



Suzanne Rolt, chief executive at St George's, has The LAST WORD in Bristol Business News Online  
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## Bristol Business News Online

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### The LAST WORD: Suzanne Rolt, chief executive, St George's Bristol

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By Robert Buckland

Each week *Bristol Business News* gives a prominent member of the city's business community the last word on its weekly e-bulletin. This week Suzanne Rolt, chief executive, St George's Bristol – currently fundraising £5.5m for its 'Building a Sound Future' extension appeal – answers our 10 questions.

What was the LAST:

**Film you watched?** If we're talking cinema, it was *The Theory of Everything*. Any worries I had about it being a bit serious and high minded were blown out of the water by the brilliant acting of Eddie Redmayne and an intensely warm, humorous and uplifting script.



**Book you read?** *My House in Damascus: An Inside View of the Syrian Revolution*. It's been described as 'a love letter to Syria' and it's the real life story of Diana Darke who buys and restores an old Ottoman house in the centre of Damascus. As this unfolds, she reveals much about Syria's history and politics as well as its society and culture. It's beautifully written and it offers real insight into how the Syrian Revolution began and where it might yet lead.

**Music you bought/downloaded?** Last week I had a bit of a splurge and bought several CDs: *String Party* featuring the extraordinarily beautiful music of a young Bulgarian composer called Dobrinka Tabakova; and, following a talk by Jonathan James at St George's, I also went out and bought the six symphonies of Danish composer Nielsen. If that sounds a little serious, I also downloaded some old Muse tracks to my iPhone.

**Concert or play you went to?** As you might guess, I get to attend more concerts than most and the highlights are always at St George's. The most recent classical concert was pianist Paul Lewis playing Beethoven's last three piano sonatas. I don't think I've ever heard playing of such intense passion. I also sneaked in for the sound check for Gretchen Peters – just gorgeous.

**Sporting event you attended?** I'm not a great sports fan although I get as excited as the next person when the Olympics or Commonwealth Games come around. I enjoy watching water sports and I've been known to embarrass the kids by screaming (embarrassment obviously!) at the rowing teams competing in the annual Bristol Regatta.

**Holiday you went on?** For the past two years our family holiday has been in Brittany. We load the bikes on top of the car and have a great time cycling to, and often along, the beaches. The food is great – as is the wine and local cider – but you need a wetsuit because the sea may look inviting but it's usually icy cold.

**Restaurant you ate in?** I've been to *Reveration* twice in as many weeks. Once in the upstairs restaurant for a family birthday and then downstairs in the café for an extended brunch with friends visiting Bristol. I love being alongside the water and it's a bit like being on holiday – though I've never been tempted to take to the water!

**Thing that annoyed you?** That would be the person who drove right up behind me in a 20 miles per hour zone because clearly the law applied to me but not to him ...

**Thing that made you laugh out loud?** I caught *Bridesmaids* again on Film 4 recently. I love this film – it's outrageous, and probably appeals to women more than to men, but it's guaranteed to make you laugh out loud the whole way through.

**Piece of good advice you were given?** I came across an Arabic proverb in the book on Damascus I mentioned above and it really chimed with me because I'm leading St George's 'Building a Sound Future' capital project. It was *'the pleasure of food and drink lasts an hour, of sleep a day, but of a building a lifetime.'* It reminds me that it's worth going the extra mile to achieve a truly exceptional extension to St George's because, once complete, it's going to be part of the Bristol landscape for decades, hopefully, centuries to come.

*Suzanne is chief executive, St George's Bristol, and non-executive director of Bristol Cultural Development Partnership. She studied music at University College Cardiff before working for Welsh National Opera and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, the UK's leading charity for professional musicians. During her time with the Fund she managed an annual festival of music in London and was part of the launch programme for the Jacqueline du Pré Memorial Appeal. Suzanne now combines a love of music with a passion for writing and is a board member of the Royal West of England Academy and an advisory group member of the Bristol Festival of Ideas.*

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