

The plinth of wails



► Despite dodgy poetry, a broken bell and bust microphone, 'town crier' Scott was delighted to promote his pub – on a plinth in Trafalgar Square

ALEXANDER CLARE

HIS poetry may not have been inspired but a Hammersmith bar owner certainly had a fine platform to perform on.

Scott Illman, from the Distillers in Fulham Palace Road, had the perfect chance to promote his business through his dodgy verse by becoming a living statue in Trafalgar Square.

The 35-year-old was one of the first volunteers to take part in artist Anthony Gormley's *One and Other* project, standing for an hour on the square's empty fourth plinth.

Scott used his time, dressed as a town crier and brandishing a bell, to advertise the Distillers and another bar he runs in Farringdon.

His performance even made it to *The Guardian's* front page, boosting his message: "Come to our bar it's the best by far." Describing the coverage as 'quite hilarious', Scott recalled how he was hoisted by crane on to the plinth.



SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT: Scott Illman dons his town crier's outfit, far left, and, left, in more casual attire on top of The Distillers, in Fulham Palace Road

PICTURE AT DISTILLERS BY LEIGH QUINNELL

“It was like being on top of the world,” he said. “Looking up at Nelson from closer than you're used to, I was floating.”

After 10 minutes, his bell broke and his microphone was not working, but Scott continued to roar above the noise of the traffic.

The plinth felt smaller than he expected as he walked around it, 'making a wally of myself'. A heckler booed him, telling him to 'stop being boring and say something interesting, or get off'. As Scott replied: "You can't get off – that's the point!"

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He had arrived 90 minutes early, nervously watching other 'statues' perform.

Friends stood by with cameras, and Scott was grateful to be able to hide behind his sunglasses.

Descending from the plinth, he sparked a media frenzy.

"Sound mikes were shoved in my face and they started asking lots of questions," he said.

Scott's chance to promote his two-for-one cocktails and boost his pubs was timely, because business has been hit by the credit crunch. The Farringdon bar opened last August at the brink of the banking crisis.

● Gormley's project runs for 100 days, using 615 volunteers chosen from more than 13,000 applicants.



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