane to Japan. The roaming peacocks will make the visit all the more pleasant, assuming you stay on their good side. Or, skip the outdoors altogether and cosy up at the Belvedere, the park's plush restaurant in a 17th century ballroom.

## 7 Coming Soon: White City Green

An in-progress park opening 2019/2020. The four acre site will run along the revitalised area surrounding the Hammersmith and City line viaduct, creating a green bridge between Westfield and Television Centre.

## 8 Ravenscourt Park

This ancient park was first recorded as the grounds of a medieval manor. The picturesque pond at its heart is the remnant of a moat dating back to the 13th century.

## 9 Hyde Park

One of London's grandest parks, originally created as a hunting ground for Henry VIII. Since then, it's been the site of mass protests, iconic concerts, Hyde Park Corner debates and the annual Serpentine Pavilion.



Clockwise from left:  
Bluebird, Homeslice,  
Bayley & Sage

# The lineup at Television Centre

Coming up next at Television Centre: new shops, restaurants, an independent cinema and gym. These are just a few of the new neighbours set to move in by the end of this year and early next. We'll be announcing more in upcoming issues of transmission.



## Food & drink

### Bayley & Sage – NEW!

Independent delicatessen and gourmet grocer with nearly 20 years of lunchtime authority.

bayley-sage.co.uk  
@bayleyandsage

### Homeslice

Regularly hailed as London's best pizza, with unorthodox toppings and prosecco on tap.

homeslicepizza.co.uk  
@homesliceldn

### The Allis

A cocktail concept by the Soho House Group. It may originate from Chicago, but we hear they make a mean Manhattan.

theallis.com

### Patty & Bun

London's favourite burgers come to Television Centre. Stacked buns that require an unhinged jaw.

pattyandbun.co.uk  
@pattyandbunjoe

### Bluebird

The sophisticated Chelsea establishment moves north. Modern European dining with an interior to please the well-heeled.

bluebird-restaurant.co.uk  
@bluebirdchelsea

## Pop-up

### Pergola on the Roof

A seasonal rooftop bar and street food offering atop the Television Centre car park returns in May with a Hamptons theme.

pergolaontheroof.co.uk

## Wellness

### House Gym by Soho House

Television Centre residents' place for pumping, spinning, trotting, treading, lifting and a touch of ommmm.

sohohouse.com  
@SohoHouse

## Entertainment

### BBC Studioworks

Three historic studios are being refurbished, and will host live audience recordings from 1 September.

bbcstudioworks.com

### White City House

The latest addition to the Soho House family. The adjoining hotel will offer 47 cosy bedrooms in the historic Helios.

sohohouse.com  
@SohoHouse

### Independent Cinema

A new cinema is slated to set up a three-screen offering at Television Centre. Enjoy the latest arthouse flicks (or zombie thrillers) in a plush setting.

# News & events



Clockwise from above:  
The Pod at White City Place,  
Pergola on the Roof, art piece  
by Catherine Yass.



## News

### The Pod at White City Place

Calling all podcasters! Our neighbours at the creative campus White City Place have recently unveiled the Pod. The unmissable pink cube is a mobile recording studio where storytellers and entrepreneurs have the support they need to get their podcasts on the airwaves.

[whitecityplace.com/  
podcast/studios](http://whitecityplace.com/podcast/studios)

[podcasting@  
whitecityplace.com](mailto:podcasting@whitecityplace.com)

### Television Centre Video Art Screens at RIBA

A collaboration between White Noise and artist Catherine Yass explores the impossible. The video art piece, which was recently debuted at RIBA, features a grand piano hoisted from a crane high above the rooftops of Television Centre, the wind blowing through the strings to create the eerie soundtrack. "The piano stands for the arts, which the BBC does so much to promote, and it is about freedom of expression," she told White Noise.

[whitenoise.city](http://whitenoise.city)

### Pergola on the Roof Returns

This summer, the return of this 600-seat space atop the Television Centre channels the Hamptons, the scene-y strip of Long Island where summering wealthy New Yorkers let down their hair, and their inhibitions. The new season of vendors includes the return of Patty & Bun and newcomers like 8 Hoxton Square, Breddos Tacos and Bonnie Gull spin-off Salt 'n' Sauce.

[pergolaontheroof.com](http://pergolaontheroof.com)



## Events

### Sneaker Con London

The preeminent coming together of sneakerheads comes to London for the first time.

27 May  
Olympia London  
12.00–19.00pm

[sneakercon.com](http://sneakercon.com)

### HIR

A dark comedy about a marine who returns to his small American Mid-Western town to find his family life turned upside-down.

15 June–22 July  
Bush Theatre

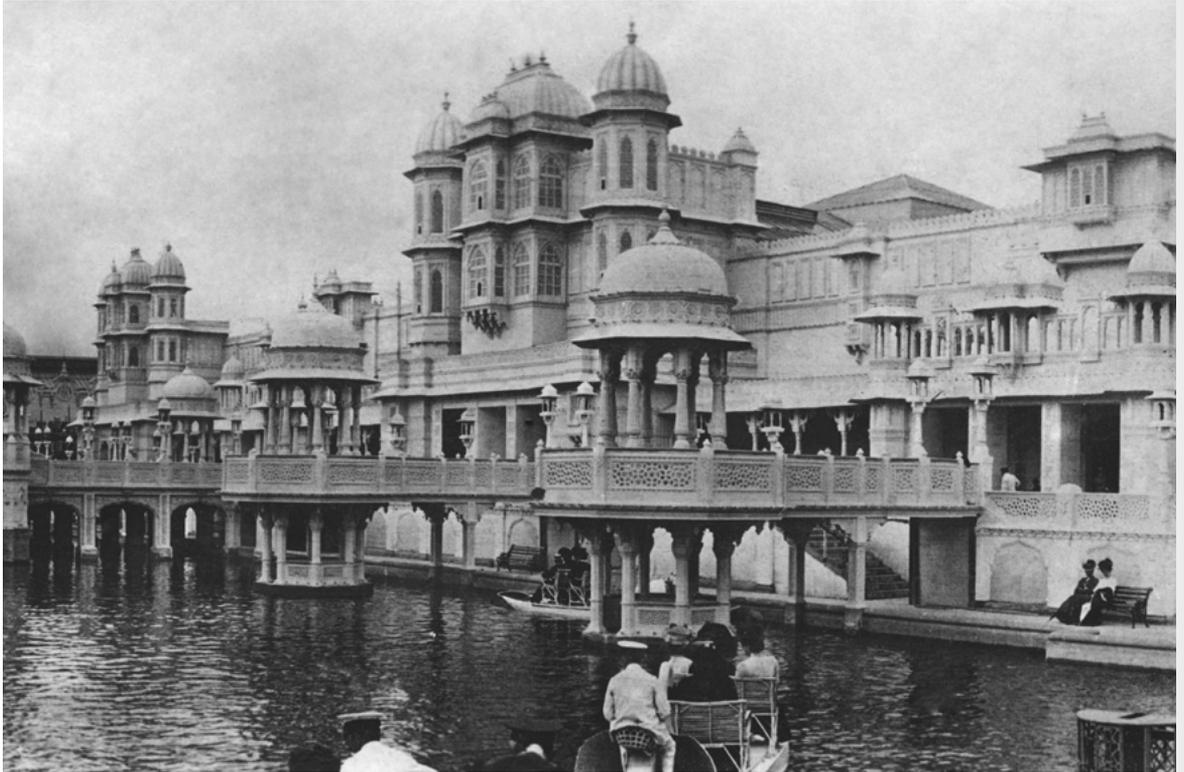
[bushtheatre.co.uk](http://bushtheatre.co.uk)



# Under the arches

A city is what you make of it. The arch beneath a railway track can be an overgrown sliver of unused space or, as a new plan in White City will have it, an opportunity to invite shops, restaurants, cafés and galleries big and small into the area. Taking a leaf from areas like Cambridge Heath, Camden and Battersea, 31 arches beneath the

Hammersmith & City line viaduct near Wood Lane station will be open for business as soon as 2018. This will create new pedestrian passageways between Television Centre and Westfield and that ever-pleasing connection to the city that is forged by the gentle rumble of the tube overhead while you dine.



## Five things you didn't know about the Franco-British Exhibition

1908 was an important, weird and wonderful year for White City.

- 1** Eight times the size of the Great Exhibition of 1851, this was the largest exhibition of its kind in Britain. 4,000 men working by day and another 2,000 working by night erected the grand white stucco pavilions, which gave White City its name.
- 2** There were many outlandish displays at the exhibitions. One from the Canadian Pavilion featured a series of sculptures depicting significant moments in Canadian history – all carved out of butter.
- 3** The Indian arena boasted a 50-animal procession, including a herd of elephants. For the grand finale, 12 elephants careered down a slide and into a small lake.
- 4** Meanwhile, in the Senegalese Village, 150 people lived in mud huts for the exhibition's five-month duration. This happened again at the 1910 Japan-Britain exhibition, also held in White City, where the Ainu people lived on display in reed huts.
- 5** That same year, White City also hosted the London Olympics, which, at seven months, lasted even longer than the exhibition.